

People

Community Calendar, Close-Up, Social Notes, Community News

Close-Up

Choristers share their love for song

By IRENE PERRY
Chronicle Staff Writer

Above the horizon, there are individual stars with diverse backgrounds and beginnings, but when you see them together at night, their collective presence beautifies the sky.

So it is with the Twin City Choristers, a group of 32 black males from all parts of the Triad who have various backgrounds and occupations. Yet, when they sing together, the melodic richness of their voices enraptures an audience with their glorious songs.

Under the direction of Dr. Permilla Flack Dunston, this all-male chorus performs all kinds of

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-- Dr. Permilla Flack Dunston

music: Spirituals, hymns and classical music.

The ages and backgrounds of the choristers are just as diverse as their musical selections. "The Twin City Choristers range in age from 26 to 78," says Dunston. "Our members are from all church affiliations and occupations -- from doctor to house painter, from postal worker to pharmacist, and from banker to funeral director."

The Twin-City Choristers originally were organized in September 1957 under Dr. Dunston's direction. Dr. A.L. Cromwell served as the first

president of the group.

The group flourished from 1957 until 1959, when Dr. Dunston left the city. The group continued to perform under various directors, but only sporadically. Eventually, in the latter part of 1960, the group reluctantly disbanded.

Its members, however, remained in close contact with one another and the dream of one day reorganizing the group stayed with them.

On May 13, 1980, the Twin City Choristers realized a dream of nearly twenty years when the group was reorganized with 10 of its original members and Dr. Dunston returned as director.

Since the reorganization, the Twin City Choristers have experienced phenomenal growth and popularity. The group now numbers 35 persons, including the director and accompanist. Although the group's members span a wide spectrum of backgrounds, their love and appreciation of music is the common interest shared by all.

The Choristers say that, although they return much to the community in the form of song, the choral art form can continue only through the support of worthy, as well as needy, music students.

"Since we give scholarships to needy people, we do accept donations," says Dr. Dunston. "We don't charge any money for concerts; however, when we travel out of town, our expenses are taken care of. No one is paid for anything -- we just love to sing that much."

Because of the variety of members' schedules within a group this size, practice is held once a week



Dr. Permilla Dunston, director of the Twin City Choristers: Love and appreciation of music keep us together (photo by James Parker).

and always starts on time.

"We don't have auditions," says Dunston. "When someone hears our music, they know if they want to participate, because the music is so refreshing and different."

Since its inception, women have not made any attempts to join the group. They enjoy coming out to

hear the men sing, Dr. Dunston says.

The membership of the Twin City Choristers is open to all men with a desire to sing for personal enjoyment and musical achievement. The group rehearses at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays at the Wentz Memorial Church of Christ. Anyone interested in joining the group can contact Dr. Dunston or any of the members.

Social Notes

Bass heads foundation

Marshall B. Bass, corporate vice president of R.J. Reynolds Industries, has been elected chairman of the board of the Winston-Salem State University Foundation.

Bass was elected during the board's biannual meeting on Nov. 19.

Also elected were James Mack, vice chairman, and Perry Turner, treasurer. Five new members were appointed to the board: Dr. David Branch, Derrick Davis, Mrs. Lynn Eisenberg, Lyons Gray and Mrs. Lynn Hill.

A member of the foundation board since June 1981, Bass will serve a one-year term as chairman of the 21-member body. The



Marshall Bass

foundation is designed to foster and promote the growth, progress and general welfare of Winston-Salem State University, and to receive and administer gifts and donations for such purposes.

Alexander Erwin is selected state Principal of the Year

Robert A. Clendenin of Greensboro and Alexander Erwin of Wilkesboro were honored on Wednesday night as the first Wachovia Principals of the Year, an award presented to the state's most outstanding public high school principals.

Erwin, principal at Wilkes Central Sr. High School, and Clendenin, principal at Walter Hines Page Sr. High School, were presented awards of \$1,000 for the purchase of educational materials and equipment for their schools and \$1,000 for personal or professional use.

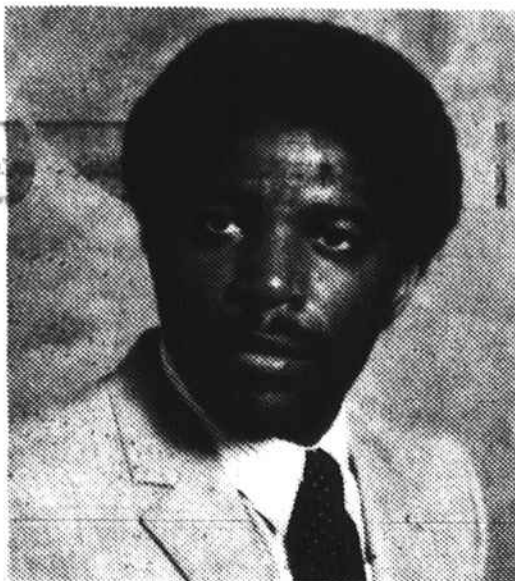
The awards program is sponsored by Wachovia Bank and Trust Co. and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. It was created to recognize principals who "create an environment in which education thrives and young men and women are challenged to achieve their fullest potential."

John F. McNair III, vice chairman of Wachovia, commended the principals for the "investment of time and talent and energy" which they put into their roles.

"We believe that effective principals are the key to achieving maximum return on the vast potential represented by the young people of our state and nation," he told the group attending the opening night of the N.C. Association of School Administrators' fall conference.

