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Close-Up

First black theatre reunites

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TelePrompTers have long since replaced the old standby of cue cards for actors who would flub their lines and for newscasters who read the day's events from them.

But Flonnie Anderson, founder of the Flonnie Anderson Theatrical Association, believes members of the Community Players Guild were probably the first stage people ever to use such a resource.

That was 23 years ago, when television was still considered young, and Anderson, along with her husband, Rudy Anderson Sr., and 14 members of Winston-Salem's black community went before the city's Recreation Department to organize and receive funding for the now-defunct Community Players Guild.

"The Community Guild died out because of a lack of leadership," says Anderson. "They didn't have a theatre person to keep it going after I left."

Outside the NAACP, the Guild was considered one of the more stalwart and well-supported organizations in Winston-Salem's black community. But many of the members who helped organize the Guild, including Anderson, who served as president, were young and beginning their families. Six years later in 1966, the Guild lost its members and its support.

"It was just impossible for me to stay on as president with four young ones," she says. "I had also started teaching in the public school system and I was directing theatre in the school."

This Friday, the pioneers of Winston-Salem's first black community theatre will reunite at the Salem College Fine Arts Center at 8:15 p.m. when Anderson's FATA

will dedicate its production of Agatha Christie's "Ten Little Indians" to the original members of the Guild. At 6:30 p.m., a display of pictures and other theatrical paraphernalia of the Guild in its heyday will be exhibited. The first production of the Guild was Christie's "Witness For The Prosecution."

"The Community Players Guild was the only black community theatre group we could find in the South," says Anderson. "I know because we looked for others to pattern our constitution after."

After years of promising her drama students at Parkland Senior High a black community theatre, she finally went ahead with the plans three years ago and founded FATA.

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Anderson's roots in community theatre still remain with the Guild, and FATA's purpose has continued the tradition of the original community theatre 23 years and eight months ago.

"The Community Players Guild is the harbinger of FATA," says Anderson, "and it uses as much talent as possible from the original group."

"Just like the Guild, we want to offer this community a forum for their talents," she says. "Winston-Salem is small, but it's also large enough for people not to know each other. But with FATA, where you have people from all walks of life, it's enriching to get to know other people who live in this community."

Anderson came up with the idea of a reunion of the Guild's first members. However, her only involvement in



Flonnie Anderson reads the Salem Art Gallery for "Ten Little Indians" (photo by James Parker).

the affair will be the exhibition. The rest will be up to members of FATA and John Moore III, who will direct the production for Anderson.

The drama teacher, who coached actress Fay Hauser and Jimmy Kennedy, soap opera star of "One Life to Live," has no problems with stepping aside to let the young take over. Anderson says she wants them to know that organizations like the Guild were a progressive part of the black community.

"Young people have a misconception of progress prior to the civil rights movement as far as cultural enrichment and education," says Anderson. "All of that was a part of the black community."

"FATA is just as important to this community," she says, "because we have participants from the cradle almost to the grave."

The original organizers of the Guild were Cleester Hickerson, Maurice Johnson, Mariah Ferguson, Ruth Haith, Velma Watts, Sandra Motz, Blanche Hobson, Wilson Weaver, Francis Turner, Roland Watts, Luix Overby, Bernard Foy, Charles Miller, Dr. Darwin Turner and Dr. Joseph Patterson.

Members of the first cast and crew were Edward Hanes, Fred Williams, Sylvester Humphreys, Dr. Joseph Gordon, Henry Jones, William Anderson Jr., Janet Warren, Juanita Gordon and Rudy Anderson Sr.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

*A Pre-School Storytime for children ages 3-5 years old will be held at the East Winston Branch Library at 10 a.m.

*The Children's Room of the Forsyth County Public Library will feature My Favorite Book Club for 6-9 year olds from 6:30-8 p.m. There will be reading aloud, storytelling, films and book talks.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

*"We're Going All The Way," a serious but amusing play depicting thoughts and expressions of black children, will be featured at the Arts Council Theatre on Coliseum Drive at 7:30 p.m. by Dawn of Life Productions. The play is also in celebration of Black History Month and in honor of 6-year-old Peedie Snipes, who suffers from the aging disease progeria.

*The annual Big Brothers/Big Sisters appreciation banquet will held at Reynolds High School from 6:30-8 p.m. Dave Plyer will be the guest speaker.

*The High Point College Theatre will present the heart-tugging play "Vanities" tonight through Saturday in Memorial Auditorium on the High Point College campus at 8 p.m. Tickets may be purchased by calling 885-5101, extension 289 or 232 from 1-5 p.m.

*Registration for a four-session computer course in spread sheet analysis begins March 13 ends today. Interested persons should contact the Department of Math/Computer Science at Winston-Salem State University for more information.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

*The statewide Bowling Tournament for the Blind will be held at Major League Lanes at Stratford Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*Reynolds House Museum of American Art will offer an American Arts Discovery for 12- and 13-year-olds for six Saturday mornings, plus an orientation beginning today through March 31 from 9 a.m. to noon. Class size is limited. For more information call 725-5325.

*The Kid's Club for 10- to 14-year-olds will meet in the Children's Room of the Forsyth County Public Library from 2-3:30 p.m. The club will feature storytelling, new books, films, library helpers training and puppets.

