"Strategies for Employment Diversity"
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Strategies for Employment Diversity

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Introduction

The 1964 Civil Rights Act banning employment discrimination everywhere in the United States inspired black-led initiatives to expand employment opportunities for black Bostonians. Prominent activists such as Tom Brown of the Jobs Clearing House; Charles "Chuck" Turner, along with Mel King and others, who were key organizers of the Boston Jobs Coalition; and several others worked tirelessly to find gainful employment for black Bostonians. Despite opposition from employers, unions, and others who sought to maintain the status quo, these black leaders utilized innovative and effective strategies to place blacks in what were then considered good-paying jobs. The battles for racial and economic justice are not yet over in Boston and elsewhere in Massachusetts. Several studies document challenges faced by black people in seeking access to economic resources.[518] Earlier struggles reflected key themes that are still relevant today for the pursuit of local economic equity and justice.

The following case studies highlight the efforts of several black men and their organizations that were seeking greater employment opportunities. Their work was covered mostly in the *Bay*

State Banner. However, black women like Melnea Cass, Sarah-Ann Shaw, Sister Virginia, and Doris Bunte, who also served as the first African American woman elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1972, all played an enormous role in the overall account of the black community economic struggles.[519] Although Latinos and Asian Americans were much smaller in numbers compared to blacks during the period covered in this chapter, they also faced community-wide economic challenges. Russell Lopez's book, *Boston's South End: The Clash of Ideas in a Historic Neighborhood* (2015) highlights economic challenges facing Latinos, for example. Mario Luis Small's *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio* (2004) is a historical case study of the founding of the Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion (IBA), the first Puerto Rican-led community development corporation in the nation. A dissertation by Michael Liu, "Chinatown's Neighborhood Mobilization and Urban Development in Boston" (University of Massachusetts Boston, 1999), describes longtime struggles for economic justice in Boston's Chinatown.

Boston's Black Population and Employment Levels

Between 1950 and 1960 Boston's black population grew by 57 percent. While the total population in Boston in 1960 was 697,197, the black population was 63,165 or 9.1 percent of the total.[520] The median income in Boston during that period was $3,243. For blacks it was $2,369.[521] By 1968 Boston's black population had increased to approximately 88,000.[522] The overall unemployment rate in the city that year was 3.1 percent, but for residents of the South End, Roxbury, and North Dorchester, where most of the black population at the time resided, it was more than double that at 6.8 percent. Eighty percent of the people in Roxbury were considered underemployed—their full talents were not being exploited. Median income in the South End, Roxbury, and North Dorchester was $4,224, compared to $6,300 nationally. [523]

By the 1970s the unemployment rate for blacks was still about twice that of whites. Nationally the unemployment rate for blacks in 1973 was 9.4 percent, compared to 4.9 percent for whites.[524] That year, Boston's population was 16.3 percent black and 4.6 percent other people of color.[525] The high black unemployment rate was not due solely to racial discrimination on the part of private employers but also to the actions and nonactions of public agencies, such as the Boston Housing Authority and the Department of Public Works. In 1973, only 8.5 percent of the city's workers were black people. Other people of color comprised only 1.7 percent of all city workers.[526] Adding urgency to the struggle for equal employment opportunities was that Boston's black community rapidly grew to 104,596 by 1970.[527]

Patterns of Discrimination

In the 1960s, blacks occupied a disproportionately large segment of low-level positions, such as domestics and janitors, and they were severely underrepresented in the economy's mid- and upper-level positions. Sociologist Stephan Thernstrom reported the following occupational breakdown for black males in 1970: professional (11%); manager, proprietor or official (5%); clerical worker (11%); sales worker (3%); craftsman (17%); operative (25%); service worker (19%); and laborer (8%).[528] A hidden problem here was underemployment—blacks working below their skill level or potential skill level. The major barrier to equal employment opportunity in Boston's job market was racial discrimination—or antiblack animus—as evinced by an employer's refusal to disclose information about job vacancies to qualified black applicants, and its refusal to hire them. For example, the Urban League of Greater Boston had launched an effort in 1965 to convince Boston City Hospital (BCH) to provide periodic lists of job vacancies, but the hospital refused. The NAACP also met repeatedly with BCH officials in an attempt to obtain lists of job openings and job descriptions, to no avail. Moreover, though the hospital's repeated explanation in 1968 for not employing blacks in clerical positions was

that it couldn't find qualified applicants, over a twelve-month period the Urban League's executive director, Mel King, helped to identify and send thirty qualified black applicants to the BCH, seeking clerical positions. And despite a continuing critical shortage of clerical help and dozens of job vacancies at the hospital, not one of those applicants was offered a job.[529]

Another barrier to black employment was an employer's use of preemployment aptitude tests. These tests did not measure the person's ability to perform the essential functions of the job but worked a hardship on otherwise-qualified black applicants. Thus, under the guise of metrics supposedly to measure qualifications, the employer and union practice of nepotism, or the reserving of entry-level job vacancies for relatives and friends, combined with union-bargained seniority systems, denied black people access to better paying mid-level jobs.

Pressure on employers to hire more blacks increased after the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination against individuals in hiring, firing, and terms and conditions of employment based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin, and also called for the creation of governmental agencies to enforce the law. Under Title VII, Congress established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to monitor civil rights compliance in the workplace. A year later, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11246, creating the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC). The OFCC was given permanent status within the Department of Labor and charged with the responsibility of ensuring that firms being awarded federal contracts hired minority workers. By the fall of 1966, Title VII cases began appearing in the federal courts.

