

# Black Elected Officials' Wives Answer Some Very Direct Questions

By Loretta Manago  
Post Managing Editor

The spotlight, which has been shining for so long on the black elected officials of this city, shifted directions last Friday night and focused in on the better halves of politicians, Harvey Gantt, Mel Watt, Bob Walton, Ron Leeper, Charlie Dannelly, Jim Richardson, Howard Barnhill, George Battle, and Arthur Griffin.

These public servants' wives were honored in "An Evening of Elegance," a lavish, festive affair, sponsored by the Iota Chapter of the Chi Eta Phi Sorority and held at McDonald's Cafeteria.

On that night, it was the elected black officials' wives turn to take to the podium and answer some very direct questions posed to them by WBTB news reporter and mistress of ceremony, Beatrice Thompson. On hand at the fund raising event were Cindy Gantt, Rose Dannelly, Mary Richardson, Lois Barnhill, Iris Battle, and Alisha Griffin. Eulada Watt, Thelma Walton, and Phyllis Leeper were not able to be present.

While more serious questions centered around the advice they would give to wives whose husbands were considering running for public office, or their opinion if they thought that women were getting a fair shake in the political arena, the question that brought the most uproar was, "What would you change about your husband if you could?"



At a recent political fund raiser for Mayor Gantt, the wives of black elected officials were given a special salute.

The responses to this question varied. Mrs. Barnhill exclaimed that for years her husband has urged her to keep up with him, if she could, she would slacken his pace.

Mrs. Gantt on, on the other hand, said she would reduce her husband's intake of peanut butter and jelly. Making the statement that her husband is seldom wrong, Mrs. Griffin

remarked that if she could change him, she would let him be wrong more so that she could say, "I'm right!" For Mrs. Dannelly, to make her spouse more argumentative so

that they could share in the joy of making up was her only change.

As Ms. Thompson read a brief introduction of each honored guest, the audience was able to see that these women were more than just wives, but had established identities of their own.

Mary Richardson is the mother of two sons. She attends Memorial Presbyterian Church and is employed at Westinghouse Electric. Presently, she is attending Belmont Abbey College.

Retired from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, after working 26 years, Lois Barnhill is involved in the Kappa Alpha Psi Silhouette and the Sir Walter Cabinet.

The mother of four, Cindy Gantt works part-time in accounting. She received her B.S. in the mathematics field and she attends Friendship Baptist Church.

Rose Dannelly is a graduate of S.C. State College. She has one son and she enjoys the symphony and the ballet.

A guidance counselor at West Charlotte, Iris Battle is involved in the Hornet's Nest Girl Scouts and the A.M.E. Ministers' Wives Club.

At her church, Alisha Griffin serves on the Usher Board. She is a confidential secretary at DuPont and she enjoys tennis.

Ruthie Giles, a member of Chi Eta Phi bestowed each honored guest with a paperback copy of Alice Walker's "The Color Purple." Vivian Smith, president of the organization, presented them each with a red, long stemmed rose, given to them on behalf of Bertha Maxwell.

At the conclusion of the program, the audience enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and beverages while the Johnny Holloway Band provided the entertainment.

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## How A Woman Lives Now Can Affect The Health Of A Baby

Raleigh - How a woman lives now can affect the health of a baby she may choose to have in later years, according to Ruby Hooper, deputy secretary of the North Carolina Department of Human Resources.

"Women who smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs, or eat improperly may be affecting the health of a baby they may want to have later," Mrs. Hooper said. "This includes women who are not pregnant, women who may be pregnant but don't yet know it, and women who know they are pregnant."

A developing fetus is very sensitive to environmental surroundings during the early phases of pregnancy, according to Dr. Raphael DiNapoli, chief of the Maternal and Child Care Section in the N.C. Division of Health Services.

"This is the period when the fetus is actually taking a more noticeable human shape, and when the infant's body is developing both physically and mentally," DiNapoli emphasized. "It's also the period of time when a woman may not realize she is pregnant, so she continues a lifestyle that may not be as healthy for the unborn child."

He noted that many women do take better care of themselves and make every effort to protect their unborn child once they know they are pregnant, but some women may not realize they are pregnant for several weeks or even months.

DiNapoli said that women who are considering pregnancy should do some advance planning.

"Women who use birth control pills, for example, should stop using them about three months before trying to get pregnant in order to let their body return to a normal state," he said. "They should, however, use another method of birth control until they are ready for pregnancy."

DiNapoli also suggested that women:

- avoid smoking - when an expectant woman smokes, her baby "smokes," too. Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide and nicotine, both of which are poisons. They can cause blood vessels to constrict and push oxygen out of the blood. Therefore, the baby does not get enough food and oxygen.

Smoking during pregnancy may lead to small babies, prematurity, breathing problems, slow learnings or stillborns.

-beware of medicines, drugs and chemicals - some medicines, both over-the-counter and prescription, can cause problems during pregnancy. Before becoming pregnant, a woman should talk to her physician or local health department about the kinds of medicines she may safely take. This also applies to women being treated for illnesses such as diabetes or epilepsy. There are no known street drugs that are safe during pregnancy. Women who use chemicals (such as paint strippers, oven cleaners, or bug sprays) at home, work, or play should wear gloves and a mask for protection and work in a well-ventilated area.

-Eat a good, well balanced diet crash diets, diet pills, overeating, fasting, skipping meals, and using

vitamin pills as a substitute for a well balanced diet can harm an expectant woman and her unborn baby. Special diets such as those for high blood pressure or diabetes can be safe during pregnancy, but a woman should discuss a "safe" diet with her physician or nutritionist before becoming pregnant.

-Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages - when a woman drinks, her unborn child "drinks" too. If a woman drinks, her baby may be born with permanent physical and mental defects such as mental retardation, heart defects, small head and size or deformed face. The child could also be clumsy, hyperactive, or nervous. These defects are caused by a medical condition known as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

"Regular exercise is also a very important part of a healthy lifestyle, both before and after a woman becomes pregnant," he said. "However, she needs to tailor her

exercise program carefully. She should also remember that pregnancy is not the appropriate time to begin a program of strenuous exercise."

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