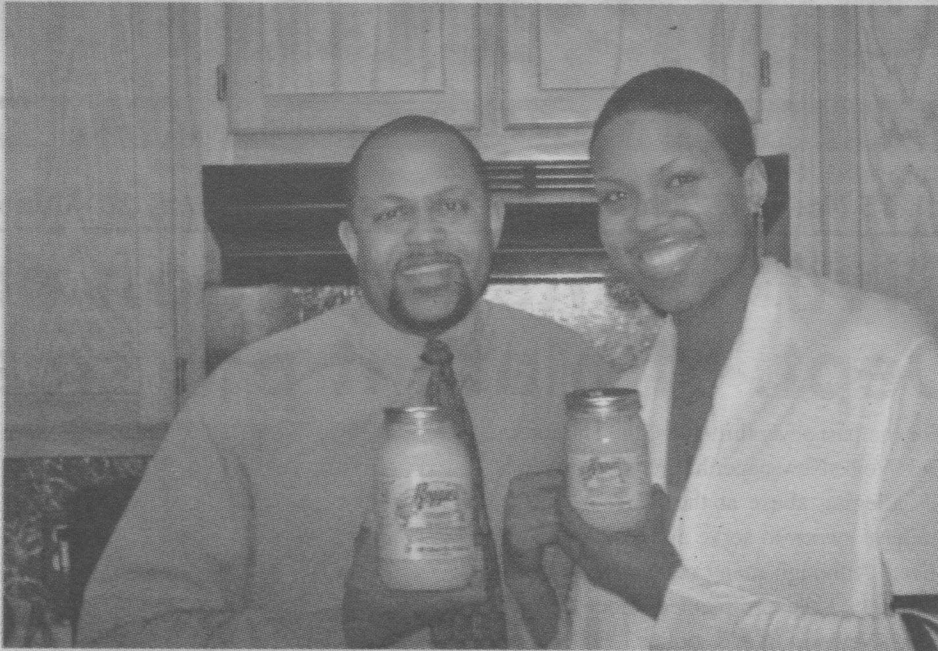


Reggie's Banana Pudding Sauce



"Reggie" and "Gin-Gin" Rodgers showcase jars of Reggie's Banana Pudding Sauce"

By Arielle McCollum
Staff Writer

Ask any banana pudding lover what makes a good banana pudding and they will definitely say the pudding. Many family matriarchs have their recipes for the delicious desert, but thanks to Reggie's Banana Pudding Sauce, you too can make it; but, in a quarter of the time it took Nana to prepare it.

Reginald "Reggie" Rodgers, retired Navy, is the man behind the sauce. While stationed in San Diego in the early 80s, he was looking for a place that sold good banana pudding. Unsuccessful in the search, he called his mother for her recipe. Rodgers began making the banana pudding and sold casserole-sized containers to his comrades on the ship. "I sold them for \$10; just for a little extra money," said Rodgers. He continued to make his mother's recipe, with a few tweaks here and there throughout the years. Friends and family members requested Rodgers' banana pudding for functions and gatherings. Some even asked for his recipe. "But they couldn't quite master it," he said.

Rodger's daughter, Gina "Gin-Gin" Rodgers, was looking to start an entrepreneurial venture. She suggested selling her father's sauce under the family's already established research development company, R.R. Enterprise, LLC. "He laughed at me," she says of her father's initial reaction to

the idea. But Rodgers came around to the idea of making his mother's recipe accessible and convenient for consumers.

Even with all the talents and skills held by the Rodgers' family members, none had experience with food service. Martha J. Ross-Rodgers, Reggie's wife and project manager, said they took classes to learn about food preparation, as well as classes to write their business model, identify target market and branding. And in 2008, Reggie's Banana Pudding Sauce was born.

The Rodgers are currently working to get their product in other stores and planning to expand the line of sauces to include a sugar-free version in the next few months.

When asked what advice they would give to aspiring entrepreneurs, the Rodgers family agreed that making a lot of money should not be the driving force. Rodgers' suggests that budding entrepreneurs do "something you would be willing to do for free." Ross-Rodgers encouraged people to read and learn as much as they can and network. Gin-Gin suggests using planners, being organized and doing something for the business every day.

Rodgers says he is "very blessed" to have his wife working by his side. He, his wife and daughter agree the family-run business will be a great legacy for their family. "It's not about having a lot of money, but the faith to accomplish something together," said Ross-Rodgers.