

Life Around Us



PAMELA REID WITH PRE-SCHOOLERS

Pamela Reid Brings Historical Performance To NCCU

By Ray Trent

Pamela Reid of Lowell, N.C. has a unique way of keeping alive and sharing black history. She stays in period of the 50s, 60s and 70s. Her character is Miss Elizabeth Pittman who lived through the periods and participated in some of the history making events. On January 20, at the NCCU Student Union, she welcomed a group of "History 101." The group ranged in age from pre-schoolers to high college students. In Lil Liza Jane's class (she was nicknamed this as a child in South Africa) there was never a dull moment. She made you laugh, she made you cry, she made you remember your childhood or she let you peep into what your parents did growing up.

The class started with Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954. As Lil Liza Jane said, the blacks went to white schools but no whites went to the black schools. In fact, it made the black schools junior high or shut them down.

It was the tragic story of Emmett Till in 1955 to the courage of Rosa Parks (her feet hurt). In 1957 Federal troops had to escort black children to school. But it wasn't all that. She let the students know what was going on at "fish fries" in those days.

In 1957 and '58 saw the rise of the civil rights movement with the Temptations, James Brown and Marvin Gaye and soul was a black company.

In '62, James Meredith entered the University of Mississippi. And the riders were going all over the South to get people registered to vote.

The March on Washington in 1963 with Dr. King and those thousands of people caused the president to sign the Civil Rights Bill in '64. In '66, Malcolm X was assassinated and we lost a great leader. But in '67, another great leader, Thurgood Marshall, went to the Supreme Court.

But Little Liza Jane's greatest memory was in 1968. As a student at a college in the town of Orangeburg, S.C., which refused to integrate, a student only wanted to go bowling. It started a mess and Liza Jane and all the students were confined to campus. When the National Guard came, she thought they were there to see that the black people could bowl if they wanted to, but the guards came to the college and surrounded it. For some unknown reason they started shooting into the school grounds. Several students lay murdered.

The Orangeburg Massacre in 1968 will always be a scar on Little Liza Jane's memory along with the tragedies and victories we knew in those periods.

After the presentation, the pre-schoolers who had sat so attentively throughout the whole performance, listening and laughing at the dances of those times, surrounded Pamela Reid with a hundred questions.

By knowing what was sacrificed by so many of our people in the past, they might be able to build a future for America on the foundation of the 50s, 60s and 70s.

Quake Deals Another Blow To Area Torn By 1992 Riots

LOS ANGELES (AP) - South Central neighborhoods struggling to recover from the 1992 riots were dealt another blow by the deadly earthquake.

While the worst damage from Monday's 6.6-magnitude temblor was in the San Fernando Valley, hundreds of buildings in the Southwest and South Central areas were rendered unsafe.

Some are institutions in the black community.

Perhaps worst-hit was the Southern Missionary Baptist Church, whose congregants spent

\$250,000 on earthquake reinforcement three years ago.

"There's no question we'll have to tear it down," said the Rev. J.L. Gates. "We made it through the Rodney King beating trials, but the tribulations got us." The acquittal of four white policemen in the state beating trial prompted three days of rioting that left dozens dead and caused \$1 billion in damage.

The Messiah Baptist Church, a refuge for Crenshaw District residents at the height of the rioting, closed after the quake cracked its bell tower and collapsed the ceiling and chimney in the fellowship hall.

"We took care of hundreds here in 1992," said the Rev. Kenneth J. Flowers.

He suggested the earthquake, coming on the heels of riots, floods and wildfires, may be a wake-up call to Southern California.

"I think God is speaking to get our attention, to say that we need to recognize that he is still in control and in charge," Flowers said.

Also shut, at least temporarily, were Bethany Baptist Church, the Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Theatre and offices of the Family Savings and Founders National Bank.

The quake damaged dozens of small bungalows and Spanish-style houses in the north end of the Crenshaw District, leaving many without gas or water.