Clendenin was cited for several programs instituted at Page High School, including an attendance monitoring system with computer-initiated calls to students' homes, which resulted in a significant decline in absenteeism; annual questionnaires to students, staff and parents; and internships in city service agencies.

Erwin was recognized by the selection committee for programs



Alexander Erwin

developed to establish rapport with students, parents, teachers and the community. These programs include a meeting for each incoming student and his parents with the director of instruction and a counselor; and the "mentor program" for college-bound students.

Six other principals who were named Principal of the Year for their regions were also recognized at the meeting, including J. Robert Boyce at John A. Holmes High School, Edenton; Patrick Best at Goldsboro High School, Goldsboro; Richard M. Jewell at Broughton High School, Raleigh; George W. Seagraves at Lee County Sr. High, Sanford; Robert H. Bellamy at Monroe High School, Monroe; and Larry R. Liggett at Asheville High School, Asheville.

Each received a check for \$750 to be used to purchase educational materials or equipment for their schools.

The regional winners were selected from among 35 principals nominated by their local school systems. The selection committees included principals, high school teachers, college educators, lay people and representatives of Wachovia Bank and Trust Co.

Elberson to speak at NAACP banquet

Robert E. Elberson, president and chief operating officer of the Consolidated Foods Corp., will be the featured speaker at the 1985 Freedom Fund Banquet sponsored by the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP.

The banquet will be held on Jan. 10 in honor of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth-

day. It will begin at 7 p.m. in the M.C. Benton Convention Center.

"This year, the Winston-Salem branch will pay a special tribute to Sarah Marsh," said Pat Hairston, president of the local NAACP. "Mrs. Marsh served as the NAACP secretary for 30 years and was a hard-working

Please see page A7

Gents present holiday baskets to needy

For the third consecutive year, the Sophisticated Gents Inc. brightened the lives of the less fortunate by passing out Thanksgiving baskets to needy families.

The non-profit organization delivered a total of 13 baskets of food to families in Winston-Salem.

As a community-oriented organization, the Sophisticated Gents have conducted numerous public service activities in the black community.

As part of the group's fundraising efforts, the

Sophisticated Gents will host their annual Christmas benefit social on Saturday, Dec. 22, at the M.C. Benton Convention Center. The semi-formal event will include live entertainment.

Another important event on the group's calendar is the Third Annual Distinguished Citizen's Awards, which will be held on Sunday, Jan. 27, at the Stevens Center. Alderman Larry Little will be the guest speaker and Rudy Anderson will serve as the master of ceremonies. Providing entertainment will be Ms. Eve Cornelius, jazz soloist; Curtis Hairston and Kerry Waiters.

Minnie Ervin attends educational seminar

Minnie Ervin has completed her sixth educational seminar in Birmingham, Ala. She is educational director of Region Four for continuing education of the National Beauty Culturist League.

She organizes and directs all classes for cosmetologists and hair stylists for seven states, including North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee, as well as Nassau, in the Bahamas.

Ervin says finding qualified instructors and secretaries and serving as director of all the classes leaves her very little time to participate in the learning process herself.

For the last few years, she has returned from the regional



Minnie Ervin

meetings and proceeded to study abroad in Switzerland, London and Paris. In Paris, she studied hair cutting, designing new concepts and fashion coordinating for the total look.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

A. Louis Myers, assistant secretary of commerce, will speak at 7:30 p.m. in the East Winston Branch Library during the monthly meeting of the Minority Business League. The meeting is open to the public and is free. All interested business persons are encouraged to attend.

The Winston-Salem Human Relations Commission will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the city council chambers of City Hall on Main Street.

The Artworks Gallery Inc. is sponsoring a presentation of small works for Christmas by 23 area artists through Jan. 5. The show features painting, sculpture, photography, fiber art, pottery and installation art. The Artworks Gallery is located at 217 West Sixth St. and is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays. For more information, call 723-5890.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30

The Flonnie Anderson Theatrical Association will present the drama, "Les Blancs," by Lorraine Hansberry at the Winston-Salem Fine Arts Center Workshop Theatre through Dec. 2. For more information, contact the Arts Council or the Delta Arts Center.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

The Leisure Ladies Craft Guild will sponsor its annual "Christmas Cornucopia" bazaar from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. at St. Paul United Methodist Church at 3400 Dellabrook Drive. A variety of handmade items will be on sale, including macramé, needlepoint, cross-stitching, quilting, ceramics, oil painting and lace-net embroidery.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

Reynolds Gardens of Wake Forest University will hold its annual Poinsettia Show from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. at the greenhouse, in conjunction with an orchid display and sale by the Triad Orchid Society. Poinsettias from the show will go on sale at 8:30 a.m. Monday. For more information, call 761-5593.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

The Tuesday Night Film Program at the Forsyth County Public Library at 600 West Fifth St. will present Francois Truffaut's 1959 film, "The 400 Blows" at 7:30 p.m. The program is the first of a six-film tribute to Truffaut. The film is subtitled. Admission is free.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

A representative from the office of U.S. Rep. Steve Neal will be at the East Winston Branch Library from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Any residents of the Fifth Congressional District having problems with a federal agency or who has an opinion about pending legislation before the Congress are invited to voice their concerns at this time.

The Chronicle welcomes Community Calendar notices. Announcements should be concise and typed or neatly printed. They should include the day, time, place and sponsors of the event, plus a number to call for additional information. Announcements should be addressed to the Winston-Salem Chronicle Community Calendar, P.O. Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102. The deadline for announcements is Monday at 3:30 p.m.