



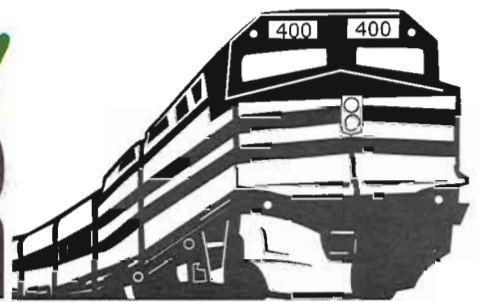
BRC BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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The Overground RR!!

THE CONDUCTOR



VOLUME 4 NO. 2

The Official Newspaper of the Atlanta Black Agenda Business Resource Center, Inc.

SECOND QUARTER 2005

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The Call and the Response

ABOVE ALL THINGS MINISTRY

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." - III John:2

Overground RR!! Conductor's Award

The Atlanta Black Agenda Business Resource Center (BRC) awarded its first Overground RR!! Conductor's Award to Julieanna Richardson, founder of The HistoryMakers, during its 3rd Anniversary Gala held on April 2nd at the Georgia International Conventional Center. The entertainment-packed, spiritually-charged and standing room only event celebrated the third anniversary of the growing organization. Guests representative of Atlanta's notable Who's Who in government and business included the Honorable Shirley Franklin and Patsy Jo Hilliard, mayors respectively of the cities of Atlanta and East Point; State Representative the Honorable Tyrone Brooks; prominent and longtime Atlanta businessmen, Jesse Hill and Herman J. Russell, who also served as chair of the Honorary Host Committee.

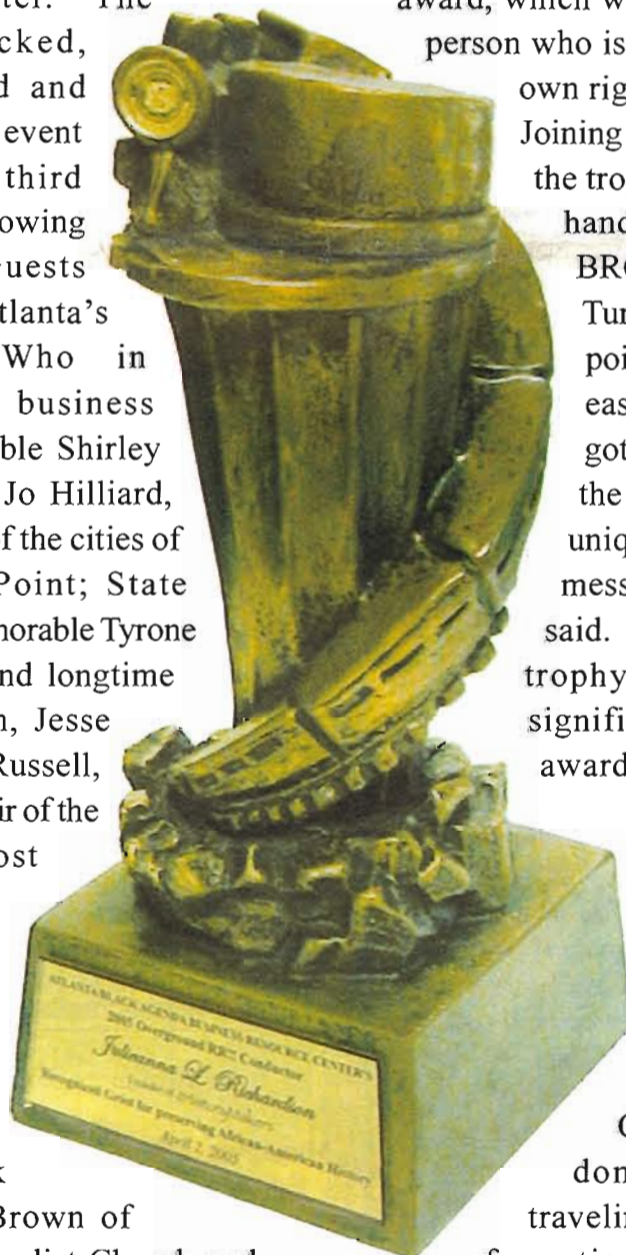
The spiritual community was well represented with the likes of Rev. Darrell Ellingan of the Concerned Black Clergy, Rev. Olu Brown of Cascade United Methodist Church and Rev. Dr. Gerald Durley, who also served as Co-Chair of the Pastoral Host Committee. The elegant and eloquent Monica Kaufman of WSB-TV and the suave and sophisticated Larry Tinsley,