*The Carver Precinct will sponsor a Floating Tea, featuring several local candidates and an art display by James and Earnestine Huff from 1-4 p.m. in the Auditorium of the East Winston Branch Library.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

*"Black Firsts in Winston-Salem: How It Was Then, How It Is Now," a historical discussion geared toward K-8 grades, will be held in the auditorium of the Forsyth County Public Library at 3 p.m.

*The Executive Board of the Winston-Salem Please see page A7



The Purple Cross Nurses Health Department Unit No. 185

Purple Cross Nursing Unit recalls 1983

The Purple Cross Nursing Unit No. 185, which is associated with the Garden of Iris Temple No. 2202 Camel City Lodge No. 1021, IBPOE of W Order of Elks of the World, points out some of its highlights from 1983:

The state convention that was held on the May 14-17 in Winston-Salem. One of the group's members, nurse

Mary Benton, was first runner-up for Nurse of the Year. The nurses then attended the National Annual Grand Lodge Convention in Miami, Fla., in August. During that ceremony, two of the local nurses, Claudette Lindsey and Betty Miller, were capped.

On Sept. 18, the annual Health Day program was held at the lodge. During

the program, eight nurses were capped. They were Mary Allison, Ronda Blyther, Thelma Carter, Elaine Cole, Lucille Lomax, Sorthey Steel, Lilley Walters and Rosa Wallace. Mrs. Annie T. Carpenter directed the capping ceremony and was assisted by Rochelle Pinson. Mrs. Elizabeth Burrough Vereen, from

Durham, was the guest speaker.

Officers for the 1984 year are Rochelle Pinson, president; Betty Miller, vice president; Claudette Lindsey, recording secretary; Lucille Lomax, financial secretary; Janie Brown, treasurer; Maude Jackson, chaplain; and David Hawkins, escort.

Rescue Squad gives first aid pointers

Staff Sgt. George Crawford, a member of the Southeast Winston Rescue Squad Inc., conducted a basic first aid class to the group of sixth-graders on Feb. 10 at Easton Intermediate School. Crawford gave first aid pointers to Linda Pounds' class.

The presentation included tips on what to do and what not to do in cases of

animal bites, insect bites, severe bruises, burns, choking, shock and other topics. The students, who are studying a first aid unit, participated in a question-and-answer session following the presentation. Members of the class also read narratives on various aspects of first aid.

Crawford, who has advanced emergency medical technician training, has 10

years of rescue squad experience.

Southeast Winston Rescue Squad also conducted CPR workshops for the Paisley ROTC program last week, and held a public education class at Second New Bethel Church last Saturday. Sgt. Billy Glenn and Sgt. Ron Goolsby conducted the CPR workshops, and Lt. O.B. McManus and Lt. Scott Hartman took

charge of the public education class.

Any group or organization interested in learning the basics of CPR or first aid may contact Lt. McManus at 722-9414.

The Southeast Winston Rescue Squad Inc. is a totally not-for-profit volunteer organization and is located at 1353 Diggs Boulevard.

Social Notes

Garden Club meets

The Lachenalia Garden Club met for its February meeting at the home of Mrs. Doris Herrell. The meeting opened with devotional services by Mrs. Addie Ruth Acey.

The business meeting was conducted by the president, Mrs. Christine Campbell.

The officers are Mrs. Christine Campbell, president; Mrs. Patricia Dosier, vice president; Mrs. Doris Harrell, secretary; Mrs. Delores Wall, assistant secretary; Mrs. Annie S. Alexander, treasurer; Delores Wall, photographer; Annie Alex-

ander, reporter; Addie Acey, chaplain; and Mrs. Christine Gaither, parliamentarian.

At the March meeting, Mrs. Gaither is arranging to have a representative from Buena Vista Floral Shop to visit with us.

Mrs. Vernon Gaston joined the group. A very delicious dinner was served by the hostess.

Present at the meeting were Doris Herrell, Delores Wall, Christine Campbell, Delores Douthit, Christine Gaither, Addie Acey and Annie Alexander.

Gaines featured on radio

Winston-Salem State University Basketball Coach Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines, along with numerous other Black North Carolinians, are subjects of 14 radio public service announcements now being aired on statewide radio stations in observance of February as Black History Month.

Black North Carolinians have made major contributions in many fields from education and religion to law and arts, and their specific efforts are outlined in the series of 30-second spot announcements.

These announcements will be heard throughout February, according to Annette Gibbs, project coordinator.

Among people and events discussed in the series, which covers the period from the early 19th century to the present, are the original civil rights sit-ins in Greensboro in 1960 by several black college students.

Others to be featured are Charles Waddell Chesnut of Fayetteville, who was a lawyer, educator and the first distinguished black American novelist; Eleta M. Alexander of Smithfield, the first black

woman to graduate from Columbia University Law School, and the first black woman to practice law and to try a case in the N.C. Supreme Court. She also is the first black female judge elected in the United States. Also included is Ellerbee's Henry Frye, educator, legislator and lawyer and the first black ever to sit on the N.C. Supreme Court.

Others are educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown; John Chavis, educator and minister; George Moses Horton, a black slave who became a poet; John Coltrane, one of the world's most accomplished musicians; Romare Bearden, a leading collagist; black businessmen John Merrick and Aaron McDuffie Moore, both founders of North Carolina Mutual Insurance Co.; and their first employee, Charles C. Spaulding.

Also featured in the public service announcements are several religions that founded colleges, including Shaw University, Baptist; Johnson C. Smith, Presbyterian; St. Augustine, Episcopalian; Bennett College, American Methodist; Livingstone College, AME Zion.