Jobs Clearing House

Thomas J. Brown and the Jobs Clearing House is an uplifting story of how a personally successful, highly educated black used his

professional status to benefit others. Brown and his nonprofit corporation found midlevel administrative jobs for thousands of people of color in Boston. Brown was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1925, where he attended B.M.C. Durfee High School. A popular student, he sang in the chorus and glee club and was a member of the track team. His 1942 graduating class voted him "best personality."[530] Brown subsequently served three years in the army during World War II before returning to Fall River. He enrolled at Brown University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in English in 1950. Afterward, he worked at Raytheon as a project coordinator in the early 1950s.[531]

By 1963 Brown utilized his winning personality to become an account executive for the Marvin and Leonard Advertising Agency in Boston. He was the only black man with such a job in the city at that time. On Labor Day 1963, while employed at the advertising agency, he founded and became executive director of the Jobs Clearing House Inc. (JCH), a nonprofit corporation at 600 Washington Street in downtown Boston, whose purpose was to locate and provide middle management and midlevel administrative jobs for black Bostonians. "Our job at the Clearing House," Brown explained, "is to narrow the gap in employment by encouraging employers to hire Negroes who need training in order to become productive."[532] Neither the job applicant nor the hiring company paid a fee for this service. Grants from Harvard University, the Ford Foundation, and Boston's business community paid the rent. In addition to carrying a full-time responsibility as an account executive, Brown worked at the JCH at least two hours during the evenings, and he worked as well on weekends, taking no compensation.[533]

In the 1960s black employment at the midlevel was low, regardless of schooling level. "Getting a job as an elevator operator or a low-level clerical job was all that a black person could hope for then," remarked Melvin B. Miller, publisher of the *Bay State Banner*. "Tom Brown pushed for middle management jobs for black people, moving them up and changing their lives," he said.[534]

Due in part to pressure applied by black activist groups such as

the NAACP, Greater Boston businessmen as a group actively tried to recruit black employees in 1964.[535] But their efforts were in large part successful due to Brown as well, whose employment agency had registered two thousand black job applicants and placed seven hundred of them in jobs at 295 companies by Christmas 1964.[536]

Brown felt it his moral duty to focus his free time and effort on finding black people meaningful work. When asked by a local reporter in 1964 why he went to the trouble of providing the service, Brown replied, "Give me one reason why I shouldn't try to help other Negroes. Give me one reason." Clearly, he wasn't in it to make money. He told the reporter, "I'm in this because somebody's got to do it."[537] Brown knew that the "situation" of high black unemployment in Boston was not going to be solved in his lifetime, but he, with the help of his wife, Inez, made every effort to place black people in good jobs.

In 1965 Brown left the advertising industry to become special assistant to Edwin H. Land, founder of Polaroid Corp. There he used his office and his very affable personality to open doors to equal employment opportunity. "From Ed Land's office, he would call top executives of big companies and they would take his calls," said Miller, adding, "He would tell company CEOs, 'I was down at your office the other day and didn't see one black face. What's going on?'" Brown made it difficult for them to refuse to hire blacks.

When corporate executives claimed that they could not find qualified black job applicants, Brown and Miller worked together harmoniously to deliver them. Miller ran ads in the *Banner* posting JCH job vacancies at no cost, and candidates went to the JCH. This was one of the ways that the *Banner* became a major employment source for blacks. Another way was through its regular column, "The Job Scene," which provided information on job openings. Brown told a reporter in 1965 that the problem of jobs in Boston was basically a misunderstanding between blacks and white employers that required better communication. "The white man believes the Negro labor pool is largely unskilled," he said, "and the Negro, in turn, either doesn't know or doesn't dare believe that the 'off limits' sign has been

yanked down in most places."[538] For his job-finding efforts, Brown was honored by the Association of Business and Professional Women of Boston, who presented him with the Human Relations Award at its annual Sojourner Truth Award Luncheon on June 13, 1965.[539] Alan Monroe, the first black branch officer of the First National Bank of Boston—indeed the first black to achieve such a position at any bank in Boston—owed his success to Brown. In December 1966, Monroe told the *Banner*, "Tom referred me to the First and has done much over the last three years to help me get where I am today."[540] In addition to fulfilling the obligations of his day job at Polaroid and running the Jobs Clearing House, Brown presented free lectures on how to obtain employment. For example, on the evening of February 14, 1966, he gave one at the Egleston Square branch of the Boston Public Library entitled, "Jobs for Negroes: Where They Are and How to Get Them."[541] Five days later, he gave another one on "Negroes in the Job Market" at the Calvary Baptist Church in Lowell.[542]

In 1968 Brown estimated that 80 percent of the people in Roxbury were underemployed—not working up to their skill level or potential skill level.[543] In the first half of that year, the JCH filled 110 clerical positions with black workers.[544] According to agency records, the nonprofit corporation eventually connected more than ten thousand Boston area residents to jobs during its thirty-year history.[545] Few individuals amassed a record like Brown's. But he sacrificed a lot. He became an uncompromising champion of the employment rights of his people even though he knew it would ultimately diminish his status within the white power structure. Top business executives were not always pleased with someone so committed to equal employment rights. Brown died of cancer June 24, 2013, at Milton Hospital.

