



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Sharon Maxwell-Hendricks looks over some residential building plans soon after moving the office for her contracting firm, Boanerges Group, into the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs Center in north Portland.

Obstacles for Business Center

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in real estate make it difficult to tell whether a deal is too good to be true.

"Property is only worth what you get when you sell it," says Brooks. "You have to be on your toes all the time trying to make ends meet."

And in working tirelessly to make deals go through, Brooks has orchestrated success not only for himself, but also for many other minority entrepreneurs who have moved

to larger spaces after leaving OAME's nest.

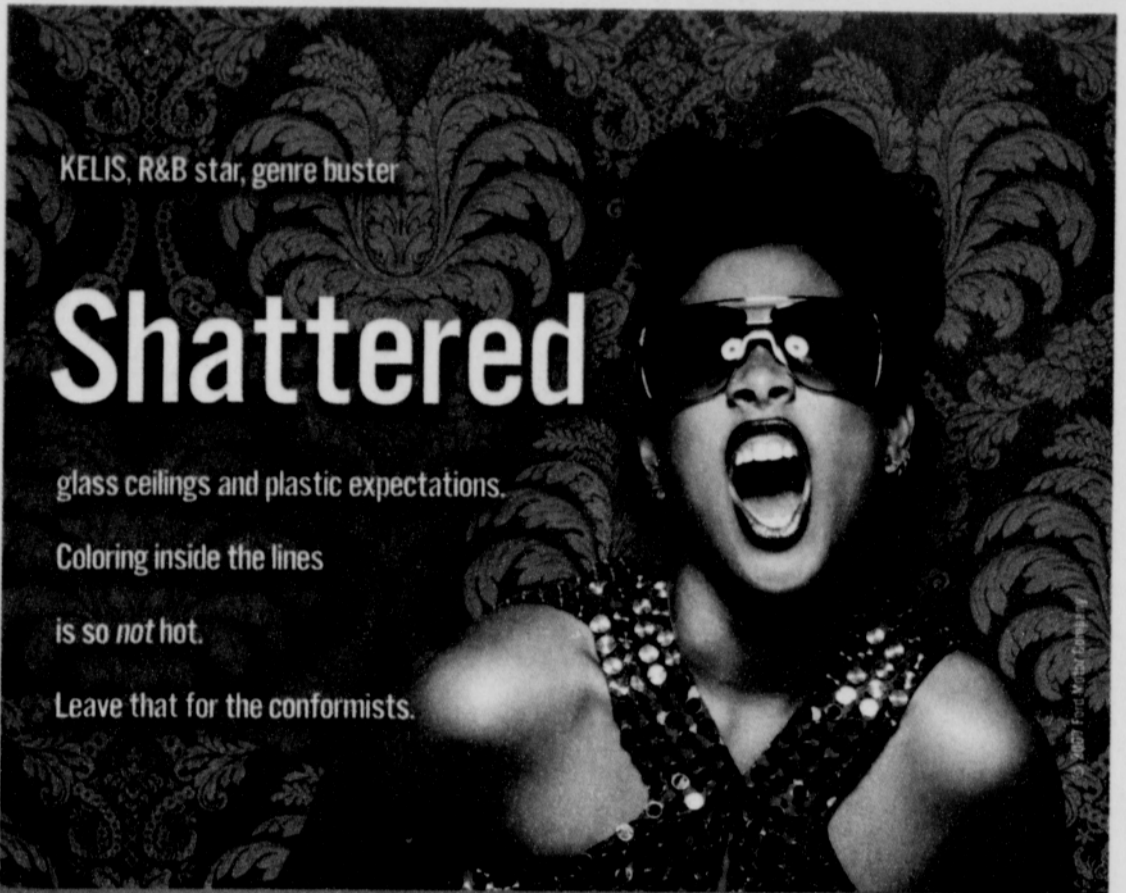
As he thinks back to the approximately 1,000 people attending the last annual OAME conference, he considers all the headaches worth it in the quest to make something from nothing.

Brooks prioritizes opening doors for other minorities when considering his legacy, "so that they know it can be done." He hopes that the next person to run a minority-business incubator will make it even

bigger and the next African-American president of the PBA will be able to do even more.

For Simone Brooks, these are large shoes to fill.

"It's a little more daunting for me, because I'm far more realistic now about what I have ahead of me," she says, laughing at the suggestion that her answer would change without her father present. "There's no way to have a really good family business unless everyone can be open and honest."



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