



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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# THE CHRONICLE

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## Black History: 100 years of wisdom

Throughout the month of February people across the country will be celebrating the lives and legacies of great African-Americans who made contributions to society.

### Dr. Virginia Newell Still championing equality and education at age 101

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Fredrick Douglas, George Washington Carver, Harriet Tubman, and Rosa Parks have become synonymous with February and Black History Month. While it is important that we lift up the names and accomplishments of the greats everyone knows, it is equally and maybe even more important that we highlight the history-makers right here in our own community who paved the way for others.

And when making a list of Winston-Salem's Black History Makers, your list isn't valid if it doesn't include champion of equality and education, Dr. Virginia K. Newell.

Originally a native of Davie County, Newell relocated to Winston-

Salem with her family when she was a child. A graduate of Atkins High School, in 1977 Newell and Mayor Tempore Vivian Burke became the first black women elected to the board of alderman (now City Council).

Newell, who will turn 102 later this year, said her father always stressed the importance of voting. She said when they lived in Davie County, her father was one of the few blacks who were allowed to vote. Newell said her father taught her that politics can affect every phase of life, from education to job creation and housing.

Newell said she remembers going to the polls with her father, asking dozens of questions about the process and what it all meant.

"He was never elected to office, but my father was always involved in politics



Dr. Virginia K. Newell is a living legend and a champion of equality and education.

Photo by Tevin Stinson

and when he would go vote, he would take all of the children in the neighborhood with him so they could ask questions and learn about voting," Newell said.

During her 16-year tenure representing the city's East Ward, Newell was known as an advocate for fair housing, economic justice, and racial equality. She is also credited with leading the effort to build the East Winston Shopping

Center and founding the YMCA's Best Choice Center. Newell said when she served the citizens of East Winston, she made it her mission to speak out against things that were not for the betterment of people.

Last week Newell told The Chronicle that although she never got the opportunity, she always wanted to take her talents to Washington. She said she's proud of what she

accomplished during her time as alderman, but her dream was to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

She said, "... If I had started earlier, I think I would have made it to Washington. I wouldn't have been like Maxine Waters, but something like her. I would've been like a Harriet Tubman in Washington, a Sojourner Truth in Washington, they

would've known I was there. I would've let them know what was happening to our people."

Although she is most known for her contributions to the city of Winston-Salem, Newell's true passion has always been education.

After college Newell returned to her alma mater, Atkins (now Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy), to teach math.

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## Charlie Lentz honored with accolades and mayor's proclamation

BY JUDIE HOLCOMB-PACK  
THE CHRONICLE

Nearly 100 people attended the 100th birthday celebration for Charlie Jasper Lentz on Saturday evening, Feb. 2, at the Village Inn and Conference Center in Clemmons. As guests were introduced and recognized, it appeared that they were all family in some way - either his children, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, children and grandchildren of uncles and cousins, and one guest who declared that SHE had adopted Mr. Lentz as her uncle and not the other way around.

The love for not only Mr. Lentz but each other filled the room. Family and friends came from as far away as Maryland,

Virginia and New York to join in the celebration of his special day.

The mistress of ceremony, Carolyn White, described Mr. Lentz as a "walking miracle," a description that was used throughout the evening. She mentioned that he has never had any major hospitalizations or illnesses and is always "calm, cool and collected."

In his reflection about his dad, Charlie Lentz Jr. said, "... I've never seen him get angry or get seriously upset with anyone ... Thank you Daddy for teaching me how to be a real man."

Mayor Allen Joines also had kind words to say about Mr. Lentz before he read a proclamation declaring Feb. 3 as Charlie Lentz Day. As he presented the proclamation to Mr. Lentz, there was applause and a standing ovation for a man who has obviously and positively influenced numerous lives.

Mayor Pro Tem Vivian Burke was also in attendance and spoke highly of the Lentz family saying, "We are blessed just to be in his company. All of us join the mayor to say 'This



Charlie Lentz with his granddaughter Kimberly Bunkley, Mayor Pro Tem Vivian Burke and son Charlie Lentz Jr. at his 100th birthday celebration on Feb. 2.

Photos by Judie Holcomb-Pack

is your day!"

Mr. Lentz's primary care physician, Dr. David Miller of Wake Forest Baptist, was introduced

and he said that Mr. Lentz had been his patient for 14 years and noted, "... that seems like a long time, but when you live to 100, 14

years isn't very long." He said he had looked up his doctor's notes from his first visit with Mr. Lentz and read: "Mr. Lentz is a delightful 86-year-old man." He remembered asking Mr. Lentz during the first visit how he arrived at the office. Did he drive? No, he answered. Did a friend or family member bring you? No, again. He asked, then how did he get here and he was taken aback when Mr. Lentz replied, "I walked." He asked how far that was and Mr. Lentz said, "About a mile." He said that Mr. Lentz was the "Miracle Walker." He mentioned that at the age of 93 he finally convinced him to get a cane, but that another doctor had done even better when he convinced him to get a walker. Then he added, "I've never seen him use it."

Dr. Miller said he has determined, "... several keys to living to 100: Taking care of yourself and walking every day; having a happy heart; honoring the Lord; and having a great family."

Angel (Wyvern)

Anthony gave a brief history of Mr. Lentz and noted that he enlisted in the Army in 1941 during the Second World War and served until the war ended in 1945, receiving seven medals and ribbons for his military service. His family moved to Winston-Salem after the war ended and that is when he met his wife, Bernice, and his children Charles and Gale were born. Mr. Lentz served 26 years at the United States Post Office on Fifth Street, where he retired as chief of security, then he worked five more years at the Federal Building downtown and retired a second time. He has attended Goler Metropolitan AME Zion Church for 74 years.

Rev. Johnny Ruff, pastor of Goler Metropolitan, also praised Mr. Lentz and said, "There are a lot of people who are alive, but are not living. We salute you today." Mr. Lentz still attends church faithfully every Sunday.

Mr. Lentz did not seem at all fazed by the accolades and attention he received. When asked what was the most significant

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