

Chronicle Profile

Policewoman reflects on past

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Press coverage isn't something new to Lillian Bonner, nor are the awards or the dinners in her honor. But she still appreciates it all, even down to an Easter Egg a little boy gave her many years ago.

Bonner was honored last Saturday by the Winston-Salem A. Philip Randolph Institute for her contributions to community service.

"A young man I know gave me this little Easter Egg when he was in his teens," says Bonner. "After I ate the candy out, I still kept the egg and he's a grown man now, but I still cherish that egg or anything somebody gives me or does for me."

Bonner, 60, is Winston-Salem's first black police woman. She worked her way up to the rank of corporal after 30 years with the force. In 1982, she retired in order to spend more time with her two grandchildren, 2-year-old Angela and 10-year-old Anthony.

"I don't know of anything else I would have liked better than taking care of my grandchildren," says Mrs. Bonner. "because I guess I see a lot of my son Horace in them and it brings back memories of yesteryear."

In 1952, Mrs. Bonner's son was just a toddler. And when she decided to go downtown and fill out an application for a meter maid, she wrapped him up in his snow suit and took him along. She recalls that he and the captain "just carried on so."

Three other white women had already been chosen for the job but the department needed a black woman, she says. So Mrs. Bonner says she and

several other black women who also wanted the job went through a series of screening and background investigations. Not one skeleton was found in her closet.

"The sergeant that investigated me was so surprised to learn about the long line of ministers in my family," says the Sumter, S.C., native, whose brother was the late Dr. Abraham McDaniel, pastor of Union Baptist Church for 47 years.

"He went all around Winston-Salem asking about me," she says, "and he couldn't get one bad comment and I told him I wasn't ashamed of my life."

"When people in the community learned I was out there to do my job and not out there to deal with color, everything was all right."

— Mrs. Lillian Bonner

As an officer of the law and the first black woman in Winston-Salem who could legally cite a white person for a parking fine, Mrs. Bonner says she faced a bit of animosity.

"When I first started," she says, "there was resentment on the part of both races and it was surprising to find it among blacks."

"When people in the community learned that I was out there to do my job," says Mrs. Bonner, "and not out there to deal with color, everything was all right."

Mrs. Bonner's first uniform isn't anything like the uniform women police wear today. She chuckles at the thought of what that early attire looked like.

"My first uniform was the navy blue suit I got



Winston-Salem's first black policewoman, Lillian Bonner, has retired now, but will return to the force if needed (photo by James Parker).

married in," says Mrs. Bonner. "After a while I needed a change, so I would borrow my sister-in-law's blue suit while mine was being cleaned."

Becoming a meter maid was just a start. After the turmoil of the civil rights movement and segregation laws began to ease, Mrs. Bonner's responsibilities began to increase and it also meant going into the community and making arrests.

"I was called to a black woman's house once and

all of a sudden she went for a gun," says Mrs. Bonner, "so I got the gun away from her. Now had I not been there she would have probably turned on the other officers already there."

In her line of duty, she always used one method to encourage those who dared to take their life or others.

"I always told them, 'This isn't the way. God will help you, if only you trust in Him,'" she says.

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Bass named to board

Marshall B. Bass, corporate vice president of R.J. Reynolds Industries, is one of 15 advisors named this month by North Carolina Central University Chancellor LeRoy T. Walker to the NCCU Board of Visitors.

The board of visitors, which will play an advisory role only, has been named as NCCU prepares to celebrate its 75th year of service. The celebration will focus in large part on the role NCCU will play in the 21st century.

Walker, a former Olympic track and field coach who has been a member of the NCCU faculty since 1945, was named acting chancellor of the university by William Friday, president of the University of North Carolina. Walker assumed the post in July 1983.

In announcing the appointment, Walker said, "Marshall Bass is known to North Carolina Central University and throughout the nation as one who has played a key role in the exercise of R.J. Reynolds Industries' very strong and very generous corporate conscience. I am delighted that he has consented to join our board of visitors and to advise this university on such matters as its relationship with the industrial

world. I expect NCCU to benefit greatly from closer contact with Mr. Bass."

Bass, a retired U.S. Army officer, was elected to corporate vice president of Reynolds in 1982.

