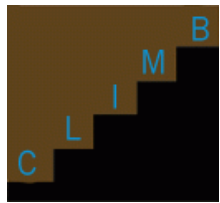


A Climb to Success

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CALVIN MILLS, JR., COULD HAVE BEEN another statistic, but this founder, CEO and president of CMC Technologies Consulting in Baton Rouge, is

proof the American Dream is alive and well when hard work and dedication are part of the mix.

Mills, 33, turned a small computer consulting business he began with a college buddy into a company that has expanded to include government and corporate clients such as Wal-Mart and Hewlett-Packard. However, even though he has been successful as the sole owner of his company, Mills has never forgotten his humble beginnings or the impact that comes from inspiring others to imagine a better future.

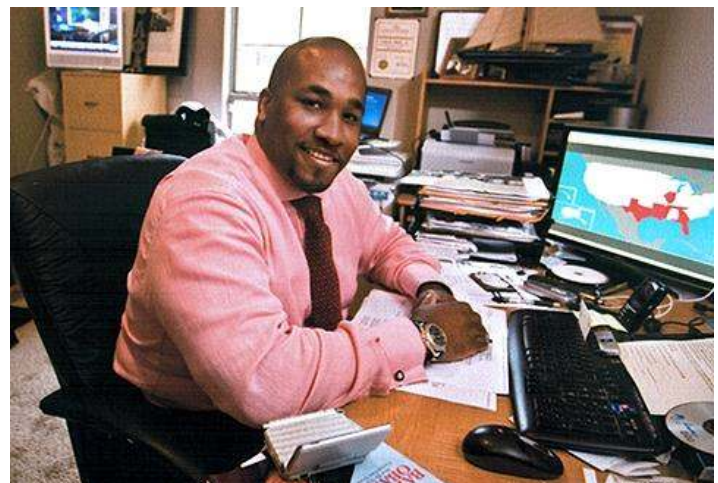
Mills is committed to make helping others part of his daily business. His company includes EduTech, which helps low-income families and students with their computer needs. Mills also delivers motivational speeches to disadvantaged children, based on his own path to success, through a program called CLIMB (Changing Lives is My Business).

Mills grew up poor in the Third Ward of New Orleans. He lived in a shotgun house and his father was killed when he was a child. His mother, a schoolteacher, raised him on her own, and was determined that her son would have chances beyond his neighborhood and her limited resources.

“My mother instilled in me a lot of self-motivation and drive,” Mills says. “By high school, I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew it would be doing something on my own. I looked at where I was, and by high school, I saw a different kind of life. Kids need to see another side of life so they will have options. It’s easier for people to hear my story than the story of someone born with advantages.”

Mills inherited his mother’s ambitions and seemed hard-wired for success – no matter what anyone told him. Mentors helped him learn to play golf and the saxophone. He attended a private Catholic high school through a work-study program. He was an average athlete at first, talking his way onto the high school football team, even though his coach never believed Mills would succeed in sports.

Mills was accepted to Southern University in Baton Rouge, where he pursued a degree in business and computer



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science, and his discipline and tenacity earned him a walk-on spot with the Southern University football team. By his senior year, Mills was a starting fullback, and he went on to enjoy a short stint with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

“Knowing what I want keeps me moving,” Mills says.

After football, Mills pursued work at an electronics retail store and set his sights on management. “One day a family came in looking for a new computer, and I could just see the excitement on the kids’ faces; it was almost like it was Christmas,” Mills says. “I was helping them, and I had to be the bearer of bad news that they needed more money than they had. To see the look on their faces ... I decided to take matters into my own hands.”

Mills was able to use his employee discount to customize a computer system for the family. A week later, a wealthy businessman with a Fortune 500 company paid him \$500 to come to his home and set up a new computer system. Soon after, the businessman encouraged Mills to pursue his own business and introduced him to a group that helped entrepreneurs.

Mills’ efforts began paying off soon after Hurricane Katrina struck when he landed some government contracts, and his business has grown every year since then. He hopes that one day his company will be publicly traded.

Of course, there were ups and downs in the early days of the business. Mills was jobless at one point, living for five months on unemployment benefits. “I’ve had clients disappear without paying and a lot of other challenges,” Mills says. “But I don’t accept failure.”

Mills said his own childhood spurs him to help others today.

“We were helped by people. Sometimes we had to go to the Salvation Army to get food,” Mills says. “I wore hand-me-downs other people had given us, and there were always people telling me I couldn’t do something. Now, it means so much to me that I can give back and inspire young people to work for their goals and their dreams -- no matter what their circumstances may be.”

CALVIN MILLS started his business with support from Seedco Financial, a non-profit organization backed by Regions.