

Now and Then

Bama Pest Control

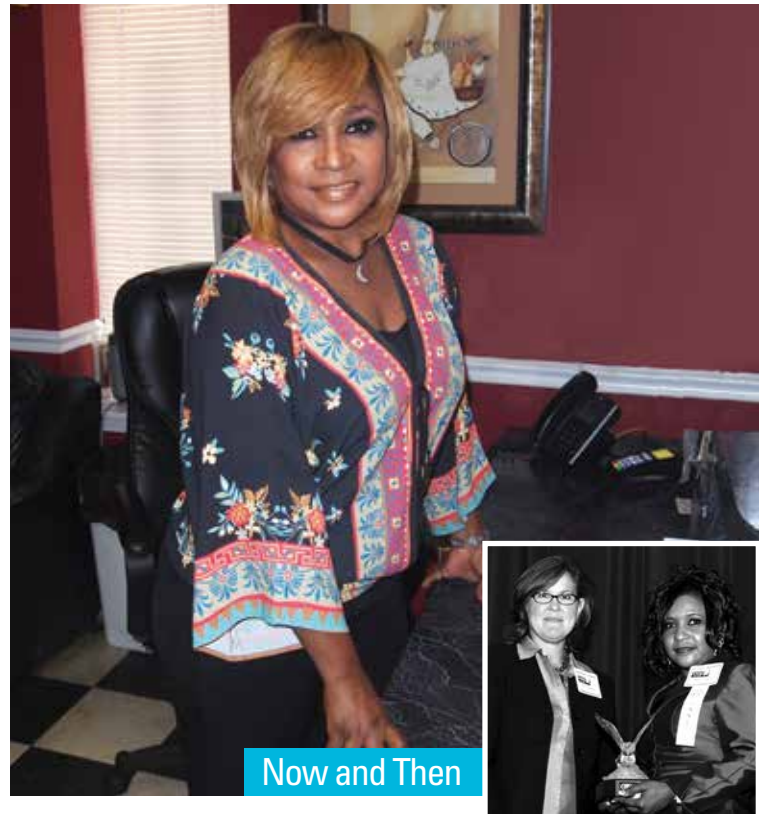
1999 & 2012 Eagle Award Winner
 Clarence Johnson Jr., president
 1862 Duval St.
 251-478-7015
 www.bamapestcontrol.com

Bama Pest Control received the Eagle Award in 1999 and 2012. President Clarence Johnson Jr. said it wasn't long ago he was looking for an exit strategy from the company he and his wife Ruthie built. The pest control industry overall has grown to maturity and much of the competition can be found on the shelf at big-box stores.

The recognition the company gained from the Eagle Award, especially the second time around, motivated Johnson to get involved with the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force, spurring opportunities to grow his business in ways he hadn't imagined.

Instead of allowing a financial ceiling to squash business growth and send him into retirement, Johnson and his son, Clarence Johnson III, expanded services that keep or force pests and wildlife out of homes, offices and commercial properties.

Watch for details on the company's next endeavor, landscape services.



Now and Then

Paula's Hair Unlimited

2007 Eagle Award Winner
 Paula Jones, owner
 729 Lakeside Dr. W.
 251-661-1747
 www.PaulasHairUnlimited.com

2007 Eagle Award winner Paula Jones is owner of Paula's Hair Unlimited, a full-service salon for women and men. Her business grew from initially helping her mother, who styled family members' and neighbors' hair. Over the years, she has watched natural hair trends, including the growing popularity of afros and women embracing their gray, cut into her business.

While Jones still has a large clientele who use her specialty services, such as precision cuts, highlights, color, relaxers and weaves, she now has someone in her shop specializing in natural hair, specifically for African-Americans.

With the technology of social media, Jones is engaging new and existing customers through Facebook, promoting her salon and her happy clients.

Jones also uses her master cosmetologist training to teach students at a local community college, passing on her knowledge to tomorrow's business owners.

Eagle Awards Timeline

1998 The first Eagle Awards were presented by the Mobile Area Chamber in partnership with Bishop State Community College and the University of South Alabama's Small Business Development Center. Tavis Smiley served as the first keynote speaker for this sold-out event.

Anissa Centers, then with WALA FOX10, was the Eagle Awards' first emcee. The station has supported the event since its inception, providing emcees and

video production. When Centers left Mobile, anchor Lenise Ligon has since served as emcee.

2001 The number of awards winners changed from 10 to five.

2003 The first female keynote speaker for Eagle Awards was Susan Taylor, then-editor of *Essence* magazine. She returned to Mobile in 2015 to speak again.



2004 Alexis Herman, the former U.S. Secretary of Labor under President Bill Clinton, returned to her native Mobile as the keynote speaker.

