

Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun?

Reginald F. Lewis, African American Entrepreneur

Museum Connection: Labor That Built a Nation

Purpose: In this lesson students will determine factors that support successful entrepreneurship.

Course: United States History, African American History, Maryland History

Time Frame: 2 class periods

Correlation to State Standards:

United States History

5.0 CONTENT STANDARD: HISTORY- Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs and themes; organize patterns and events; analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland and the United States.

Objective 1.e: Examine African-American responses to the denial of civil rights such as the rise of African-American churches, African-American newspapers, historically black colleges and the responses of individuals, such as Ida B. wells, W.E.B. DuBois, and Booker T. Washington.

Correlation to Maryland State Curriculum for Personal Financial Literacy Education Standards:

Standard 2: Grades 9 – 12

BY THE END OF GRADE 12, STUDENTS WILL:

2.12.A Evaluate the relationships among career choice, education, skills, economic conditions and income.

2.12.A.2 Analyze how personal values may impact financial decisions, including becoming an entrepreneur.

Common Core State Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

Common Core State Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

- Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Objective:

Students will be able to determine characteristics that enabled Reginald F. Lewis to be a successful entrepreneur.

Vocabulary and Concepts:

Entrepreneur	an individual or group who takes the risk to start a new business, manage creatively, or introduce a new good or service into the marketplace in the hope of earning a profit.
Human Resources	the health, strength, talents, education, and skills that people can use to produce goods and services; also called <i>human capital</i> .
Philanthropic	devoted to helping other people, especially through giving charitable aid.
Endowment	the giving of an amount of money to an institution, especially an educational institution.
Sabbatical	a period of leave from work for research, study, or travel, often with pay.
Leverage Buyout	the borrowing of money to purchase a company, in the hope that it will make enough profit to cover the interest payable on the loan.
Capital	money that can be used to produce further wealth; the assets of a business that remain after its debts and other liabilities are paid or deducted.
Venture Capital	money used for investment in enterprises that involve high risk, but offer the possibility of large profits
Small Business Administration	a business that has a small number of employees, usually less than 100.
Development	the process of changing and becoming larger, stronger, or more impressive, successful, or advanced which leads to sustained economic development.

Materials:

For the Teacher:

Teacher Resource Sheet 1, Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun?

For the Student:

Student Resource Sheet 1 a, Reginald F. Lewis, Part I

Student Resource Sheet 1 b, Reginald F. Lewis, Part II

Student Resource Sheet 2, Reginald Lewis: Overcoming Obstacles

Student Resource Sheet 3 a, Reginald Lewis: The High School Years, Part I

Student Resource Sheet 3 b, Reginald Lewis: The High School Years, Part II
Student Resource Sheet 4 a, Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part I
Student Resource Sheet 4 b, Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part II
Student Resource Sheet 5 a, Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part III
Student Resource Sheet 5 b, Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part IV
Student Resource Sheet 6 a, Reginald Lewis: The Harvard Years, Part I
Student Resource Sheet 6 b, Reginald Lewis: The Harvard Years, Part II
Student Resource Sheet 7, Reginald Lewis: Building a Career
Student Resource Sheet 8, Reginald Lewis: Firmly Established
Student Resource Sheet 9, Reginald Lewis: Philanthropist
Student Resource Sheet 10 a, What is an Entrepreneur? Part I
Student Resource Sheet 10 b, What is an Entrepreneur? Part II

Resources:

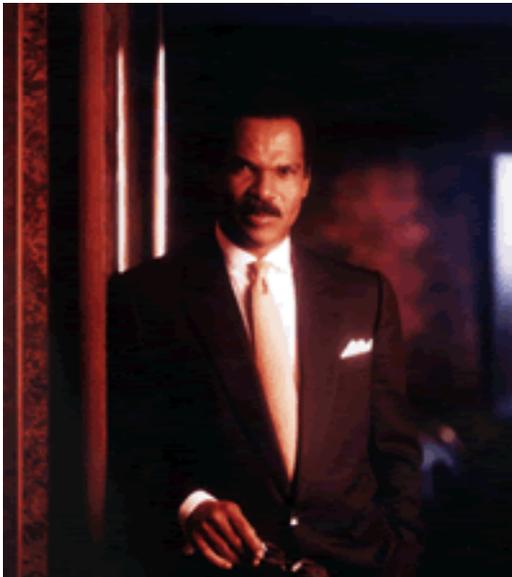
Publications:

Haskins, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Black Stars: African American Millionaires*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lewis, R.F. & Walker, B. (1995) *Why should white guys have all of the fun?* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The Reginald F. Lewis Story. Hosted by Tim Reid. Obsidian Home Entertainment, 2004. VHS.

Historical Background:



Reginald F. Lewis

Reginald F. Lewis was born on December 7, 1942 in a Baltimore, Maryland neighborhood he once described as “semi-tough.” Strongly influenced by his family, he began his career at the age of ten, delivering the local Afro-American newspaper. Fortune Magazine reported that as a child Lewis kept his earnings in a tin can known as “Reggie’s Hidden Treasure.” His grandmother who taught him the importance of saving some of everything you earned had given him the tin can. Reginald later sold his newspaper business at a profit.