host of V103 Sunday Morning Inspiration, served as Mistress and Master of Ceremony.

The Overground RR!! Conductor's Award was the highlight of the BRC's evening of excellence. H.J.A. Alexander, the president of the BRC, explained the significance of the award, which will be awarded each year to a person who is "not only successful in their own right, but a deliverer of others." Joining Alexander for the unveiling of the trophy, which was designed and handcrafted specifically for the BRC, was BRC Chairman Aaron Turpeau. Alexander was quick to point out that the BRC could have easily gone to a trophy shop and got a trophy but anything done by the BRC "must be done with a unique style which dramatizes the message of the BRC mission," he said. "There simply did not exist a trophy that could represent the significance of the award." The award was designed through the collaborative efforts of BRC graphics genius Larry Newton and entertainer Faye Raye, who also served as the Gala producer and director.

The Overground RR!! Conductor's Award depicts the dominant image of a train traveling from the base of a rock formation, breaking through from underground. This symbolic imagery signifies that this is the "same train" that traveled on the Underground Railroad

See Conductor's Award, page 8



BRC A.L.L.I.A.N.C.E.S

- African Christian Clergy Network International - Atlanta Black Agenda - Atlanta Quest
- A Miracle N Progress, Inc - BeSomeone - Ckids Kreate Mobile Fund-Raiser - Concerned Black Clergy - Creation Deliverance Center, Inc. - Daniel's Dream for Childrens Awareness - FACA
- Friends of Sweet Auburn - GABEO - Greater Atlanta Economic Alliance - LAMA, Inc. - NAACP - Onyx Coalition
- Prodigal Sons & Daughters Ministry - Sharing Way Inc. SKIP, Inc. - The Anointed Sisters Calling, Inc.
- The Owens Center For Excellence - 100 Black Men of Atlanta - 100 Black Women of Atlanta



Celebs, elected officials, clergy and businesses celebrate BRC 3rd Annual Gala

By Maynard Eaton

Ever since the advent of integration, it has been a lamentable dilemma that African Americans – unlike other ethnic groups — have routinely and continually failed to do business with each other. The problem and potential solutions have been debated for years. Now, there appears to be an answer to the angst – a concept that is catching on here in Atlanta that may prove to be a model for Black America.

It's the Atlanta Black Agenda Business Resource Center that has come to be known by three simple, yet powerful letters, BRC. The nonprofit group is headed by political activist Aaron Turpeau and attorney H. J. A. Alexander.

"Herald is a very strategic and a very deliberate organizer," observes civil rights veteran and Atlanta State Representative Tyrone Brooks. "Being an independent attorney, having his own resources he can do this very carefully and very strategically. He's



(Top left) Mistress and Master of Ceremony Monica Kaufman and Larry Tinsley; (Top right) BRC Chairman Aaron Turpeau and BRC President HJA Alexander; (Bottom right) HJA Alexander, Julieanna Richardson, Herman Russell and Aaron Turpeau.

Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard wrote "Your economic development efforts of involving churches and businesses is one of the most progressive movements in our history."

been working on this concept for a very long time. This is going to work; it's going to grow because he's done it the right way. He's the kind of guy who will stay on top of it."