New England Telephone's Hiring Efforts and Freedom House

Prior to 1968 the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company (NET&T) had a horrible record when it came to employing African Americans. In 1943 it employed fewer than twelve blacks out of a

workforce of about twenty thousand. By 1950, that number had more than doubled, but the workforce, too, had increased to twenty-seven thousand.[546] NET&T employed fewer than 150 people of color in 1964, out of a workforce of thirty-five thousand.[547]

Allen G. Barry took over as president of the telephone company in October 1963. He did not want to carry the stigma that attaches to engaging in employment discrimination. He was aware that discrimination complaints had been filed with the FCC against other telephone companies, such as Southern Bell. In 1964, Barry authorized E. Eric Butler, then-director of recruiting for NET&T, to adopt the Massachusetts Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity—a plan devised to make every effort to employ blacks and other people of color.[548] That year, Butler also served as employment opportunity chairman for Freedom House, a nonprofit community-based organization in the Grove Hall section of Boston. Freedom House was founded in 1949 by social workers and activists Muriel and Otto Snowden as a catalyst for promoting equality and access to quality education for lower-income communities of color throughout Boston. In his capacity as employment opportunity chairman for Freedom House, Butler scheduled a job fair on December 15, 1964, for blacks seeking employment. The job interviews were conducted by New England Telephone and seven other Boston employers: Boston Gas Company, First National Bank of Boston, First National Stores, H. P. Hood & Sons, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, Shawmut National Bank, and the Gillette Safety Razor Company. The job fair offered a wide range of jobs, from assistant advertising managers to night porters. Some of these jobs required high school diplomas and others required college degrees.[549]

Due in large part to the efforts of Butler and NET&T Vice President Bruce Harriman, whose responsibilities included public relations, the telephone company made progress on its commitment to hire more blacks. In 1965 it dropped two of its three pre-employment tests because it concluded that they measured acquired knowledge, rather than the fundamental ability to learn. It went a step further by

contacting applicants who had been rejected in the past for failing the knowledge tests and offering them jobs. NET&T also used the *Banner* as a major means of communicating information on job opportunities.

At the Washington Park Shopping Mall in the heart of Roxbury, NET&T also set up a mobile employment office, which was unusually successful. The first visit netted sixty-one female job applicants over three days, sixteen of whom were hired on the spot.[550] In an effort to allay the suspicions of black men and recruit them for jobs, the telephone company staffed its mobile office with black male employees. Thus, recruiting in the Roxbury community and enlisting black employees to help with that recruitment were effective strategies in increasing the employment of people of color at NET&T. Those efforts and others, such as the creation of a summer work program for black male high school and college students and a Teenage Employment Training Skills (TEST) program, netted modest gains in minority employment. By 1968, NET&T employed about 580 people of color, who comprised about 1.5 percent of its thirty-eight-thousand-member workforce. A telephone company official that year remarked that all those hired under the new arrangement had "proven capable of handling jobs assigned."[551]

On April 26, 1968, the employees of NET&T went on strike rejecting the company's final offer of a 7.5 percent wage increase.[552] The bargaining committee of the largest union, the 13,500-member International Brotherhood of Telephone Workers, had been negotiating since March 15, 1968, for a substantial across-the-board wage increase for its crafts people, noncrafts employees, and clerical workers. All of the reporting on the strike focused on wages, but one unspoken battle of management was to make up for missed opportunity by allowing qualified blacks to enter NET&T at midlevel. Indeed, the real barrier to midlevel black employment had been the seniority system, and historically, white union employees had engaged in the practice of nepotism—filling entry-level job vacancies with their relatives and friends. After 128 days, the longest strike in Bell Telephone history ended on August 31, 1968.[553]

The Boston Urban Coalition

There were other significant black-led efforts to address the problem of black unemployment. After organizing in closed door meetings in December 1967, the Boston Urban Coalition, a group of more than two hundred business, union, and community leaders, went public in March 1968, intending to attack poverty and reduce black unemployment in the city by using the powerful muscle of the private sector to create jobs. Among the members of that coalition were black leaders Thomas J. Brown of the Jobs Clearing House; Kenneth I. Guscott, president of the Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Reverend James P. Breeden of the Massachusetts Council of Churches; Melvin H. King, executive director of the Urban League of Greater Boston; and Bertram Alleyne of the South End Manpower Corp. (SEMCO).[554] However, only four months after the coalition went public, in July 1968, all five black leaders resigned over its failures, noting in their letter of resignation to Robert Slater, chairman of the policy-making steering committee, "It is our judgment that the Urban Coalition in Boston has proven itself unwilling or unable to take the steps necessary to add significantly to the energies available to meet the urban crisis." They suggested that the coalition work directly with community organizations and elected black officials in order to give black people a say.[555]

Boston Water and Sewer Commission

Dennis R. Tourse was appointed general counsel for the Boston Water & Sewer Commission (BWSC) after *Banner* publisher Melvin Miller was named a BWSC commissioner. Both were committed to expanding job opportunities there for people of color. Tourse was born on April 3, 1940, in Ridgewood, New Jersey. His mother cleaned houses for a living. He graduated from Ridgewood High School in 1958 and attended Bates College in Maine, where he played the position of

halfback on the football team. He graduated with a BA in 1962 and then worked for an insurance company. Eligible for the draft, Tourse attempted to sign up for the Army Reserve, but he was rejected. So he attended the US Naval Officer Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1963, graduating in 1965. He became a signal officer, one of three hundred black officers out of eighty-seven thousand, and the second black officer on the aircraft carrier Essex—the most decorated ship in the navy at that time. He was also a communications officer who actually had top-secret clearance. Tourse became a reserve and a special service officer who was stationed at the Naval Air Station in New York.

