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Tucker helping needy firms locate financing

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For many small businesses in Maryland, especially those owned by minorities, Stanley W. Tucker is the man to turn to for a helping hand.

For most of his career, Tucker has been giving fledgling businesses a jump start and helping others stay afloat through MSBDFA Management Group Inc. (MMG), a trio of private firms that makes loans to and invests in small, disadvantaged companies. The firm, which was set up as a quasi-public state agency with Tucker as its executive director, was privatized in 1995.

"My mission is simple: I want to fuel dreams, create new realities, take businesses by the hand and lead them to Wall Street," said Tucker, reciting his well-known mantra. "I've always felt it was important to help small businesses."

Over the years, the firm has doled out roughly \$59 million in financing to some 384 businesses.

Tucker's dedication is not going unrecognized.

Each year, Allan Stephenson, director of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Baltimore District office, said he chooses either an individual, company or organization that has gone the "extra mile" in assisting small businesses and presents them with the office's Unsung Hero Award.

This year's unsung hero is Tucker, whom Stephenson praises for working more than 16 years assisting small or economically disadvantaged businesses.

"Under his direction, (MMG) is able to provide contract financing, equity or investment financing, working capital and other forms of financial assistance," Stephenson said. "In recognizing the unique needs of minority businesses, his organizations work with youth and other programs in anticipation of developing tomorrow's business leaders."

Indeed, Tucker has been able to take a state agency that was ailing in the 1980's and turned it into a profitable operation.

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