

Bill Bynum
July 23, 2004

Introduction: It now gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce our speaker for the luncheon. A major part of the African tradition is the _____ or the storyteller. And I will introduce our speaker this afternoon as part of a wonderful story. I'll give you the preface and introduction to Bill Bynum and he will give you the concluding chapter.

In 1992, the Foundation for the Mid-South received its first major investment from a national funder in the sum of \$8.3 million dollars. These funds were to support a major initiative targeted to the Delta portion of Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. An initiative called the Delta Partnership Initiative. This initiative was described as having a three legged stool, work-force development, economic development, and marketing opportunities for Delta goods. A regional citizen was hired to head the work-force development leg. The Board of Directors of the Foundation for the Mid-South decided to follow the philosophy of the Marines, they looked for "a few good men" to consider for leading the development of the other two legs, economic development and creating marketing opportunities. The board looked all over the country and finally set their sights on one good man; from North Carolina, Bill Bynum. The board found a man who is well prepared, experienced, dedicated, educated and creative. However, the funder questioned the wisdom of the decision, because this out-standing gentleman was so young and did not bring many years of service. Because of their recognition of who he is, our foundation leadership said, "We will bring this man to the mid-south region, funders, with or without your support." Bill Bynum, his wife Hope and their then little daughter, Blyth, came to the region as a result of this decision. Bill used the Foundation for the Mid-South as an incubator for moving the concept of the two legs of the stool into a fully developed and functioning organization, The Enterprise Corporation of the Delta.

Since his inception in the mid 1990's, The Enterprise Corporation of the Delta has generated over \$150 million dollars into the region for financing through the Community Development Financial Institution. He then, with a small grant, did something that had not been done in 11 years. He established a faith-based credit union at his church, Anderson United Methodist Church. Today, the two are merged; The Enterprise Corporation of the Delta and the Hope Credit Union are one. I've given you the preface and the introduction to this dynamic story. My professional partner, my friend, my hero, and my brother will give you the next chapter.