

# Diggs Gallery, Library dedicated in twin ceremonies

By BLANCHE CARTER  
Special to the Chronicle

Winston-Salem, known nationally for its commitment to the arts, has grown in stature even more since Friday, Oct. 5, when Winston-

1910. Shortly afterward, the guests—among them aldermen Larry Womble and Virginia Newell—moved through the library and wended their way to the gallery, which is named for a former chair-

T. Diggs Gallery stands as a monument to him as a symbol of the great esteem in which he is held."

Inside the gallery, a contemporary facility accented with track lighting above the nearly 7,000 square foot area, guests were treated

about 80 objects from the African Heritage Center at N. C. A&T State University and the North Carolina Museum of Art, as well as from Gordon Hanes's private collection.

In addition, the gallery opening featured large pencil drawings by Glenda Wharton-Little, a Winston-Salem artist and sculptor. Mrs. Wharton-Little created the drawings for an ancient African folktale she has illustrated about the origination of the sun. The nine surrealistically styled works are reproduced, accordion-style, in a booklet, "The Children and the Sun: A Bushman Tale," that children will receive when they tour the gallery.

Large color photographs from the Elison Archives at the Smithsonian Institution were also on exhibit, depicting African tribal life.

"We have a splendid gallery and a splendid exhibition," said Mitzi Shewmake, a Winston-Salem State art professor and the gallery director. "It's taken nearly 20 years to see this become a reality and now that it is, the community and people from all over should take advantage of what we have here now and in future exhibitions. It's simply magnificent and an asset for the university."

The free exhibition runs through Dec. 16 during the hours of 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesdays through Fridays, and 2 to 5 p.m. Sundays.

The library addition, which opened in May, is nearly double the size of the original building and boasts a three-story atrium that floods the entrance area with natural light.



Participating at "The Kneeling Figure" oil painting at the Diggs Gallery opening are (left to right): Lewis Claytor, Eric Claytor, Natalie Claytor, Mary L. Diggs, and Janifer Diggs-Claytor.

Salem State University dedicated its new art gallery and the library addition that houses it.

"Your presence here this evening symbolizes your positive relationship with this institution and your support of our development into a regional university with multifaceted offerings," Robert A. Emken, chairman of the university's Board of Trustees, told the 200 guests who attended the evening gala to mark the opening of the James T. Diggs Gallery and the addition to C. G. O'Kelly Library.

In grand fashion to honor the occasion, university officials held twin ribbon-cutting ceremonies, and tours of the facilities and the inaugural art exhibitions.

Doing the honors for the library was Fay Ash of High Point, a relative of the late Cadd Grant O'Kelly, the university's second chief administrator, who served from 1904-

man of the art department and a professor emeritus, James Thackeray Diggs Jr., who taught at Winston-Salem State for more than 40 years before his retirement in 1979.

Diggs, who died in April 1989, also was co-founder of the Associated Arts of Winston-Salem and helped establish what is now SECCA, the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art.

Cutting the ribbon were his wife, Mary Louise Diggs, and Gordon Hanes, a former trustee and noted arts patron.

"No one deserves this honor more than 'T' Diggs, who breathed life into art," Hanes said.

Chancellor Cleon F. Thompson Jr. called Diggs a "talented, colorful and caring human being."

"James T. Diggs was the consummate artist, who enthusiastically taught and deeply appreciated his craft," Thompson said. "The James

to a retrospective of Diggs's works. The 25-piece collection features a variety of media, including abstract paintings, landscape watercolors, etchings and drawings.

They also glimpsed the gallery's main show, "Through African Eyes: The Rhythm of African Life and Arts," featuring

## Delta reading program

Delta Sigma Theta was invited to be the lead national organization in collaboration with the Barbara Bush Foundation to implement a national family reading program. In this effort to establish literacy as a value in every family in America, the Winston-Salem alumnae chapter launched School America, a massive drive to register readers in our communities.

A registered reader is anyone who pledges to read to a child aged one through 10 one story a week throughout 1990-91. Each registered reader receives a reader registration card and a reader button. At the Delta National Convention held in Miami, Fla., in June, the sorority presented First Lady Barbara Bush a plaque documenting over one million registered readers. In Winston-Salem over 8,000 readers have been registered.

For the remainder of this year and throughout 1991, Deltas will be registering readers. However, this year the focus will not only be on individual readers but also on the development of quality reading groups. Every effort will be made to identify children and adults who have reading problems. Reading groups will be organized and meet on a regular basis at the Delta Arts Center using the feeder groups listed below to conduct the sessions.

School America will be expanded into the more advanced curriculum of read-a-thons, reading parties and read-ins. The read-ins will be a retreat-styled day where children and adults can come together and read about a particular topic and discuss local storytellers. Children's book authors will be invited to participate in some of the

read-ins.

Efforts will be made to establish church reading centers and family learning centers for registered readers. Deltas will coordinate all storytelling hours, adopt reading families in the community and work with local bookstores and libraries to provide afternoon reading for children. Card parties will be scheduled at local libraries to help children experience the wonder and excitement of getting their first library card. Youth "reading panels," with a group reading a particular book and discussing various themes and characters in a panel type discussion group, will be held twice a year. Annually, a story reading and storytelling festival will be sponsored. Signers will be included at all activities to accommodate the hearing impaired.

Bethlehem Center already has been adopted, and once a week a registered reader will read out loud to the children. Books will be given as gifts at all scheduled activities.

Throughout the year, there will be used book sales where the only price for a book is the presentation of a reader registration card.

In order to fulfill this year's goals, the sorority will be networking with other literacy organizations. Some of these partnership organizations are the Delta Fine Arts Reading Achieves Positives (RAP) group, Jack & Jill of America Inc., Family Services and the public library system.

School America is intended to help every family in the nation understand that the home is the child's first school, that the parents are the child's first teachers and that reading is a child's first subject.

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