

Mrs. McClelland: Educators Must Have Strong Commitment

By Lori Grier
Post Staff Writer

In honor of our Black History edition, we salute achievers in the Charlotte area who know what it takes to be the best in their varied professions. Mrs. Eva McClelland is one of our many achievers.

McClelland, 37, originally from Lancaster, S.C., has been a teacher for 15 years. She is presently employed at Statesville Road Elementary School (four years) with the Resource Class (Educable Mentally Handicapped-Learning Disabled) and grades K-6. The 1983-84 "Teacher of the Year" at Statesville and the Northwest Area (17 schools) previously taught at Long Creek Elementary School for 10½ years with the Resource Class and Tryon Hills Elementary School with the Self-Contained LD Class for one and one-half years.

Her honors and awards consist of graduating Cum Laude from Johnson C. Smith University, speaking for the Woman's Day Program at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Lancaster, S.C., and being featured in the Lancaster newspaper. The professional achievement she is proud of is the Masters degree in Human Development and Learning that she received from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1981. It took her two and one-half years to complete the 40 hours of work on her Masters, and she graduated with all A's. "I was young and proud when I got my college degree, but obtaining my Masters while I worked was something I really wanted. I had to be

African Arts

An exhibition of African art entitled "African Sculpture and Textiles" will be on display through February 24 in the Main Gallery of the Cone University Center at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

A total of 25 pieces are on loan from North Carolina A&T Heritage Center in Greensboro.

The sculpture exhibit will include ceremonial masks, carved figures, and a ceremonial adze (a status symbol carried on the shoulders of important tribesmen and chiefs). Most are carved from wood, though one sculpture is of stone.

Tapestries of various sizes and designs will also be on display. The tapestries are representative of nine different African nations.

Gallery hours are 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. week-days, noon to 11 p.m. Saturdays and 1 to 11 p.m. Sundays.



Mrs. Eva McClelland
....."Teacher of the Year"

away from my family at times, but I had my family's support. My mother and sisters really pitched in," beamed McClelland.

The other achievement she is proud of is that her immediate family has literally stayed together during the years. All of them, except her brothers, Ronald Laney of Durham, N.C., and James Brown of Washington, D.C., live on Capps Hill Mine Road in Charlotte.

On the average at the schools at which she taught, McClelland doesn't think the number of blacks in education has increased from 20 years ago, especially in administrative positions. The system is

large and has a lot of good people out there, but the good people (mostly blacks) are overlooked. I don't think a lot of educators are dedicated in what they're doing—they're just taking the position. We need to go into the churches and families and tell them that they need to see what's going on in the schools. I keep the communication open between the parents and myself and invite them at anytime to see the type of things we do. Parents have the right to call me and tell me what I might need to do to help more," she emphasized.

On the whole McClelland believes that blacks are fairing all right as educa-

tors, but "we are going to have to have a stronger commitment. We can't lose our identities, and I'm going to fight for my identity, follow the rules of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System and look at children as human beings. We need to think more about the children and not about the conveniences for ourselves. It's easy in a big system to get lost in paper work. When you speak out you're not trying to be a radical, but you're being yourself," she pointed out.

Black History Month is important to McClelland and the students in her Resource Class at Statesville. During the Gunn Arts Program, they will be working in units to feature black historians who contributed to black history. She knows that "adults need to be educated about black history as well as children. We should go back to the slavery period when we discuss black history so that we can understand all people. We should be honest and not hide anything."

The daughter of the late R. B. Laney and Maggie Laney has three sisters—Maggie D. Laney, Mrs. Robbie Grissom and Betty Laney; and three brothers—Edsel Laney, Ronald Laney and James Brown. She and Belgie have one son, Belgie, II, 7, and attend C. N. Jenkins Memorial United Presbyterian Church where Rev. George Goodman is pastor. She works with the Sunday School Department and will be speaker for her

church's Mother's Day Program. McClelland is a 1965 graduate of Torrence Lytle High School, Huntersville, N.C., and she attended Winston-Salem State University for one semester. She received a B.A. degree in Elementary Education from Johnson C. Smith University in 1969 and completed studies at Appalachian State University during 1973-74.

Eva McClelland concluded, "I'm 37 years old and come from a three-room school with pot belly stoves, outdoor toilets, old milk boxes, a water pump and no cafeteria. We have a lot of resources now, more than we've ever had, that we can pull from in schools. When we take a look and see that we're having such big problems in education, I wonder if

we really don't need to get back to some basics (compassion, understanding and motivation). Motivation was such that I had a desire to achieve. These weren't academic things, but I strongly believe in them. I think these are things which could carry us in not only the field gaps of Human Relations but in filling the gaps we can't seem to find answers to in education. I know there's not a magic formula, but if we could reach one kid out of five, we would really have accomplished something."

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