Blue Collar Jobs On the Rise in 12 Cities

By Samuel Slade

Blacks are slowly, but determinedly moving into white and blue collar jobs in the United States and at the same time, efforts are emanating from the black community to encourage that movement.

Within the past year, studies made indicate that industry through affirmative action dictated by federal government guidelines or because of manpower shortages are taking young blacks into the mainstream.

New York, which probably took the lead years ago, has lost its first place position to midwestern St. Louis (Mo.). New York was the first to place blacks in the so-called showcase jobs, but today's emphasis is on the routine line positions.

In a study conducted by Dr. Andrew Brimmer, professor at Harvard University, the St. Louis metropolitan area has the best record in employing black professionals when compared with 12 other major areas in the nation.

The Greater Metropolitan St. Louis area also ranked first in the categories of blue and white collar jobs, although it was among the worst of the 13 areas in the craft worker classification.

The Sentinel Newspapers of St. Louis (circulation of the bi-weekly in excess of 67,000) recently joined with the Urban League of St. Louis in a salute to these blacks at a lavish dinner. Howard B. Woods, publisher of the newspapers, is president of the Urban League board of directors.

The dinner named for entertainer Sammy Davis Jr.'s book, "Yes I Can," drew some 1,120 persons from the firms that employ these persons. Syndicated columnist and former U.S. Ambassador Carl T. Rowan was the guest speaker.

Woods said that we joined with the league in this effort because it has been through this professional agency that many of these placements have been made.

Similar observances have been held around the country recently. The Harlem YMCA has been sponsoring a Black Achievers dinner for some years and within the past six months, a Black Achievers observance was held in Pittsburgh, Pa.

William Douthit, executive director of the St. Louis League, pointed out that "We had persons in our midst that we were totally unaware of. They are here, doing their jobs, mowing their lawns and walking the dogs."

After the Sentinel wrote an editorial on the Brimmer study, entitled "The Hard Truths," the joint effort was begun. St. Louis is now in a national campaign to raise its positive image and the dinner moved rapidly.

Sammy Davis, unable to be present in person, sent his mother, Mrs. Elvira Davis to represent him. Also present for the occasion was Lee Archer, executive of General Foods; William L. (Billy) Rowe, first black police commissioner in New York; Lt.-General Daniel (Chappie) James, highest ranking black officer in the military establishment; St. Louis Cardinal baseball star Lou Brock and St. Louis' highest ranking police officer, Lt.-Col. Atkins Warren.

"Yes I Can" week was proclaimed by Mo. Gov. Christopher Bond, County Supervisor Lawrence K. Roos and Mayor John Poelker. Messages were received from Joe Louis, Davis and President Gerald Ford.

I. Owen Funderburg, president of Citizens Bank and Trust Co., Atlanta, Ga. and past president of the National Bankers Association,

Four of the young Black Achievers at the St. Louis "Yes I Can" dinner with guest speaker Carl T. Rowan. From left, Byron Glore, marketing director, Anheuser-Busch, Inc.; Gloria Witherspoon, Laclede Gas Co.; Sandra Hutcherson, insurance dept., St. Louis Globe-Democrat, and William McEwen, director of Equal Opportunity, Monsanto Co.

Among the principals at the St. Louis dinner are from left, William Douthit, executive director of the Urban League of St. Louis; Lt. General Daniel (Chappie) James, vice commander, Scott Air Force Base (Ill.); William L. (Billy) Rowe, New York and Howard B. Woods, publisher of the Sentinel Newspapers.

said that meetings such as the ones held "are consistent with my thinking that young black folk have not had enough examples of success in their lives. They live in depressed areas among deprived people, and unless they see some rays of hope, it is not too difficult to understand a growing frustration and hopelessness."

Elmer J. Whiting Jr., a black Cleveland certified public accountant, speaking in St. Louis shortly after its dinner, departed from his text to praise the idea as healthy and worthwhile for a community. Whiting is with Ernst and Ernst.

In other developments it has been revealed that minorities and

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