

Anne Doyle, 58, Auburn Hills



Personally Speaking

Previous Job: Director of Ford North America Communications. Spent 13 years at Ford Motor Co. In the late '70s, Doyle was one of the first women TV sports broadcasters in the United States.

Current Jobs: President of Anne Doyle Strategies. Motivational speaker and communications and leadership consultant.

Early Retirement Date: December 2001

Details of Retirement Package: Voluntary. "I was only 53, but they offered a package where they added two years to your age and two years to your years of service, which made me eligible to retire with 15 years toward a pension and medical coverage."

How did you feel at the time about taking early retirement? "After 13 years, I just felt it

was time to move on to something new. I have a whole career of walking away from jobs when it felt like it was time. Plus, I was a single mother of a 10-year-old, so I wanted more flexibility in terms of my schedule."

How do you feel now? "I still think it was the right thing to do. I really love what I do now – I'm very interested in leadership, and my public speaking is a way of motivating people, and passing along the insights I've gained from being a change agent in journalism and the corporate world."

What was the financial impact of retiring early? "Between my Ford pension, investments, and my fees for consulting, professional speaking and writing, my income is nearly the same as my salary was my last year at Ford. The company lost money in 2001, so we didn't get bonuses for that year – that year was the beginning

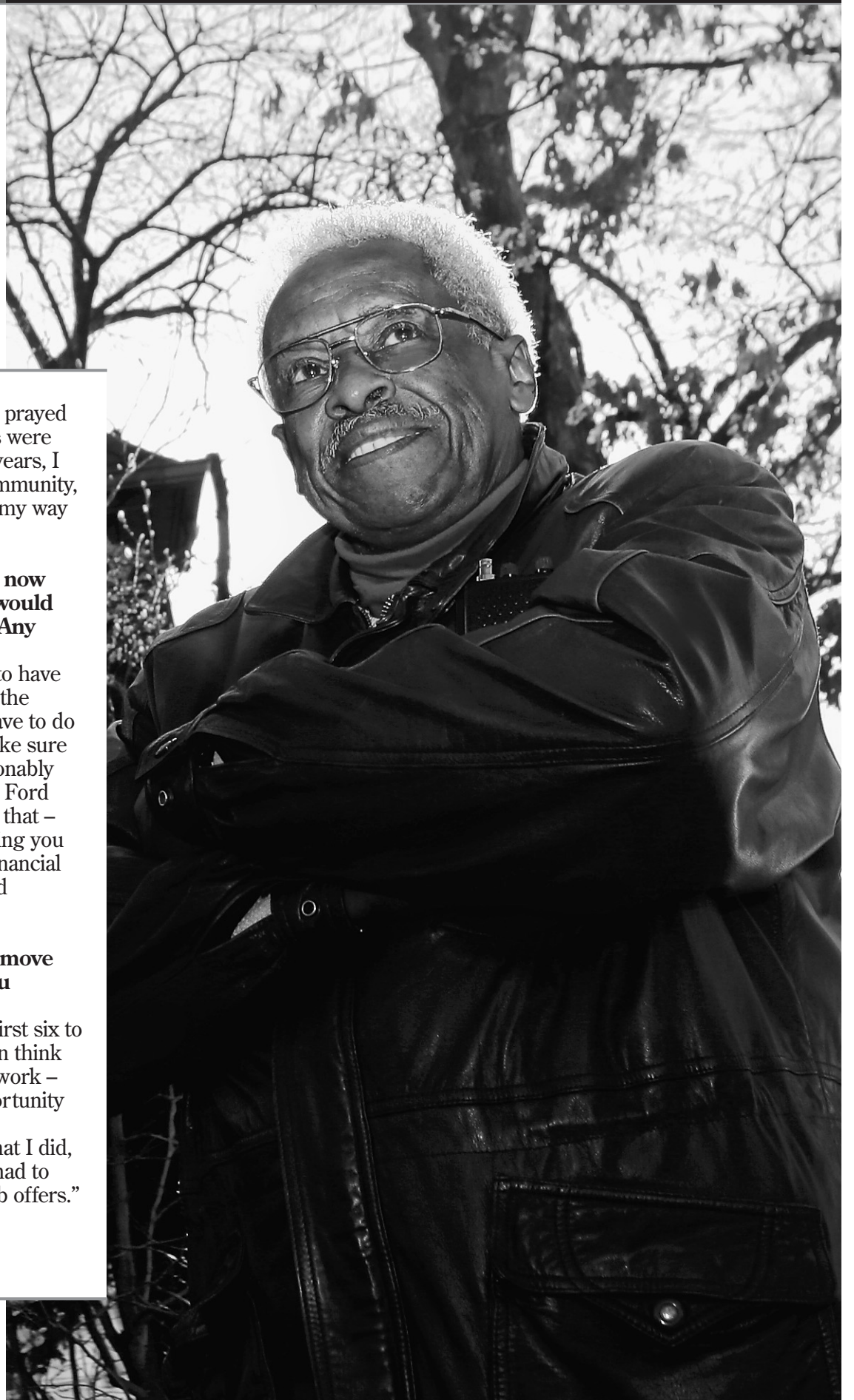
of the downturn that you can still see playing out today in the domestic auto industry."

