

Las Amigas, celebrates 50 years of sisterhood and community service

By Brenda C. McCaskill
Herald Contributor

Las Amigas, Inc., an African American women's public service organization, celebrated 50 years of service at its 49th Annual Conclave in Cincinnati, Ohio, June 27 - July 1. The 49th Annual Conclave and 50th Anniversary, with the Las Amigas' 16th National President Ethel Hart presiding, was hosted by the Cincinnati Chapter and the Northeast Region and held at The Westin Cincinnati.

In addition to conducting business and policy matters, the occasion was highlighted by a variety of activities showcasing the accomplishments of the organization's local, regional, and national impacts over its 50-year history. The 49th Annual Conclave, with record attendance, brought 225 members and guests together from across the U.S. representing twenty-four chapters from the organization's five regions - Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Tidewater Central, and Sunbelt.

The organization marked its 50th Anniversary with the election of officers for 2007-2009. Joann W. Williams of Greensboro, N.C., was elected the 17th National President of Las Amigas and will guide the organization thru 2007-2009 to further its dedication and service to education, economic development, political awareness, health, and family.

National President Williams said, "I am humbled to have the opportunity to work with the leadership team for the next two years. I look forward to leading and serving this great organization to the next level."

In addition, the following were elected to serve as National officers for 2007-2009: Vice President - Brenda Gilliam (Forestville Chapter), Recording Secretary - Betty A. Crawford (Red Springs Chapter), Corresponding Secretary - Barbara Howerton (Forestville Chapter), Financial Secretary - Zeller Raspberry (Portsmouth Chapter), Treasurer - Jolyle Shaw (Whiteville Chapter), Reporter - Brenda C. McCaskill (Cincinnati Chapter), Historian - Pearl Owens (Greenville Chapter), Sergeant at Arms - Angela Moore (Henrico County Chapter), Chaplain - Agatha Grimes (Greensboro Chapter), and Board of Trustees member - Mary Wren (Baltimore Chapter).

Throughout the convention, members and guests attended inspirational performances and keynote addresses that motivated, celebrated, and renewed their dedication and commitment to public service and sisterhood. The public town



P. Ann Everson-Price, gospel radio personality and evangelist, gave an inspirational and motivating keynote at the Power Breakfast 07.

hall meeting, held on June 28th, kicked off the three day convention featuring inspirational performances from Greater Cincinnati area youth. On June 29th, those attending the Power Breakfast were motivated by an inspirational keynote from P. Ann Everson-Price, gospel radio personality and evangelist, and uplifted in song by a performance from Trudy Jackson.

Numerous community and organizational awards were given at the Dora R. Mason Awards Luncheon held on June 30th which featured a powerful keynote from The Honorable Judge Melba Marsh and inspirational songs performed by

Cynthia Grant.

Among the numerous awards presented, two Cincinnati residents were honored at the luncheon for their humanitarian and community services - the Rev. Calvin Harper (2007 Humanitarian Award) and Mrs. Iva Reibling (2007 Community Award). Scholarships were awarded to Shariya Smith, a student at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, and Omowaleola O. Onosebi, who will attend Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. The \$1,000 National

Partnership Award was presented to the National Bone Marrow Donor Program. Other organizational awards included: the Bettye McNeill Long Award presented to the Portsmouth Chapter; the Lorraine Walker Award presented to the Seat Pleasant Chapter; the Mary Q. Moore Outstanding Chapter Award presented to the Greensboro Chapter (1st Place); Newport-Northeast Chapter (2nd Place); Portsmouth Chapter (3rd Place); and the Dora R. Mason Outstanding Member Award presented to Frances Robinson of the Richmond Chapter.

The three-day convention and celebration culminated with the Mary Q. Moore Orchid Gala where Linda Hammonds of the Southeast Region was crowned the Las Amigas National Queen 2007-2008. In 2008, Las Amigas will hold its 50th Annual Conclave, hosted by the Henrico County Chapter and the Tidewater Central Region, in Richmond, Va.

Las Amigas, is an African American women's public service organization founded in 1957 by Dora R. Mason and Mary Q. Moore. The mission of Las Amigas, Inc., is to enhance the quality of life and promote the general improvement of the communities in which Las Amigas serves and to encourage personal and professional growth and foster a closer relationship among members.



Las Amigas, Inc., 16th National President Ethel Hart presided over the 49th Annual Conclave and 50th Anniversary.



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The Honorable Judge Melba Marsh gives a powerful keynote at the Dora R. Mason Awards Luncheon.



Rev. Calvin Harper, recipient of the Las Amigas Award, 2007 Humanitarian Award



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The 49th Annual Conclave was hosted by the Cincinnati Chapter and the Northeast Region of Las Amigas, Inc.; standing left to right: Brenda C. McCaskill (Conclave Co-Chair), Daphene Mosley (Cincinnati Chapter President), and Warda A. Walker (Conclave Co-Chair)



Northeast Regional Director Roberta Epps and 16th National President Ethel Hart



Las Amigas, Inc., National officers for 2007-2009: seated left to right - Zeller Raspberry, Joann W. Williams (17th National President), Brenda Gilliam, Barbara Howerton; standing left to right: Agatha Grimes, Jodi Berry, Rosemary Hemmingway, Brenda C. McCaskill, Angela Moore, Betty A. Crawford, Pearl Owens, not shown Jolyle Shaw and Mary Wren



Linda Hammonds of the Southeast Region was crowned the Las Amigas, Inc., National Queen 2007-2008 by Ruth Perkins, National Queen 2006-2007.