

Petree Elementary principal earns doctorate

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Essie McKoy, the principal of Petree Elementary School, recently graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a doctorate of education degree in educational leadership.

She credits her accomplishment to her belief in God that all things are possible with faith and the determination to strive for excellence.

Dr. McKoy has also earned an educational specialist degree in educational leadership from UNCG, a master's degree in middle grades education from Appalachian State University, with certifications in public school administration and curriculum and instruction and a BS degree in special education with certification in learning disabilities from Winston-Salem State University.

She also completed the Principals' Executive Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, receiving the program's Outstanding Academic Achievement Award; the Leadership Program for New Principals at UNC Chapel Hill, receiving the prestigious Jack McCall Award.

Dr. McKoy, a member of the National Scholars Honor Society, began her teaching career at the former Petree Middle School and later taught at Hanes-Lowrance Middle School. She served as an instructor at the Math and Science Academy of Excellence at Winston-Salem State University. Before becoming the principal at Petree, she was the principal at Hall-Woodward Elementary School.

As a special treat for her students, Dr. McKoy wore her doctor-

al graduation regalia live on the school's daily morning show and talked to students about dreaming, setting goals, working hard and attending college.

"Our kids can achieve greatness and have the potential, we just have to show them the way and make a powerful impact while they are young," she said.

The students asked intriguing questions about college, her regalia and how she got to be a "Dr." No matter what the question was, the answer always led back to "you can do the same."

Dr. McKoy thinks that it is more than irony that she is back leading the school where she started her educational career. She wants to impact the lives of her students and instill in them the notion that they too can become anything and accomplish anything.



Dr. Essie McKoy is a recent UNCG graduate.



The Otesha Creative Arts Ensemble performs during Kwanzaa 2011.

City's nightly Kwanzaa celebrations start Dec. 26

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Kwanzaa, a week-long African American cultural celebration, will begin on Wednesday, Dec. 26 and continue through Jan. 1, 2013 at various locations throughout Winston-Salem.

The Otesha Creative Arts Dance Ensemble, the Healing Force and the North Carolina Repertory Teen Ensemble are among the featured performing arts groups. Duke Divinity School student Candice Benbow, who has appeared on The Huffington Post Live and is a guest columnist with Urban Cusp Magazine, will speak on the first night of Kwanzaa. On night two, Masika Braitwaite of the Victory In Life youth organization will hold an African naming ceremony. City Council Member Derwin Montgomery is scheduled to participate in the ceremony.

A Kwanzaa Banquet will be sponsored by The Whole Village cultural organization at Emmanuel Baptist Church on the third night. The banquet is free with a ticketed reservation. To make reservations, call Vernita Terry at 252-204-7487.

Wednesday, Dec. 26 Umoja - Unity Opening Ceremony at the Urban League, 201 W. 3th St., at 6 p.m. Sen. Elect Earline Parmon will be the honoree;

Thursday, Dec. 27 Kujichagulia - Self Determination at the Sprague Recreation Center, 1350 E. Sprague St., at 6 p.m. with honorees Sharon Burns and The Healing Force;

Friday, Dec. 28 Ujima - Collective Works and Responsibility at Emmanuel Baptist Church, 1075 Shalimar Drive, at 6:30 p.m., with honorees Effranguan Muhammad and TeNisha Fields;

Saturday, Dec. 29 Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics at the Carl Russell Recreation Center, 3521 Carver Road, from 3 - 6 p.m.



Benbow



Braitwaite



Bishop John and First Lady Deloris Huntley



Parmon

with honorees the Scott Cares Foundation and Horace Fulton's Sound In Action;

Sunday, Dec. 30 Nia - Purpose A Celebration of Purpose at Grace Presbyterian Church, 3901 Carver School Road, at 6 p.m., with honorees Rudolph Boone Sr. and William E. Shouse;

Monday, Dec. 31 Kuumba - Creativity at the Arts Council Theatre, 610 Coliseum Drive, at 1 p.m., with honoree Dr. Felecia Piggott Long;

Tuesday, Jan. 1 Imani - Faith at Alpha and Omega Church of Faith, 1445 N Gray Ave., at 4 p.m. with honorees Bishop John and First Lady Deloris Huntley;

All programs are free and open to the public. Vendors interested in setting up at events are asked to call 336-757-8556 or visit www.triad-culturalarts.org.

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