



Photos by Exclusively Photography
Bishop Sir Walter Mack Jr. and his wife, First Lady Kim Mack, are shown during his 50th Birthday Gala on Friday, April 28.



A crowd of more than 300 attended the first College Internship Benefit and the 50th Birthday Gala for Bishop Sir Walter Mack Jr.

College Internship Benefit and 50th Birthday Gala

BY FELECIA PIGGOTT-LONG
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A crowd of more than 300 offered a standing ovation as they received Bishop Sir Walter Mack Jr. and First Lady Kim Mack in the Grand Pavilion Ballroom of the Embassy Suites Hotel on Friday, April 28.

The first College Internship Benefit and the 50th Birthday Gala for Bishop Mack was supported by members of Union Baptist Church, and other churches, ministers, business owners, educators, community leaders, and the like. Denise S. Hartsfield, Forsyth County District Judge, served as the Mistress of Ceremonies.

Four-year-old Caleb Serrano, the "Little Big Shots" sensation, led the crowd in singing "Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior" and "It's All Right, It's Okay Don't You Let Your Trouble Get in Your Way." He also led a birthday song in Bishop Mack's honor.

"Unbelievable! Thank you, Caleb. He walked this thing! It is so appropriate that we started off with a child. We have to bring the children up," said Judge Hartsfield. "Third grade is the measure for prison. If children are not reading on a third-grade level, they are part of the plans for incarceration. Our children need to be unashamed, and unapologetic for singing about God. They should not be ashamed of using their talent for God. We have to plant our seeds early so they can sprout for the harvest."

Several leaders offered greetings during the evening. Deacon Sammie Gray, chairman of the Deacon's Ministry, thanked God that everything Bishop Mack puts his hand to, God has blessed it. Mutter Evans of Mutter Evans Communications discussed the internship that Bishop Mack completed at WAAA Radio when he was a student at Elon University.

Dr. Harold Hudson, vice president for Enrollment, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, thanked Bishop Mack for his contributions to the seminary, and all of the students that Bishop Mack sends to United will receive scholarships.

The Rev. James Wilkes, senior pastor of Elon First Baptist Church, thanked Bishop Mack for nurturing him as a pastor. Bishop George Brooks, National Clergy, pastor emeritus, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Greensboro, reminded Bishop Mack that he is like a classic car, more valuable today than when he was younger, and he has a second chance to bloom at the age of 50.

Several college students addressed the audience by video presentation. The video was called "The Blessing of an Internship."

Having enjoyed an evening of worship, a fine meal, Motown sounds, an interview between pastor and comedian Rev. Debra Terry-Stephens with Caleb Serrano, "Little Big Shots" sensation; having cried peals of laughter with Marcus D. Wiley, international comedian and singing along with Keith Wonderboy Johnson, international gospel recording artist, the crowd offered thunderous hand praise to God.

"This has been an amazing night. Thank you for being here tonight," said Bishop Mack. "I am celebrating 50 years, and I have so many wonderful friends in my life who make me who I am. In the house tonight, I see some of my students, high school friends, fraternity brothers, childhood friends, church members and family members. My heart is committed to you, these students. We have a responsibility to help shape them, to mold them."

The fundamental purpose of the Summer College Internship Program is to give college students an opportunity to explore and expand their God-given gifts in the context of the church and community environment. This program is designed to introduce college students to real world opportunities in a responsible, caring place of work.

Although Bishop Mack tends to disagree with much that President Donald Trump says, there is an action that Bishop Mack does support.

"When he took office, he said that he would turn his business into the hands of his children. It is important that he put something into them. He has confidence they can run the business," said Mack. "We need to put something into our young people. They must know they cannot show up to work with a cell phone in their hands. They must learn how to shake hands with executives and look them in the face. They will be reading the book Dog Whistle Politics, visit the nursing homes, visit hospitals, and pray for the sick. They will also meet with the First Lady, who will do workshops with them. We have solicited community support and we will be hiring students from various churches."

Bishop Mack recalled that for three years when he served as an intern at WAAA Radio under the direction of Mutter Evans, he could not go to church. He worked from 6 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. on Sundays. He hosted several of the programs from various churches and funeral homes, and he played gospel music. He found the gospel music very inspiring.

"All I can say is that he was very dependable during his internship. At that time, he was not a minister, but he was faithful and professional," said Evans. "I can see why the idea of an internship would be near and dear to his heart."

AFAS Center for the Arts to open in the Arts District

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The sleek new AFAS Center for the Arts, located at the corner of Liberty and Seventh streets, will officially open to the public on Saturday, May 6. The local nonprofit organization Art for Art's Sake (AFAS) commissioned the 14,500 square foot, three-story building, which was constructed over a period of 15 months.

The Center's official opening will be celebrated with a public ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2 p.m. on May 6, accompanied by live music, food trucks, ARTivity on the Green mural wall painting and family activities, from 11

a.m. until 6 p.m.

This latest addition to the city's burgeoning Arts District consolidates several AFAS activities and locations that were previously scattered throughout downtown. The building houses AFAS' headquarters, as well as Red Dog Gallery, Unleashed Arts Center and Studio 2, a jewelry studio. There are also 10 artist studios available for lease at affordable rates.

The Center's location – adjacent to ARTivity on the Green art park – extends into the Arts District's footprint into a previously underdeveloped area of the city.

Harry Knabb, AFAS chairman and chief executive, said the new head-

quarters underscores AFAS' continued commitment to the Arts District and the city's arts community overall, while also ensuring the viability of AFAS for generations to come.

ARTivity on the Green and the AFAS Center for the Arts have both been made possible via generous grants – primarily one from the Thomas J. Regan Jr. Foundation – and both projects have enlisted the professional skills of several local businesses; STITCH Design Shop and Frank L. Blum Construction Co. served as the architect and general contractor for both projects, respectively.

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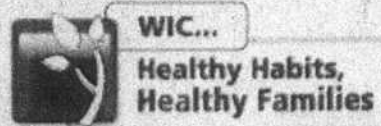
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