After leaving the Navy Reserve, Tourse went to work for IBM in 1967 as a sales representative. His sales territory was midtown Manhattan. The person who got him hired was John Lewis, a tremendous sales representative and mentor. Tourse recalled that IBM management chewed him out for wearing a button-down blue oxford shirt. "One had to wear a white shirt, a dark suit and a striped tie at IBM," he said, adding, "I probably was not cut out to be a businessman in corporate America."[556]

Tourse left IBM and enrolled at Harvard Law School, graduating in 1970. That year, he became the first black man hired at the law firm of Sullivan & Worcester. He worked there for about six months and then found employment at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute. After staying there a year, he decided that he really wanted to practice law. He ran into a partner at Sullivan & Worcester, who told him that the firm was disappointed that he left and wanted him to return. So he went back and stayed for five years.

In 1973, two years after Unity Bank & Trust Company was placed in receivership, then-State Banking Commissioner Freyda Koplow appointed Melvin Miller conservator of the bank.[557] Unity Bank had been organized in 1968 by a group of Greater Boston black businessmen. In 1971, it was about to collapse, and the banking commission was not going to allow that to happen. While Miller was holding down that appointment, he made Tourse's firm, Sullivan & Worcester,

counsel to the bank, for which Tourse, who had corporate law and real estate experience, did proxy work. Under Miller's stewardship the bank's operations became profitable for the first time. He resigned as conservator of the bank effective February 4, 1977, to devote his full time to other professional activities.[558]

When the City of Boston was running a deficit, Boston's Water & Sewer Department was spun off into a separate entity in 1977 to balance the City of Boston's books at the request of Mayor Kevin White. That year the Massachusetts Legislature, pursuant to a home rule petition entitled the Boston Water and Sewer Reorganization Act of 1977, established the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) on July 18, 1977. In accordance with the enabling act, ownership of the wastewater collection and storm water drainage system and the water distribution system was transferred from the City of Boston's Department of Public Works (DPW) to the BWSC in August 1977. The BWSC was created to solve the city's water and sewer program's growing deficit, which was $26 million in 1977.[559] Virtually all of the BWSC's 325 employees came from the DPW. The BWSC, which was responsible for the delivery of water and sewer services to over ninety thousand Boston customers, became a subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Enabling Act also provided for the establishment of a three-member Board of Commissioners. Mayor White appointed Melvin Miller as one of the three unpaid commissioners of the BWSC, the other two being John Howe, CEO of the Provident Institution for Savings bank, and Michael Rotenberg, a successful real estate investor.

Miller, who was then vice chairman of the BWSC as well, stated, "When I was appointed I could hardly find any black workers in the office or in the field. There weren't many blacks and they weren't treated with respect."[560] Joseph F. Casazza, who had been appointed DPW commissioner by Mayor White in 1968, was not known as a leader in hiring a diverse workforce. In 1976, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law of the Boston Bar Association filed a class action lawsuit against the DPW on behalf of three black men,

claiming that they were illegally denied employment at the DPW. The suit charged the department with racial discrimination in hiring and promotion and accused Commissioner Casazza of appointing provisional and temporary white employees "on the basis of patronage, friendship or influence to the detriment of minority persons," who traditionally had "fallen outside the sphere of influence and patronage." The lawsuit also claimed that these temporary white employees then gained a disproportionate advantage in obtaining permanent civil service jobs. The city and the state Civil Service Commission were accused of failing to publicize job openings and upcoming examinations in the black neighborhood, failing to recruit blacks, and failing to correct the belief that the DPW discriminates against minorities.[561] According to the City of Boston's January 1977 figures, 17 percent of Boston's population was black and about 6 percent was Spanish-speaking people and other people of color; however, the DPW, with a payroll of 1,064 workers, was more than 96 percent white.[562]

Tourse and Miller set out to expand job opportunities for people of color at the BWSC. They helped to create and implement an affirmative action program. On January 23, 1978, the commissioners appointed African American Charles Scales, a Midwesterner with an extensive engineering background, as executive director of the BWSC. He worked there for only a few months.[563] Rajaram Siddharth became the commission's director of administration, and Eleanor Matthews became deputy director of personnel. In June 1978, the commissioners presented the Boston City Council with a proposal to spend $1.2 million to hire 131 employees and to eliminate all legal restrictions on the amount of money that could be spent on those employees. The council approved both requests.[564] Over the next few years, according to Miller, the BWSC began hiring blacks in substantial numbers.

The commissioners were authorized to sell revenue bonds. Goldman, Sachs & Co. prepared the underwriting for the first bond issue. Garland E. Wood, an African American who had established himself at Goldman as the numbers guy in public finance, was

assigned the task. He came to the investment bank from Columbia University, where he earned an undergraduate degree in economics and an MBA. Goldman had somewhere between forty and fifty partners. Miller had repeatedly asked David Clapp, the partner overseeing Wood at the time, "When is Garland going to become a partner? You guys have to have a black partner." Wood became a partner in 1986—Goldman Sachs' first and only African American partner. In 1992, *Black Enterprise* named him one of the "25 hottest blacks on Wall Street."[565] He had retired by 1996, having left the firm at age fifty-nine.[566]

In 1980 Miller became chairman of the commission and managed its operating budget of $193.2 million. The following year, he joined Tourse and Harrison A. Fitch in cofounding Fitch, Miller & Tourse, a primarily corporate law firm. The BWSC agreed to bring a significant amount of business to the firm. Tourse became outside counsel for the agency and, later, a special examiner.

