

Local nurses recognized in 'Great 100'

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Seven nurses at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center have been named to the 2009 "Great 100" list in North Carolina that recognizes some of those providing excellent health care.

The Great 100 Inc. is a grassroots organization that allows nurses across the state the opportunity to nominate their peers who demonstrate excellent nursing care of their patients and also a commitment to their vital profession. Recipients are recognized for their outstanding professional ability and for the contributions they make to improve the health care services in their community.

"It is always an honor to have nurses from our staff inducted into this prestigious group of nurses from across North Carolina," said Maureen Sinfich, R.N., vice president of operations and chief nursing officer at Wake Forest Baptist.

The nurses from Wake Forest Baptist are: Anita Dixon, B.S.N., R.N., child psychiatry at Brenner Children's Hospital; Vera Eckard, B.S.N., R.N., nurse supervisor for radiation oncology; Carolyn Fulton, R.N., acute care elderly; Robin



Great 100 nurses (front row, l-r): Anita Dixon, Carolyn Fulton and Adrianna Sloan; back row: Vera Eckard, Phyllis D. Knight-Brown and Robin R. Hack.

Hack, M.S.N., R.N., nursing clinical systems; Phyllis D. Knight-Brown, M.S.N., R.N., staff development; Adrianna Sloan, B.S.N., R.N., 4B ICU; Lyn Wooten, M.S.N., R.N., surgery oncology coordinator. The Wake Forest Baptist

recipients will be recognized at a gala event on Saturday, Oct. 3 at the Greensboro Coliseum.

The Great 100 Inc. was formed in 1988, when Heather Thorne, R.N., called together a group of nurses from across

the state to develop a plan to select and recognize the best of their profession. The organization also raises funds for nursing scholarship, awarding more than \$140,000 to help others pursue a nursing career.



Natasha Gore with Sonia Manzano.

Manzano

local and national writers. The festival took over the streets of the Downtown Arts District. Manzano's talk, which was sponsored by the Hispanic League of the Piedmont Triad, was one of the day's first events. Natasha Gore, the executive director of the ECHO Council, played host at the discussion, asking the actress/writer questions about her storied career. Gore said she was honored and even a bit star-struck to chat with "Maria."

"She's such a pioneer," said Gore. "When a person of color makes inroads in any setting ... it's really just something that we can look to."

Hispanic League Board Member Cesar Guerrero also grew up watching Manzano.

"She's an icon...for the Hispanic community," he said.

Manzano is a force in front of and behind the camera on "Sesame Street," which has become "the nation's longest-running children's program since its debut in 1969. She was a part of the show's writing team, earning her 15 Emmy Awards. Her writing credits also include her children's books "No Dogs Allowed!" and "A Box Full of Kittens."

Although television has made Manzano's face recognizable to people around the world, she says the power of the page is greater than that of the screen.

"When you have a book in your hand, you have an opportunity for your mind to wander and to fantasize between the pages and between the words," she said.

Gore asked Manzano about her creative inspiration and her writing technique. The actress also read from "A Box Full of Kittens," but, inevitably, the questions came back to her iconic role on "Sesame Street."

Manzano told the crowd that the show was originally designed to provide educational basics to inner-city African-American children, but that the Hispanic community wanted representation too. Manzano was hired, along with actor Emilio Delgado, who plays Maria's husband, Luis. A 1980s episode in which the two characters wed is one of the most popular "Sesame Street" shows of all time.

Manzano says her art has often imitated her real life. When she fell in love and got married, Maria followed suit. When she had a baby in real life, so did Maria. She called Sesame Street the "first reality show."

Both Manzano's daughter and Maria's daughter are named Gabriela. At one time Manzano's real-life daughter, who is now a college student, even played the role.

Manzano says that young fans of the show have provided her with some of her fondest memories. She told the crowd about the time when the actor playing Big Bird was on the "Sesame Street" set without the top half of his costume on. When a child spotted him, he asked "Does Big Bird know there's a man in there?"


Many children she meets think that she's literally in their living room when she's on television. One time, she asked a boy what his name was and he said, "Oh, Maria, you know my name." Another child asked her, "How do you like our new sofa?"

Manzano, who is of Puerto Rican heritage, says diversity has come a long way since her first days on the show. She has helped that progression. Her own children's books star Hispanic characters living in the

Bronx, where she was raised. The Bronx also produced new Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a Latina of Puerto Rican heritage who is the High Court's first Hispanic member.

Guerrero said Manzano's life story and work are in line with the mission of the Hispanic League. Over the decades, Manzano's character has been able to maintain her heritage while also making connections to children of all races.

"Part of our purpose is to join the Hispanic/Latino community with the (other) Forsyth residents to find common ground," Guerrero said, "and Maria ... she defines that joining of Hispanics with mainstream."



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