

Black social workers group honors Woodruff with service award

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Each year the North Carolina Association of Black Social Workers recognizes an outstanding member of the community with its Annual Human Service Award, and this year's winner says she "has no idea" why she received the honor.

County Commissioner Mazie Woodruff received a plaque from the social workers' association during its recent meeting in Winston-Salem in recognition of her years of dedication to human service.

Mrs. Woodruff was honored at an awards banquet held on the first day of the conference and says she doesn't feel that she's done anything spectacular.

"The only thing that I've done is to go about doing what I'm supposed to be doing," says Mrs. Woodruff.

"I asked God to use me, and that's all that I've been doing. I'm honored, but it's nothing that I've done on my own. It's

nothing that I can boast about because I've never done anything alone."

In her acceptance speech, Mrs. Woodruff thanked the organization and encouraged the members to take an active interest in keeping black heritage alive.

"We need to keep our heritage alive. We need to keep talking about from whence we came," Mrs. Woodruff told the audience. "Black families must keep interested in their history and their heritage."

Mrs. Woodruff emphasizes her belief that black people have moved away from the desire to help one another and says, "Now we're enjoying big paychecks, and we've decided that we don't need to share. It's time for us to get ourselves together. Black people have got to get back on track."

Commenting on the need for young blacks to have positive role models, Mrs. Woodruff says it is time for black professionals to



Despite her recent retirement, Mazie Woodruff plans to keep busy in community affairs (photo by James Parker).

come back and give something to their communities.

"Every young black that has got a decent job today has it because somebody sacrificed years ago so they could get the job," says Mrs. Woodruff. "So what they should do is come back and be a role model for the young people in the community."

Mrs. Woodruff, who is very

earnest in her concern for the people of her community, says she will continue to work to provide more housing in black neighborhoods, housing that will bring black professionals "home to their own communities."

Mrs. Woodruff, who has 11 children, 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild, recently retired from Holladay Surgical

Supply, where she was a sales representative. She says she refused to retire until "I could find somebody that looked just like me to take my place."

It is dedication like that which made Mrs. Woodruff a clear choice for the human service award. Marty Penn, a member of the conference host chapter and planning committee, says it was Mrs. Woodruff's commitment to advocacy programs that qualified her for the recognition.

"Mazie Woodruff works with and is committed to grassroots people," says Penn. "She represents service to black people that goes beyond all the bureaucracy. She is deserving of recognition because she has facilitated the delivery of important services."

As the 1985 recipient of the annual honor, Mrs. Woodruff joins Larry Little on the list of Winston-Salem residents to receive the honor. Little was the 1979 winner of the award, which Penn says is given to a resident of

the host chapter's city.

Although retired from her job at Holladay Surgical Supply, it is difficult to imagine the energetic Mrs. Woodruff with idle time on her hands. In fact, she says that since she retired she has not had any spare time, and that makes the veteran commissioner happy.

"I haven't had one day to sit and do nothing, and I'm glad," says Mrs. Woodruff. "There are so many problems that people have that touch me that I don't think that I could sit and be bored."

Mrs. Woodruff says that she has no plans to leave the County Board of Commissioners and that she may run for another term "if the people want me to. If they've got somebody else they want, I'll step aside and let them have their turn because I'll still be doing the same thing."

With a track record like Mrs. Woodruff's, more of the same thing will be just what the community needs.

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