Three years ago Alexander and Turpeau launched an all-out effort to keep black dollars in the black community. It was not unprecedented – to be sure the idea is not new – but the concept was novel because it was simple and sane. The BRC would work in

conjunction with black churches – the rock of the black community – as a means of recycling dollars that all too often spin out of the African American community before they complete a half revolution.

"After the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act and integration we spread out so a lot of us became disconnected," explains Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin. "There are a whole lot of new people in Atlanta who don't

know the historical businesses, and they only know those businesses down the street from them. Even with my children who are native born, they have to be guided in their appreciation for the value of supporting businesses in the African American community. And, the best place to make that connection is in the church."

"The objective is not a new one, but it is a new concept in terms of utilizing the churches in a formalized method to minister to their business members and their consumers in being an active part in building the economy on an ongoing basis in the black community," adds Alexander, the BRC president.

This year's April 2nd, 3rd Anniversary Celebration was an overwhelming success — drawing some 1,000, people including a wealth of well known elected officials, celebrities, clergy and business owners. The BRC even designed a special trophy for their 2005 Overground RR!! Conductor's Award. The recipient was Julieanna Richardson, the founder of The HistoryMakers, a nonprofit educational video production enterprise.

"The BRC has really taken off," said Mayor Shirley Franklin. "You can see today that the hall is packed."

I think sharing information, networking, raising the awareness of the black businesses that are in our midst is bound to have a positive impact on our community and on our children."

"It's a great day because we got a crowd out," added Turpeau, the BRC chairman. "People are

See 2005 Gala on, page 8



The 3rd Annual BRC Gala featured vendors as part of the BRC City. Faye Raye entertained the crowd as a saxophonist serenaded the guests prior to the program. (Bottom right) BRC Marketing Manager Curtis Burnette, Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard, BRC Executive Director Judy Brownlee and Asa Hilliard.

Julieanna Richardson, griot of the Black community, becomes BRC *HistoryMaker*

by Maynard Eaton



(Top) Julieanna Richardson accepts the first BRC Overground Railroad!! Conductor Award. (Left) Herman Russell gives remarks about the honoree as Rev. Gerald Durley greets her. BRC Chairman Aaron Turpeau and BRC President HJA Alexander look on.

“I have been honored before, but I have never been honored in this way and it really brought tears to my eyes,”

feels a kinship with the BRC’s enterprise of Black economic empowerment.

“My group, the *HistoryMakers*, and the BRC have been around almost the same period of time, and I felt that we were simpatico,” she says during an exclusive interview with *The Conductor*. “We are both very significant in terms of what the accomplishment of both of our missions would mean in the black community. On our end we are looking at recording this fantastic history that we have so that we can take our rightful place in history. And in terms of the Black Resource Center the thing that is so significant is that if we can believe in ourselves enough to do business with each other that would be significant also. Because time and time and time again, we see money leaving our community or just stopping in for a second before it goes back to the majority community.”

Is the Overground RR!! Conductor’s Award a singular honor bestowed to you from your people; or because of the surprise or because of respective missions, she was asked by this reporter?

“I think all three,” she replied. “Especially in the early years people did not understand what we were doing, archives sound old and dusty. And for it to be recognized in that way is something significant and in a city that is so important to African American history like Atlanta, I was just overwhelmed.” She adds, “Both organizations are really involved in changing our thinking, and that’s a difficult thing. You have to recondition the black community. It’s thinking its ok to have a history – it’s a great history. And, that’s the same thing, it’s ok to shop with black people – nothing bad is going to happen to you.”

Ms. Richardson’s goal with *The History Makers* is to build the largest archive of the 21st century African American

See Richardson on, page 8

**2005
Overground
RR!!
Conductor’s
Award**

Award ceremonies – be they the Grammys, The Emmy’s, BET or NAACP Image Awards, you name it – are almost commonplace in our culture. But perhaps this year’s most unique and original salute and honor may well have been the Atlanta Black Agenda’s Business Resource Center’s (BRC) 3rd Anniversary’s singular and substantive tribute to the incomparable and inspiring Julieanna Richardson.

