



Mr. and Ms. Top Teen of America 1997-98, Alfred "Buddy" White and Maya McCoy.

Top Teens of America, Inc. honor their parents at first scholarship land cruise

By FELECIA P. McMILLAN
Community Correspondent

Lady Minnie Ervin, president of Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. (TLOD) welcomed the parents and the members of Top Teens of America, Inc. aboard *The Fantasia*.

Then the land cruise ship sailed to Fantasyland. On Monday, Dec. 22, the ship docked at the Anderson Center on the campus of Winston-Salem State University and set sail at 7 p.m. The coordinators of the cruise were Ervin and Lady Daisy Staten.

The captains of the ship, Lord Jakay Irvin, Sr. and Lord Leonard Staten welcomed each sailor with a handshake and a smile. Alderman Vivian H. Burke

of the Northeast Ward gave greetings on behalf of the City of Winston-Salem.

The entertainment for the evening of elegance included Chris Murrell of the Count Basie Orchestra and soloist Belinda S. Wilson, renowned mezzo soprano. Mag Smith, organist of First Baptist Church on Fifth Street served as the accompanist for the evening.

Teen Alfred "Buddy" White and Teen Maya McCoy were crowned Mr. and Ms. Top Teen of America 1997-98. Former Teen Charita Cardwell served as mistress of ceremonies, and former Teen Kenyatta Manns was the commentator for the fashion show of formal wear.

The purpose of this cruise was to

raise scholarship funds for the Top Teens of America, Inc. Winston-Salem Chapter and to honor the parents and guardians of the teens involved.

"The parents have worked so hard to get these kids where they are. The parents were so elated and so thrilled to board the cruise to fantasy land. It was different, and everyone enjoyed the idea," said Ervin.

"These are ordinary teens doing extraordinary things, and it is all because of committed parents who helped to see them through. They deserve our honor and praise," she added.

Chris Murrell of the Count Basie Orchestra sang "Wind Beneath My

Wings" as a tribute to the parents. Soloist Belinda S. Wilson sang "Sweet Little Jesus Boy," and Murrell joined her in a duet of "Silent Night." "The music just sent chills down our spines. It was so special, Ervin said.

Lady Daisy Staten assisted Ervin with the planning of this special function.

"Oh, it was beautiful. It was an affair that any king or queen could be proud of. We worked so hard, but it was all worthwhile," Daisy said. She was so proud to see the teens conduct themselves in such a professional manner, and all of the ladies were

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75 cents

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New year, new career



Robert V. Williams (top) and William Collins Jr. (right) recently received commissions at N.C. A&T and will start the year off as military officers.



Sigmas help five motherless children through the holidays

By FELECIA McMILLAN
Community Correspondent

"I am committed to raising my grandchildren, but the burden has become impossible for my husband and I to bear alone." — Elnora Ratliff

When Billie Booker heard a letter on the 97.1 radio station about five motherless children who were in need during the holidays, he immediately called Darryl Prince, the president of

6 — whose mother was murdered in August of 1996 as she sat on her porch.

In the letter, Elnora Ratliff, the mother of the deceased explained, "I am committed to raising my grandchildren, but the burden has become impossible for my husband and I to bear alone."

Unable to work because of her diabetes and vision loss, Elnora and John Ratliff are dependent upon his one check as income. Following the murder, the father of the children

However when the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma left the Ratliff home, they had contacted Bell South to install a telephone line, and they plan to pay for the phone bill for the first six months.

Paris, 5, was thrilled to get a black baby doll and a Tickle-Me Elmo. They filled up three buggies at K-Mart, and Walmart donated five boxes of clothes and personal items such as washing powder, antiperspirant, soap, shampoo, paper towels, and other toiletries.

"When we delivered these packages, the children's faces lit up like Christmas tree," said Prince.

When Billie Booker saw the opportunity to be of assistance to the family, he knew that the Sigmas needed to move quickly. Prince and Booker met with the family in order to access their needs. They took a trip to the community where the family of nine lives in a single wide trailer designed for four.

"We were deeply touched by their condition," Booker said. Prince and Booker stood in awe as Elnora and her husband John recalled the horror of that hot summer day in August.

The late Helen Ratliff had just put her children down for a nap and had gone out on the porch to get some fresh air because it was so hot in the house. According to Chanita Howard, a young woman emerged from a car, walked up on the porch and shot Helen in her chest. Helen then fell back into the door. Based on her last words, Helen did not even know her murderer.

Motivated by the family's dire circumstances, Prince and Booker moved on the case. After calling an emergency meeting with the fraternity two days later, President Darryl Prince and the twelve men of Phi Beta Sigma came up with \$850 which they used to shop for the family. From those members of the fraternity who were absent from the meeting, Prince

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The late Helen Ratliff was the mother of (left to right) Patrice, Paris, Phillip, Kevin, and Chancy (holding cousin Essence) before she was gunned down on her mother's porch in August of 1996.

the Delta Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma to solicit their help.

Christmas letter #1 was about a family of five children — Chancy 11, Phillip, 9, Kevin 8, Patrice 5, and Paris

abandoned the children and has not been heard from since. The family did not have a telephone, nor did the children have beds. They slept on the floor.

Gun & Knife Show

Dec. 20 & 21
L.J.V.M. MEMORIAL
COLISEUM



Residents of East Winston-Salem pray for an end to violence in their community.

Stop tempting African Americans with ads that promote violence

BY SHARON BROOKS HODGE
THE CHRONICLE Editor

Violence in black neighborhoods would be easier to curb if outsiders didn't use billboards to encourage the sale of weapons, said the Rev. Seth Lartey.

Lartey recently organized a demonstration in front on one such billboard. About a dozen people, joined hands and prayed in front of a huge sign at the intersection of Liberty and Paterson streets.

This particular sign was advertising a gun and knife show being held in December. The ad has since been changed.

"We've seen that the billboard

has changed," Lartey said on Tuesday. He added that the new advertisement "is of a health-conscious nature, and I think that's the kind of thing that should be advertised in our neighborhoods."

Lartey said he and those how joined in the demonstration are disturbed that "people keep bringing their trash into our neighborhoods." He said that such signs don't tempt the residents of places like Buena Vista and Pausflow.

"So why dump things that destroy us in our community?" Lartey asks. Since the demonstration on Dec. 22, Lartey has been collecting signatures. He said he intends to take the petitions to city officials with the

hope of having restrictions placed on billboard permits.

But that may not be an easy task. The city already has regulations for where billboards can be placed, said Bill Petree, who is the city's zoning code enforcement supervisor.

"Although we have guidelines and restrictions on sign placement, I'm not sure what we can do about content," said Petree. "I would direct them to speak with one of the city attorneys."

According to Lartey, other urban areas have been successful in barring certain types of advertisements. He said he would like to see East Winston-Salem purged of any billboards that are not educational or promoting cultural events.