

Making a Difference

Giving back has become more than a passion for GCMC. It's a way of doing business.

BY CHARLYNE H. McWILLIAMS

As an individual, making a difference in your community can be a worthwhile and achievable goal. To create a business with a sole mission to improve the community, though, is another matter. Since its inception in 1992, Grant Capital Management Corporation (GCMC) and its president and founder, J.P. Grant, have strived to do just that.

Grant did not start his career knowing he would go into financing, or that helping municipalities meet the needs of their citizens would become his lifelong undertaking. But, after attending Harvard University and working for IBM selling computers to city and state governments, he saw an unmet need and decided to take action. Thus, GCMC was born.

But starting GCMC, originally named First Municipal Credit Corporation, was not an easy task. Times were harsh in the beginning, and it wasn't until a family friend invested \$2,000 that the company really took off.

"That got us through a tough time," Grant says. "He had faith in me and did not focus on where I was at the time, but my potential. And I will never forget that I did not get here on my own."

Today, GCMC, based in Columbia, Md., has one mission—to provide lease finance services to government entities, such as states, cities, counties, school districts and universities. They receive finance services from GCMC, including lease purchase agreements, master leases, certifications of participation and shared savings energy financing.

Through its investors, GCMC can handle financing requirements

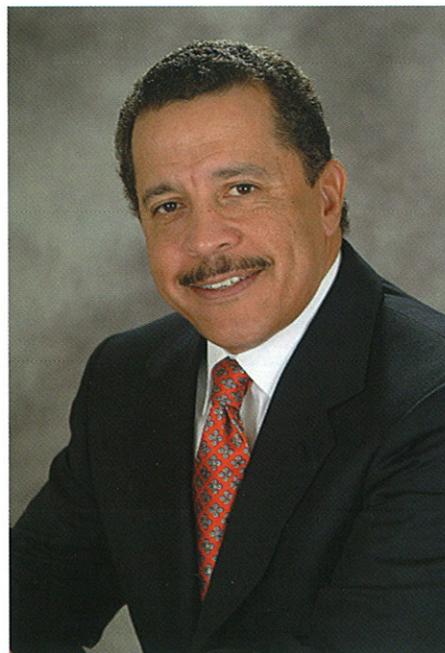
of municipalities ranging from \$50,000 to \$70 million, allowing these towns to pay for everything from toll roads to new firefighting equipment.

However, Grant is clear that GCMC provides more than just financial support to municipalities.

"It is about giving back to your clients and the community, and we instill that in our employees," he explains. "We strive to make the client feel like they are getting more than what they are asking because we are able to show them extra value in the projects they propose."

This fact is especially evident in projects that are self-sustaining, Grant says. Installing energy-efficient equipment into everyday technology such as traffic lights translates into lower energy costs for the municipality in the long run. This allows the project to pay for itself while adding the value of being environmentally friendly, he explains. A high level of customer service also has made the firm stand out among such competitors as Bank of America.

Grant's commitment to giving back also is evident in GCMC's work with the NFBPA. Grant has been financially supportive in several ways with the organization, including advertising in *The Forum* and co-sponsoring NFBPA's annual conference. GCMC is also a member of the National Corporate Advisory Council, through which it helps enhance public-private cooperation in finding solutions to urban challenges and develops resources to carry out the mission of NFBPA. In addition, GCMC is establishing a \$5,000 scholarship to a recipient



J.P. Grant

selected by the NFBPA this year.

