



UL and partners to aid small businesses

BY TODD LUCK
Small Business and Entrepreneurial Clinic starts next month

THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Urban League is partnering with the City of Winston-Salem and Wake Forest University to offer small businesses the knowledge and expertise they need to thrive.

The partners will offer the Small Business and Entrepreneurial Clinic at the Urban League's Quality of Life Center on Patterson Avenue. The City will provide training seminars, while the Wake Forest Community Law and Business Clinic will offer legal training relevant to entrepreneurs and legal services to participating businesses.

"I wanted to create a program that actually would help move small businesses along to ensure the success of these businesses as much as possible," said Urban League President and CEO Keith Grandberry.

The year-long program will initially start with a small group of small business owners taking several weeks of seminars. Grandberry hopes the initial crop of participants includes both established business owners and those with new businesses. There will be an application process for prospective participants. The clinic is expected to start next month. Plans are for the program to take on more businesses over time.

Walter Farabee Jr., the City's Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Program coordinator, said seminar topics will include business plan development, financial management, market analyses and advertising.

"A lot of people are interested in starting businesses but they don't know exactly where to start and aren't aware of the resources here in the area," said Farabee. "So this is a great opportunity for them whether they're actually starting or just have some ideas floating around."

Steve Virgil, founding director of the Wake Forest Community Law and Business Clinic, and WFU Law alumni will lead workshops at the Clinic covering topics like managing human resource issues, reading financial statements and complying with regulatory, license and tax requirements.

After the group workshops are completed, participants will meet one-on-one with WFU law



Grandberry



Farabee



Virgil

students for legal advice. Under Virgil's supervision, the students will take on more involved, long term roles to serve the businesses' legal needs. WFU has helped local residents since 2009, but Virgil said the UL clinic will be the first time the law clinic has offered its services in such an integrated way, turning workshop attendees into clients.

"It gives us an opportunity to serve more people and serve them in a more dynamic way," he said. "...I'm very hopeful we'll have a bigger impact and better impact in the groups we're working with."

The State of Small Business and Entrepreneurship in 2012 report put out by the State's Small Business and Technology Center found that small businesses were vital to the economy. In 2009, 98 percent of businesses with employees in the state were considered small business with less than 500 employees. The report also found that there has been a decline in businesses owned by sole proprietors, but that income is up for small business owners and that they are hiring more employees.

For information on how to apply for the Small Business and Entrepreneurial Clinic, contact the Urban League at (336) 725-5614.

Moles

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socialize.

The conclave only comes to town once every 30 years, and the local affair has been 10 years in the making, organizers said.

"It's kind of like delivering a baby," commented Caldwell, who co-chaired the Conclave along with Mole Pat Hickman. "We've been working on this for 10 years and now it's here."

Themed "Arts with an Attitude" to highlight the city's Arts and Innovation motif, the conclave featured a full slate of events, including a trip to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in Greensboro, a Mules golf outing and shopping excursions to Hanes Mall and Thruway Shopping Center. Each day was punctuated with meetings, receptions and luncheons and culminated with opulent dinner/dances. Featured performers included national recording artist Marsha Ambrosius (a former member of Floetry), The Moles Choir and Winston-Salem's own Otesha Creative Arts Ensemble. The North Carolina Black Repertory Company even presented an excerpt from the play, "Crowns," because Moles are known for their ornate hats.

"Winston-Salem has a legacy of offering the national organization the best conclave ever, and this one will not disappoint," declared Moles Chapter President RaVonda Dalton-Rann. "...We're looking forward to giving our Mole sisters the ultimate experience in Moledom, sisterhood and having a good time."

In addition to celebrating the tradition of the Moles, chapter members worked to showcase the unique attributes of the city they call home through the Conclave, through events like the art exhibition and sale featuring local artists that was held at the Embassy Suites Friday. Among them was Barbara Eure, whose favorite mediums include wood, clay and fiber. Eure, the pottery specialist at Summit School, brought along a collection of her sculptures and bowls, coated in her signature copper and blue toned glaze, and an array of vibrant hand painted scarves for sale.

"It's wonderful," said the Pfafftown resident. "...I've enjoyed seeing how organized they are, how colorful they are and how accepting they are of the arts."

The local chapter, which is home to nearly 30 members, was founded in 1953 by Elva James, who was an English professor at Winston-Salem Teachers College (now Winston-Salem State University). The university maintains a strong presence in the local contingent. In addition to Dalton-Rann, who serves as executive assistant to WSSU Chancellor Donald Reaves, the chapter is also home to D'Walla Simmons-Burke, founder of the famed Burke Singers and director of Choral and Vocal Studies and Campus Police Chief Patricia "Pat" Norris. Other organizations represented in the chapter include Wake Forest University, Wake Forest School of Medicine and Womble Carlyle Sandridge and Rice. Dalton-Rann, who joined the group seven years ago, said the club has taught her "the real meaning of sisterhood."

"These are some of our community leaders and they come together to support one another and enjoy one another's company," she remarked. "It's one of the warmest groups of women I have ever been associated with."

Since its inception, the Moles has welcomed women who represent the best in their chosen fields,



Photos by Dennis Dove/Dink Digital Productions

Mules pose for a photo during one of the weekend's many gatherings.



Conclave Co-Chair Lisa Caldwell speaks.



Moles Chapter President RaVonda Dalton-Rann (right) with Dr. Velma Watts.



Moles and Mules hit the dance floor Friday.



Photo by Layla Garris
Artist Barbara Eure

said Caldwell, the executive vice president and Chief Human Resources Officer at Reynolds American and RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company. Although Moles gatherings continue to attract business and community leaders, the group's most important objective is to adhere to the club's mantra of living life to the fullest, Caldwell said.

"It's a great way to have fun and fellowship with people you enjoy being around. That's the bottom line for this group, and then it broadens even more when you bring in people from all these other sites," she remarked. "It's good networking, but it's all around fun, no bones about it."

Mole Rita Taliaferro made the trip from Petersburg, Va. to be in the number at the 2013 Conclave. Taliaferro, the CEO of a behavioral health corporation, joined the Moles in 2008 and says she hasn't missed a Conclave yet.

"I think everything's beautiful," the New Jersey native said of the local



Moles Evelyn Acree (left) and Mole Vanessa Smith, co-chair of the Friday night dinner/dance welcome their sisters to the Piedmont Club.

event on Friday. "The Friday night and Saturday night events are always events that you look forward to. You have an opportunity to meet and see those friends that you haven't seen in a year. It's just the ambiance of being in the presence of all these beautiful women."

Taliaferro, a member of the Moles Choir, says she looks forward to attending

the conclave every year. "Our motto is 'Enjoy... it's later than you think' — all of the ladies I have met live by that motto," she commented. "Being that a lot of us are professionals, we need these few days once a year to do just that."

For more information about the Moles, visit www.wsmoles.com.

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