During his years at Dunbar High School, Reginald excelled in both academic studies and sports. He was quarterback on the

football team, a shortstop on the baseball team, and a forward on the basketball team. In all three sports he was named captain. Reginald was also elected vice-president of the student body; his friend and classmate, Robert M. Bell (current Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for the State of Maryland) was elected president. During his high school years, Reginald worked nights and weekends at jobs with his grandfather, who was a head waiter and maitre d'.

In 1961, Reginald entered Virginia State University on a football scholarship, majoring in economics. He graduated on the dean's list, despite having a rough first year academically and losing his scholarship due to an injury. In his senior year, the Harvard Law School offered a summer school program to introduce a small, select group of black students to the field of legal study. At the end of the program, Reginald was invited to attend Harvard Law School; at the time, he was the only person in the 148-year history of Harvard Law School to be admitted before submitting a formal application. He arrived at Harvard with \$50 in his pocket. It was in his third year at Harvard that he discovered the direction for his career in a course on securities law. Lewis wrote his third year paper on takeovers.

Reginald Lewis graduated from Harvard Law School in 1968 and went to work for the prestigious New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton and Garrison. Within two years, he established his own Wall Street law firm. While his focus was corporate law, he also helped minority-owned businesses secure badly-needed capital using Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Companies (venture capital firms formed by corporation or foundation, operating under the aegis of the Small Business Administration.)

A desire to "do the deals myself" led him to establish the TLC Group L.P. in 1983. His first major deal involved the \$22.5 million leverage buyout of the McCall Pattern Company. Reginald nursed the struggling company back to health and despite a declining market, led the company to enjoy the two most profitable years in its 113-year history. In the summer of 1987, he sold it for \$90 million, making \$50 million in profit.

In October 1987, Reginald purchased the international division of Beatrice Foods, with holdings in 31 countries, which became known as TLC Beatrice International. At \$985 million, the deal was the largest leveraged buyout at the time of overseas assets by an American company. As Chairman and CEO, he moved quickly to reposition the company, pay down the debt, and vastly increase the company's worth. By 1992, the company had sales of over \$1.6 billion annually, and Reginald was sharing his time between his company's offices in New York and an office in Paris (most of the company's businesses were in Europe).

With all of his success, Reginald did not forget others; giving back was part of his life. In 1987 he established The Reginald F. Lewis Foundation, which funded grants of approximately \$10 million to various non-profit programs and organizations while Reginald was alive. His first major grant was an unsolicited \$1 million to Howard University—a school he never attended—in 1988; the federal government matched the grant, making the gift to Howard University \$2 million, which was used to fund an endowment.

Interest from the endowment is used for scholarships, fellowships, and faculty sabbaticals. In 1992, Reginald donated \$3 million to Harvard Law School—the largest grant in the history of the school at that time. In gratitude, the school renamed its International Law center the Reginald F. Lewis International Law Center. Among other programs, the grant supports a fellowship to teach minority lawyers how to be law professors.

In January 1993, Reginald’s remarkable career was cut short by his untimely death at the age of 50 after a short illness. At his funeral, a letter from his longtime friend, David N. Dinkins, former mayor of New York, was read. In the letter, Dinkins wrote, “Reginald Lewis accomplished more in half a century than most of us could ever deem imaginable. And his brilliant career was matched always by a warm and generous heart.” Dinkins added, “It is said that service to others is the rent we pay on earth. Reg Lewis departed us paid in full.”

Even after his death, Reginald’s philanthropic endeavors continue. During his illness, he made known his desire to support a museum of African American culture. In 2002, the Vice President of the foundation read an article in the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper describing a museum of Maryland African American History and Culture slated to be built near Baltimore’s inner Harbor.

After further research and discussion, especially relative to the partnership between the museum and the Maryland State Department of Education to develop an African American curriculum to be taught in all public schools in the state of Maryland, the foundation made its largest grant to date to the proposed museum; \$5 million dollars. The money in is an endowment with the interest to be used for educational purposes.

Lawyer, entrepreneur, philanthropist, Chairman, CEO, husband, father, son, brother, nephew, cousin, friend—Reginald F. Lewis lived his life according to the words he often quoted to audiences around the country: “Keep going, no matter what.”

Lesson Development:

Motivation:

Display **Teacher Resource Sheet 1**, “Why Should White Guys Have all the Fun?” Discuss the quote. Explain that this is a quote from Reginald F. Lewis, a successful entrepreneur who was born in Baltimore City, and is the title of his co-authored biography. Tell students that they will be learning about Lewis’ life and the various obstacles that he faced on his road to becoming a successful businessman.

Distribute **Student Resource Sheet 1a-b**, “Reginald F. Lewis” and **Student Resource Sheet 2**, “Reginald Lewis: Overcoming Obstacles.” Have students read Lewis’ biography and list the obstacles Lewis faced and how he overcame those obstacles on the graphic organizer. Project a transparency of Student Resource Sheet #2 and keep a master list as students discuss the reading.

