

VISION OF SUCCESS

IFB workers show what they are made of

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Mayor Allen Joines visited Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind (IFB) last week, to issue a proclamation declaring Oct. 15 "White Cane Safety Day" across the city.

"You are a major economic impact in our community, a major employer in our community and you're also contributing in so many ways across the country," Joines told the IFB employees that gathered in the facility's cafeteria last Thursday to hear his presentation.

"Congratulations to all of you for the great work that you do."

A national initiative, White Cane Safety Day was created as a way to recognize the accomplishments of individuals across the country who are blind and visually impaired. The observance draws its name from the distinctive canes that are often used by people with visual impairments. Though it is a tell tale sign of the disability, the white cane is also one of the greatest tools for independence a person with visual impairments can possess, proponents of the day say.

Like the canes, IFB offers an opportunity for greater self sufficiency to hundreds of individuals in the local community who are blind or visually impaired. The not-for-



Executive Director David Horton, left, introduces Mayor Allen Joines to IFB employees.

profit is home to more than 340 employees; roughly 200 of whom are blind or visually impaired. Mattresses, military clothing, commissary items for base stores, office supplies and prescription glasses are among the items manufactured at the facility off North Point Blvd. The facility is equipped with adaptive technology, which makes it possible for people who are visually impaired to perform the same duties that any sighted person could.

"Our biggest mission is training and employment and upward mobility," said David Barnwell, president of A Brighter Path Foundation, IFB's newly established non-profit. "...We're always looking for creative ways to try to employ more people."

The organization has increased its revenue, and its ability to employ more people greatly over the last decade, Barnwell said.

"We've just had some really exponential growth recent-

ly, and that's something we're really proud of," he related. "It's unbelievable ... the number of people we're able to employ."

IFB Employee of the Year Roderick Wilson, affectionately known to his colleagues as "Mr. IFB," said he enjoys the camaraderie he's experienced at IFB.

"It's hard to really explain the overall experience other than the abundance of love," said Wilson, who was blinded at age 18 after being shot in



Anastasia Powell

the face. "There's an outpouring of love ... from the administration all the way down to my coworkers."

In addition to steady work and a decent paycheck, IFB offers a variety of services to the community. Its Student Enrichment Experience (SEE) and Focus on Literacy programs are extended to those who have challenges with their vision, as is the Community Low Vision Center, which is also on-site.

Staff members are invited to take part in a variety of enrichment opportunities, which range from computer and photography classes to swimming, public speaking and more.

Anastasia Powell, a seamstress in the Army T-shirt department, says the extra amenities available at IFB are



A Brighter Path's David Barnwell with Roderick Wilson (right).

what make it special.

"The neat thing about this shop is they not only train you to have a skill, but they have many other programs that you can use outside of the place," she commented.

Powell says being employed at IFB for the last five years has changed her outlook on life for the better.

"It's made me more confident; my husband says I'm fearless now," remarked the mother of three. "When you're bound with a disability, sometimes you feel like it's the end of the world, but here, they allow you to know its not."

For more information about Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind, visit www.wsisfb.com or call (336) 759-0551.

First Ladies

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the work that they do."

Dressed in their Sunday finest, the women were escorted into the room one by one, encouraged by cheers from the crowd of more than 200 attendees. The luncheon included prayers, song and even a "church dress" fashion show put on by the J.T. Lewis Modeling Troupe.

"This was a labor of love," Doris Herrell, president of Delta Visions and chair of the luncheon, told the honorees. "...We thought this (event) was pretty special, just like you."

First Lady Deloris Huntley of Alpha and Omega Church of Faith said she was flattered to be recognized by the group.

"Our job is huge, but we enjoy doing it," she said of first ladies. "I think it's great being recognized for doing what you enjoy doing."

Bishop John Huntley, her husband of 44 years, said his wife's dedication to the church is unwavering.

"One thing I like about her (is) she's in the church everyday," he stated. "...You don't have to make an appointment to come see me or her. That's what we desired when we came into the ministry - to serve the people. That's what it's all about."

Pastor Mary Duncan said she hoped the luncheon would renew the spirits of all the women who participated.

"The love that was shown here today was so needed," she remarked. "This should encourage them to reach out more into the community because they are worthy."

Darryl Napper, pastor of Greensboro-based New Calvary Baptist Church, said he was thrilled to see his wife, Dinina, honored.

"I love it," the pastor said with a wide grin. "She is a phenomenal woman; she keeps me balanced."

Dinina Napper said she jumped at the chance to rub elbows with some of her fellow first ladies.

"It has been wonderful; I have enjoyed every minute," she declared. "It feels wonderful just knowing that somebody wants to celebrate us (first ladies). It just gives us that extra boost to continue doing what we do."

The other guests of honor were: Lady Shirley Churn, Mt. Zion Baptist; Lady Luellen Curry Eversley, Dellabrook Presbyterian; Lady Hattie Fulwood, St. Mark Baptist; Lady Delores Griffey, Mt. Carmel Baptist; Lady Constance Hash, Bethlehem Baptist; Lady Joyce Hash, St. Peter's



From left, seated: Joe Walker Jr. with his mother, First Lady Mattie Walker; First Lady Pauline Moore and Pastor Green Moore; and First Lady Peggy Moore. Back row: Pastor and First Lady Daryl and Dinina Napper and Pastor and First Lady Nathan and Wyndalynn Scovens.



From left, seated: Evelyn Terry, Waymon and Leola Monroe, Gloria Lewis, First Lady Hattie Fulwood, Rev. James Fulwood and First Lady Mazarene McConnell. Back row: Elder and First Lady Henry E. Millner and Pastor Mack H.L. McConnell.



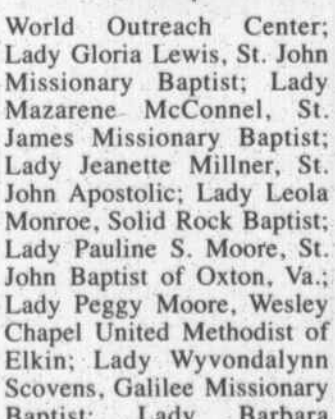
Hartsfield



Herrell



Swinton



Quayshaun Hall sings.

World Outreach Center; Lady Gloria Lewis, St. John Missionary Baptist; Lady Mazarene McConnell, St. James Missionary Baptist; Lady Jeanette Millner, St. John Apostolic; Lady Leola Monroe, Solid Rock Baptist; Lady Pauline S. Moore, St. John Baptist of Oxtan, Va.; Lady Peggy Moore, Wesley Chapel United Methodist of Elkin; Lady Wyndalynn Scovens, Galilee Missionary Baptist; Lady Barbara Stowe, Messiah Missionary Baptist of Pinnacle; Lady Diane Stowe, Exodus United Baptist; Lady Evelyn Terry, Mocksville Second Presbyterian; Lady Mattie

Walker, St. Jones Chapel Missionary Baptist of Reidsville; Lady Courtney B. Williams, Shiloh Missionary

Baptist of Mt. Airy; and Lady Emily Williams, Yadkin Star Baptist Church of Lexington.



Bishop J.C. Hash of St. Peter's World Outreach escorts his wife, Lady Joyce Hash.



Bishop and First Lady Huntley.



Pastor Mack H.L. McConnell with Lady Mazarene McConnell of St. James Missionary Baptist.



Pastor Johnny Stove of Exodus Baptist escorts First Lady Diane Stowe.



Messiah Missionary Baptist Church (Mt. Airy) Pastor Steve Stowe escorts Lady Barbara Stowe.