



ENTREPRENEUR ANTHONY WASH

D.C. ENTREPRENEUR SHARES SECRETS TO CAREER SUCCESS

By Arnesa A. Howell

For native Washingtonian Anthony Wash, the journey to ownership of his electrical contracting firm, A. Wash & Associates, was an unexpected one. Wash recalls the year more than two decades ago – while he was studying at the

Continued on page 2

MAKING STRIDES: JOBS COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □



DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN
The D.C. Apprenticeship Academy Class of 2011 with Mayor Vincent Gray

MAYOR LAUDS D.C. APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMY GRADUATES

The blistering heat outside Cardozo Senior High School only invigorated those gathered inside to celebrate the 2011 graduating class of the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy. Family members smiled and excitedly snapped pictures of their loved ones, who would be praised for completing 576 hours of classroom instruction and more than 8,000 hours of on-the-job training to officially become electrical apprentices.

By Arnesa A. Howell

Among the graduates looking forward to a better life after completing the four-year program is Floyd Collins.

“It has meant success, it has meant self-development and it has meant moving forward financially,” said Collins of the program. He added that some people try to make a way for themselves by going back to the streets, “but the best way to do it is by starting the apprenticeship [program] because then you won’t have any problems.”

The 12 graduates – dressed in slacks and shirts or suits for the occasion – could easily have stepped off the stage and gone to job interviews after receiving their certificates of completion. But they didn’t have to: each one is already employed. Eleven are with the Dull-

es, Va.-based specialty contractor M.C. Dean Inc. while one works for electrical contracting firm E.C. Lyon.

“This level four class was just exceptional in professionalism,” said Cheryl Rodgers, manager of the Apprenticeship Academy, at the 2nd Annual D.C. Apprenticeship Academy graduation ceremony. “They came in as gentlemen, ready to study and do what was necessary... and they came in on time.”

All that hard work paid off. Collins and fellow graduate Dalton Palmer tied for the highest grade point average. Meanwhile, accolades for the most improved apprentice went to Antonio Greene.

And the ultimate benefit of graduating from the Academy? Being prepared to become

Continued on page 2



TÊTE-À-TÊTE Wash takes a moment with Apprenticeship Academy graduate Dalton Palmer.

Speaker A. Wash *Continued from page 1*

University of the District of Columbia – when his life underwent a transformation.

“I met a young lady there and had a child and realized I had to get a job to take care of the baby,” said Wash at the 2nd Annual D.C. Apprenticeship Academy graduation at Cardozo Senior High School on June 8. Searching the classifieds, he came across a job announcement for an electrician helper – quite a switch from his job at the time as a dishwasher, waiter and cook on Capital Hill. Although he knew nothing about the electrical trade, he applied, and ultimately, landed the job.

A fast learner, Wash quickly progressed in his career. Soon he applied for – and was accepted into – the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Program through the union, Local 26. “Local 26 was a different place at that time. There weren’t many minority apprentices,” he shared.

Parallel Journeys

He graduated from the program in 1991, and faced an economic environment much like what today’s Academy graduates are facing: a recession. Wash knows their journey, because it parallels his own.

“They’ve walked the path in which I’m very familiar. I’m very familiar with the struggles they’ve gone through and it’s dear to me, so it’s very important that I come back and let them know that the sky’s the limit,” he told *JOBS Coalition Pathways*.

The Dunbar High School graduate says the spirit of entrepreneurship surrounded him from an early age.

“I grew up around folks who always told me you don’t have to work for someone; you have the ability to work for yourself,” said Wash, whose uncles owned stores and drove taxicabs. “So, once I found the trade, it was important for me to learn as much as I could.”

Continued on page 4



SOARING MARKS Graduate Floyd Collins smiles broadly as he is recognized for his high GPA.



Apprenticeship Graduation *Continued from page 1*

a journeyman, according to Palmer. “They have classes within the company to help you,” added Palmer, employed by M.C. Dean.

It Takes a Community

Besides Rodgers, local government officials including Lewis Brown, associate director of the D.C. Office of Apprenticeship Information and Training, and D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray turned out in support of these latest additions to the skilled trades workforce.

“The work skills that you have, no one is able to take away from you but yourself,” Gray told the newly minted electrical apprentices. He even predicted that the group might have the opportunity to work on something “close to home.”

“There’s about to be a two-year modernization of Cardozo,” said the mayor, noting the chance to preserve the building’s “wonderful architecture.”

With the planned development of the Southwest Waterfront and restoration of the



FIRM HAND OF SUPPORT Mayor Gray congratulates a new electrical apprentice who just received his certificate of completion.

Howard Theatre in the District’s Shaw neighborhood, Gray said an increasing number of projects are on the horizon for Apprenticeship Academy alumni.

