

Uplifting the name of God takes group to high places

▲ Local gospel group will perform next week-end at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

By CAROLE RAGINS
Community News Editor

A tiny church between Winston-Salem and Greensboro is filled with the gospel harmony of four singers diligently rehearsing. They have been invited to perform in Yolanda King's production, "Tracks," at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. on July 23-25.

The King's Corner Singers are a part of the King's Corner Holiness Church where Bishop Reginald Kelly is the pastor.

It all started when renowned author Dr. Maya Angelou invited the group to sing at her birthday celebration when Yolanda King was a guest at her home in Winston-Salem.

"When I first heard them, their voices sent goose pimples all over my body. I knew there was something special about them," said Yolanda King, daughter of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "There is such a wonderful spirit about them."

King added that "Tracks" has been "a labor of love" and in looking for new talent to add to the show, her producer agreed with her that the choir would add a special quality to the production.

The singers are Chris McLaughlin, Cynthia Brown, Brian McLaughlin and Joe Brown. Joe Brown is the musical director and composer, as well as one of the singers in the choir.

The singers say they owe their success to their mentor, Angelou, and Kelly, who motivated them to sing relentlessly.

"Dr. Maya Angelou has introduced us to so many renowned people such as her mother, Alex

Haley, and Oprah Winfrey, all of whom we've had the pleasure to sing for while guests in Dr. Angelou's home," said Joe Brown. "We probably would have never had the opportunity to meet Dr. Angelou and get to know her on a personal basis had it not been for Bishop Kelly."

The singers refer to Dr. Angelou as "Auntie."

"Whenever we need her, she's always available to make things work out for us — no matter what the situation is," said Kelly. "She's a mother to all of us and we owe this opportunity to sing in D.C. to her."

According to soprano Cynthia Brown, when they first sang for Dr. Angelou's mother they sang a capella, yet she asked, "Where's the microphones?" "I was humbled because I didn't think we were as great as they thought we were," said Brown.

The choir has been singing as a group for over ten years and have been members of the church since it was formed 18 years ago. "It is a wonderful ministry and through our faith in God and his blessings, we have continued to grow and move forward with other programs that the church offers," said Brian McLaughlin.

King's Corner Holiness Church is also celebrating its 18th anniversary, during which Bishop Kelly has served faithfully. As it grew, the church formed programs focusing on helping at-risk youth.

Kelly has delivered guest sermons throughout the Piedmont area and continues to visit other churches. "My calling has come natural and my roots are firmly planted in the ministry," he said.



Pictured (from left to right) are Cynthia Brown, Yolanda King, Bishop Kelly, Martha Bassett (voice coach), Joe Brown, Brian McLaughlin, and Chris McLaughlin.

Hooper offers funeral planning program

Hooper Funeral Home is offering a program called "Forethought Funeral Planning" for the advance planning of funerals in the Winston-Salem area.

According to Gregory T. Burrell, funeral director for Hooper Funeral Home, pre-arranged, pre-funded funerals are not a new idea.

"The idea behind funeral planning is simply that one day, a great deal of vital information about you or a loved one will be needed by your family and anyone whose responsibility it is to assist them," reported Burrell.

"There's no doubt that those who plan ahead are more comfortable knowing not only that their personal wishes are recorded, but also that unnecessary difficulties can be avoided."

Forethought funeral plans are made before the need arises with the help of a professional counselor from a local funeral home. It takes about an hour and there's no cost or obligation.

While there are many decisions related to the funeral and burial, most can be provided for



Gregory T. Burrell

by making a few basic selections. Once personal decisions are made, the counselor puts the funeral service wishes in writing.

"All arrangements, all the services and merchandise and all your special desires are planned in advance," said Burrell.

"You fund it all with a Forethought Life Insurance Policy too. It guarantees that the funeral you plan will be available years later when needed so it won't be a burden on your family."

St. John C.M.E. holds appreciation banquet

St. John C.M.E. Church honored its pastor and family with an appreciation banquet at Carl Russell Recreation Center, Saturday, June 27 at 7 p.m.

Dr. and Mrs. Davis have been faithful servants for eight years and the church wanted to thank them for their service.

The Rev. James Fulwood was the guest speaker and he was introduced by Francis Johnson. The scripture was read by Nathaniel Williams, the Rev. Bertha Walker lead the prayer, Walter Funderburk presented the welcome and Shanta Watts sang a solo. Ken Causer directed the music for the occasion.

R.L. Brown paid special tribute to Dr. Davis as a spiritual leader and Adrienne Speas paid tribute to Mrs. Davis with gifts. All the boards and departments were directed by Lance Mack. The presenters were Marion Simmons, Fostina West, Dorothy Williams, and William Simmons.

Sandra Manning recognized guests and visitors, and James Payne paid tribute to the Chestnut Grove United Methodist Church.

Meredith McRae was mistress of ceremonies. Lillian Plowden, the president of the pastor's aid board was the sponsor. The Rev. Herman Gilliam gave the benediction.

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