

# Women In Business

## HIGH RENT: DOWNTOWN'S FOLLY IS MAMIE'S BANE

**CENTER CITY:** How long have you been in business and how did you get started?

**MAMIE GAMMON:** I got into business by accident. I was working at a lady's place when someone from the Junior League asked me to cook for one of their functions. I then went to the First Methodist Church and stayed there three years. I came to the Wolf River Club in 1962.

**CC:** Haven't you been looking for a Downtown location in which to open a restaurant? Your business manager has pursued several leads, hasn't he? What has been your biggest problem?

**GAMMON:** My biggest problem has been with individuals not institutions. I can't find a place and when I do, the landlord asks too much rent.

**CC:** Did you apply to the National Business League?

**GAMMON:** I went to see them and I got the feeling they wanted me to be established. The man said, "You know the richest people in town, just ask the people you know for \$1500."

**CC:** Which of course means you'd no longer be in control — you'd be responsible to a multitude of investors. Have you applied for a loan?

**GAMMON:** No, I considered selling my house; it is paid for. I paid the balance early, in 18 months, and didn't get a good credit rating because of that. I paid early and it damaged my credit, can you imagine? Well, it's the only house I have; it's security so I decided not to sell. I haven't tried the banks. I raised what cash money I have to invest. I even bought a \$1000 salad service and steam table I was so sure we would be settled in a place. They're in storage now.

**CC:** What has been your major problem in getting a building?

**GAMMON:** They are asking too much rent, \$600 to \$1500 a month with no improvements. One man told me he'd just as soon let it sit there for tax purposes. We were ready to move into that restaurant in the William Len Hotel. They're going to tear the hotel down; we could put up a wall and they'd tear it down around us. The location had everything — adequate restrooms, a stove, a walk-in refrigerator and new wiring. They even offered the building rent-free for a year or two if we'd clean it up. But the Health Inspector said I'd

have to tear the walls out and put in whole new fireproofing. It has the decorator wood in it. There was a restaurant operating there previously. It just seems so one-sided that new businesses are opening and are using even more decorator wood.

**CC:** You want to locate near Madison, right? It's the heart of the business district and you'd get all the north-south cross traffic. There are so many vacant buildings. What about Anderton's across the street?

**GAMMON:** They want \$1700 a month for that. We looked at the Curtain Shop on Court but the bank where my manager works is the trustee and refused us. I don't think it is me. Somebody's just sitting on Downtown. They can't afford two lemons. They've built that Convention Center and the Mall — it has to work. But somebody knows what's coming.

**CC:** Waiting on Downtown to boom? You would certainly be an attraction to Downtown; you have a city-wide reputation. What kind of restaurant do you want to open?

**GAMMON:** I have had so many ask for private parties. When Mahalia Jackson's was open, I had a banquet room. I also carried food into the Peabody Hotel and the Fontaine House. I cooked for the Symphony and Opera parties but now they have a food service. I've had a party booked all summer but no place to give it. I need a place for private functions at night and where I can serve lunch to the public.

**CC:** How many employees do you have?

**GAMMON:** I have none on a day to day basis. I have three other caterers I can call, as well as waiters and bartenders. I have no everyday base from which to operate. If I have too much to do, I can just turn the whole job over to someone else. If I had my own place, I could contract out the jobs.

**CC:** You mean you could operate as an agency and get a commission on the jobs?

**GAMMON:** Yes.

**CC:** Do you have any advice for women going into business?

**GAMMON:** Stick to it, maybe it will work. When I first started, you'd be surprised how many doors were closed. It hasn't been hard for me; people have been in my corner. I had no special training; whatever has been accomplished has been through God's grace.

# Buffoed Again

Much of the appeal of opera is the spectacle that is presented on stage. This is especially true in the case of an opera like *Turandot* which was presented by the Memphis Opera Theatre on November 4 and 6. When the spectacle is missing, the performance can fall flat — which was almost what happened in this production.

MOT has certainly taken a step backward in its visual presentation this year. The set for *Turandot*, as well as *Madama Butterfly*, was of extremely poor quality. They would have been acceptable in the Memphis of ten years ago, but not now.

The stage direction of the usually imaginative David Morelock was hampered by the sets which consisted of a flight of steps and drops. The monotony of the parallel movements of the chorus quickly became tiring. Nor were all the movements of the chorus and principals motivated

by the plot, and several movements were completely out of character for *Turandot*.

Once the chorus settled into the opera their singing was good, but this did not happen until the entrance of *Turandot* in the second act. If the MOT is ever to be a first rate opera company, the chorus must be trained to sing their lines with conviction. The fact that the chorus was singing phonetically was readily apparent.