“I was terribly moved and felt terribly honored,” recalls Richardson who recently moved an office to Atlanta on Auburn Avenue.

Ms. Richardson is founder and impresario of *The HistoryMakers*, a nonprofit educational video production enterprise destined to build the largest archive of 20th and 21st century African American history. History will record that the remarkable Ms. Richardson, *The HistoryMakers*’ creative spirit and spunk, made history herself as the first ever recipient of the BRC’s originally-crafted and designed special trophy, The Overground RR!! Conductor’s Award. It was a sizzling and sensational milestone for the BRC and its heavy-hitter honoree.

“I have been honored before, but I have never been honored in this way and it really brought tears to my eyes,” she says gleefully. “The program was lovely. The award itself is lovely and what it symbolizes. I wasn’t given just a sort of little cookie-cutter award. It was an award that was designed from scratch. And the meaning of the award was so important because in the past we had to be an underground railroad, but today we can do it upfront.”

Ms. Richardson is still beaming with pride and appreciation over the recognition; still fondly relishing that special moment.

“I came here having just come from San Francisco trying to pitch the project to open up that market,” she explains. “And, I came there in my typical – I’ve got this many things to do mode. And to sit back and see what they had done to honor me, I was terribly moved. I cried. I played (the video) again last night, I’ve played it several times sort of reliving the moment,” she laughed joyously.

Ms. Richardson said what makes her historic award so significant and heartwarming is that she



Conductor's Award

continued from front page

spearheaded by such conductors as Harriett Tubman, who delivered our people from physical slavery.

The column signifies the period of time that has passed since the train transported passengers underground to the present. "The train is a train of many cars, signifying the millions of passengers which it has and continues to transport," Alexander continued.

The train climbs to the top of the column and arrives on the Conductor's cap, which crowns the trophy column. Train tracks merge into the bill of the cap. The Conductor's cap represents the work of the award recipient. Alexander explained to he

capacity-filled Convention Center that the recipient "will always reflect the spirit of Harriett Tubman" and always be a "deliverer of our people."

Amid tears of joy and a special video tribute depicting her biography, Julieanna Richardson was joined on stage by Herman Russell and Rev. Gerald Durley, as Alexander and Turpeau presented her with the first BRC Overground RR!! Conductor's Award

The Gala exploded with an arousing challenge by Rev. Olu Brown who called the BRC a "great champion" who can make the black dollar circulate in the black community by "connecting black people to black people . . . connecting churches with businesses, businesses with consumers."

BRC City

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over your current castle. You could rid your home of the tiniest crawling pests, decorate it anew, contract a moving company, and get good water delivered to your door. You could advertise your business, put money in the bank, entertain clients at a fine restaurant, confer with your political leadership, receive spiritual uplifting, and take care of your body on the inside and on the outside from head to toe. Whatever your need, it could be met by an experienced, reputable, trusted business member of the BRC. More importantly, there is the accountability to the organization to the community to maintain the highest standards

of performance and customer service. If your need is simply to find that something to keep you going, faith and hope are overly abundant in BRC City.

So those who came to hear more of The Atlanta Black Agenda heard about the 67 businesses and 200 churches that are fueling the Overground RR!!. The visionaries that came to speak about the tracks to economic freedom told of our rich past that is inextricably tied to a gleaming future. And all of the ministers, business owners, civic leaders, young people, and trailblazers, got a glimpse a new city - the BRC City.

2005 Gala

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getting the message about circulating the black dollar. It's working now."

"This represents a new level of acceptance and understanding and commitment by the churches," Alexander concluded. "It has now taken hold and this has now grown beyond just the ideas of few people but a movement of a people."

