



Minorities Excel In Construction

Minority-owned firms and employees are providing important services in the Michigan construction industry.

■ *By Aram Kalousdian and Nisah Tahara, CIT*

Dumas Companies Celebrate

This year marks the 30th anniversary for the Dumas Companies in the construction industry. Working in both the public and private sectors, major projects have included factories, hospitals, automotive facilities, educational institutions, office buildings, casinos, and stadiums. Through owner J. L. Dumas' persistence, dedication and vision, the firm has evolved into a multi-million-dollar enterprise that enjoys a reputation for excellence and customer satisfaction in commercial, industrial and manufacturing markets. With a core professional and administrative staff of 50 employees and skilled tradesmen in the field ranging from 25 to several hundred at any given time, Dumas stands ready to meet industry needs. As early as 1981, the company enjoyed the distinction of being one of the first minority-owned firms in the country with the capacity to handle large-scale projects on a national level.

Specialty services include but are not limited to structural steel fabrication and erection, manufacturing equipment installation, and the erection of precast concrete. The firm also has offices in Chicago, Ill., and Toledo, Ohio.

In 2002, the firm opened a 64,000-square-foot structural and miscellaneous steel fabrication shop located in Detroit. J. L. Dumas, president, said, "We are one of a few African American owned entities of this kind and magnitude in the country and the only one within the city of Detroit. It's been a 30-year journey with ups and downs. For people entering the business my advice would be not to take things personally, treat your people well and keep evolving."

Over its 30-year history, the firm has developed an impressive client base that includes automotive giants such as Ford, DaimlerChrysler and General Motors; large municipalities such as the cities of Detroit and Chicago, Ill.; educational institutions such as Wayne State University and the Detroit Public Schools; and an array of commercial



J. L. Dumas

owners including Detroit Edison and SBC, formerly Ameritech.

With quality as a cornerstone of its operations, Dumas received its International Standards Organization (ISO) 9001 registration in 2000, an accomplishment that has helped to sustain and further develop excellent working relationships and alliances

with major construction enterprises nationally. Dumas is a certified minority business enterprise (MBE) with several local, state and national agencies including Minority Business Development Councils in Michigan and Chicago. The firm also has working agreements, memberships in or affiliations with the International Ironworkers Union and International Operating Engineers Union, as well as unions representing laborers, carpenters and other trades.

In addition to seeking out the best-qualified professional staff, J. L. Dumas is an advocate for employee development and community involvement. Dumas said, "Education is a life-long endeavor and it comes in many forms. I want the best people around me and if that means making an investment in their formal education, I'm glad to do that." Dumas also maintains professional affiliations with the National Association of Minority Contractors where he has been a board member for 22 years; the Association of General Contractors; the American Arbitration Association; Detroit Chamber of Commerce; the Chicago Urban League; the Great Lakes Fabricators and Erectors Association; and the Detroit Athletic Club.