

# FINANCE COMPANY HIRES 1ST BLACK MAN

Not one black man working in any finance company in the entire state of Nevada? Sad but true; and that's the way it was on March 21, 1971 until three men got together and decided that things certainly needed to be changed.

The first was Edward Taylor, Minority Group Representative for the Las Vegas office of the Nevada Employment Security Department.

In daily visits to employers in the finance company world, Ed had had little luck in finding job openings and thus selling the State Employment Service and, though he did notice a small number of minorities employed, had no success at all in finding a black man actually involved in any of the over 40 different offices in the Las Vegas area. Naturally his first finding left little hope for his second.

Then he met man number two, Bill Richardson, Branch Manager for the Dial Finance Company at 128 North 4th Street office in Las Vegas. Richardson saw the same problem Taylor had seen and told him so. He then gave the ball to Ed. He said he could make an opening for a bright, interested high school graduate with preferably no previous finance experience. "Find me a good man and he's got a job as assistant credit manager," he said.

That "good man" and the third leg to his triangle was 23 year old black man named Fred Webber Jr. who had come to Las Vegas from Memphis Tenn. via three years at Bishop College in Dallas, Texas.

Fred got to college on a combination of music and academic scholarships. Singing bass in the classical and opera style and studying his way along, he earned \$2,500 of the \$2,700 necessary yearly for tuition. But never planning on a musical career, he majored in political science and international relations.

In three and a half years, still just a few credits short of a degree, he came to Las Vegas and became an employment coach with the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP). Ten months later he was off to the Nevada Equal Rights Commission as a field representative for a seven month stay.

"Ed and I had gotten to know each other pretty well at CEP," says Fred, "so at this point he also knew I was out of a job and that I needed and wanted to get back to work as soon as possible."

Well, it was a routine process after that. Ed handled the necessary job information paperwork, notified Fred and one other applicant of the opening, and left the rest up to Mr. Richardson. On March 22, he hired Fred.

"I like being an assistant credit manager," he says, "and I like my chances for advancement. I hope to work up to Branch Manager first, then other goals will follow."

In his new position Fred processes applica-



tions, checks credit references, verifies employment and processes loan papers. "I learn something new every day, and I deal with the public quite a bit, which is something I've always liked."

Fred earns \$525 a month plus any overtime he gets, but that's just the beginning.

"I'm as enthusiastic as I can be about my future here," he says. "The other employees are going all out to make me welcome and help me get the systems and procedures straight."

Fred Webber's future does look bright, but so does the future of many more black men in Nevada interested in penetrating the world of the finance company. He is just the first step.

With the enthusiasm of a few more Edward Taylors and the sincerity and interest of a few more Bill Richardsons, a few more Fred Webbers will have a chance at bright futures. And therein lies what it's all about.

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