

## Minority firms making mark in S. Jersey

By **ERIK SCHWARTZ**  
Courier-Post Staff

John Erving's business is growing.

His greeting cards are already popular among African-American shoppers throughout the mid-Atlantic states, where more than 40 Pathmark supermarkets carry the line.

Now, the Lawnside resident's 12-year-old company, JonMar Creations Inc., is about to expand its offerings into some 500 CVS pharmacy stores, up from 200 last year.

"We're moving along pretty well," said Erving, 58, who once worked for American Greetings Corp., now his rival along with Hallmark Cards Inc. in the multi-billion-dollar greeting card industry.

JonMar has but a tiny fraction of a market dominated by the giants, but the niche is lucrative.

"We compete with them every day, and we're still standing," Erving said.

JonMar is one of an estimated 36,000 black-owned businesses in New Jersey that generated \$3.2 billion worth of revenue in 2002, according to the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Nearly a fifth of black-owned businesses statewide were in Camden County, the census found.

One of the bigger ones is a 150-employee firm in Camden called Phacil, founded by engineer and former information-technology systems executive Rafael Collado.

Over the past 25 years, Collado

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