“You ought to be able to pick the project you want to work on and put your thumbprint on it,” he said. “You have sweat through this and made it. There is a job that is there for you, so don’t throw it away.”

With that job comes the need for a strong work ethic, he continued, which means showing up every day, coming to work on time, not making excuses and maintaining a good attitude on the job. Said Gray: “When you bring those

Continued on page 3



EACH ONE, HELP ONE As Apprenticeship Academy Manager Cheryl Rodgers looks on, Electrical Instructor Richard Lawrence presents ACAD Manager Shelly Karriem (left) with a check for \$300 on behalf of the Apprenticeship Academy's Class of 2011.

Apprenticeship Graduation *Continued from page 2* things, you are absolutely unstoppable.”

Learning While Employed

This program is significant because it's been the only registered apprenticeship program in the city, translating into a stronger workforce in the

District because individuals would not have to be sent outside the city for training. Still, there is more work to be done. For example, there were no female apprentices in the graduating class, something the Academy acknowledges and is striving to rectify.

Mayor Gray added that despite the strides

made, more career and technical education training in the city is needed. “We wiped [such training] out of our high schools, we closed seven high schools, and we barely reopened Phelps,” he said, “[and] lots of jobs in which people could have been trained went by the wayside.”

But the outlook for vocational education in the city could grow brighter if the graduates – whom Gray called the “12 pioneers” – do their jobs with one hand while reaching out with the other to help those in this city who should have the same opportunities available to them. Urged Gray: “Be a mentor and be an adviser to them so that we get to the stage where we don't have any more double digit unemployment across the city.”

The mayor, however, offered more than verbal support. To the Class of 2011, he gave this graduation gift: an invitation to enjoy box seats to watch the Washington Nationals baseball team at Nationals Park. He also encouraged them to hold a class reunion in 2012. □

JOBS Coalition Pathways

Managing Editor: Arnesa A. Howell

Executive Editor: Carol Randolph

Copy Editor: Pam Ellison

Contributors: Arnesa A. Howell

Graphic Design: Jenn French Designs, LLC

Photographer: Imagine Photography

Board of Directors: Robert Braunohler, Bill Dean, Lynn C. French, Balchander Jayaraman, John McMahon, Debra Schoonmaker, Rev. Stephen Tucker, I. Margaret White, Hal Williams

JOBS Coalition Legal Adviser: Roderic Woodson

The *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is the exclusive property of the JOBS Coalition, 633 Park Road, NW, Washington, D.C. 20010; 202-726-7400. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is dedicated to disseminating information that will help strengthen the city's apprenticeship training and job placement programs, broadening the scope to reach the young, the underserved, the unemployed and the returning ex-offender. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is published by the Jobs Coalition.

Speaker A.Wash *Continued from page 2*

Over the years, word of mouth has helped his clientele grow. One of his first projects was the Mount Calvary Family Life Center, and his company has since worked on commercial, industrial and residential projects throughout the city. He admits the journey has not been without its challenges – the paycheck didn't always arrive on time. But still he persevered, and urged the graduates to do the same.

"It's up to you guys not to be a liability, but to become assets. And the way to become an asset is in the quality of work that you do," he told the apprentices. "You guys have to seize this moment and try to learn everything you can. The only product you have that represents you is your work."

Golden Advice

In these economic times, Wash said that 10 other

people are waiting in line to get your job. With no room for mistakes, professionalism is at a premium.

"Come to work on time, finish on time and do quality work," he stressed.

And while résumés are great, he's seen many who couldn't back them up on the job site. "What you produce is more important than what you put on paper," he said. "Be a craftsman."

Wash explained that working in the field of construction calls for discipline to manage one's time and money, because the work can sometimes be temporary. "But if you're good, construction can be permanent," said the entrepreneur.

Wash offered one final piece of advice for the graduating class, something he surely hopes they will remember long after they have left the D.C. Apprenticeship Academy.

"There's no substitute for common sense," he said. □

JOBS COALITION PROMISES

- Provide opportunities for District residents to secure gainful employment.
- Remove barriers that prevent meaningful employment.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for all District residents interested in pursuing careers in various industries and trades.
- Work toward the creation of a comprehensive, fair, and more open system of training and hiring the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.
- Ensure that the training and educational skills being taught are relevant to the job market of today and tomorrow.
- Engage elected and appointed officials to support legislation and maintain appropriate oversight to ensure gainful employment for District residents, including the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.

JOBS COALITION MISSION STATEMENT

We will work together to develop a long-term strategy that creates an environment where aspiring District residents will have unprecedented opportunity to succeed. We strive to create a fair and open system, supported by government, industry, employers and the education and faith-based communities, which seeks to properly train today's apprentices while making an unparalleled commitment to educating students and others not yet in the workforce.

JOBS COALITION
633 Park Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010

