

TRI-MET NEWS

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BERTRAM M. LEE JOINS BOARD OF REEBOK INTERNATIONAL, LTD.

Bertram M. Lee, a businessman with interests in sports, communications and finance, has been elected to the Board of directors of Reebok International, Ltd., it was announced today by Paul Fireman, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Lee's election expands Reebok's board to 10 members.

Mr. Lee, 51, Chairman of the Board of BML Associates, a Boston holding company. His ownership interests and positions include Chairman and Treasurer of Albimar Management, which owns two radio stations in the East and Midwest, including WKYS in Washington, D.C.; Chairman and Treasurer of the Denver Nuggets National Football Association franchise; Chairman of the Boston Bank of Commerce; President of KELLE Communications Group.

"We are delighted to have Bert Lee join the Reebok board," Mr. Fireman said. "Bert and I met last spring when we accepted the assignment to host Nelson Mandela's visit to Boston. Together we helped to form a celebration and fund-raising activity that was truly a unique experience for Boston and indeed the New England community. Bert's dedication to human rights, his business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit fit well with Reebok, as we strive to build a company committed to making a difference," he said.

From 1978-1986, Mr. Lee was President and Member of the Board of Directors of New England Television Corporation, parent company of Boston's WNET-TV (now WHDH-TV), which was the first minority-controlled CBS network affiliate. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Shawmut National Bank of Boston from 1984-1989.

He is Chairman of TransAfrica Forum, a leading anti-apartheid nonprofit organization and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Jackie Robinson Foundation; the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change; the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation; the National Association for Sickle Cell Disease and the Drew Child Development Corporation.

A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Lee holds a BA in political science from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois. He served in the U.S. Army 1963-1965. He is married to Laura Murphy Lee, has three children, and lives in Chicago.

Reebok International, Ltd., headquartered in Stoughton, Massachusetts is the leading designer and marketer of active lifestyle and performance products, including footwear and apparel. The company's operating units include the AVIA, Boston Whaler, Reebok, Rockport and Apparel Products (including the Ellesse sportswear brand) divisions. Sales for 1989 totaled \$1.822 billion.

UMOJA YOUTH RETURN FROM PHILADELPHIA

Six Portland House of Umoja Youth have returned from Philadelphia after spending 2 months of orientation in the Umoja Program from David & Falaka Fattah founders of the Philadelphia based House of Umoja. The Youth have returned to pursue education and employment opportunities while continuing to work with the Portland Project, helping on the internal site design and on the development of program activities, with plans to enter the House in late October.

The Portland House of Umoja continues to honor the request of the six youths and their parents that they remain anonymous and that their identities be protected.

For future information contact: Lorenzo T. Poe at 248-3406 or Iris M.D. Bell at 287-7488.

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BOARDING ON INSULT: The NIKE controversy continues

BY: NYEWUSI ASKARI

What a difference a week makes.

At the beginning of last week, several local African American leaders appeared somewhat baffled, indifferent, dazed, stunned and distracted by the NIKE/ Operation PUSH controversy, however, by the time the weekend rolled into Oregon, those leaders had clarified their positions.

At a press conference last Friday, the Coalition of Black Men, the NAACP, the Urban League of Portland and others met with the press and members of Operation PUSH to make it clear that they indeed supported PUSH's goals and objectives. Displaying a united front, the leaders revealed that some of them favor mediation while others are in favor of the boycott, however, none disputed the need for concrete action against the NIKE Corporation.

Later, during the same day, NIKE released information about the number of African Americans and minorities it employs throughout the United States.

*NIKE says its overall workforce totals 3,703.

*NIKE classifies 622 of its employees as "Officials and managers. Of that total, 10 are African Americans, 9 are Hispanic, 18 are Asian and 2 are American Indian.

*NIKE says it lists 309 employees as "Professionals." Of that total, 3 are African Americans, 1 is Hispanic, 11 are Asian and 1 is American Indian. Also, NIKE says that those 309 Professional employees are women.

