

# Urban League youths celebrate power of ancestors



Willard Tanner of the Urban League lit the first candle in honor of elders 80 years old and above. The youths passed the candles on and formed a circle around their elders.

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN  
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

There was standing room only last Thursday when the youths of Winston-Salem paid homage to their elders.

The event, sponsored by the Urban League as part of its celebration of Equal Opportunity Day, gave youths a chance to showcase their talents for a group that included their grandparents and seniors from the local community.

For each elder 80 years old and above the watoto - children - lit a candle and called the elder by name.

Afterward, the children formed a circle and sang "We are Marching in the Light of God."

The group then recited the poem "Minute by Minute," which affirms the need to save African American culture's history and traditions.

The idea for the ceremony came from Delores J. "D" Smith, president/CEO of the Winston-Salem Urban League.

"Our seniors and our children don't have the benefit of being in the space of our elders to experience their power," said Smith.

under the direction of Ms. Smith is such a wonderful gift to our community."

Drama performances were one of the highlights of the program. One of the best was "Aunt Rudele's Family Reunion," a colorful one-person comedy written by and starring Nate Jacobs.

Developed and directed by Larry Leon Hamlin, the play will be presented in February by the North Carolina Black Repertory Company.

Jacobs stars as a feisty, unorthodox woman who takes a trip to her family reunion.

The Eagles of Praise, a choir from Union Baptist Church, also performed during the event.

One of the highlights of the show was a performance by Bishop John Heath. Heath brought the crowd to its feet with a stirring rendition of "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord." Heath received a standing ovation for "Lord, You Brought Me From a Mighty Long Way."

Another popular performer was Vergie Collins, who sang "I See Youths on A8



A youth presented celebration buttons to the elders during the youth/elderly recognition program held at The Urban League.

Photos by Felecia P. McMillan

## Urban League raises \$60,000 at EOD

BY FELECIA MCMILLAN  
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

As the soulful sounds of the Manhattans wafted through the ballroom at Adam's Mark Hotel, hundreds gathered to celebrate the work of the Urban League.

The Urban League capped off a month-long celebration of equal opportunity with the annual Equal Opportunity Day Founders' Black and White Gala.

The event was called "Celebrating the New Millennium and our Corporate Partners." The gross amount raised was more than \$60,000, according to Mona Covington, director of finance.

More than 400 joined the throng of people who crowded the dance floor to listen to the sounds of the Manhattans. The group sang some of their best loved hits, including "Kiss and Say Goodbye" and "Shining Star."

Wanda Starke, an anchor at

NewsChannel 12 WXII, was the mistress of ceremonies.

Starke reminded the audience of the mission of the Urban League.

"The Urban League has been serving this community for 51 years," she said. "They have been sponsoring workshops, youth programs, Reading Olympiad, Special events such as Kwanzaa; presenting adult, family and senior programs and bridging the gaps in race relations. Thank you for joining us for fun and fellowship," Starke said.

Richard Williams, chairman of the Urban League Board of Directors, thanked the corporate sponsors who assisted recently with the RJR-UL Empowerment Conference.

"Without your support, the Urban League would not be able to help young men after their release from incarceration. We

See Urban League on A11



Delores "D" Smith, president/CEO of the Urban League, praised the many contributions Marie Williamson, Ph.D., has made to youths in the community. Williamson received the Mazie S. Woodruff Achievement Award at the gala. Richard Williams, president of the UL Board of Directors, congratulated Williamson.

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