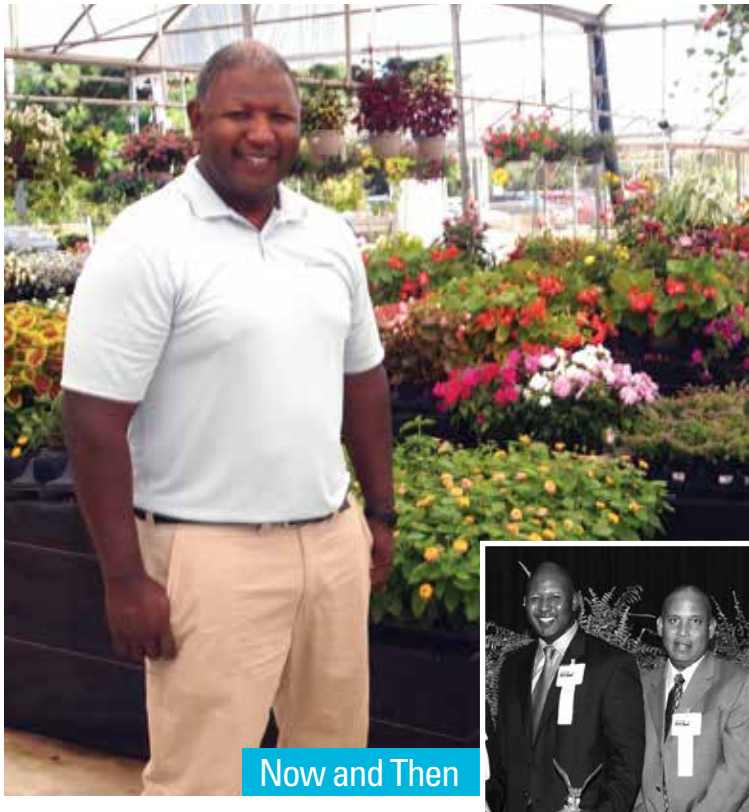
The Chamber presents its first Minority Business Advocate Award to Mobile Area Water and Sewer System for supporting local minority-owned firms.



2006 The Eagle Award Hall of Fame was created, and the first two inductees were named:

Commonwealth National Bank and State Farm Insurance – Makeda Nichols.





Now and Then

Shore Acres Plant Farm

2008 Eagle Award Winner
 Oliver Washington, owner
 11545 Bellingrath Rd.
 251-973-1602
www.saplantfarm.com

Oliver Washington is owner of Shore Acres Plant Farm, started by his grandfather, passed to his father and now to him. The company was recognized with an Eagle Award in 2008.

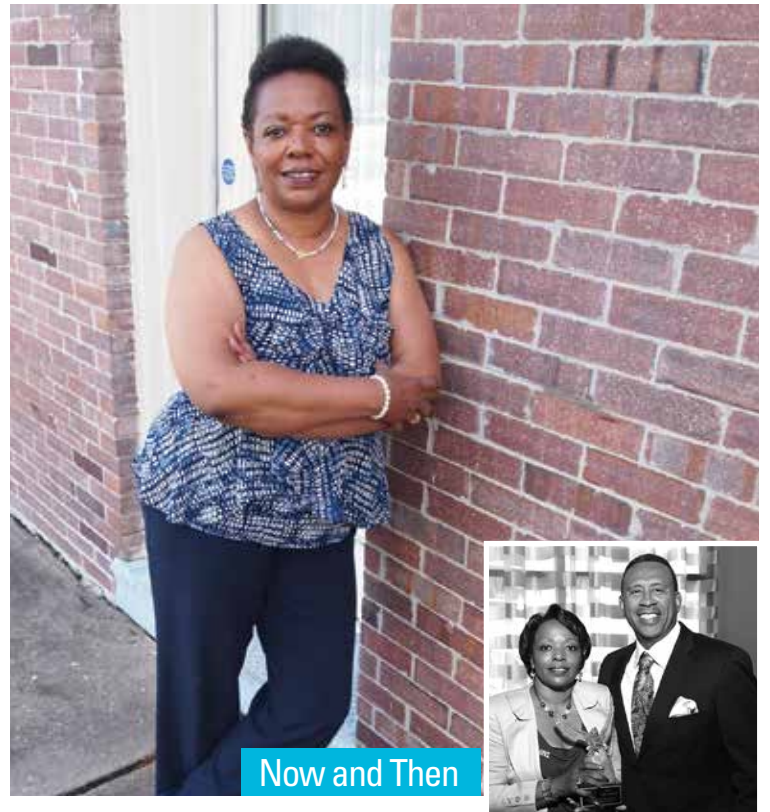
The fact that millennials don't like to work in the yard is affecting his customers – primarily big-box retailers, nurseries and garden centers – and therefore him.

Rather than let his family

business wilt, he has created larger containers with a variety of flowers and greenery that appeal to millennials and other clients, and added recognizable brands to its inventory, like Knock Out roses and Encore azaleas, popular for their continuous blooms.

Washington recently hired a merchandising team to ensure quality once they arrive at stores along the Gulf Coast.

Recognizing the latest farm-to-table trend embraced by restaurants and families alike, he has increased the nursery's emphasis on vegetables and herbs. Shore Acres is also open to the public.



Now and Then

Business Resource Design and Print

2013 Eagle Award Winner
 Janice Malone, president
 809 Government St.
 251-438-7050
www.brcdesignandprint.com

After winning the Eagle Award in 2013, Janice Malone, president of Business Resource Design and Print, changed her business model significantly – and more than once. When the parent company of Business Networking International was bought, Malone sold her franchise, dropping BNI from the company name.

Her first instinct was to then focus on print and copy, but she knew she needed volume and automation to turn ink into dollars, even with her daughter JaVaughne Malone adding graphic design to the company's services.

Next, she pivoted the focus to marketing, and found herself competing with a flooded arena of solo entrepreneurs offering similar services.

The final shift came when she melded marketing and technology, a combination Malone believes makes her company unique. Today, she is helping clients rebrand and create customer engagement through mobile apps and social media.

2008 Muskogee Metalworks in Atmore was presented an Eagle



Award. In 2015, the company returned to receive the Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate Award.

2010 The annual Eagle Awards program merged with the MBDA Minority Business Enterprise Center awards.

2011 Professional development workshops geared toward minority-owned businesses were added to the day's events.

2013 The Chamber board of directors added a vice chair of minority business development and Larry Dorsey of Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering is the first volunteer to hold the position.



2014 The Chamber's Minority Business Advocate award presented at the Eagle Awards

was renamed to honor the late Rev. Wesley A. James, (on right) a champion of the Chamber's diversity efforts.

