



From left: Linda Sutton; Arlene Peebles; Pastor Joyce McCarter, accepting for her husband Bishop Sheldon McCarter, and Winston-Salem Street School Principal Jennifer Green.

Local Liberians induct first Hall of Fame class

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The Liberian Organization of the Piedmont (LOP) started what it hopes will be an annual tradition with the presentation of its first Community Leaders & Legends Hall of Fame Awards on Saturday night.

For the past 21 years, LOP has been active in community causes here in the Triad and in Liberia, where most LOP members hail from. The awards ceremony, held at the Benton Convention Center, honored those who have also done outstanding work in the community.

"This special event is LOP's way of giving back to the community in which we live and work while paying homage to our roots in Liberia, West Africa," said Dwedor Ford, who helped to plan the event.

LOP Founder and President James Hunder, who has called Winston-Salem home since 1985, said often, those who are making positive differences are not getting the attention they deserve.

"We feel there are some wonderful people who are doing wonderful things in this community ... so we felt that it is essential to give them their flowers (recognition) while they live," said Hunder.

Three "Leaders" and one "Legend" were inducted into the Hall of Fame. Leader awards went to Bishop Sheldon McCarter for his 21 years of service as pastor of Greater Cleveland Avenue



Cletus Wotorson

Christian Church; Arlene Peebles, founder and director of Alabaster Place, a ministry that fights abuse; and Linda Sutton, chair of the Forsyth County Board of Elections and longtime community activist.

Poet Maya Angelou got the Legend award. Angelou, a strong LOP supporter, sent a video acceptance speech to the ceremony. During the speech, she read her popular poem "Still I Rise," dedicating it to the struggles Liberia has seen over the decades with its many incidents of civil unrest.

"How the Liberians have come up from the awful, awful times is an encouragement to all people, all people everywhere," said Angelou.

The more than two hour-long program was emceed by media personality Mütter Evans and featured a kinetic performance of African dance by Otesha Creative Arts Ensemble.

Cletus Wotorson, president pro tempore of the Liberian Senate, brought greetings from Liberia. He was in Winston-Salem for the entire weekend and was slated to speak at Goler Memorial AME Zion Church, whose pastor, Seth O. Lartey, is a native of Liberia, the day after the awards ceremony. Wotorson said he would tell those in Liberia about the LOP and its many good deeds.

"I will spread the good word about what you are doing," said Wotorson.

Other special guests included Nigel Alston, a motivational speaker and GMAC executive; Dr. Ed Wilson, Wake Forest University Provost Emeritus; Dr. Charles Ford, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Winston-Salem State University; Winston-Salem Urban League President and CEO Keith Grandberry; and District Court Judge Denise Hartsfield.

Wilson spoke about a sermon that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave at Wake Forest's Wait Chapel, in which he boiled leadership down to two things: intelligence and goodness.

"The heart can never be totally right, if the head is totally wrong. Only through the bringing together of head and heart - intelligence and goodness - shall man rise to a fulfillment of his true nature," he said, quoting King.

Also during the ceremony, LOP awarded a scholarship to Yulimar Santos Mendoza to help pay her tuition at the Winston-Salem Street School, a private, Christian-centered

high school.

For more information about the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont, visit www.lopn.org.



Fitkids participants works out at Salem Gymnastics.

FitKids

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The gym, and the workouts that are done there, is only one part of the Fitkids. The program also includes a comprehensive nutrition program that includes menus, monthly seminars and even a Web page.

Children who reach their goals of increasing fitness levels and attending nutrition seminars are rewarded with a Fitkids Rewards Party.

"This partnership, coupling fun workouts with nutritional education, makes Fitkids truly an all encompassing fitness program," says Beth Morphis, co-owner of Salem Gymnastics. "We are looking at the whole health of the child, with the ultimate goal of building healthy habits for life."

Fitkids is for boys and girls ages seven and up. Go to SalemGym.com or call 336-765-4668 for class information.

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☎ = registration required. Visit besthealth.com or call 336-713-BEST (2378) to register. For BestHealth membership information, call 336-713-BEST or visit our web site.