Note to Teacher: You may choose to have students view the *Reginald F. Lewis Biography Video* instead of reading *Student Resource Sheet #1*. This is available on the *American Legacy DVD Collection*.

Break students into 7 groups. Tell students that in order to obtain deeper insight into why Lewis was successful, they are going to read excerpts from his biography. Assign each group one of the **Student Resource Sheets 3-9**. Inform students that the italicized words in their readings are Lewis' actual words--they are from an autobiography that his biographer used. Have student groups read their selection and add to **Student Resource Sheet #2**. Add to the master list as student groups report out.

Tell students that many of the characteristics that enabled Lewis to overcome life's obstacles are the same characteristics that have been identified as characteristics of successful entrepreneurs and other business persons. Some of these same characteristics are also seen in other successful individuals who are not entrepreneurs. Distribute **Student Resource Sheet #10a-b**, "What is an Entrepreneur?" Ask: Which of those characteristics did Lewis have? Have students highlight the characteristics that they found in the life of Reginald Lewis. Discuss.

Assessment:

Have students write an essay responding to the following prompt:

Identify three characteristics of a successful entrepreneur and write an essay that describes how Reginald F. Lewis used those characteristics to overcome obstacles and become a successful entrepreneur.

Closure:

Have students revisit the section of **Student Resource Sheet #10a-b**, "What is an Entrepreneur?" Ask them to define the term Human Resources. Record the definition on the board. Ask: What ways can YOU (Student) increase your personal human resources and increase your chances of becoming an entrepreneur? Discuss.

Lesson Extensions:

The Museum offers several school programs that connect to the curriculum lessons.

- *Journey in History Theater* provides living history and theatrical performances which highlight African Americans in the museum's gallery.
- Take the theme tour, *Pioneers and Trailblazers*. Discover African American pioneers and leaders who contributed to Maryland's history in labor, the arts, education, politics and community activism.
- Contact group reservations for schedule updates.
- View The Reginald F. Lewis Story from the American Legacy DVD Collection.
- Research African American entrepreneurs in the media today such as former BET owner Bob Johnson, media giant Oprah Winfrey, or hip hop mogul Sean Puffy Combs.

- Visit the Building Maryland, Building America gallery in the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. Locate African Americans who overcame social obstacles to pursue their career goals.

Teacher Resource Sheet 1

Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun?

I remember being in the bathtub, and my grandmother and grandfather were talking about some incident that had been unfair and was racial in nature. They were talking about work and accomplishing things and how racism was getting in the way of that. And they looked at me and said, “Well, maybe it will be different for him.”

I couldn't have been more than about six years old.

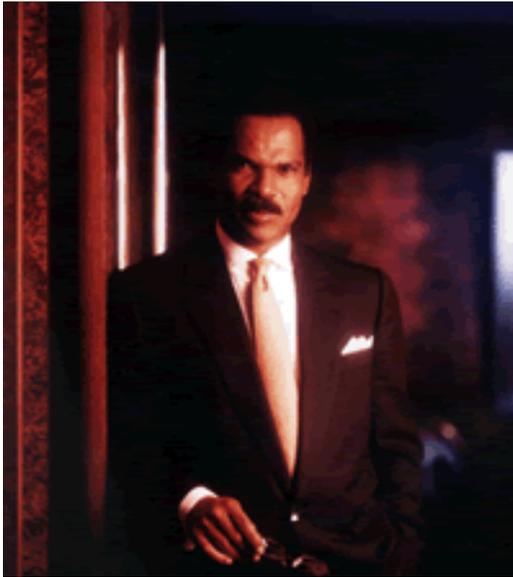
One of them, I can't remember whether it was my grandfather or my grandmother, said to me, “Well, is it going to be any different for you?”

And as I was climbing out of the tub and they were putting a towel around me, I looked up and said, “Yeah, cause why should white guys have all the fun?”

(Lewis & Walker, p. xvii.)

Student Resource Sheet 1a

Reginald F. Lewis, Part I



Reginald F. Lewis was born on December 7, 1942 in a Baltimore, Maryland neighborhood he once described as “semi-tough.” Strongly influenced by his family, he began his career at the age of ten, delivering the local Afro-American newspaper. Fortune Magazine reported that as a child Lewis kept his earnings in a tin can known as “Reggie’s Hidden Treasure.” His grandmother who taught him the importance of saving some of everything you earned had given him the tin can. Reginald later sold his newspaper business at a profit.

During his years at Dunbar High School, Reginald excelled in both academic studies and sports. He was quarterback on the football team, a shortstop on the baseball team, and a forward on the basketball team. In all three sports he was named captain. Reginald was also elected vice-president of the student body; his friend and classmate, Robert M. Bell (current Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for the State of Maryland) was elected president. During his high school years, Reginald worked nights and weekends at jobs with his grandfather, who was a head waiter and maitre d’.