The BWSC had been headquartered in South Boston. The commissioners purchased land in Lower Roxbury in March 1998 and moved their headquarters to 980 Harrison Avenue. The handling of the BWSC's deal to move its headquarters to the old Stride Rite building in Lower Roxbury was not welcome by residents and prompted many to charge that blacks continued to be left out of the loop in public planning schemes in their own neighborhoods. Tourse urged the BWSC to set up a hearing process for complaints. Roxbury residents wanted jobs. They believed that if a large employer such as the BWSC came to their community, it had to hire people in that community.

For six months, an abutters group of activists met with BWSC representatives and asked that they make significant concessions to the neighborhood. They had hoped to get specific commitments from the BWSC to give Roxbury residents priority when filling job openings at the agency; however, the BWSC made no specific hiring commitments at that time. It did agree to fund a "part-time job development specialist position" at the Enhanced Enterprise Community to find candidates for open BWSC positions within the city's Enhanced

Enterprise Community. It also agreed to provide commercial driver's license training to two residents of the Roxbury community in each calendar year and to do outreach by sponsoring a job fair once a year.[567] Tourse believed that, in addition to increasing the number of employees of color at the BWSC, putting its headquarters in Roxbury was one of their major accomplishments.[568]

Charles "Chuck" Turner and the Boston Jobs Coalition

For more than three decades Charles "Chuck" Turner has been unrelenting in his efforts to get Roxbury residents their fair share of the city's construction jobs. His work at the Third World Jobs Clearing House and the Boston Jobs Coalition opened thousands of jobs to people of color in Boston. Originally from Ohio, Turner came to Massachusetts in 1958 to attend Harvard University and graduated four years later with a bachelor's degree in government.[569] He began to participate actively in black community affairs. In 1968 he cofounded a coalition of black community self-help organizations called the Black United Front of Boston (BUF), of which he and John Young became cochairmen. Among other things, the BUF advocated community control of local institutions such as schools and increased black employment in state and local government.[570]

Boston residents had traditionally taken a backseat to suburban workers on city construction jobs. Before 1970, local, state, and federal efforts to increase minority hiring in the construction trades were a dismal failure. After a series of negotiations among several parties, including representatives of the Building Trades Council, the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts and other industry groups, and the Black Community Construction Coalition (BCCC), an association of several black community groups established in February 1970, they signed the "Boston Plan" on June 18, 1970. Under the plan, the construction industry was to set up a training program for workers of color in various construction trades and to add at least two thousand of those workers over the next five years.[571] The plan

was to be administered by a board of directors equally representing black workers, the industry, and the unions. The NAACP and the Urban League denounced the plan at the outset, charging that the administrative setup left control of entry into construction industry jobs in the hands of the building trades unions and the employers, who had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Those black organizations also believed that a lack of strict enforcement provisions made Boston Plan ineffective.[572] The plan failed a year later.[573]

The signing of the Boston Plan, however, did not dissuade activists like Turner and members of the BCCC from picketing construction sites where contractors employed few blacks. On August 20, 1970, they picketed a Boston City Hospital construction site, charging that only ten of the one hundred workers on the project were black, and demanding that the contractor, Perini Company of Framingham, increase that number to fifty.[574] They were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, loitering, and blocking a public way.

In 1976 the Commonwealth's minority hiring policy had a "30-10-5" formula. This meant that if a contractor's job was in a predominately black or Spanish-speaking area (South End, Roxbury, North Dorchester), the work crew had to be at least 30 percent minority. If it was outside the "impacted areas," at least 10 percent of the workforce had to be minority, and if it was outside the city, the crew had to be 5 percent minority. Speaking for the Third World Construction Task Force in July 1976, Turner proffered that the state's percentage in the "impacted areas" should have been increased from 30 to 50 percent for workers of color, as this would ease tensions between white and minority workers, since each would have a "fair share of the city jobs."[575] He did not see it solely as a racial issue but one that involved "the rights and fairness of Boston workers."[576] After months of negotiation and debate, the task force accepted the state's terms.

In August 1976 the Construction Industries of Massachusetts Inc. (CIM), an organization representing about two hundred contractors, subcontractors, and other companies involved with highway or transportation construction contracts with the state's Department of

Public Works and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, filed a suit charging that the state's Department of Transportation and Construction was discriminating against white contractors by setting aside 30 percent—or $5 million—of the work on the South Cove Tunnel to minority contractors. The 30 percent formula was based on an affirmative action order issued by Governor Michael S. Dukakis that contractors doing business with the state employ more workers of color. The lawsuit, in Turner's view, was a "continuing effort" by the construction industry to prevent public officials from increasing minority participation on construction jobs through policy decisions.[577] The $500 million Southwest Corridor project, which involved relocating the Orange Line and improving railroad and other transportation facilities, was expected to create eighteen thousand jobs.

