

Women

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encouraged her constantly during her 10 years as owner of the popular downtown boutique, Body and Soul.

"She's always educating me and schooling me and making me feel good about what I'm doing and encouraging me. I know I'm not alone in that," she said of Burke. "...I'm just really glad that she's in our lives, because she's made such a difference for all of us."

Assistant City Manager Martha Wheelock continued the accolades in her introduction of Burke, praising the Northeast Ward representative for her "tireless will and never-ending passion" in serving the city for over 36 years.

Burke, a founding member of the North Carolina Black Elected Municipal Officials and the Black Political Awareness League (BPAL) expressed her bewilderment when she reached the podium.

"I thought you all were having my funeral a few minutes ago. Do you all know something I don't know?" she quipped, adding, "...I am appreciative. I did not know it was going to be about me."

More than 100 women have been honored for their leadership in the business, nonprofit and community sectors over the course of the reception's history. Burke told those who assembled for the July 11 reunion that the receptions are part of a larger effort the city is making to ensure that women feel honored and appreciated for their many contributions. Burke, who initially took office in 1977, remembers a time when that wasn't the case.

"When I first became an elected official, it wasn't easy in City Hall," she related. "It was a place where they felt that it was a man's world... if you look at our city, with the employees that we have (now) we truly believe that women - the woman's role - is so important."

The honorees of the



Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke presents City Council Member Wanda Merschel with a plaque in appreciation for her service to the community.

Photos by Layla Garris



Assistant City Manager Martha Wheelock speaks.



Almeta Poole, a 2005 honoree.

Outstanding Women program reflect a rich tapestry - a larger community of women who have helped to enrich the city and the world, Burke said.

"We as women know this: we will be with each other. It doesn't have anything to do with the color of our skin - women hurt and understand things differently (than men) and that's the reason why we can always come together," she said. "We have in our hearts love, kindness, understanding and togetherness."

Many of the women on hand for the reunion at the Anderson Conference Center praised the Outstanding Women Receptions for their galvanizing qualities.

"I think it helps with connecting, bonding with the community," said Almeta Poole, owner of Meta's Restaurant and a 2005 honoree.

"I think it's a beautiful occasion because it gives me the opportunity to network with other black business owners and honorees, and networking is important for businesses."

Suggs also praised the event, which honored her early in her career as an entrepreneur.

"I always felt good about this program that Mrs. Burke has started," she said. "It gives us a chance to meet one another and fellowship together and feel good about our accomplishments."

Elva Jones, chair of the Computer Science Department at Winston-Salem State University, said she was honored to be named among the 2006 honorees.

"It was really humbling," said Jones, for whom the school's computer science

building is named. "You work and you try to improve the lives of others, but to have other people recognize your efforts makes you really grateful and thankful."

Mosé Belton, a Nationwide Insurance agent, was among the inaugural class of Outstanding Women Leaders honorees in 2003.

"I'm happy and I'm blessed that 10 years later, I'm still in business and I'm still helping people and serving my community," she declared. "The economy has hurt all of us, but I continue to do what I do because I love what I do, which is basically making sure that everyone that I come in contact with is properly insured."

Belton, who has worked in the insurance industry for 27 years, said she was glad to have the opportunity to mingle with fellow honorees and pay homage to one of her most loyal customers.

"She has always supported me and always encouraged me throughout the years," she said of Burke. "I had to come and support her."

Burke, the city's longest serving public official, said she is "thinking and praying" about whether she will run for re-election this time around. Three challengers - Jemmise Bowen, Brenda Diggs and Michael Owens - have already filed as candidates in the Northeast Ward race.

Gentlemen's Golf Classic is July 27

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Union Baptist Church will hold its Second Annual Gentlemen's Charity Golf Classic on Saturday, July 27 at The Winston Lake Golf Course. On Friday, July 26, there will be a free youth clinic open to boys and girls interested in learning golf.

James Black, a Charlotte native who played the PGA TOUR in the 1960s, will conduct the free youth golf clinic, which is open to the public. Mr. Black was the first-round leader in the 1964 LA Open.

Dubbed "the Caddie from Nowhere," Black was considered a child prodigy and self-taught caddy. He made history in 1964 at the age of 21 by being the first black golfer to shoot 67 in the first round on the first day of his first professional golf tournament. He had a marvelously sweet swing then and still does today.

Black spends time teaching in Charlotte and the DC area. He was inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame in 1986 and has written a book about the swing.

Registration for the 2013 Gentlemen's Golf Classic will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 27. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. Tee time is at 1 p.m. The cost is \$60 per person or \$240 per team of four. There will be prizes and awards. Proceeds from The Gentlemen's Charity Golf Classic will benefit The Youth Character Football League of Union Baptist Church. The Youth Character Football League was initiated for the purpose of providing boys and girls, ages 5-14 years old, with a positive athletic experience that builds character and to address the issues of gang violence and childhood obesity.

For more information or to register, call the church office at 336-724-9305 or visit the web site at www.unionbaptistwsnc.org. Union Baptist Church is located at 1200 N. Trade St. in Winston-Salem. Dr. Sir Walter Mack Jr. is pastor and teacher.



Black

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