In 1961, Reginald entered Virginia State University on a football scholarship, majoring in economics. He graduated on the Dean’s List, despite having a rough first year academically as well as losing his scholarship due to an injury. In his senior year, the Rockefeller Foundation funded a program at Harvard Law School to select a few black students to attend summer school at Harvard to introduce them to legal studies in general.

At the end of the program, Reginald was invited to attend Harvard Law School; at the time, he was the only person in the 148-year history of Harvard Law School to be admitted before he applied. He arrived at Harvard with \$50 in his pocket. During his third year at Harvard, he discovered the direction for his future career in a course on securities law. He wrote his third-year paper on takeovers.

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Student Resource Sheet 1b

Reginald F. Lewis, Part II

His first major deal was the \$22.5 million leveraged buyout of the McCall Pattern Company. Reginald nursed the struggling company back to health and, in the summer of 1987, he sold it for \$90 million, making \$50 million in profit. Despite a declining market, under his leadership, McCall enjoyed the two most profitable years in its 113-year history. In October 1987, Reginald Lewis purchased, for \$985 million, the international division of Beatrice Foods, with holdings in 31 countries, which became known as TLC Beatrice International. This deal was the largest leveraged buyout ever of overseas assets by an American company. As Chairman and CEO, he moved quickly to reposition the company, pay down the debt and vastly increase the company's worth. In 1992, the company had sales over \$1.6 billion annually, and Reginald was sharing his time between his company's offices in New York and an office in Paris (most of the company's businesses were in Europe).

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In January 1993, after a brief illness, Reginald F. Lewis' remarkable career was cut short by his untimely death at the age of 50. At his funeral, a letter from his longtime friend, David N. Dinkins, former mayor of New York, was read. In the letter Dinkins said "Reginald Lewis accomplished more in half a century than most of us could ever deem imaginable. And his brilliant career was matched always by a warm and generous heart." Dinkins added, "It is said that service to others is the rent we pay on earth. Reg Lewis departed us paid in full."

Lawyer, entrepreneur, philanthropist, Chairman, CEO, husband, father, son, brother, nephew, cousin, and friend, Reginald F. Lewis lived his life according to the words he often spoke to audiences around the country, "Keep going, no matter what."

Source: Reginald F. Lewis Foundation & Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture Website

Student Resource Sheet 2

Reginald Lewis: Overcoming Obstacles

Obstacles	Characteristics that Enabled Lewis to Overcome those Obstacles

Student Resource Sheet 3a

Reginald Lewis: The High School Years, Part I

“In the ninth grade, I had to go to public school. I knew the choice of a high school was important and that I could not leave it to my mother alone. So I asked around. Actually going through the school selection process was probably the first independent research I ever did. I couldn’t get into the Catholic high schools, because my test scores apparently were not strong enough. It was just as well.” (page 14)

Serious beyond his years and determined to succeed, Reginald Lewis immersed himself totally into high school, where he excelled in football, baseball, and basketball. He also began to exhibit a demon work ethic, toiling after school to earn extra spending money.

Overcrowded and with less modern facilities than its white counterparts, Dunbar nevertheless had a good reputation academically. A large percentage of its students went on to college and those who could not make the grade were “pushed out,” in the words of Dr. Elzee Gladden, a former Dunbar principal.

The school had an all black faculty that took pride in its profession. Dunbar teachers drummed into their students that in order to succeed, dedication and commitment to excellence were critical... (page 16)

“I chose Dunbar for its sports coach, the famous Bill ‘Sugar’ Cain. Dunbar was great. The school was known for its great basketball team and for sports generally. What was not so well known was that the A course for each grade level was absolutely superb academically. I was accepted into the ‘in crowd’ right away because of my ability in sports.”

“In all modesty, I was a hell of a performer. I earned four varsity letters in baseball, three in football--where I was the starting quarterback from my sophomore year on--and two varsity letters in basketball. In football, I believed there were only two passers in Maryland worthy of mention--Johnny Unitas and me. I could put the ball on a dime from 40 yards. And when I played, I never doubted my ability and could look into the eyes of my teammates when the heat was really on and tell who could perform and who couldn’t.

I also learned that the voice and the eyes in the huddle could make a real difference. When you said, ‘Okay, we’re going in,’ you had to mean it and you had to deliver. I generally had the reputation that I came to play and that I was serious about the game.” (page 17)

Student Resource Sheet 3b

Reginald Lewis: The High School Years, Part II

“He was a kid that if you didn’t know him, you may have gotten the impression he was egotistical and in love with himself,” says Dick Brown, Lewis’ junior varsity baseball coach. “But it was his drive. He had one that I can always appreciate and that I always tried to instill into my athletes: That is, ‘I am the best. I am the greatest.’ That drive, that desire for excellence made him the man he became. It was already in him at Dunbar.” (page 20).