Turner was appointed executive director of the Third World Jobs Clearing House (TWJCH) in 1976. This South End-based organization combined the forces of the black, Latino, and Chinese communities to recruit and train people of color for work in the construction industry and to obtain construction jobs for them. It had a no-dues structure and asked nothing of the workers it placed except that they do a day's work for a day's pay.[578] Though not a union, the TWJCH served as a hiring hall for people of color. In 1976, Mayor Kevin White included the TWJCH in Boston's Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program with a $195,000 grant. The clearing house had exceeded its goal of placing 360 minority construction workers in jobs during its first year of existence.

Many workers of color believed that the Third World Construction Worker's Association (TWCWA), a private group formed in January 1976 by black, Chinese, and Latino workers, enabled the TWJCH to surpass its target figure of 360 placements.[579] In March 1976 Turner and workers from the TWCWA began demonstrating at construction job sites to protest inadequate minority hiring on construction projects in communities of color. Twenty-six people were arrested at the Madison Park High School construction site; they were later tried and found not guilty of trespassing. After only two weeks of

demonstrations, the workers received fifteen job orders, compared to the fifty-five job orders the TWJCH had produced during its first five months of operations.

Not only were the TWCWA's series of job actions, which had succeeded in shutting down some construction job sites in the spring of 1976, effective, they prompted about two thousand mostly white suburban union construction workers to demonstrate at Boston City Hall on May 7, 1976, protesting what they called "harassment" by minority groups demanding employment. William Cleary, president of the Association of Building Trades Unions, said that the TWCWA wanted nonunion workers hired for construction jobs and that the union officials wouldn't stand for it because there wasn't enough work for their own members, including blacks.[580] Under pressure from the construction unions, the Boston City Council opposed funding the TWJCH, and by a vote of 9–0, it amended the city's proposal for 1977 CETA funds to exclude it. The council claimed that Turner and several TWJCH employees supported the activities of the TWCWA, who, in addition to picketing construction sites, was the main proponent of a 50 percent hiring quota for people of color on all city-funded construction jobs in Boston's communities of color.[581]

On November 2, 1976, faced with opposition from the Boston City Council, Mayor White approved an order effectively dropping the TWJCH from Boston's budget for the training and placement of workers of color. Calling White's decision "disappointing," Turner said that the mayor chose to make it not on what was "just and right but only on what satisfied political expediency."[582] The TWJCH's funding was terminated though no legal basis had been established by the city for ending it. A legal battle and great controversy ensued over the issue. The US Department of Labor warned that the action of the Boston City Council and the mayor could result in the total loss of the CETA monies, which funded eighteen other city agencies.

When US Labor Department officials, in a letter dated November 29, 1976, told Mayor White that he had until December 29 to rescind his order to cut TWJCH funding, or the city's request for $7.5 million

in federal funds under CETA would be jeopardized, he made arrangements to resubmit to the Boston City Council a proposal to restore funding to the TWJCH for the months of January and February 1977, on the following conditions: (1) that there be no job actions on the part of members of the TWJCH, (2) that a liaison committee be formed to resolve differences between the Building Trades Council and the TWJCH, and (3) that the program be monitored and evaluated by the Mayor's Office of Affirmative Action.[583]

According to Turner, the real issue was that the construction trade unions' policies and referral systems unjustly deprived Boston construction workers, white people as well as people of color, of a fair share of the jobs on construction projects in the city, and that the white construction workers of Boston had no leadership.[584] "[I]t is apparent to blacks, Spanish-speaking and Chinese," he said, "that the problem of white people in Boston is not us. The problem is how are they going to get a fair share of the economics of this city—the same problem we have."[585] Reflecting on that period, Turner recalled, "I realized we were both fighting for the same thing—jobs. All we had to do was unite the two groups under the employment umbrella of residency to break the power of the suburbs. If the economic system is such that those on the bottom view each other as enemies, then chaos will result."[586] Turner's assessment of the construction jobs situation in Boston led to only one possible solution. He said that it necessitated "an alliance between the communities of color and white communities in Boston"—one that would hopefully reduce racial tensions. After months of work, forty-two organizations from eight neighborhoods, including the Third World Jobs Clearing House,[587] joined together to form the Boston Jobs Coalition.[588]

On September 6, 1979, Turner announced that the Boston Jobs Coalition had reached an agreement with Boston Mayor Kevin White's administration on a hiring policy that would give preference to Boston residents on publicly funded or subsidized construction projects.[589] Set forth in the mayor's executive order, the new policy required that at least 50 percent of the workers be Boston residents,

that 25 percent be minorities, and that 10 percent be women.[590] It also made federal and state funds available for on-the-job training for unskilled, inexperienced workers.[591] Turner noted, "With residency coupled to affirmative action for workers of color and women, the policy was viewed as a fair way to cut the pie."[592] In October 1979, White extended the hiring policy to all construction dependent on long-term tax agreements under Chapter 121A of state law.[593] Before the executive order went into effect, up to 80 percent of those employed on city construction jobs lived outside of Boston. That percentage dropped significantly during the first year of the policy, when close to 40 percent of the jobs went to city residents.[594] Turner noted that the policy was aimed at providing eighty thousand construction jobs and $1.6 billion in wages for Boston residents during the 1980s.

