

Prominent women successful at business and community

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and creator of the POP Awards. "One thing that I noticed in my community dealings was the incredible clout, influence, and talent African American women had within companies and organizations that were going relatively unnoticed by the community at large."

The POP Awards will be held at Spirit Square at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$75 and can be purchased at The Post. Proceeds will fund scholarships, educational initiatives and arts and racial inclusion projects.

The caveat 'Women of Distinction' was added to this year's POP Awards to recognize the achievements of Emma Shaw Allen, LaRita Barber, Angelina Clinton, Raichelle Glover, and Linda Lockman-Brooks in their careers, civic and community organizations and family lives.

"When Gerald... called me I asked him, 'Are you sure?'"

said Clinton, vice president of enterprise operations services at Duke Energy. "It's a great honor, especially to be recognized with this group of women that I'm going to be standing shoulder to shoulder with. That's very inspiring."

The premise of "paying it forward" inspires Allen, a consultant and director of community outreach at First Charter Bank. As founder of a wealth management company, AJ Financial, she conducts a seminar titled "Start Now, Finish Rich" to empower the community regarding finances.

"I am humbled by (the honor)," she said, "because while I recognize that I am being recognized for doing significant work in community, I realize that there are a lot of other people doing the same thing. I feel I am accepting on behalf of all those who do it every day and do not get recognized."

All of the honorees are

accomplished professionally and have garnered countless awards and recognitions over the years, but it is their character and spirit as role models in the community that will be as much of a focal point at the POP Awards.

"I think it incumbent upon us to give back when we can in what ever manner we can," said Clinton. "Everybody isn't able to give back in the same way and as we see things that we can become passionate (about) or create some passion around, I just think it's healthy. It's what we should do. It's just the right thing to do."

As a small business owner, Lockman-Brooks, president of Lockman-Brooks Marketing Services, also acknowledges the importance of community involvement and said that is one of the reasons she is so proud to receive this particular award.

"I was raised with the old adage 'to whom much is given, much is required,' so I

think that's part of my personal motivation," she said. "I also believe that business owners of color and black executives in corporate life really need to have their feet at the table in community organizations so that they can bring their perspective as well as add their expertise to the conversation."

POP will include two segments where guests will have the specific opportunity to network and socialize with the honorees. The honorees will also be placed on stage with WSOC-TV morning news anchor Erica Bryant for a living room-type discussion. Though the format is a departure from typical awards events, Johnson feels it will be beneficial in that the audience can learn from the honorees' experiences.

Clinton echoed that sentiment, saying, "As long people can learn from the mistakes I've made as well as what I've done right, then so be it."

Lockman-Brooks feels that

the unique format will be a nice change of pace and will be interesting and worthwhile by giving people a chance to interact.

The honorees will have plenty of words of wisdom for those in attendance and sage advice for future generations.

Glover, a senior vice presi-

dent with Bank of America, emphasizes the importance of excellence and professionalism for the community.

"I am really driven now more than ever before around the whole notion of excellence and that takes on many forms," she said.

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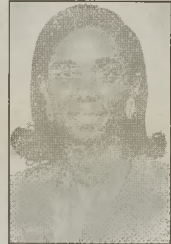
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Paul David Wellstone

Durham defends its honor during ordeal

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with an armful of bright red portfolios stuffed with promotional material about her city of 200,000. She hands out flyers or just a business card, and knowing the fastest way to a reporter's heart, she offers food from local restaurants and caterers.

"We knew we had to be on the street," said Reyn Bowman, president and chief executive of the convention and visitors bureau. "We had to be in touch with the media."

Our job was to move quickly, and Rosemary did that." Durham has long been stereotyped in North Carolina as the bad apple of the Triangle, as the cities of Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill are known. Raleigh is seen as the clean, if bland, state capital, while Chapel Hill is the bucolic university town. But Durham is viewed as troubled and crime-ridden, a rundown factory and tobacco town that has seen better days - with the elite Duke in its midst.

After a black exotic dancer

told police she was raped by white members of the Duke lacrosse team at an off-campus party, a frenzy of media descended on Durham to cover the case and the later indictment of two players. Bowman and Kitchin said their aim isn't to put a positive spin on the story, but provide an accurate context for national depictions of their city, which hasn't gotten this much screen time since "Bull Durham" hit theaters in 1988.

"When a frenzy hits like this, people are looking for contrasts, so the temptation is to slightly overemphasize the contrasts," Bowman said. "Durham has a bit of an image problem within a 50-mile radius anyway, that often contaminates the national coverage."

Durham officials are frustrated when writers describe Durham's population as poor and black. The city's population is 45.5 percent white and 43.8 percent black, while the median household income is \$41,160, or just under the

national average.

The "rundown factory town" image irks as well, given that the famed Research Triangle Park is a special tax district within Durham County and the high-end Streets at Southpoint regional mall anchors the county's southern end. The county's largest employers are Duke and its medical center, drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline and IBM, which has its largest single facility in Durham at RTP.

Kitchin said she was shocked to see a television story show an under-construction condominium development to illustrate a reporter's statement that Durham "has seen better times."

"Is the glass half-empty, or is it half-full?" she said. "He's showing huge renovation projects as though they're slums."

Bowman said the bureau plans to commission national polling on Durham's image in the days ahead and then again in several months to

try to assess the impact of the lacrosse case on the city's image.

But Duane Knapp, head of Anacortes, Wash.-based DEK BrandStrategy, a group that consults to convention and visitor bureaus on marketing and branding issues, said he wouldn't worry.

"The long-term challenge is a strategic one, not a reactionary one," Knapp said. "The challenge would be: What do we want our promise to be going forward, to make sure the city leadership and the convention and visitors bureau has the opportunity to decide what experience they want to offer. What kind of experience do we want visitors to enjoy when they're here?"

Bowman and Kitchin are used to battling on Durham's behalf. Their bureau has long urged local media outlets to dateline stories in Research Triangle Park from Durham, and to note Duke's location in Durham in stories about the university.

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