

Ken Banks' Perspective

By Ron Kipling Williams

“Business is a creation. You get people with like minds around you and create a vision-mission attitude.” Walking into the corporate office of Mr. Ken Banks is like walking into a world of aesthetic diversity. Earth tones resonate throughout the office, which by the way was designed and built by him and his staff. A number of business books are aligned on his bookshelf and an array of African and Asian books and art are displayed throughout, clearly expressing his expansive interest.

Mr. Banks credits the selection of colors in his office to the gifted eye of some employees of his company. You see, he is color blind but he views this as no disadvantage. “I try to see things for what they are and not for what I might expect them to be,” said Mr. Banks, as he begins to impart his business and life philosophy.

I asked Mr. Banks his thoughts about business. He said, “There are many different ways to go about business but we tend to repeat the way business was done in the past instead of considering new ways to go about it. There is so much undiscovered territory. I view business as a blank screen, envisioning what is possible.” Having that kind of vision is what made Banks Contracting Company a giant in the contracting industry. “Business is a creation. You get people with like minds around you and create a vision-mission attitude,” said Mr. Banks. In his youth, there were teachers who did not have his vision. “I was told that I would never amount to anything but somehow I never believed it,” said Mr. Banks.

He grew up in the housing projects of Yonkers, New York and as a boy, suffered with asthma. A physician told him that exercise would help alleviate complications associated with asthma. That encouraged his desire to run track and to become an athlete. He won a track scholarship to Adelphi University in Garden City, Long Island, New

York. “I knew if I worked hard, things would change,” said Mr. Banks. Mr. Banks’ vision also translates to his business advisors. “I have tremendous respect for this elite group of business leaders,” said Mr. Banks. “It is a great privilege to be able to formulate business ideas and strategies with some of the great business minds in Maryland. I am honored to have their advice and support”. Mr. Banks’ Advisory Board consist of Aris



Melissaratos, Sr. Advisor to the President of Johns Hopkins University, Eddie Brown, President of Brown Capital Management, John Paterakis, President of H&S Bakery, Herb Miller, President and Chairman of the Board of Western Development Corporation and John McDaniel, Chairman of the MedStar Health Foundation.

Currently, Banks Contracting Company is on the construction management team to build the Coppin State University Physical Education Complex. They were also part of the construction management team who built the Hilton Baltimore Convention Center Hotel which was completed in August 2008. Mr. Banks is one of the

partners of Presidential Partners, LLC who teamed with Forest City Enterprises to develop the Science+Technology Park at Johns Hopkins in East Baltimore, a part of the East Baltimore Development Corporation’s (EBDI) initiative. “Biotechnology is one of the next growth sectors in Maryland,” said Mr. Banks, pointing to Baltimore’s anchor hospitals, Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland. Mr. Banks is also an equity owner in the University of Maryland Baltimore Biotech Park, construction occurring west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

Among hundreds of contractors in the City, Banks Contracting Company is one of the most recognized. He is an exceptional businessman who also has a great interest in public policy. He has served as chair on Mayor Sheila Dixon’s Transition Team which led a blue ribbon committee on economic development. Currently, he serves as a member of the board on the Chesapeake Commission (a regional think tank chaired by Governor Martin O’Malley, Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia and Mayor Adrian Fenty of the District of Columbia) and was appointed by Governor O’Malley to the Maryland Affordable Housing Trust Board. Mr. Banks will also chair the American Heart Association’s 25th Anniversary Baltimore Heart Ball in February 2009.

Banks Contracting Company is dedicated to excellence in quality construction. “We exceed the expectations of our clients. They are already familiar with our level of construction experience and performance so they trust us to make their visions a reality. Our goal is to always give the client our best performance so that they keep coming back,” said Mr. Banks.

For more information on Banks Contracting Company, go to www.bankscontracting.com or call 410-837-8720.