Editor, Reston Times

Dear Sirs:

A classified advertisement in the Washington Post on August 24 read "Sell for Reston"..."immediate opening for a young man with a Virginia Real Estate License."

Perhaps the Gulf-Reston executive who approved this advertisement meant to ask for all qualified applicants, black or white. However, to the young black man with local real estate experience this method of seeking applicants definitely says "white man wanted." The black community sees this type of advertisement as support for labeling Reston as another "exclusive community." If Gulf-Reston really desires blacks on its sales force, this must be explicitly stated in all advertisements, and a Virginia Real Estate license cannot be a prerequisite for a job interview.

If Reston is to be an open community where the black workers from local industry and government installations feel welcome, black sales personnel are mandatory. Employing black salesmen in communities that are not all black is unusual, but there are few precedents for open diverse communities in contemporary America. If Gulf-Reston uses only the standard proven tools of the real estate trade then standard single color, single socio-economic class development will result. If an open, diverse community is really desired, Gulf-Reston must use novel, if not radical, procedures.

It is clear that Gulf-Reston executives are not personally experienced with or deeply sensitive to the key requirements for building a racially diverse community. But my despair does not stem from the fact that these men have lived in a white world where black men did not exist. Rather, I lament the fact that this advertisement appeared several weeks after a group of Reston citizens pointed out to Glenn Saunders, Executive Vice President of Gulf-Reston, that having an all white sales force discourages many black families from making Reston their home. Mr. Saunders responded at that time that first; no qualified blacks had sought out Gulf-Reston for sales jobs and second; the sales force was currently overstaffed by a couple of people.
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I submit that if Gulf-Reston is really planning an open, diverse community they must actively recruit qualified blacks for residential sales.

Very truly yours,

Edward G. Sharp
Hunters Woods