

Hall of Fame

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of the festival is felt year-round," Robinson said.

The Hall of Fame will be the anchor of a downtown arts center that will also serve the Arts Council and The University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

During the festival, Segway tour operators in Winston-Salem will offer hour-long tours to historic African-American places in Winston-Salem that will end at the museum.

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, the widow of

the late Larry Leon Hamlin, said that since the beginning of the festival, Larry wanted to include a hall of fame.

"Before the festival started, Larry talked about creating a museum for black theater," said Sprinkle-Hamlin. "I know he's looking down on us smiling, not only because of the museum but also because it is his son's birthday."

Hamlin passed away in 2007.

For more information on the National Black Theatre Hall of Fame and Museum, visit www.nbt.org or www.newwinston.org

Festival

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assisting the funding for the NBTF, always enjoy what the black cultural arts has to offer.

"I became one of the financial co-chairs of this festival back in 1993 before I became mayor," said Joines. "The energy that comes into the city brings a specialness to our community."

African drum performers and dancers entered the room, while the actors, actresses, directors and playwrights followed down a path like a "red carpet" to take center stage to begin presenting the awards.

Morgan and Williams, co-chairs of the NBTF, led the program and recognized each person who was presenting the awards to the honorees.

Before the awards were distributed, they took a moment to remember the following stalwarts who have died: Winston-Salem's Dr. Maya Angelou, who helped Mr. Hamlin bring his vision of the NBTF to life; Garland Lee Thompson Sr.; and actress Ruby Dee.

The Winston-Salem Millennium Fund was awarded the Marvtastic Philanthropy Award, accepted by Chairman Ralph Womble.

"We appreciate what the festival has become. From the moment Mr. Larry Leon Hamlin had an acorn idea and planted it squarely in Winston-Salem, we watched it grow into a mighty oak tree, and each year reaching new heights," said Womble.

The Theatre Arts and Humanitarian Award went to Warren Dell Leggett of Winston-Salem, a longtime NBTF and N.C. Black Rep volunteer and supporter who helped the organizations with his financial acumen.

The Special Recognition Award was given to the Karamu House, based in Cleveland, Ohio and Rachel P. Jackson, the longtime Winston-Salem community advocate who is considered one of the city's matriarchs.

The Carpetbag Theatre Inc., of Knoxville, Tenn., was given the Theatre Longevity Award.

The Living Legend Award were given to the following: A. Peter Bailey, Maurice Hines, Grace Jones, Hattie Winston and Robert Hooks.

Hooks expressed his concern about the arts in the community need to be more in the limelight.

"They [community arts centers] are dying ladies and gentlemen. They're on their sick beds, some of them are gone, and some are in desperate need of support. That makes me mad," Hooks said.

He went on to further suggesting to reaching out to the multimillion dollar celebrities who donate money to other charities, to invest into community arts theatres, as well as giving back to the communities from whence they came from.

Jones, president of AUDELCO (Audience Development Committee), which holds an awards ceremony each year that honors the best in black theatre, asked members of the audience to send her \$5 each for her organization. "Don't worry, I won't spend it," she said.

The Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award was given to Nate Jacobs, who gave his remarks of his relationship with Mr. Marvtastic.

"Little did I know he would wisp me up, fly me to North Carolina, take me under his wings and develop me as a professional," said Jacobs. "I'm just so fortunate to have had Mr.

Hamlin's Marvtastic light shine on my life and my career."

Katori Hall, who received the August Wilson Playwright Award, revealed a personal story of having an actual encounter of Wilson which inspired her to become a playwright. "Mr. Wilson gave me that permission to tell everything I had inside of me and put it on the stage. He paved the way for me and he has paved the way for others," said Hall.

The main award of that special evening was the Sidney Poitier Lifelong Achievement Award, which was given to actor Bill Cobbs.

"The arts saved my life, they made me somebody," Cobbs said.

Other awards and recipients were as follows: Emerging Producer Award, Erich McMillan-McCall; Lloyd Richards Director Award, Clinton Turner Davis; Outstanding Achievement in Costume Design, ESOSA; Outstanding Achievement in Lighting Design, Allen Lee Hughes; Outstanding Achievement in Scenic Design, Harlan Penn.

NBTF is a biennial program since 1989 of the North Carolina Black Repertory Company, based in Winston-Salem. Including live shows from critically acclaimed actors, there are other events and seminars, as well as local talents performed by the next generation of performers.

The NBTF will continue until Saturday, Aug. 8.

For additional information and a schedule of events, purchase The Chronicle's NBTF booklet inserted into the July 30 edition of the newspaper (call 336-722-8624 for more information), go to www.nbt.org or call the Festival office at 336-723-2266 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Photo by Donna Rogers
NBTF co-chairs Darnell Williams and Debbi Morgan leave the NBTF Gala on the runway in the Benton Convention Center banquet room on Monday, Aug. 3.



Photo provided by Felicia Piggott-Long
Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin and Obba Babatundé dine together at the NBTF Gala.

Welcome to the Practice of
William R. Warren DDS, PA
Jacquese O. Black, DDS



Dr. Jacquese O. Black graduated from the Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry in Nashville, TN. She is a member of the American Dental Association and Associate Member of the American Association Pediatric Dentists. Dr. Black is committed to the promotion of oral health and dental education in an effort to work with her patient to achieve excellent overall health. Her practice is now open and we look forward to treating children of all ages, adolescent and adults.

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Welcome

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Winston-Salem Transit Authority and guides to local restaurants and other attractions from Visit Winston-Salem.

Downtown businesses are also gearing up for the festival, with expanded days and hours of operation. Many have signs welcoming National Black Theatre Festival attendees and decorations in purple, which is the signature color of the festival. One store that goes all out is Trade Street cultural gift shop Body and Soul, which has store decor and employees adorned in purple and black for the week. Store Owner Dana Suggs said it's the biggest sales week outside of the holiday season.

"This is a huge time for us," she said. "We're ready, we're excited about this whole opportunity of the theatre festival. It's just wonderful for us as retailers. It's like Christmas."

Suggs has many out-of-town customers who make sure to visit her store when they come to the NBTF. She has a book filled with photos of all the celebrities that have stopped by her store. She said the line to her sole cash register can get long on NBTF week, but her customers are always patient.

Many new businesses will greet out-of-towners. Two new businesses, Rusty Bumper Ice Cream and Twin City Cigar Company and Lounge have opened in the last few weeks in the building that houses Body and Soul. Across Trade Street, the Winston-Salem location of Mast General Store, which opened earlier this year, is hoping to attract festival-goers too. Mast is also among the many sponsors of the NBTF.

"It's a great cause," said Mast General Manager Zach Lail. "It brings a lot of people to Winston. It brings a lot of people to downtown."

Festival attendees will also need to eat, and a multitude of restaurants will be more than anxious to serve them. Vivian Joiner, co-owner of Trade Street southern soul food restaurant Sweet Potatoes, said she also gets theater festival regulars.

"It's kind of like a family reunion, seeing old friends," she said. "You don't stay in contact with them throughout but when you see them, you kind of catch up."

Joiner said those at the restaurant try to be good ambassadors for the city and that she was looking forward to this week's rush.

Mayor Allen Joines said the whole city works hard to embrace the NBTF. He said this year the City is taking its festival week teen activities up a notch with a Teentastic Weekend, which includes a K Camp concert, at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds. He said the festival brings many benefits to the Twin City.

"Not only does it have a direct economic dollar impact, but it has a very intangible value of giving the city great exposure nationally and, really, internationally," he said. "Hopefully, it really demonstrates that we are a city that embraces its cultures and really opens ourselves up."



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