Opposition to Hiring Boston Residents

The construction industry and organized labor opposed any insistence that nonunion blacks be employed in city construction projects. Moreover, they made it quite clear that they objected just as much to sharing construction jobs with white Bostonians as sharing them with workers of color. In a lawsuit filed by the Massachusetts Council of Construction Employers and organized labor[595] against Mayor White and others to challenge the new policy, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, on August 28, 1981, declared the mayor's 50-25-10 executive order unconstitutional, in violation of the Commerce Clause.[596] Immediately after that ruling, the percentage of city construction jobs going to Boston residents dropped to 34 percent, then to a low of 28 percent by the end of 1982.[597]

The state court ruling, however, was appealed to the United States Supreme Court, and on February 28, 1983, Judge William Rehnquist, writing for the majority, held that when local government enters the market as a participant, it is not subject to the restraints of the Commerce Clause. Thus, the city was not prevented from giving effect to the mayor's 50-25-10 executive order.[598] Once that order was

reinstated by the US Supreme Court, the Boston City Council, by a vote of 8–0 on September 28, 1983, passed a new ordinance consistent with Mayor White's executive order.[599] By the time the council had passed the jobs ordinance, the Boston Jobs Coalition had collapsed under the weight of internal racial tensions.[600]

Changes in tax laws eliminated the requirement for downtown developers to use the 121-A tax benefit. As a consequence, advocates for the new jobs policy saw that private industry was no longer covered. Remnants of the Boston Jobs Coalition placed political pressure on Mayor Raymond Flynn, who had replaced Mayor White in 1983.[601] In response to that pressure, on July 12, 1985, Mayor Flynn signed an executive order extending the Boston Jobs Policy, which had covered publicly assisted projects, to include major private construction, including ten downtown construction projects. Flynn predicted that, in three years, the policy would create 6,500 construction jobs for Boston residents, 3,250 jobs for people of color, and 1,300 for women.[602] Turner attended Flynn's signing ceremony. He remarked, "Past experience has shown that an active cooperative effort on the part of the city, community and construction industry is essential if policies are to be effectively implemented."[603]

Turner noted that figures for the first half of fiscal 1988 showed that "on private construction projects, totaling $1.3 billion, Boston residents got 29 percent of the hours worked; workers of color, 25 percent, and women, 3 percent. On public projects during the same period, totaling $371 million, residents got 39 percent, workers of color, 25 percent, and women, 3 percent."[604] Although these figures did not live up to the 50-25-10 requirement of the Boston Jobs Policy, it was a significant improvement over 1980, when the executive order was first implemented.

On December 14, 1990, Turner, who was at that time chairman of the Roxbury Neighborhood Council, joined Reverend Graylan Ellis-Hagler and several black elected officials and community leaders[605] in picketing the site of Roxbury's new $4.5 million post office building, vowing to continue until neighborhood residents made up 50 percent

of those employed on the construction project. Turner told a reporter, "Our standard is that for every hour worked by a worker from outside our community, there will be an hour worked by a worker from our community on every trade." He added, "We understand people will try to make it look as if we are in the wrong. ... But if we don't stand up for our rights to a fair share of the work in our community, who will? ... If we don't take action to see that those in our community who have the skills can work on construction jobs in our community, how can we persuade our children to develop skills?"[606] As a result of the picketing, Suffolk Construction Company, the federal project's general contractor, agreed to hire one-third of its workers from Roxbury.[607]

Out of the protests at the Roxbury post office site was born the Greater Roxbury Workers' Association (GRWA), a volunteer group of union and nonunion construction workers. Its goal, according to Turner, its cofounder and chairman, was to evolve beyond the basic demand for jobs and become a clearinghouse to help workers save money, buy housing, and assist newcomers in job training.[608] On May 9, 1991, the GRWA began picketing a site on Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, where the Methuen Construction Company was replacing old sewers under a city contract. A dozen demonstrators were arrested.[609] A month later, on June 6, members of the GRWA staged a sit-in, occupying Mayor Raymond Flynn's office for five hours. At a news conference that day on City Hall Plaza, Turner said, "To have a major construction project of $3 million going forward without community residents on the job is a travesty of economic justice. We want neighborhood work to go to neighborhood workers." After lengthy negotiations with the GRWA, city officials contacted the Methuen Construction Company and requested that all new hires on the sewer project come from minority neighborhoods of Boston, and that half of those new hires be members of the GRWA.[610] For more than thirty years, Chuck Turner has been a relentless champion of black employment on construction projects in Boston, particularly in predominately black and Latino neighborhoods in the city.

Kenneth I. Guscott and the NAACP

Before becoming one of Boston's most prominent African American real estate executives, the late Kenneth I. Guscott served as president of the Boston branch of the NAACP for six years. Sworn into office on January 1, 1963, in addition to trying to eliminate segregation in public housing and public schools, he concentrated much of the civil rights organization's efforts on placing unemployed blacks in jobs. Guscott worked with several employers, including his own, General Dynamics Corporation in Quincy, where he was employed as a nuclear engineer.[611] During the week of August 15–20, 1966, the NAACP and General Dynamics cosponsored a special Job Opportunity Week to recruit black employees. At that time, the company employed about two hundred blacks.[612] A total of 309 people applied for jobs at the Quincy division of General Dynamics during Job Opportunity Week, and of that total, 255 qualified as potential employees or trainees. Guscott stated at that time, "This program demonstrates that there is a reservoir of manpower available in minority groups—a reservoir of ready, willing and able people who are looking for opportunities to work or improve themselves."[613] He also negotiated with several other companies to begin black recruitment drives.[614]

