



TAKING A DIFFERENT VIEW OF A BAD SITUATION CAN MAKE YOU A WINNER IN THE END

Have you been going through a lot lately? Some day's things have been really difficult for you and you have no idea how things are going to end up as you approach adulthood? Know that you are not alone. That was more the norm for those who were before your time, say born in 1920. They had to 'take a different view of a bad situation, in order to come out a winner in the end'. Think about how David in the Bible had to deal with Goliath. He had to take a different view of his bad situation of fighting a giant that was over 9 feet tall. Who would have thought prayer and 3 small stones would get the job done? But David figured out a plan and came out a winner.



Now let me tell you the story about 'Buddy'. He was a minority born in the 1920s. He was challenged with the reality of prejudice, the Ku Klux Klan, poverty, unable to finish high school, and other issues, that are not as prevalent for you today. Buddy volunteered to serve in World War II, and then worked as a Pullman Porter (which was a job that started out in the 1860s given to former slaves to work on railroad sleeper cars). Pullman Porters carried bags of wealthy train riders and were respected in the community as they helped to define rail travel within the United States. Then Buddy was able to secure a job as a bus driver with what initially call Detroit Street Railway (DSR) driving street cars (also known as trolleys). It is now known as D-DOT (Detroit Department of Transportation) He worked that job for 30 years.



But Buddy's patience and determination was worth the wait because in 1971, while he was still a bus driver, he founded his own business, Enterprise Uniform Company. Why uniforms you say? Because, every job Buddy held involved him wearing some kind of uniform! Not only that, ten years later he opened up another store, in Atlanta, Georgia in 1982. At that time Leroy Burgess was deemed the second minority to own a uniform store in the United States. This is but a small portion of the Leroy 'Buddy' Burgess' Story. But because he was brave enough to 'take a different view of a bad situation, he came out a winner in the end'.

SEE FULL STORY BELOW



The Leroy 'Buddy' Burgess Story

Leroy "Buddy" Burgess was born March 20, 1920 in Ashburn, Georgia. He was the 8th of 9 children born to Rev. King and Leola Burgess. His parent's roots were from slavery and to feed their children moved from town to town as rural migrant workers picking strawberries, oranges, grapefruit or cotton until the family grew too large and they settled in Polk City, Florida.

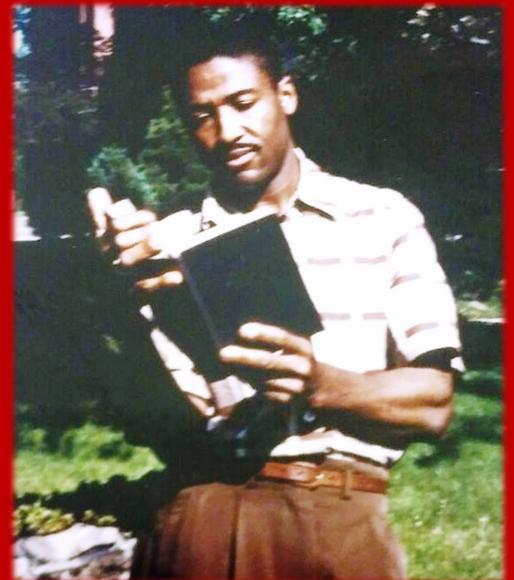
Hard work for minimal wages was the norm for the Burgess clan. Living conditions were deplorable for Buddy and his family for years. They lived in what was call a "shot gun" house with no electricity or running water, but as his brothers and sisters grew older they soon began to drift apart from the family home and go their separate ways in search of a better lifestyle. Desiring but unable to finish high school it was during this time Buddy began to formulate his determination to leave the South and follow a path to lead to a place of opportunity.

Racial discrimination was high, especially in the rural South. Blacks were considered fit for only the dirty and low paying jobs. President Roosevelt had turned his back on Blacks and felt that portion of the South should remain unchanged so as not to upset the white Democrats. A common slogan at the time was "No job for a N----- until every white man has a job." But Buddy and his family pressed on making the "best of a bad situation".

Buddy's desire to control his own destiny led him to volunteer for a tour of duty at age 17 during WWII to remove himself from the hatred and inequalities he lived with for so long in the South. Although the racism followed him the decision to leave his home opened the world to a young man who desperately wanted to be free of the racism, he had endured all his life.

Buddy had heard reports of plentiful jobs and opportunities that existed above the Mason-Dixon Line. Cities he had only heard about. Chicago, New York, New Jersey, Cleveland, and Detroit all large industrial centers . . . with no fruit to pick. So, he headed to Cleveland . . .the promised land.

Buddy's choice to migrate to Cleveland after his honorable discharge from the Army was spurred on by a close Army buddy who had roots there. He helped him get a job as a train Pullman Porter. It was safe and steady work that appealed to blacks coming from the south who were used to hard manual labor. Although the wages were meager it allowed Buddy to continue to send money home to help put his brother and sister



through college and support his Mother now living in Tampa, Florida after the death of his Father.

After a few months Buddy was encouraged by his oldest brother Joe to move to Detroit to earn more money. He relocated to Detroit and here the Leroy ‘Buddy’ Burgess journey as he dreamed as a young boy begins . . .

In 1946 and after a short stint at the Chrysler Dodge Main plant Buddy’s destiny led him to a “City” job with the “DSR”, Detroit Streets Railways, a job he loved which led to another Love, Ruth Allen whom he met in January of 1947 and married in September of the same year. Two children Ronald and Lynne soon followed.

Buddy’s dreams were becoming real, the old painful life of his youth was fading away and he was becoming content. But soon after 25 years as a City bus driver sensed the urgency to in the words of M. L. King, “consider the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

August 21, 1971. . . The Grand Opening of Enterprise Uniform Company, established by Leroy Burgess . . . the son of a migrant worker, 6th grade education, no entrepreneurial skills, and meager savings. But with determination, drive, and commitment, made his dream into reality and accomplished the unthinkable. With Pride along with the support of his daughter Lynne, Buddy sold uniforms to his friends and co-workers at DSR, to Postal workers, Firemen, Policemen, Wayne County Sheriff, and organizations such as Chrysler Corporation, General Motors, Hospitals and many accounts throughout the United States and Canada. Due to valued support from their customer base they opened a second store in Atlanta, GA – Enterprise Uniforms II in 1981 which was later sold.

Although Leroy passed on in 2009 his legacy has continued for over 46 years at 2862 E. Grand Blvd and his dream lives on . . . it wasn’t easy . . . there were many desperate days and nights.

The road from Ashburn to Detroit that was once filled with despair proves that thru sacrifice and determination one can rise above their circumstances and as Buddy . . . Change Their World!