He oversees Reynolds Industries' activities in federal contract compliance, equal employment opportunity programs, the development and implementation of non-discriminatory personnel policies and practices and the coordination of the company's minority business enterprise programs. He is secretary to the public policy committee of the corporation's board of directors and is himself a director of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

Bass is a member of the board of directors of Piedmont Federal Savings and Loan Association and a member of the National Commission on Working Women. He is a member of the board of directors of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County YMCA, the Industry Advisory Council of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, board of directors of the Winston-Salem Urban League and board of directors of the Winston-Salem State University Foundation.

Other members of the board are Roger S. An-



Marshall Bass

thony, corporate vice president of Burlington Industries Inc.; Lee Archer, vice president for urban affairs of General Foods Inc.; Richard Cecil, president of Cecil and Associates, Atlanta; C. Carson Conrad, executive director of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; Walter E. Douglas, president of New Detroit Inc.; Charles Harris, director of athletics at the University of Pennsylvania; Eugene Jackson, president of Unity Broadcasting Co., New York City; William J. Kennedy III, president of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co.; Grady W.

Lewis, senior vice president of Converse, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Don E. Mott, vice president for personnel Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co., Durham; Thomas B. Shropshire, senior vice president and treasurer Miller Brewing Co.; William Simon, chairman of Wesray Corp., president of the United States Olympic Committee, and former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury; Mrs. Julia W. Taylor, president of Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Durham; and James Bud Ward, vice president for organization development, Marriott Corp.

400 Betas attend Xinos Conference

The Eastern Regional Xinos Conference, affiliate of the Beta Lambda Chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa Inc., met at the Hyatt House in Winston-Salem on March 16-18.

The theme of the conference was "Profiles in Excellence in Education." The Eastern Regional director, Mrs. Ardena Dixon; the Eastern Regional Xinos chairperson, Mrs. Catherine Williams; the basileus of the local chapter, Beatrice Watts; Apryl Brandon and Shan Bynum, president and vice president and Mrs. Sabrina Boyd presided over the conference. Approximately 400 Xinos were in attendance.

Each Xinos chapter presented a Scholar of the Year and a participant in the oratorical contest. The winner of the oratorical contest was Dana Jackson,

Iota Chapter, Atlantic City, N.J..

Saturday afternoon the local Xinos chapter gave a fashion show which was narrated by Mrs. Maxine Brandon and three workshops were held. The consultants and topics were: The Rev. Carlton Eversley, "Drug Abuse"; Louis Jones, "Careers in Education"; and Gail M. Brandon and Mabel Jessup conducted a "Charm Clinic."

A banquet was held on Saturday night. Lisa Brandon, a former Xinos and graduate of WSSU, was the guest speaker.

The conference ended with the Sunday morning service with Mica Jeffries presiding. Mabel Jessup was the speaker. Music for the conference was furnished by Angela Jones, Tonya Byrd, Eva Long, Laura Roberts and the Handbell

Choir of Mt. Zion Baptist Church under the direction of Mrs. Veronica Jones.

The Xinos Chapter is an organization of girls in grades 9-12. Sponsors of the chapter are Mrs. Mary

Ellis, Mrs. Maxine Brandon and Mrs. Bernice Tanner. Mrs. Eva Jeffries and Mrs. Anna Gilliam were co-chairpersons for the conference. Mrs. Mildred Leak was chairman of publicity.

Fashion show From Page A6

Commander W.L. Wright and background music was provided by Gregory Hunter.

The 18th District Leadership Workshop was held at the Clyde Bolling Post No. 55 on March 24.

The Ralph R. Morgan American Legion Post No. 220 Junior Auxiliary attended the workshop. Marlo Thomas, vice president, and Ms. Louise Turlington, Unit No. 55 president, brought the welcome. The national anthem was led by Mrs. Martha Gillis and

the recognition of officers was given by Mrs. Katherine Brendle. Mrs. Aretha Higgins was elected district junior vice president, Kimberly Limas, secretary; and Jerri Rhodes, sergeant-at-arms.

Mrs. Ireme Barbe conducted the workshops. Members of Unit No. 220 attending were Namio Lone, Patricia Higgins, Marilyn Springs, Jeanette Thomas, Alexandria Shelton, Debbie Higgins, Mary Thomas and Twanna Staten.

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