

# Storytelling Festival & Youth Talent Showcase

The players in this production aren't household names; most have never appeared on television, let alone the silver-screen. But to the masses they entertain each year, they are superstars.

The National Black Theatre Festival is welcoming back its popular "Storytelling Festival." When the event was first welcomed into the NBTF family of programs, it was conceived as a children's program. But that has changed over the years as the audiences became more diverse. The members of the North Carolina Association of Storytellers who stage the Storytelling Festival have a knack for telling the kind of tales that can entertain anyone - from the young to the old.

The storytellers weave bits of black culture with humor, poetry, life lessons and song to tell tales that almost always promote virtues and family values. The N.C. Association of Black Storytellers is an

offshoot of the National Association of Black Storytellers, which was founded in 1982 by Mary Carter Smith and Linda Goss as a way to preserve the rich history of black storytelling. The head of the N.C. Association of Storytellers is Beverly Fields Burnette. Contact her via e-mail at [bb71946@aol.com](mailto:bb71946@aol.com) for more information about the group.

The great Larry Leon Hamlin, the founder of the National Black Theatre Festival and the N.C. Black Repertory Co., always believed in the promise and endless possibilities of young people. His schedule was never too busy to help out youngsters. His was a regular at local schools, where he would perform and encourage students to embrace the arts. Hill Magnet, which has a nearly all black and Hispanic student population, was a favorite of Hamlin's. Hill students were often players in Black Rep productions and shows.

A few years before he passed away, Hamlin excitedly announced the addition of the National Youth Talent Showcase to the National Black Theatre Festival lineup. Designed to provide youngsters with a comforting environment to display their burgeoning singing, dancing, acting, rapping and poetry skills.

The event, which always attracts a healthy amount of celebrity special guests, is coordinated by Sharon Frazier, a beloved local educator and a gifted vocalist in her own right.



Sharon Frazier

## "Storytelling Festival"

Aug. 3 at 10 a.m.  
&  
3 p.m.  
at Benton Lower Level  
Ticket Price: \$7

## "National Youth Talent Showcase"

Aug. 6 at noon  
Aug. 7 at 11 a.m.  
at Benton Lower Level  
Ticket Price: \$10

- The Chronicle



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