Almost a year before the General Dynamics-sponsored Job Opportunity Week, in October 1965, the NAACP's New England Regional Conference of Branches, of which the Boston branch of the NAACP was a member, instituted a selective buying boycott to pressure three major Massachusetts bakeries to employ blacks. Only the Wonder Bread Company had employed a black salesman. The Nissen Baking Company, the Sunbeam Company, and the Ward Baking Company had all refused to employ black salesmen, even though they all enjoyed a considerable market in the black community. The executive board of the conference called upon all members of the black community to buy only from such baking companies that recruited blacks as salesmen. The Boston members of the committees for the New England Regional Conference of Branches included

Guscott, Thomas J. Brown, Kivie Kaplan, Harold Vaughn, and Ruth Batson.[615]

As head of the Boston branch of the NAACP, Guscott not only pressured private employers to hire blacks but also local government agencies. Testifying before a state Senate committee on August 17, 1966, he charged that hiring procedures in local agencies resulted in discrimination, as those agencies employed far fewer blacks than their 9.6 percent ratio in Boston. Guscott cited as an example a federal investigation of the Boston Housing Authority (BHA), which revealed that 461 whites were employed by the BHA, compared to only nineteen blacks. He recommended that Boston Mayor John F. Collins take several steps to ensure equal employment of people of color, including: sending a directive to all city department heads to request a survey of people of color in their employment and their positions; directing department heads, within two weeks after the survey, to state how they intend to improve the employment situation for people of color; and setting up an agency to police a program for increased minority employment. Guscott said that the mayor should also consider the use of people of color when filling nonsalaried city agencies and boards.[616] Focusing on jobs, Guscott observed to the more than one thousand guests at the Seventh Annual Awards Banquet of the NAACP on December 3, 1966, "The Civil Rights Movement has changed. No longer is it a movement with demonstrations and marching with signs. Today the opportunity is for us to get jobs so that men can be men, bringing home paychecks, instead of unemployment checks."[617]

In October 1967, Guscott created the nationally acclaimed Positive Program for Boston (PPB), a tax-exempt arm of the NAACP Special Contribution Fund, and named his longtime friend and close aide Robert Montjoy as its director. Funded by financial contributions from foundations, individuals, and Boston's business community, the PPB was active in the field of job opportunities, among other areas,[618] and it placed one thousand people in jobs in its first year. "One of the valuable aspects of this program," Guscott told a reporter in November 1968, "is that it has the flexibility to go where the needs are.

We're not rigid like most other programs."[619] The PPB had been such a success that agencies in other cities were modeling their programs after it.[620]

On June 3, 1970, Guscott became the first black president of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), the city's community action poverty agency. As president, he coordinated board decisions on the allocation of ABCD's $18 million annual federal funding and programs ranging from Head Start to the Neighborhood Youth Corps.[621] In 1970, ABCD operated thirteen Neighborhood Employment Centers, plus four orientation and training centers, including the OIC.[622]

In 1972, Guscott and his brothers, Cecil and George, founded Long Bay Management Company, a property management, development, and construction company. By the year 2000, the company owned and managed three thousand units, primarily in Roxbury, and had provided jobs for hundreds of community residents. "We want to house people and build businesses to employ these people," Guscott told the *Banner* in 1993.[623] Dudley Square Main Streets Director Joyce Stanley remarked, "His projects always engaged at least 80 percent minority workers and services. He didn't just talk about hiring minorities. He made it happen."[624] Guscott died on March 6, 2017. He was ninety-one.

Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC)

In addition to the efforts of black churches, there were other efforts involving campaigns to expand economic opportunity in the black community.[625] Opened in the summer of 1966 at the old Robert Gould Shaw House, 11 Windsor Street, Roxbury, the Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc. (OIC), headed by its founding executive director Reverend Virgil Wood, was a nonprofit, self-help job training program for the unemployed in the South End, Roxbury, and North Dorchester. Bertram M. Lee of Chicago became the new executive director in 1967.[626] Among the OIC's special features were

basic education, black history classes to instill pride, and job skills training. It also had neighborhood recruiters who went into poolrooms and barrooms to give job information to the hard-core unemployed.[627] Initially, the OIC had to struggle to raise funds for its modest job training program, but its success in helping seriously disadvantaged community residents attracted support, first from the federal government through Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), and then from the business community, the general public, and the state.[628] In March 1968, the OIC moved to the Hibernian Hall Building at 184 Dudley Street. That year, on $500,000 in federal funding, it employed a staff of nearly eighty and had almost four hundred enrollees in its job training program. And with classes in secretarial science, IBM keypunch, electronics, telephone switchboard, and graphic arts, the OIC was able to place more than two hundred people of color in jobs. On June 1, 1968, Gary Robinson took over as executive director of the OIC, succeeding Lee, who became vice president and general manager of EG&G Roxbury Inc., a new business, recently formed by EG&G, to provide job opportunities and training for Roxbury area residents.[629] By 1970, the OIC was training about one thousand people a year.[630]

To help qualified blacks obtain employment in Boston, the Urban League of Greater Boston, headed by Executive Director J. Westbrook McPherson, launched the Skills Bank Project on June 1, 1964. The purpose of the project was to help locate and list qualified young men and women in a broad array of skills, crafts, and professions, and to direct them to companies with openings.[631] McPherson is noteworthy for his accomplishments in the area of increased black employment and for the renewal of the Urban League's On-the-Job Training Project from the US Department of Labor. He resigned as executive director on February 27, 1967.[632]

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