“While in high school, I had jobs in my junior and senior years. During the week, I worked in a drugstore from six o’clock until ten o’clock following sports practice, which lasted from three o’clock until five o’clock. Then, maybe I’d have a date from ten-thirty to midnight, and would be home by one o’clock. I would get about four hours of sleep, maybe an hour of study, a quick look at the sports and business pages and then I’d make a mad dash for school, which was across town.

At 16, I made a big decision. Instead of playing baseball during the summer six days a week, I took a full-time job at a country club where my grandfather worked as a captain. The pay was \$50 a week--no tips permitted--but if you picked the right members to give that little extra effort to, they would find a way to ‘take care of you.’

I learned a lot working there, both from the staff and members. From the staff, the virtues of being a real pro. My grandfather, Captain Sam, took tremendous pride in his work and other waiters really respected him a lot... From the members of the club, I learned that talk is cheap...” (page 21-22).

“In keeping with a pledge he made not to be a financial burden on his family, Lewis clothed himself while at Dunbar. “Reginald was practical, he really saved his money,” Carolyn Fugett says. “He wanted this pair of shoes and it amazed me that the shoes were so expensive. And he said, ‘Mom, it’s my money and I think I can spend it anyway I want.’ And I said, ‘Fine.’ But when I look back on it now, that pair of leather shoes carried him from the 11th grade through law school. He was a master at planning.” (page 27).

Student Resource Sheet 4a

Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part I

“The hours spent on the football field paid off for Lewis by helping him overcome his mediocre grades. Lewis got a football scholarship to Virginia State College in Petersburg, Virginia....” (page 31).

“Freshmen football players, or white shirters as they were called, had the unenviable task of playing on the scout team. Basically, they simulated the plays used by Virginia State’s upcoming opponent, while the veteran Trojans practiced against them.

“It was brutal, believe me,” Al Banks, another football player from Baltimore, recalls. “First of all, we were all freshmen and less skilled people. And for quarterbacks, that was very intimidating, because those guys would blow in there and they would take cheap shots. It was kind of dangerous--they would come blasting through there and take out the freshmen quarterbacks and anybody else they could. It was not a pleasant situation. Me and Reggie were definitely practice quarterbacks that got killed.”

“The pounding was taking its toll on Lewis’s throwing shoulder, which was injured repeatedly during his freshmen year. He wasn’t able to throw the football with the velocity he’d had at Dunbar”(page 37).

“A crisis was brewing in Lewis’s life, one that no amount of exhortation would change. His football performance wasn’t up to par and teammates were beginning to whisper that his scholarship might be in jeopardy. Hurting physically, Lewis would either have to ignore the pain and elevate his level of play or drop football altogether. It would be a painful decision either way”(page 38).

“I quit football after my freshmen year and decided to get serious about my studies. The college years were wild. I crammed a lot of living into those four years. After a rotten freshmen year, I really started to study. I got straight A’s in economics and always went beyond the course. I started reading the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal every day. But I had fun too” (page 40).

“I worked throughout college, first as the night manager of a bowling alley from 1 a.m. to 8 a.m. This didn’t last more than a semester and a half.

My next job was great. I traveled to elementary schools and high schools throughout the state of Virginia as a salesman for a photographic service. I could make \$500 a week on commissions, which was big money in 1963. I had an unbelievable sales record, with about 60 percent of my calls resulting in sales.

Student Resource Sheet 4b

Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part II

I learned some great lessons. The key was to make lots of calls and build on each successful sale. Some principal who I'd sold would call his friend in another county and the next sales call was a layup. I set my college schedule so that I would have no classes on Tuesday. I would leave Monday night for the territory, stay at the Holiday Inn, get up around 5 a.m., make calls, and set goals for the day. I would make my first visit by 7 a.m. I would try to see one principal at 7 a.m. another around noon, then three more in the afternoon and one in the evening and leave before it was too dark. This was not easy because these were rural schools not close to each other. I also wanted to start back somewhat early since the South was not a place where a black man wanted to get stopped or stuck once the sun went down. Fortunately, I never had a problem and, at night especially, I always kept well within the speed limit with my sports car" (page 41).

“Already ambitious when he arrived at Virginia State, Lewis was becoming incredibly focused. He was starting to write daily schedules that listed his itinerary for a given day, then would try not to deviate from it. On a schedule written on a piece of cardboard, he wrote, “To become a lawyer, one must work hard.”

“He always had a purpose,” Melvin Smith, another classmate, says. “Where other guys were taking courses to get out of school, Reggie had a master plan in mind. When other guys were reading comics, he was reading *The Wall Street Journal*.” (page 42).

Student Resource Sheet 5a

Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part III

"I began to think about graduate school or law school or maybe, just maybe, a really great university like Harvard. At this point, it was really pretty much a dream, but who knows- -keep punching and maybe.

In my senior year, lightning struck. Harvard Law School started a program to select a few black students to attend summer school at Harvard, to introduce them to legal study in general. Participating colleges would select five students from their respective schools and Harvard Law School would select just one student from each school.

