

my downtown is . . .

opportunity

LOOKING AHEAD

Jimmie Tucker, sitting in front of the historic Universal Life Building on Linden and Danny Thomas, sees a bright future for development south of FedExForum. "There are some challenges and a tremendous amount of opportunity," he explains. "My primary motivation is to provide exposure to these opportunities."

As a native Memphian and local business owner, Jimmy Tucker has watched his Downtown blossom into an economic and cultural hot spot in recent years. "It's tremendously exciting to see Downtown growing and evolving," he says. "This is a first-tier city, a cosmopolitan and vibrant city. It's important for us to take full advantage of everyone here."

Tucker, founder and principal in Self Tucker Architects, is making sure that these opportunities for Downtown development are available to everyone. That's why he sits on the Center City Commission's Women and Minority Business Enterprise All-Boards Committee, or W/MBE, organized to increase minority involvement in the surging Downtown renaissance. "There does need to be more minorities to help in the development of Downtown," he admits. "There is some room for improvement."

The W/MBE board has set up goals to establish more minority and women developers, create business Downtown that will add jobs and expand the tax base, and increase women and minority involvement in future Downtown projects. "There are some challenges and a tremendous amount of

opportunity. My primary motivation is to provide exposure to these opportunities," he says.

Tucker has been instrumental in organizing real estate and development seminars in which he participates as an instructor. "The interest has been overwhelming," he says. "We've had to turn away people who have wanted to participate." He hopes these courses will attract a wide range of developers to help with future Downtown projects.

Tucker's passion for Downtown development has also led his company, Self Tucker Architects, to purchase a piece of Downtown history, the Universal Life building on the corner of Linden and Danny Thomas. Universal Life Insurance Company became one of the largest African-American insurance companies in the country in the 1940s. "The building has a tremendous history. Universal Life has a legacy in Memphis and we want to honor it by creating a premier and first-class Downtown office space," he says. "It's an interesting mix of old and new. Future aspirations of what our company wants to do, while at the same time, recognizing the role that the Universal Life [Company] has played in Memphis. We have big plans."



Memphis