What was the hardest thing about retiring early? "It wasn't a hard decision for me, but I did miss the people. I had made many wonderful friends at Ford."

What do you know now that you wish you would have known then? "I can't think of anything. I guess I just know when to fold 'em."

What was the best move you made when you retired early? "Remaining independent. I was recruited heavily by headhunters after I left Ford, but I wasn't interested in another corporate position. I knew I wanted to be on my own. I think it's important to decide how you want to use your cumulative skills and talents, and that takes some work and some time."

Jim Ward, 69, Detroit



Green Acres Is the Place to Be

Previous Job: Human resource manager, Ford Motor Co. Spent 31 years at Ford. Also was production manager for two years in the early 1970s for the Motown songwriting team Holland-Dozier-Holland.

Current Jobs: Community activist. President of the Green Acres Radio Patrol for Green Acres neighborhood (Woodward/Eight Mile area); serves on the board of directors for Detroit Omega Foundation, which provides scholarships to young black men and other services to young people in the community, and on the board of trustees for University Commons, a community development group dedicated to revitalizing the Livernois/McNichols business district. Also an active member of Springhill Baptist Church.

Early Retirement Date: January 1998

Details of Retirement Package: Voluntary. No buyout, but retired early at

age 60 with 31 years toward a pension.

How did you feel at the time about taking early retirement? "Over the years, I would hear other folks, who had retired early, say, 'You'll know when it's time.' And it's true, I did. So I felt good about it."

How do you feel now? "I still feel good about it. I'm actually busier now in retirement than I was when I was working. I just got an e-mail from my daughter saying, 'Daddy, I wish you would get a job so we could catch you.'"

What was the financial impact of retiring early? "I'm earning substantially less now. All the work I do as an activist is volunteer. But I have my pension, and I don't pay state or city taxes on it, so I have no complaints."

What was the hardest thing about retiring early? "I can't really think of anything. I had to do my homework, to make sure I could

afford to retire, and I prayed on it, and my prayers were answered. Over the years, I got a lot from my community, and my work now is my way of giving back."

What do you know now that you wish you would have known then? Any advice for others? "You definitely have to have a reason to get up in the morning. And you have to do some planning to make sure you can enjoy a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. Ford was very good about that – they offered everything you needed in terms of financial planning services and forecasting."

What was the best move you made when you retired early? "I was told, 'For the first six to 12 months, don't even think about going back to work – give yourself an opportunity to adjust to your new lifestyle.' So that's what I did, and I'm glad I did. I had to learn to say 'no' to job offers."