From a very small beginning, the BRC has grown into an empowering force in its three short years of operation. More than 75 churches and 207 businesses are now embracing the BRC movement.

"It is a matter of expressing to the people that just because blacks are selling it that doesn't mean it is not going to be as cold as the whites when they sell it, it's not going to be as good of a quality," said Rev. Eric Jackson, pastor of Greater Heights Christian Church. "In fact, I believe it so much that when I needed some work in my own home I used the BRC businesses first. I want to be one that not only talks about it, but one that does it and supports it. You have to know the way, show the way and go the way."

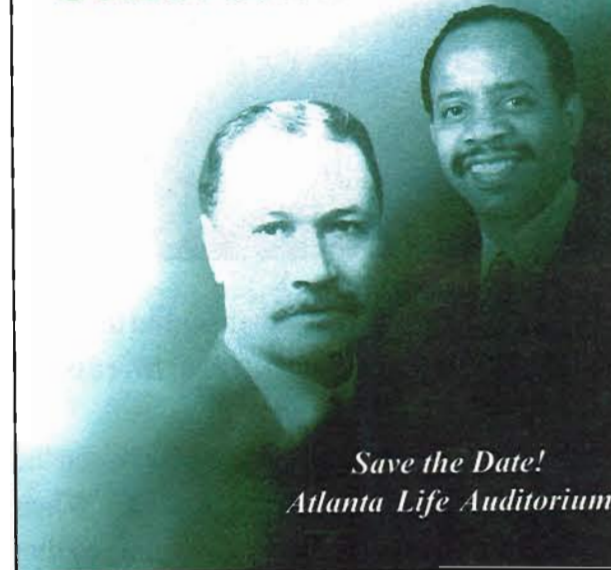
"All of us are making a commitment and

saying let's go (to the BRC) first before we go outside," echoed Dr. Gerald Durley, pastor of Providence Baptist Church. "We also said if you go to Maynard Eaton & Associates, for example, and Maynard Eaton has a bad staff person - don't dog Maynard Eaton come back to the BRC and let them talk and work it out. That's the difference that I see now."

But even those who fervently support the BRC are perplexed as to why it has taken black folk so long to pool their resources and turn their money over in their community like other ethnic groups do so effectively and routinely?

"That's been one of the greatest dilemmas of all-time," admits Rep. Brooks, president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials. "But we have begun to understand that if we want to help ourselves we've got to do it for each other, and no one else is going to do it for us. I think we are beginning to understand that, and you are going to see more and more African Americans spending money with each other, supporting each other and really contributing to each other in many ways in which we haven't done before. It's about buying into the concept of unity."

BRC to host Atlanta Life Financial Group 100 Minutes of Jazz August 5, 2005 for Centennial Celebration



Richardson

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history. The significance of that is there's only been one occurrence in the history of the United States where there has been a massive attempt to record our experience as told by the first voice and that was with the slave narratives. A lot of people don't know that between the years of 1936 and 1938 there were 2,300 former slaves interviewed.

Ms. Richardson's hope is to have the archive as a living, breathing example of living history. She is essentially taking traditional oral history and combining it with state-of-the-art technology. The vision is to create a visual archive that will be available in libraries, museums, schools around the country so people will be able to access the collection. She told the BRC 3rd Anniversary audience that prayerfully *The History Makers* will be able to be a central part of the African American museum on the Washington, D.C. Mall that Congressman John Lewis is working on.

"We're no longer a thought; we are the largest in the country - 1100 interviews," she says proudly. "We've outdistanced the collection of the Shomberg Library in New York and the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum. Both of those organizations we are collaborating with. And we believe to an extreme level about the power of joint collaboration. That is what is at the center of our mission. We believe that everything has to be a function of collaboration especially in building an archive like this because you need people to direct you and guide you. Historians are relying on us."

And, she adds thoughtfully that metro Atlanta's African American community is relying on the continued success of the BRC.