The two performances were excitingly conducted by Robert Griffith of the MSU music faculty. His feel for the music was evident from the opening chord and his concern for both principals and chorus led to an ensemble performance rarely experienced at the MOT. The roles of *Turandot* and *Calif* were beautifully sung by Earlene Ballard and Herman Malamood of the New York City Opera. (Continued on back page)

# Center City

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## Mothers With Friends

The role of child care in the structure of contemporary society has gone beyond the boundaries of family rule and become a matter of community cooperation. One of the first day care centers in Memphis to recognize this aspect of child welfare is The Salvation Army Day Care Center and Kindergarten, 306 South Somerville, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. December 13 has been set as the birthday recognition, coinciding with the Center's annual Christmas party.

The Center was organized by the Junior League, jointly with The Salvation Army, as a pilot project. Mrs. Elmore Holmes III, a Junior League member and a volunteer worker at the Center, said, "The Junior League was interested in the Center to serve all segments of the community, to care for children from all income groups. Traditionally, one third has come from the lower and middle income groups." Mrs. Holmes said they wanted to do more than provide a babysitting service. "We wanted to have an educational aspect in the program, too." Mrs. Holmes, who has served for eight years on the Center's Advisory Council, said the Junior League supported the Center for approximately two and one half years. Since then, funding has come from United Way contributions. Fees are on a sliding scale. The capacity is 30, for children 3-6 years, the latter age included for children whose sixth birthday comes too late in the school year for them to attend classes as regular students.

The Center is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services, and it primarily provides day care for working mothers and also mothers who are attending school.

Hours are 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Breakfast, lunch, an afternoon snack and a two-hour rest period are among the daily provisions. Mrs. Marilyn Post, Center Director, stressed the enrichment program and its focus on learning activities. "We teach basics," she explained, "colors, letters and numbers. We also try to teach the children to get along with one another. There are numerous group activities, such as taking a particular subject per week for study. We also have field trips, art projects, crafts and movies from the Public Library. The thing that is unique is the it (the Center) draws from all socio-economic levels. We feel that this is a real good learning experience for the children. They get a foundation that serves them for years to come. On a sliding scale fee basis, we're able to provide this well-rounded program to all these levels. The family who pays \$2.00 a week gets the same attention for their child as the family who pays \$20.00 a week, which is the maximum."

One of the things that impresses a visitor to the Center is the manner in which an ageless technique in learning and sharing is constantly going on. At the beginning of the rest period, 12 children were seated in one of the rooms. *Sesame Street* was on the television set, but no one was watching. One of the children had started a simple legs-in-the-air movement and the rest were copying in varying degrees of accuracy. It may not be a written part of the program but the atmosphere of teaching, learning and sharing enriches the Center with the comfortable feeling of children at ease in work and play.

— Howell Pearre

## Media-Ogre



### A SOUTHERN MYSTIQUE? NO!

A friend of mine told me recently that, since the elections, the current vogue on Northeastern talkshows is for Northeastern personalities to claim a Southern connection: their cousin on their mama's side circulates some of that rebel blood. This new assault on the Southern ideal is the most cunning ploy yet to finally eradicate our provincial attributes by fondling and mocking them.

There is no Southern mystique ("thank Heaven"), there is but an

ambiguous idea of Southernness which most of us participate in and propagate: most of us both repudiate and cherish features of the idea. We in the South have a peculiar past and are usually at a different phase of economic development than the rest of the country — but doesn't every definable region have its idiosyncrasies and isn't that and geography just what defines a region ("and we thank Heaven for that, too").

"There's no point in trying to understand it; there is a point in living it" — wrong! That sort of anti-intellectualism is what has paralyzed every culture or species cursed with so-called mysteries. There are social and political aspects of life in the South which we must understand to preserve and others which must be intelligently sublimated.

We are what we are and there is no reason to gloat over our newfound popularity — perhaps what is really newfound is that those who were ashamed of their region and its cultural products are taking new pride and interest in a heritage they've

(Continued on back page)

# Bustle On Beale

About 75 years ago Memphians traveled about the city via streetcar, horse and buggy or on foot. Bicycles were relegated to the courageous and automobiles were playthings of the rich. Streetcars were the chief mode of transportation and since most business was transacted Downtown, the car-barns were built close-by at 821 Beale. That meant only a short time consumed in "pulling in" to the barns and "pulling out" the next morning about 5:30 a.m.

Thirty years ago Memphis boasted one of the finest privately owned bus systems in the nation. Under the leadership of Colonel Roane Waring, the Memphis Street Railway Co. was modernizing its equipment by converting its last streetcar lines to electric coaches. At the end of that program in 1947, all streetcars had vanished from Memphis streets, leaving us a fleet of about 157 motor buses and 204 trolley coaches.

