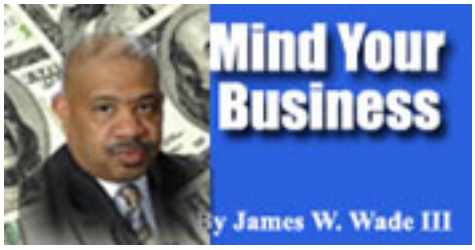

In 95 years, the paper has seen Black business grow and collapse while we are still reporting it. We have witness Stephanie Strawbridge become the first female Black Funeral director/owner and Vel's close after many years of providing a dance atmosphere highlighting the Quarter Century Club.

Cleveland can be great again

When I was growing up, I always wanted to go downtown to see all the sites and mainly the big department stores. You could always count on Higbee's and May Co. and Halle's as the places to hang out.

Then, poof, it was all gone. No more department stores… No May Co… No Higbee's… No Halles… And, no Woolworth's. At about 5:30 p.m., Cleveland's downtown looked like a ghost town.

Mayor Frank Jackson unveiled his new plan for the Lakefront that will be a mecca for business and entertainment. We already realize we'll have a new Medical Mart Conference Center and the new Horseshoe Casino that will add to our
4th Street
revitalization.

The Horseshoe Casino at the Higbee Building is expected to attract millions of eager gamblers and curious visitors to the city. How many times have you went to Detroit or New York and seen

a lot of Cleveland people in the casinos there?

Well, hopefully, we will see a lot of New York and Detroit people coming to Cleveland soon.

The rebirth of the East Bank of The Flats has begun in downtown Cleveland and will be an added addition to the thriving city. In December 2010, construction started on the $275 million phase 1 of this mixed-use waterfront neighborhood.

Located where the Cuyahoga River meets Lake Erie, The Flats' East Bank will at once offer vibrancy and calming, unobstructed views of the water. There has long been a clamor and call to make Cleveland's waterfront more accessible, to tastefully and respectfully integrate it with quality and a unique touch.

Flats' East Bank will be all of that and so much more.

The first phase will include an 18-floor, state-of-the-art office building, offering unparalleled, panoramic views of the water and downtown. This initial phase will also feature a 150-room, high-tech, boutique hotel, a variety of restaurants, entertainment offerings, and plenty of green space.

A model of environmentally-conscious design and construction, Flats East Bank will be one of the first LEED-certified green neighborhoods in the country. The centerpiece of this distinctive, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood will be its imaginative public spaces and 1,200-foot boardwalk along the river.

With more than 1,000 parking spaces and its proximity to a light rail line that is already in place, Flats East Bank will be easily accessible to Greater Cleveland residents and visitors and will connect to downtown's major attractions, Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, and suburban destinations.

I would assume the lakefront can be special because it is a prized location shared by all Cleveland residents. Although major divides exist between neighborhoods such as East and West sides, the path to bring them together on the Cleveland pier could be special.

While at the press conference about the new Lakefront, they showed a restaurant that sat back at the end just like Captain Frank's once did.

I smiled remembering all the times my father took me there to eat, before or after a Browns game.

Also, they talked about a new place to eat back in Burke's Airport and I had a flash back and the Mark where many would go for a nice meal. The potential can be real if we buy into this vision.

This area can be easily accessible with great views of the city's skyline (north, south and west) and the bike path that widens in the downtown area to include space for outdoor concerts, such as annual blues and jazz festivals.

Special events and bike events are held along the lakefront path during the spring and summer season.

This could help drive even more traffic to the famous Cleveland Rock & Roll Museum that will be right in the middle of all these new attractions. Kids coming up these days did not get a chance to enjoy Euclid Beach or even Geauga Lake and Sea World.

It would be nice to have a place that our youth can enjoy themselves without driving to Sandusky, Ohio to go to Cedar Point. Remembering businesses like the Shrimp Boat, who served the best shrimp and foot longs in the city of Cleveland, it would be great to see new landmarks emerge.

I want to also salute one of my favorite in the Lee Harvard area, the Golden Point who had the

best fries I have ever tasted. In case you are wondering where it was, it was located where the BP Gas Station is on Lee and Harvard.

The Call & Post celebrating 95 years makes me want to remember these business locations. Could you go to church and not step foot in Ribbins Bookstore and enjoy the whole family who worked in there.

Now, before Ribbins, many will remember Coleman's where you could go eat and play music before having rehearsal. Blacks believed in their community and being entrepreneurs then.

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General Moses Cleaveland founded the City of Cleveland in 1796. The name changed to its current spelling in 1831 when the "a" was dropped in order to fit the city's name on a newspaper masthead. Originally a frontier village, Cleveland grew into a manufacturing and business center for northern Ohio.

As of the 2010 Census , the city had a total population of 396,815 and was the 45th largest city in the United States, the second largest in Ohio. It is the center of Greater Cleveland , the largest metropolitan area in Ohio. Cleveland can again boost about being the "Best Location in the Nation."

It is important to note that although a vibrant minority business presence contributes significantly to the economic and social health of a community, this report is not a prescription for revitalizing inner city neighborhoods or distressed inner suburbs. There are many other factors in addition to minority business development that contribute to neighborhood vitality.