

CAREER PORTRAITS

National Business League promotes economic development

by Brenda Braxton
UP News Service

"The National Business League (NBL) is involved in developing N.E. Portland and promoting black businesses so they can be economically independent," said Ms. Gloria McMurtry, a Portland contractor and member of the NBL.

"A personal goal of mine is to see N.E. Portland develop as fast as other sections of Portland — like the downtown area. When I ride down Union Avenue... all I see is blight and cloaked and boarded up buildings. It's really depressing. I think it's up to us as black people to change all that because no one is going to do it for us," stated Ms. McMurtry.

Ms. McMurtry's future plans include starting a development company to develop buildings in the N.E. section. "I'm looking at about five pieces of property to turn into commercial spaces," she said.

Ms. McMurtry is a self-employed contractor working in interior design. "I studied design at Wayne State University in Detroit. My father had

a small construction company remodeling residences and I worked for him through high school and college. That's where I got a feel of what the construction business was all about," she said.

Upon graduating from college Ms. McMurtry found that positions in interior design were not readily available for women. She then began buying ready-to-wear fashions for a major department store in Detroit and continued in retail for almost ten years. Next came a marketing position selling industrial packaging for Mobil Chemical.

She eventually started her own business in interior design contracting. Ms. McMurtry's day involves working at the Plan Center doing paper work on current projects, finding potential projects, supervisory work, and research. "I keep up with the trade publications like the *Daily Journal of Commerce*, *Construction Data and News*, the *Observer*, and the *Skanner*. General contracting people advertise in those publications and that's where I get some of my leads."

Ms. McMurtry is presently located in the S.W. Business Complex. She shares the space with six other black entrepreneurs who deal in wholesale supply or the construction industry.

"During the latter part of last year we pooled our resources for a space downtown where we could share information, subscribe to various publications, and have the necessary supplies for our businesses. Hopefully, other minority businesses will see the advantages of working together in a common space and of sharing information."

Ms. McMurtry explained that the complex is to "help new businesses which will eventually expand and grow out of the complex situation... we think it's a good concept and are real proud of the way it's all worked out."

Last January Ms. McMurtry took a trip to Africa. "Part of the reason for my trip was to research business opportunities. I'm looking at setting up an export business to export building materials to West Africa," she said.

Ms. McMurtry described the African people as receptive and the chance for opportunity as vast. She felt that the majority of the black American population was unaware of the desire of African people to expand and develop their country. "The only people who will develop Africa are black people in America. It takes a lot of money and time when you do business internationally but the opportunities are there."

The National Business League (NBL) is the primary advocate for black business development. Its fundamental belief is that minority enterprise is vital to the nation and its economy.

Founded in 1900 by Dr. Booker T. Washington, it is the nation's oldest business organization. Its membership ranges from high technology manufacturers to single proprietors.

The NBL's Oregon Chapter officers are Charles F. Crews, president; O.B. Hill, first vice president; and James Berry, executive secretary.



Gloria McMurtry talks with visitor during open house at the Southwest Business Complex. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

OSU Opportunity Program Graduates face challenging future

Three Portland area students, Lelia Lomax, Michael L. Mackey and Anthony McKinley, are facing new challenges with their future. These students are among 38 graduates from Oregon State University through the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) this past June. The EOP has assisted 275 students to graduate from the University over the past 15 years. The program is highly successful in assisting non-traditional and minority students.

Lelia Lomax graduated from Parkrose High School in June, 1978. She was admitted to Oregon State University through the Educational Opportunities Program for the fall of 1978. In high school, Lelia was noted for her leadership abilities in assisting the faculty in working out solutions to student problems. Lelia has always had the ability to succeed. However, for a variety of valid reasons, while in high school Lelia did not demonstrate her academic potential. Lelia has matured a great deal in the last few years; and has now found a pur-

pose and direction for her education. Lelia graduated in June with a major in Psychology. Lelia still resides in Portland and is looking to pursue her career in the social services.

Michael L. Mackey graduated from the school of Business at Oregon State University. His major area of concentration within the School of Business is marketing management. Mike was born, raised and educated in his elementary and secondary years in the Portland area, graduating from Benson High School in May, 1978. He received his first two years of undergraduate study at Linfield College, and then transferred Fall term, 1980, to Oregon State where he completed the work for his B.S. in Business. While attending Linfield he worked for two years at KSLC radio station and upon transfer to Oregon State he worked for over two years at KBVR radio station, completing his work there as Assistant Station Manager. During his last term of his

undergraduate work he took advantage of a cooperative education opportunity in the Business Office of KINK radio station in Portland.

Anthony McKinley graduated from Washington High in June of 1978. He was admitted to Oregon State University through the Educational Opportunities Program for Fall of 1978. In high school, he concentrated more on art and basketball instead of academics. But as one of his high school teachers said, "I feel Anthony has great potential and abilities he is just becoming aware of and this opportunity may well be of great value to his life and

career." How prophetic. Anthony graduated with a major in sociology this June. One of the highlights in his college career was his internship experience with the Janis Program in Portland the summer of 1982. The Janis Program is a residential treatment center. Anthony worked with 14-18 year old boys from McLaren. He combined his theoretical background from his academic studies with his people skills and had a productive summer. He was also on the OSU honor roll for that term. Anthony still resides in Portland and is looking to pursue his career in social services.

The Educational Opportunity Program

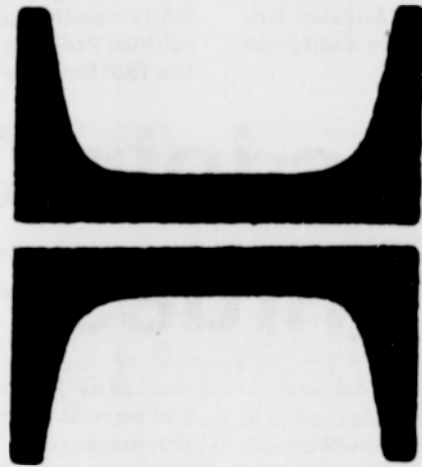
The EOP at Oregon State University is designed to provide special assistance to those individuals who have traditionally been denied equal access to educational opportunities. The program is comprehensive, offering a wide range of supportive services to students in the following areas: assisting in admissions to OSU; deferment of fees and deposits; financial aid, academic and personal counseling; academic support classes and tutoring services; employment assistance and

post-graduate planning. One of the most important activities of the EOP is the recruitment of students. The program tries to identify and encourage students with potential to complete a degree program to enter the University. EOP counselors travel throughout the state visiting selected high schools and community colleges. Information packets and admissions who are interested in the program can contact the program by writing to: Educational Opportunities Program, Waldo Hall 337, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331, (phone: 754-3628).

Paraplegic finds paycheck key to independence



Eva J. Drake, a clerical employee with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation in Chicago, voluntarily took a cut in earnings because she "would rather have a job." Drake, a former nurse's assistant, says she can sympathize with injured workers, and this prompts her to be a better employee. In the background are Labor Department officials William Van Zanen (left) and Thomas Frye.



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THAT'S NOT ALL what is available. You can be a civil or mechanical or structural engineer. Estimators, buyers, accountants and secretaries are all an important part of a construction team. Whatever career you choose, getting the training and education is all important. So you see, the option is up to you.

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