16 FRI - Gamma Knife: Incision-free Surgery

11 a.m. WFUBMC radiation oncologist Dr. Michael Chan discusses Gamma Knife, a non-invasive treatment for certain brain tumors and vascular malformations of the brain. ☎

20 TUE - LASIK & Advanced Cataract Surgery

6 p.m. WFUBMC ophthalmologist Dr. Keith Walter discusses LASIK and advanced cataract surgery, the specific vision problems corrected by these procedures, the characteristics of qualified patients, and the risks and benefits. ☎

21 WED - Pearls of Wisdom: Long-term Care Planning

11 a.m. Susan King of MassMutual Financial Group, leads a frank conversation about the financial impact on women as they live longer. In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Mass Mutual will donate a percentage to the local Komen NC Triad Affiliate. ☎

21 WED - Pharmacy "Brown Bag" Checkup

5 to 8 p.m. In recognition of National Hospital & Health-System Pharmacy Week, pharmacists from WFUBMC provide free one-on-one medicine consultations. Bring all medications, including over-the-counter and herbal supplements, in a brown paper bag. Appointment required by calling 713-BEST. For BestHealth members only. ☎

23 FRI - Screening Tests for Breast Cancer

1 p.m. In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month, join staff from the WFUBMC Outpatient Imaging Center to learn what tests are available for detecting breast cancer. ☎

27 TUE - Sleep Disorders

11 a.m. Mitch Yochum with the WFUBMC Sleep Disorders Center provides an overview of common sleep disorders in special needs children and signs and symptoms to look for. ☎

28 WED - The Family Love Letter

6 p.m. Susan Eisenman, CFP, CPA, discusses the financial impact of an untimely death and important documents you need to fulfill your final wishes. ☎

29 THU - Fantastic Fall Food

11 a.m. Hey kids, it's fall break! Registered dietician Amy Fanjoy invites children ages 5 to 7 and their parents to prepare and sample delicious and flavorful fall treats in this BestHealth Kids program. Space is limited. ☎

29 THU - Physical Therapy after Orthopaedic Surgery

4 p.m. If you're considering any type of orthopaedic surgery, such as knee or hip replacement, join WFUBMC physical therapist Marty Dekkers to learn what to expect during your post-surgery physical therapy. ☎

30 FRI - Inspiration from Cancer Survivors

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. View the quirky, dark comedy, *Jonna's Body, Please Hold*, chronicling a cancer patient's journey through cancer, and listen as a panel of cancer survivors shares their personal experiences. Video at 11 a.m. followed by the survivor panel. Boxed lunches provided. ☎

Vance

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Vance's mother, a seamstress, remarried, and the couple raised four children on an expansive farm that was willed to the family by a kind Irish man.

"We had right much," Vance recalled. "...We lived on 75-acres of land and we kind of lived to ourselves."

The farm was largely self sufficient, and the isolation from the outside world made it possible for Vance and her three siblings to grow up in a cocoon of safety, a world devoid of the racial intolerance and violence that many other African Americans were being exposed to.

"(The white) people didn't seem to bother us, so we didn't bother them," she said. "...I've been happy all my life."

The family grew cotton, which Vance vividly remembers picking at harvest time. They had their own livestock, and Vance and her siblings helped out with chores around the farm. One of Vance's duties was churning the butter.

She remembers bathing in a large tub in the kitchen by the fireplace, and the old wood stove where her mother cooked. Vance has held onto some of the relics from the old days. A more than 100-year-old china plate that was her mother's is one of her most prized possessions. She also has a pitcher and basin that were used for hand washing.

"When they didn't have the water running through the house like they do now, they had to go to the well and draw the water to let people wash their hands," she explained. "...We had a washboard and tub where you could boil your clothes (to clean them)."

Vance attended school up until the seventh or eighth grade, and played basketball on a co-ed team. A self-described "tomboy," Vance says the coaches always made the boys guard her because the other girls couldn't keep up with her.

Vance came to Winston-Salem at the age of 22, and has spent most of her her life here. She married late in life, and spent more than four decades with her late husband, James



Cleo Vance in the 1960s with her niece, Shirley Galloway, and daughter, Pearlle.

Vance, before his passing 13 years ago. The couple had one daughter, Pearlle Vance, who lives with her mother in the home where she was raised.

"She's really lived a simple life ... and in that way, she's kind of extraordinary," Pearlle Vance said of her mother, who spent her married life as a homemaker and has opened her home to many people in need, earning the affectionate nicknames of "Ma Vance" and "Honey Darlin'."

Pearlle Vance and her cousin, Betty Vance, co-hosted a birthday for Vance on Sept. 26. Roughly 25 people came out to share the day with Vance, including Mayor Allen Joines and City Council Member Joycelyn Johnson.

Vance says she was tickled to receive so much attention.

"I told them, 'Y'all act very nice to come and visit an old, ugly lady,' she declared with a chuckle. "...We had fun."

When it comes to her longevity, Vance believes her simple lifestyle and upbeat attitude have played an important role.

"The life that I lived was quiet and religious-like. I didn't have any bad habits and I just prayed a lot and asked the Lord that His will be done," she said. "It seems like it worked out pretty good."



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