I was excited, I mean, really excited. Calm down, calm down, I told myself. Develop a plan. It wasn't easy knowing where to begin. First, I need to get the literature on the program. My school only gave a summary of it, so I wrote to Harvard for specific details that same day I found out about the program. Harvard responded immediately, which really impressed me. My approach was to first make sure I was selected by Virginia State. That would not be easy. Many students had straight A's and I had had a rotten freshman year, which hurt my cumulative grade point average.

I need to supplement my application--obtain letters of recommendation perhaps. I spoke to a couple of professors, I told them that this was my shot at the big time. I said I didn't want a letter that just said "he's a nice guy," but a real substantive letter setting out what I did well and what I did poorly. I gave them a biography, grades, everything" (pages 47-48).

"Well, I made the college list, fifth. The college recommended four people above me because their cumulative averages were higher. But I made the cut. OK!"

"Then the letter came--I was going to Harvard for the summer. I later learned that Harvard discredited my freshmen year and liked my straight A's in economics and the letter of recommendation. The night I got the letter, I told my roommate, Alan Colon, "Alan, come September I will be in the incoming class at Harvard Law." He said, "Reg, this is just for the summer. Don't set yourself up for a major disappointment." I said, "Alan, just watch--I'm going to Harvard." (page 49).

As far as Lewis was concerned, the whole thing was an elaborate forum for showcasing his talents and attributes. Before arriving at Harvard, Lewis read everything he could get his hands on about the law, the better to capitalize on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. (page 51).

Student Resource Sheet 5b

Reginald Lewis: The College Years, Part IV

Lewis left Baltimore for Cambridge in the summer of 1965. .. Lewis and his fellow participants tackled law school subjects such as civil procedure, torts, criminal law, and contracts. They also took at least one course at Harvard's regular summer program that was related to legal education.

The highlight of the program was a mock trial where students took opposing sides. Lewis stood out. Almost thirty years later, Professor Sander still recalls being impressed by Lewis's self-assurance and argumentative skills.

"He rose to the occasion. When he did the mock court thing, we all thought, 'This guy is going to amount to something. He's got a real drive and energy and fight and insight.' He stood out among those students," Sander said (page 52).

"At a farewell banquet for all the participants in the summer program, Associate Dean Louis Toepfler told me that he would like me to call him at midweek. When I did, Toepfler's secretary asked if I would speak to her, since the Dean was not in. She had before her a letter she was in the process of typing to me. I said of course. The opening line was, "There will be a place for you in this fall's class, if you want it." Great news! Plus the school was making loans available and gave me a one-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation." (page 54).

Being admitted to Harvard reaffirmed Lewis's sense of destiny and further solidified his view of his own uniqueness. By refusing to entertain thoughts of failure, or to even consider the outrageousness of his quest, Lewis had leapfrogged sizable obstacles blocking his path to Harvard Law School. (page 55).

Student Resource Sheet 6a

Reginald Lewis: The Harvard Years, Part I

“All in all, I was really scared to death that first year and never really got my legs, so to speak. But I hung in there, passed all of my courses and at the end of the year received so-called Gentlemen’s C’s. My second and third years were much better and when I left, I had moved into the B category...”

“While Lewis was scared, he did not let his terror get the better of him. In the classroom, for example, his technique was straightforward and simple... Lewis wasn’t a gunner, one of the students whose hands are always flailing in the air as they practically turn cartwheels to answer questions. But neither was Lewis a back-bencher--his self-pride would not allow that. Lewis refused to give any professor or student the smug satisfaction of secretly ascribing a poor performance on his part to the fact that Reginald Lewis was black.

To Lewis’s roommates, Bill Robinson and John Hatch, he seemed to be cruising along with minimum exertion. So it was Lewis’s entire life. Those on the periphery were often convinced he led a charmed, strife-free existence, but practically everything Lewis achieved was extracted through hard work and titanic struggle....

His apparent nonchalance stemmed from something he picked up in the Fugett household, which was a custom of making the difficult appear easy. Repetition, endless practice and solitary preparation weren’t for public consumption. Never let ‘em see you sweat, just let ‘em see you excel with seeming ease” (pages 58-59).

“Of the more than 500 freshmen students in Lewis’s class, at least 17 were black, the largest number admitted to Harvard Law School in one class up to that point. Like Lewis, most of his black compatriots had poor or blue-collar upbringings and had attended black southern colleges. From those backgrounds, they found themselves thrust into an environment that easily intimidated even wealthy white graduates of the country’s most exclusive finishing schools and colleges” (page 59).

“Lewis moved easily between both black and white worlds, because he didn’t view himself as constrained by artificial barriers founded on something as trite as pigmentation. If others chose to perceive him a certain way because of his skin, that was their problem” (page 61).

“By spring semester of the third year of law school, everyone was ready to get out into the real world. The events of the year were just extraordinary--Lyndon Johnson not running for President, Eugene McCarthy’s army of college volunteers, the King and Kennedy assassinations. It was really too much.”

Student Resource Sheet 6b

Reginald Lewis: The Harvard Years, Part II

During the fall semester of my final year, I and other law students got involved in third-year interviews, an annual ritual where legal recruiters come to campus looking for prospective employees. Piper & Marbury, the Baltimore law firm where I had worked after my second year, had yet to make me an offer...

