

Lockhart Is City's First Black Female Firefighter

By Lori Grier
Post Staff Writer

"I never do a job alone. It's always with someone. It's not a man's job alone. They won't let a woman strain herself. What a man can't handle, 'like crawling through a small hole,' a woman can," declare Mrs. Linda Lockhart, 25, who stands 5' and weighs 116 pounds. She is the only black, female firefighter in the Charlotte Fire Department.

Lockhart, a firefighter since September 7, 1982 noted that she has been to the scene of only three fires since that time. Most have been for medical calls. She, like the firemen, works on the four-day rotation shift at Station 20.

The former Dietician Aid of one year quit her job at Presbyterian Hospital, because she considered it "boring. I sat in the office and made sure everyone got their right diet foods," she admitted.

Her career path took a different direction in April, 1972. "I was watching Forum, and a lady said that minorities were wanted in the Fire Department. I never considered being a firefighter before, but this would be a challenge to see if I could make it," explained Lockhart.

Her training consisted of instruction from a Medical



Linda Lockhart
.....Former dietician aid

Second in series

Emergency Technician (taught her how to handle medical calls and know medical terms); Hands On Components (learned how to pick up people and roll them over, put splints on them and check for vital signs; and a written test. "I passed the Hands On Components training the first time, but I had to take the

written test twice (maximum of three attempts). I liked the training in the gym where we did push-ups, sit-ups and had to run 1 1/2 miles in 12 minutes."

Lockhart told that the fact she's the only black, female firefighter has never crossed her mind. "Older white men have

asked me what I'm doing at the Fire Department. I told them the same reason they're there. I do about as good as they do. If I get one bad report from a man, all of them think the same way. Men are worse than women in spreading gossip.

She has had no major problems with the firemen, but "I don't trust being around men in general," she added. More respect is given to her from the firemen than their wives. "Some of the firemen's wives feel we (firefighters) should be at home."

There are only five firefighters (four white women and one black woman). According to Lockhart, all of them like what they're doing.

Her most exciting experience occurred in March, 1983. "I helped a black woman deliver a baby girl. We were alone in the bathroom where the baby was born. I felt like it was mine, and I kept holding it. You're supposed to help the baby breathe, and the best way to do that is to keep it crying. The baby only cried when I held it," she beamed.

She'll never forget the disappointment which also happened in March, 1983. "I went on a medical call

for a black man who had a heart attack before we arrived. I gave him CPR, and the air came back into my mouth. I felt death run through my body. It was a cold feeling," she recounted.

Lockhart encourages other women to become firefighters. "Most people think it's hard work and long hours. You get used to it like you do every other job. It's not as dangerous as police work. We don't have as many fires as we have medical calls," she informed.

She gets support from her husband, Grady, who is a porter at Memorial Hospital in the Emergency Room and her seven-year-old son, Savalas. "My husband is proud of me, but he didn't think I'd get as far as I have."

"I want everyone to know that I sleep in a separate room from the firemen. The room has one bed and four lockers. All bathrooms and showers have locks on them," she concluded.

Mrs. Linda Lockhart is a 1978 graduate of Olympic High School. She attends Good Shepherd Baptist Church and Central Piedmont Community College for a course in Fire Science.

Grade "A" Bridge Tournament Set

From November 11-13 the Charlotte Grade "A" Bridge Tournament will be held at the Holiday Inn, Woodlawn and Charlotte.

Sponsored by the Metro-lina Duplicate Bridge Club, Vieta Neal, chairman of the board and Bill Haygood, Tournament chairman, the object of the tournament is to stimulate a greater interest in duplicate bridge and its attendant consists and creates an enthusiasm which by reason of example will serve to awaken a spirit of emulation and aspiration to the same and throughout the communities.

George Johnson of Charlotte is president elect of the American Bridge Association.

Approximately 750 people are expected. Individuals from the East, including Washington, DC, New York, Virginia and other states will be present during the tournament.

Prizes will consist of trophies or green-stamps. Singles cost is \$40 and doubles cost is also \$40. For more tournament information, call Bill Haygood at 704-535-1681.

The most recent Metro-

lina Duplicate Bridge Club game was held at the Greenville Community Center with the following winners: North-South, first place: Julian and Rose Pyles; second, W.W. Twitty and Johnny Gray; third, Vieta Neal and John Cutliff; and fourth, Charles Bost and William

Haygood. East-West competition landed thusly: first, Dorothy and George Johnson; Daisy and Gerson Stroud came in second; Sudie Goins and Samella Twitty took third; while Joseph Scott and Edward High and Walter Byers and Louis Huges tied for fourth.

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Miss North Carolina Teen USA Pageant Set

The 1984 Miss North Carolina Teen USA Pageant will be held December 17-18 at the Hilton Inn in Winston-Salem.

The reigning Miss North Carolina Teen USA, Janet Freeman, will crown her successor, who will go on to compete in the nationally televised 1984 Miss Teen USA.

The search is on for young women to compete for the prestige, glamour and prizes of Miss North Carolina Teen USA 1984. Single young women between the ages of 15-17 may qualify. No performing

talent is required. Due to the limitations of time, applications will be accepted

immediately and candidates will be accepted up to the date of the pageant.

For those young women who watched the CBS special of the 1983 Miss Teen USA Pageant in August - this is the chance to compete for the title of Miss North Carolina Teen USA and then appear on national television in January representing your state.

For free entry information, send a postcard with your name, address, phone number and birthdate to: Miss North Carolina Teen USA National Headquarters, Tel-Air Interests, Inc., 1755 NE 149 Street, Miami, FL 33181 or call 305-944-3268.

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By the way...

By Joe Black

For the past three decades Black people have been shouting and inferring that we gained increased pride in our heritage and culture. But is that fact? Or is it just talk for show?

You see, way back when a college education was almost an impossibility for Black people, they gained hope when Cheyney opened its doors in 1839. And Lincoln University offered educational opportunities in 1854. In 1865 the churches recognized the need for ex-slaves to learn reading, writing, and ciphering and with the help of The Freedmen's Bureau, they founded Howard University, Fisk University, Tougaloo College, St. Augustine College, and Morgan College, to name a few institutions of higher learning.

It's a fact! When Black folks needed them, the Black colleges welcomed them and gave us many of our great doctors, scientists, lawyers, and educators. But as the saying goes... how soon we forget. Today, when many of these Black schools need the support of Black Americans we are giving them lip service rather than the financial support that they need. My friends, many of these Black institutions of higher learning are facing extinction. Black America is not a welfare state; we have annual gross spendable income in excess of \$130 billion dollars. That is a definite indication that we can and must help our own community and its centers of education and culture.

But too many of us are busy doing our own thing; young Blacks have accepted the fallacious belief that you can't learn anything in a Black college except how to party or play ball; while middle and upper income class Black families seem to have adopted the attitude of "I got mine, shame on them if they don't have theirs."

We have arrived at the time when we must replace rhetoric with money. Each graduate from a Black college or university should mail a minimum of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) to their alma mater each year. You know, the school that we save may be your own.

Joe Black
Vice President
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