In January 1961 the city bought the transportation system and created the MATA. The continuing eastward sprawl of the city created new logistical problems for the company. There was an increasing amount of time spent by drivers traveling to their outer terminals in the A.M. and re-

turning with near-empty buses in the P.M. Consequently, the Authority decided several years ago to abandon its property at 821 Beale St. for the following reasons: there was no room left for expansion, one or two of the car-barns had been condemned and MATA needed a more central location. The new property to be acquired is located near the Poplar-Union Ext. intersection, some three blocks east of Hollywood St. Consisting of 15½ acres, the total cost is estimated at \$10,400,000. Construction should be completed sometime in 1979.

Just last spring the City Council voted to replace the manager at the Memphis Area Transit Authority with the services of a private firm, ATE of Cincinnati, Ohio. MATA plans extensive route changes in three phases; the first, which began on Sunday, November 14, eliminated the Mid-America Circle bus at a savings of \$100,000 a year and initiated the MASH card. Ridership on the remodeled MATA system on Monday, November 15, was up by 5200 persons (possibly owing to a 50% reduction in fares that day).

Public transportation has changed greatly over the years. MATA is optimistic that its present alterations will elicit a favorable change in the attitudes of Memphians toward riding the bus. —Tom Schrodt

## BUFFOED AGAIN (Continued from front page)

Just why Memphis Opera Theatre chose to do this opera is not at all clear. Not only was this the third performance of *Turandot* in Memphis in the last nine years, but it is the second Puccini opera on an Oriental theme presented this year. Surely the Memphis public has advanced beyond the ABCs of opera. And why we must have poor performances of the same operas is beyond comprehension. Unfortunately it seems as though some of the internal confusion of the company is beginning to manifest itself in the productions.

— David Gable

## NO SOUTHERN MYSTIQUE (Continued from front page)

pathetically tried to abandon: respect based on continued self-examination is a characteristic lacking in Southerners with an it-must-all-be-better-elsewhere mind-set.

It is indeed our good fortune that the South is not so isolated an organism that the quality of Southern living must rely solely on the *Emotional Appeal* for guidance or for definition.

— Gerald Murley

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## earthly delights

### DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

CONTEMPO '76 — Cossitt-Goodwyn  
Library — 12:15 p.m.\*  
December 7-County & State Records

### MUSIC & DANCE

BEETHOVEN CLUB CONCERT  
November 28 — Oberkirchen Child-  
ren's Choir — 3:30 p.m. — South Hall  
BALLET SOUTH  
December 4—South Hall— 8:30 p.m.  
GEORGE BENSON  
December 5—Dixon-Meyers Hall —  
8 p.m.

### LECTURES/DIALOGUE

STUDENT GROUPING IN PUBLIC  
EDUCATION — Cathedral Church of  
Saint Mary (700 Poplar) — 8:00 p.m.\*  
November 30 — a town meeting

### EXHIBITS

NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE  
— lobby\*  
December 6-31 — Paintings by Patti  
Bradford, Patrick Foley and Chuck  
Johnson

### FILM

LYCEUM FILM THEATER—7:30 p.m.  
— First National Bank Auditorium  
November 30 — 'Red Dust' — Harlow  
in heat on a rubber plantation  
December 7 — 'The Passion of Anna'  
— Bergman's second color film, with  
Ullmann and the gang  
December 14 — 'Born Yesterday' —  
Judy Holliday plays the dumbest  
of all dumb blondes who wants to  
get smart.  
CENTER FILM SOCIETY — 7:30 p.m.  
— UT Student Center Auditorium  
December 3 — 'The Four Musketeers'  
FRIDAY FLICS — 4 & 7:15 p.m. —  
Peabody Library Auditorium\*  
December 3 — 'Flash Gordon Con-  
quers the World' & 'Superman'  
December 10 — 'Phantom of the  
Opera'

### THEATRE

BEALE STREET REPERTORY CO.  
November 26 - December 19 —  
'Amen Corner' by James Baldwin  
CIRCUIT PLAYHOUSE  
December 9 — 'Clarence Darrow' by  
Allen Mullikin  
PLAYHOUSE ON THE SQUARE  
Through December 19 — 'Two  
Gentlemen of Verona'

### ON THE AIR

THE BEST OF TV MOVIES\*  
November 29 — (EM-WREG) — 'The  
Heart of the Matter' — Trevor  
Howard is the hero of Graham  
Greene's morality tale.  
November 30 — (EM-WREG) — 'The  
Solid Gold Cadillac' — Judy Holliday

\*FREE

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