The choicest jobs were considered to be those with large New York firms. I picked out a few that interested me and began interviewing. I went to most of these interviews feeling pretty relaxed. I felt that even if I didn't get a single offer, I could always return to Baltimore, work in the state attorney's office or the U.S. Attorney's office for a few years, then begin my own law practice. But the prospect of cutting my teeth in one of the "great firms" appealed to me.

One of the firms I signed up to interview with was Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. The decision turned out to be a good one. I met with Bill DeWind, one of the top partners in the firm, and we had a terrific interview. He was very relaxed, asked a lot of good questions and was not the least bit racist or condescending in his approach, which at that time was the exception rather than the rule. At the end of the interview, Bill described how his firm assessed applicants and said the next step was for me to come down to New York and visit with some of his partners and associates.

A number of my friends were more excited than I was about my having "made the cut," and thought Paul, Weiss was my kind of place. I decided to stay cool and see how things played out. The New York visit did go well...

In early December, Paul, Weiss made me an offer to come and work with them. I would either be in the corporate or litigation department--the firm would decide which--and I was to make about \$10,000 per year... I accepted the offer and headed for New York" (page 70-71.)

Student Resource Sheet 7

Reginald Lewis: Building a Career

“I did the usual work doled out to beginning associates: Setting up corporations, preparing joint venture agreements, securities law filings, some not-for-profit corporate work. I worked on a series of transactions involving small venture capital type deals that were particularly instructive, and on several initial public offerings (IPO’s) which were then all the rage...”

Paul, Weiss was one of the elite, blue-chip New York law firms but, in contrast to some of the others, it was relatively “democratic,” in the sense that it was more open to minorities of all stripes. On the average, the firm hired 20 to 30 associates fresh out of law school every year...”

“In the summer of 1970 I got a call from Fred Wallace, a Harvard Law School graduate, class of 1964. I was familiar with his name but didn’t know him personally. Fred was working for Gene Callender at the New York Urban Coalition and had a mandate to create more housing for low and moderate income people. Fred wanted to recruit some lawyers in order to form a law firm to service this aspect of the coalition’s programs... We got together and the more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea of starting my own practice. Fred was offering a floor on income for a year or so and the coalition would pick up most of the overhead in exchange for getting a priority on its work. Not a bad deal” (page 74-75).

“Building a successful law practice calls for something not taught in law school: the ability to hustle and self promote... Lewis realized all this when he left Paul, Weiss in 1970. As always he had a plan. He joined Wallace and a handful of other attorneys in starting a black-run law firm geared toward business matters affecting New York City’s black community. The firm has the distinction of being one of the first black law firms on Wall Street--if not the first. Its name was Wallace, Murphy, Thorpe and Lewis, but in time only Lewis would remain” (page 76).

“... a new side of Lewis began to emerge, that of the tough, goal-oriented taskmaster. Lewis had a sense of urgency that many of his employees didn’t necessarily share. He would never tolerate their viewing his law practice as a mere job. Everyone had to give maximum effort all the time. Anything less would prompt Lewis to dismissively utter one of his favorite phrases, “That is not acceptable...” (page 77-78).

“Lewis was pro-black in outlook, but when it came to business he hired only people who could deliver, regardless of ethnic and racial background.” (page 78).

Student Resource Sheet 8

Reginald Lewis: Firmly Established

“Ultimately though, Lewis was toughest on himself. Whatever his successes, he would invariably ask himself, “Why didn’t I accomplish more?”

At home in his study, Lewis would indulge in a lifelong habit of rating his performance as well as those of his executives. Like a hard-to-please schoolmarm, Lewis would dole out A pluses, A’s, B minuses, C pluses, and so on” (page 158).

“One of his strongest traits or characteristics was his leadership ability,” says Everett L. Grant, III, whom Lewis hired in 1985 from the Price Waterhouse accounting firm to be a TLC Group vice president. Lewis had the ability to make people “achieve more than they ever thought they could,” Grant says (page 160).

“Lewis was rather methodical when conveying his decision to the troops. Before attempting to motivate or inspire anyone, he would first sit down and formulate a yearly plan. If it passed the acid test of being sufficiently aggressive when compared with the preceding year--and if it was realistic--then Lewis would sign off on it.

He would then use his yearly plan as a yardstick and would hold monthly management meetings to ensure that his objectives were being met. Once he’d told his managers in the field what his yearly plan was, the actual results--from the standpoint of capital expenditures, operating results and operating profit--were pretty much in the hands of operating management” (page 264).

Although Lewis lived in both New York and in Paris, he liked living in Paris because there was less overt hostility purely based on color.

Lewis said, “In Europe, the major difference is there is less overt hostility that’s purely based on color. As you know, you can be insulted anywhere, but I’ve always been treated very well in Europe. Here in this country, there is a certain conspiratorial desire-regardless of what you do, how much you earn, you’re still black. And that’s meant to demean. But it only demeans you if you allow it to” (page 254).