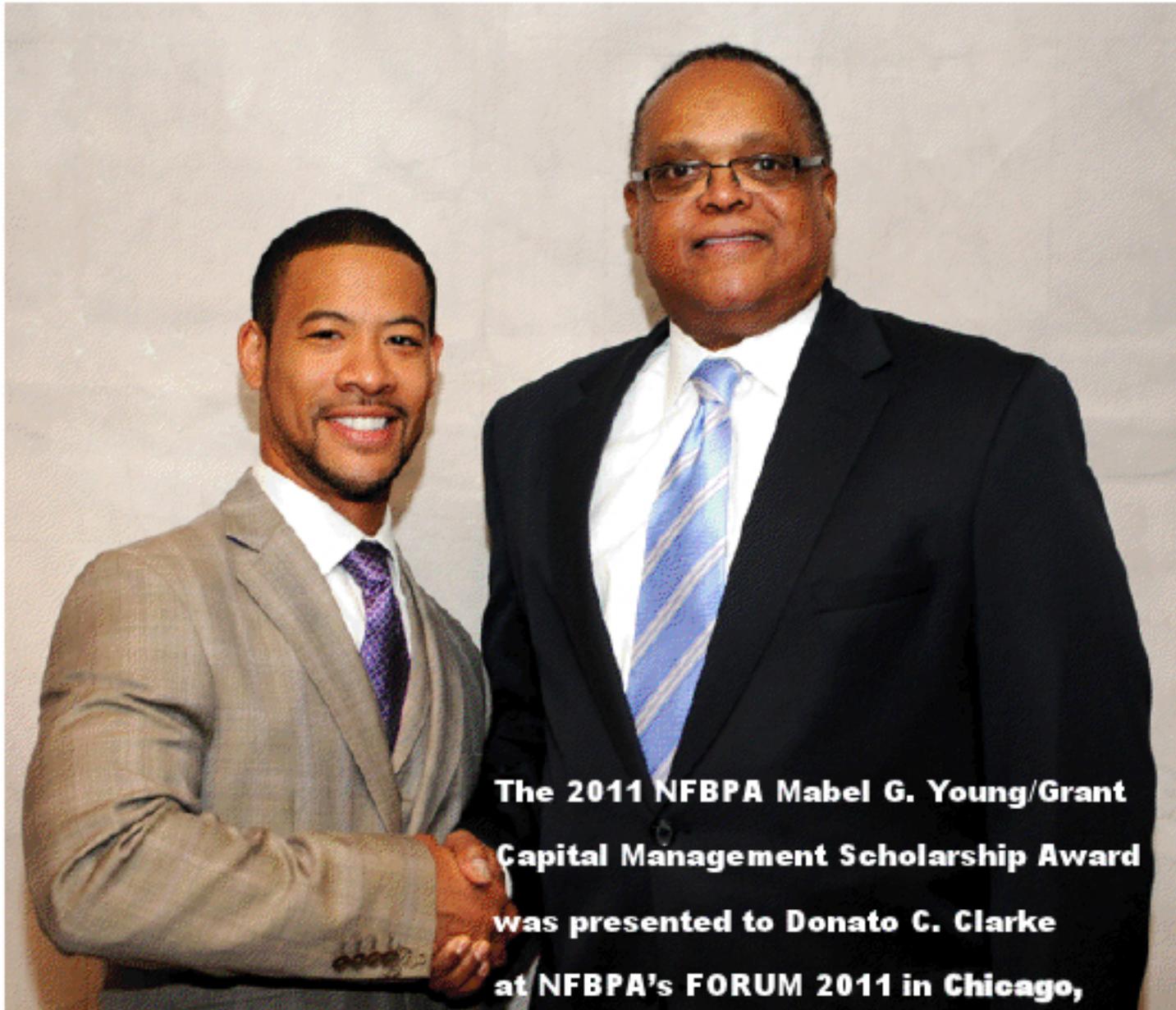
"We have to invest in our future," Grant says. "Going to school is expensive, so if we can offset some of that so students can focus on school, do it."

In addition, GCMC has offered to financially support other promising students because, as Grant says, "If you are financially strong, you are financially free."

In the future, Grant hopes to become more involved in corporate advisory board activities and to act as a financial source for any NFBPA initiatives "that may just need the funding in order to get them going," he says.

"I made a commitment to support groups such as NFBPA long ago, and it is a pleasure to work with a group with a quality staff and high level of professionalism," Grant says. "And not only is it a pleasure to work with NFBPA, but an inspiration as well because of the positive impact it has on African Americans in the public sector."

Charlyne H. McWilliams is the president of Hope Communications and a freelance writer in Silver Spring, Md.





The 2010 Mabel G. Young/Grant Capital Management Scholarship in the amount of \$5000 was presented to Ashley Parrott at NFBPA's FORUM 2010 in Greensboro, N.C.

Giving back has become more than a passion at Grant Capital . . . It's a way of doing business.

The Grant Capital Management/Mabel G. Young Scholarship

An annual academic scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 given to an awardee selected by the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) to offset some of the expense of obtaining a college education.



2009 Scholarship Recipient

Ms. Lauren Boswell

As a current third year student at University of Virginia with a 3.2 GPA, Ms. Boswell majors in Urban and Environmental Planning, African-American and African Studies.

Along with her academic endeavors, she also takes the initiative to enhance her education outside the classroom. Ms. Boswell is President of the Black Student Alliance Leadership Development, and a member of the Student Council Committee Civic Engagement which encourages student civic involvement in the community.

Ms. Boswell enjoys volunteering as a mentor for various organizations including; African-American Affairs Peer Advisor, serving as a 'Big Sister' through the Young Women Leadership Program, and through the 'Alternative Spring Break' program, traveled to the Dominican Republic and taught English to local middle and elementary school students.



2008 Scholarship Recipient

Ms. Leila Paye

As a single mother, child of immigrants and graduate student, Ms. Paye has encountered many financial and academic challenges. Her life experiences have enabled her to appreciate the value of higher education.

Recently, Ms. Paye completed her first year as a graduate student at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN and will finish the semester with a 4.0 GPA. Ms. Paye's plan is to complete the requirements necessary to earn her Masters in Public Administration and pursue a career in local government as a City Manager.

Ms. Paye current position as a Council Assistant helps her to be able to make a difference in the community she serves, and be the face of the changing demographics occurring in local communities all over the nation. This change has created a need for more people of diverse backgrounds and women in top-level administrative positions within government.