"My whole house slipped off the foundation," said Robert Petite, 81. "I'm still living here but I don't know if my house is livable." "I've been trying to get a city inspector to look, but I just get a busy signal when I call," said the retired cook, who has lived in his home since the 1950s.

Irene Trowell-Harris Is First Black Woman General In Air National Guard

By Bruce Henderson

The Charlotte Observer
CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) - Working in the fields of her family's farm near Aiken, S.C., young Irene Trowell-Harris watched in awe when airplanes flew overhead, and dreamed of someday flying for a living.

"Every time we mentioned it," she says now, "we always laughed." Trowell-Harris, 54, is doing more than just flying in her 30-year career as an Air National Guard flight nurse, nursing instructor and administrator. In October, she became the first black woman ever named general in the 357-year history of the National Guard.

"It makes me feel wonderful," Trowell-Harris, who now lives in Arlington, Va., said recently. "When I joined the Guard in 1963, the highest rank a nurse could go in the Guard was major. But I enjoyed the mission, I enjoyed the flying, and that was always more important than the rank." Her mother, Irene Battle Trowell, who still lives in Aiken, attended the ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington where Trowell-Harris was pinned as a brigadier general. Only two other women have attained that rank in the Guard.

The third of 11 children, Trowell-Harris' mother had only a sixth-grade education, and her father finished only third grade.

But several of her siblings earned college degrees, and one brother is a physician.

"We picked cotton, took care of

corn, had cows and pigs," Trowell-Harris said. "It was a lot of work, but I have good memories. The only thing I didn't like was the times when we had to stay out of school to pick cotton." After graduating from Columbia Hospital School of Nursing, Trowell-Harris earned a bachelor's degree from Jersey City (N.J.) State College, a master's in health administration from Yale and a doctorate in health education from Columbia University in New York.

She joined the Air Guard in 1963 as a flight nurse, a specialty trained to care for patients during high-altitude and often long-distance flights. After steady advancement,

Trowell-Harris in 1986 became the first Air Guard nurse to ever command a medical clinic.

As a brigadier general, she is nursing assistant to the director, Directorate of Nursing Services in the office of the Air Force surgeon general.

That's besides her civilian job as a division director in the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington. Trowell-Harris also serves on two community housing boards, in an Air Force mentor program and with school and church programs.

"People helped me, and I want to help them back," she said.

Nebraska Woman Recalls Atomic Near-Catastrophe

By Donna Farris

The Kearney Hub
KEARNEY, Neb. (AP) - Tornado sirens don't bother Marcella Dunn much.

After all, she's lived through a scare of the worst possible catastrophe - an accidental atomic bomb explosion.

Although there was no blast, she doesn't have fond memories of the air base in Morocco where a B-47 bomber, loaded with an atomic weapon, caught fire on a runway.

"It's an experience I hope I never have again," she said, adding that

she will never forget the day it happened.

Soon after the scare, military personnel and their families were told not to talk or write about the event.

But Mrs. Dunn and her husband Bob, a retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force, recently were contacted by Col. Gerald M. Adams, and her story was included in a book he wrote called "History of the U.S. Strategic Air Bases in Morocco." At the time, the United States had air bases in North Africa to guard against the threat posed by

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Durham Board of County Commissioners solicits applicants to fill positions on the following citizens' board and commissions:

Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee: Six expired terms (expires February 1995). Subsequent terms are for three years. The committee is responsive to the needs of nursing home residents and promotes community involvement and cooperation with nursing homes. Members must be county residents and have no financial interest, directly or indirectly, in a nursing home, and no immediate family of a resident can be on the committee.

Woman's Commission: One unexpired term (expires June 1994). The Commission is an advisory board on the status of Durham county women.

Property tax listing must be current. County and City taxes must not reflect any delinquencies before an application is submitted.

Appointments will be considered by the County Commissioners on Monday, February 28, 1994, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative complex, 200 E. Main Street.

For applications or additional information, contact Garry E. Umstead, Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners (560-0025).

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS

FEBRUARY 14, 1994

Garry E. Umstead, CMC
Clerk to the Board