Student Resource Sheet 9

Reginald Lewis: Philanthropist

“Lewis possessed a mixture of toughness and tenderness akin to that of his mother. He turned away many of the endless proposals and requests for finding he was inundated with after he became one of America’s wealthiest men. But he was sufficiently caring to funnel a constant stream of money to projects and institutions he thought could have a positive impact on things” (p. 283).

In 1987, Lewis created The Reginald F. Lewis Foundation to manage his philanthropic activities...

Lewis used the same mindset for philanthropy that he employed for business: What’s the best way to maximize my power and influence? Early childhood education and pediatric preventative medicine were two of his pet issues. ...

Within four years of its inception, the Lewis Foundation had donated roughly \$10 million to a variety of educational, civil rights, medical, and artistic institutions in the United States (p. 284-285).

“Lewis didn’t limit himself to checkbook philanthropy. Appropriating money is easy if one is so inclined: It’s more difficult to carve precious blocks of time out of a schedule already crammed full. Lewis would generally clear the decks without fail to take advantage of an opportunity to address African-American students. The practice paid an unexpected dividend: Lewis had such an inspirational effect on some of these students that they later sought him out in hopes they could work for him” (p. 287).

Student Resource Sheet 10a

What is an Entrepreneur? Part I

What is an entrepreneur? Below is a list of characteristics that have been used to describe successful entrepreneurs.

Risk Taker	Realist	Organized
Flexible	Persuasive	Ruthless
Persistent	Independent	Shrewd
Planner	Delegator	Self-confident
Flexible	Achiever	Enthusiastic
Adventurous	Ambitious	Responsible
Adaptable	Cooperative	Conscientious
Good Listener	High Energy	Goal Setter
Good Leader	Optimistic	Hard Worker
Determined		

Can any one person have all of these characteristics? Lists of characteristics or traits of entrepreneurs, such as these, tend to be incomplete and sometimes contradictory. Basically, however, **entrepreneurship** is characterized by an awareness of economic conditions that affect people, a willingness to accept risks, and the ability to take advantage of exiting conditions.

It has been said that successful **entrepreneurs** are planners, decision makers, builders, or workers. They recognize wants that people have and respond in creative or innovative ways. People who are innovative are able to take advantage of opportunities or can solve problems by introducing new ideas or methods. In deciding how to respond to wants and problems, successful entrepreneurs evaluate alternatives and make choices that are intended to maximize returns and minimize costs.

There is no such thing as a “born entrepreneur.” Successful entrepreneurs purposefully develop special skills and abilities that allow them to reach their goals. These skills and abilities include learning to be resourceful and innovative and finding new ways to take advantage of opportunities or to solve problems. They also include acquiring knowledge about our economy and the role of individual businesses in the economy; understand the role of government in the economy and the effects of government regulations on business firms, or companies, and acquiring the knowledge and abilities needed to make informed marketing, production, and labor decisions.

Student Resource Sheet 10b

What is an Entrepreneur? Part II

It is obvious that the knowledge and skills that contribute to an entrepreneur's success cannot be acquired overnight. Entrepreneurs must prepare for success. They can do this by investing in themselves--their own human resource potential. **Human resources** refer to those productive skills and knowledge that have been acquired through investment in training, education, or other means by which people systematically acquire and add to their productive skills. For example, a salesperson at a shoe store might understand the quality of the product offered for sale and be able to communicate this knowledge clearly and politely to customers. The ability to master these skills can be acquired by training and practice, that is, by investment in human resources. Like the salesperson, a successful entrepreneur acquires additional knowledge and skills through investment in his or her own human resources.

Profit is sometimes used as a measure of the success of an entrepreneurial enterprise. Profit is the increase in value between the cost of production of something and the revenue received. An entrepreneur, however, may operate or work for an organization that never plans to earn a profit. In every community, non-profit organizations exist to serve the public. Examples of these include churches, volunteer fire companies, charities, and school booster groups. The skills and abilities that make people successful entrepreneurs and a business that earns a profit are also important for those types of organizations. They are the ability to recognize human wants and problems and to respond to them in creative ways.

Adapted from *Entrepreneurship in the U.S. Economy*, National Council on Economic Education, 1994.

Student Resource Sheet 10c

What is a Philanthropist?

Directions: Please complete the following activities to demonstrate your understanding of Lewis as a philanthropist.

1. Look up the word “philanthropist” in the dictionary. What does the word mean?
2. Find the etymology (derivation) of the word “philanthropist” in the dictionary. What do the two root words “phil” and “anthropos” mean?
3. Using Student Resource Sheet 9, write specific examples of Reginald F. Lewis’s philanthropy.
4. Using Student Resource Sheet 9, explain some of the impact Reginald F. Lewis’s philanthropy had on others.
5. Write a brief reflection on philanthropic activities that you might perform in your community.
6. What does the practice of philanthropy say about a person’s character? What values are demonstrated in philanthropy?