If the numbers are correct, we should be hearing from other minority groups soon, especially the American Indian.

After NIKE released the figures, Portland's African American commu-

nity was awash with conversation. Much of the conversation was centered around Ullysses Tucker's September 5th article that asserted that NIKE was over represented by minorities. Many readers had assumed that Tucker's figures were fact; that his assertions deserved closer examination and just maybe Operation PUSH was unfairly pushing NIKE. By Friday's end, there was no doubt that the tide of opinion and support had shifted in favor of Operation PUSH.

By Sunday's end, Operation PUSH had established a Portland PUSH Chapter; had gained the support of Portland's Black Muslim community; had gained the support of Portland's only Urban Contemporary Radio Station KBMS, and had appeared at Bethel and Mount Olivet Churches. Sunday concluded with an appearance on KATU's "Town Hall."

A week earlier, a group of 17 African American leaders from across the country sent a letter to NIKE voicing their support of Operation PUSH's boycott of NIKE products. Among those leaders were Dorothy I. Height, President of the National Council of Negro Women; Bishop John H. Adams, founder and chair of the Congress of National Black Churches; Maryland State Senator, Clarence Mitchell; Delores Tucker, chair of the Democratic National Committee Black Caucus and Julius L. Chambers, director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

THE INSULT

As has been the tradition with African Americans in their quest for social, economic and political justice in America, the PUSH boycott of NIKE finds its foundation, spirituality and strength in the Black Church. In no uncertain terms, the boycott is being led by the Black Church.

According to African American Historian, Lerone Bennett, the African American Church has been at the forefront of such struggles. "On a Sunday in November, 1786, a group of Negro worshippers were pulled from their knees during prayer at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. Without a work, the Negro worshippers filed out of the church. Under the leadership of two ex-slaves, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, the disenchanting Methodists organized the Free African Society."

On Monday, September 17, 1990, the Rev. Tyrone Crider and about 50 demonstrators were shouted down by NIKE shareholders while they prayed.

Throughout the comings and goings of the boycott, NIKE has been accused of insulting the Black Church, especially concerning the way it has responded to Rev. Crider.

It is obvious that NIKE has little or no knowledge of Black Church traditions or the power of the Black Church. As the saying goes, "You can mess with my dog, run into my car, but please don't mess with my church!"

Although there seems to be the uncultured mind and eye, a split between the Black sacred and the Black secular, whenever the Black Church is under unfair attack, or appears to be, mass segments of the black sacred and secular merge as one. We are talking about tradition-a tradition that broke the backbone of segregation in this country. At the head of this tradition is the African American preacher. It is a respected tradition with a traditional African world view. This view holds that there is a fundamental unity between God and man; that the spiritual realm is the ultimate existence and that the Black Preacher, in the African American community, is

closest to the spiritual, to God. Throughout African American communities, the spiritual one(s) assume priority in social relationships.

The Black Church is more than a church. It is both a social and a religious unit. When it speaks, African Americans listen.

What African Americans are seeing and hearing now is disrespect. NIKE, they are beginning to say, "Is disrespecting one of our spiritual ones, Rev. Tyrone Crider."

Some of NIKE's African American supporters should explain the difference between American politics and African American religious thought and practice.

Operation PUSH knows that time is on their side. Why? Because it is obvious that NIKE is going to continue to insult the Black Church and Rev. Crider. It is suffice to say that NIKE will be misled down a path that brings it on a collision course with many African American churches in this country. The more the insults, the more organizations we will see joining ranks with Operation PUSH.

This boycott is more than about money or tennis shoes ore statements that sound good. It's about whether or not major corporations like NIKE are going to act responsible, be responsible and show responsible leadership as we prepare to enter into the 21st century.

Betcha one thang..When other corporations open their books and numbers to the general public, especially the Black Public, we gon cringe in our boots!

What all of this really says is, "America has a serious case of segregation and it is making our county ill-prepared to enter the 21st century united.

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