

Reaching Beyond the Ordinary to the Extraordinary



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As Black History Month winds down, City Startup Labs is spotlighting a set of achievers, who in spite of the odds, realized extraordinary success as entrepreneurs.



Maggie L. Walker
Maggie L. Walker,
PRESIDENT.

The first is Maggie Lena Walker – In 1903, Maggie Lena Walker founded the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in Richmond, Virginia. She became not only the first African American woman, but the first American woman of any race to charter a bank in the United States. Her bank not only catered to adult clientele but also actively marketed to children, encouraging them to save their money. *Click the image to learn more about Maggie's extraordinary story.* **Note:** Next month we will showcase another set of Black women entrepreneurs.



The second is **Byron Allen** – Byron Allen Folks, born in 1961, is an American businessman, film and television producer, and comedian. He is the founder of the U.S. media company Entertainment Studios, which has interests in television production, broadcasting, film production, and digital media. Additionally, Allen’s media empire includes ownership of The Weather Channel, regional sports networks, The Griot, and broadcast TV stations. In 2018, Allen was selected for the Bloomberg 50 as one of “the people in business, entertainment, finance, politics, and technology and science whose 2018 accomplishments were particularly noteworthy.” He was also selected for the 100 Most Intriguing Entrepreneurs at the Goldman Sachs Builders & Innovators Summit 2018. Most recently, Allen made a \$14.3 billion bid to acquire Paramount Global. *Click the image to learn more about Byron’s extraordinary story.*



Lastly, and closer to home, is **Thaddeus Lincoln Tate** — Tate was a prominent Black entrepreneur in Charlotte, NC starting in the 1890's. He and other African-American leaders created the Afro-American Mutual Insurance Company that operated from 1907 to 1927. The company hired Blacks and catered to people largely ignored by white-owned companies.

Together with C. R. Blake, Sr., A. E. Spears and Dr. A. J. Williams, Tate built the Mecklenburg Investment Company Building (MIC) at Third and Brevard Streets in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Charlotte's Second Ward 1922. It was built as an anchor for the neighborhood's business and social activities, the building was the first structure planned and executed by Black community leaders to accommodate Black businesses, professional offices, and civic and fraternal organizations. The founders represented a educated, prosperous, and self-reliant new middle class of urban Blacks that

NEW REEP COHORT



(missing from the photo: Sharrelle Davis, Tyrus McGee, Brenda Garner, and Avery Robinson)

Last week we started another ReEntry Entrepreneurship Program (REEP) cohort at Central Piedmont Community College's central campus in Charlotte (you'll recall in our last newsletter that CSL moved to CPCC early this month). This new set of REEP participants will be the second to make use of the LEARN/BUILD/DEPLOY model but with a greater emphasis on teamwork. They started their journey with a 2-day orientation. Next, they're scheduled to do some bonding during a fun-filled "Escape Room" outing and then complete the 2nd week with a Cultivation session – designed to get them to embrace the possibilities that can unfold for their businesses and lives. Over the next several months, we'll be keeping you updated (here and in our social media channels) on their progress, as this class moves from being justice-impacted to making an impact.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Each month we will be profiling a different Board member of City Startup Labs, starting with **Robyn Massey**, who we want to honor for her service, as she will be rolling off the Board after next month. We have been exceedingly lucky to have had Robyn with us, especially as she helped to guide us with governance. Please learn more about her background and why she was such an asset to CSL.

[READ ABOUT ROBYN](#)



With gratitude,

Henry Rock



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