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NEWSFILE



Lawrence Douglas Wilder, lieutenant governor of Virginia, was the speaker at the annual Howard University Charter Day Convocation Feb. 27. The university conferred on him the honorary doctor of laws degree during the ceremony, which marked the 120th anniversary of the founding of Howard.

"College students," he said, "can provide wholesome role models and become mentors to neglected children and young people while gaining a sense of fulfillment and usefulness. Our colleges and universities are in a position to play an important role in bringing together the most privileged young adults of our society with the least privileged children and young people."

The evening before, the university held its Charter Day Dinner at the Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel, where six distinguished Howard alumni were honored with achievement awards. About

2,000 people attended the \$200-a-plate affair.

Howard started a new tradition this year by also conferring honorary degrees on two other notable individuals at the convocation. Robert P. Madison, a Cleveland-based architect, received the doctor of humanities degree, and Roland B. Scott, director of the Howard University Center for Sickle Cell Disease, received the doctor of science degree.

Also, for the first time, a corporation was honored "for beneficent support" at the Charter Day dinner. AT&T, represented by chairman of the board James E. Olson, received that award.

Other luminaries participating in the ceremonies included the world-acclaimed soprano Jessye Norman, chairman of this year's Charter Day committee, and Julia M. Walsh, managing director of the Washington, D.C., stock brokerage firm Julia M. Walsh & Sons, a division of Tucker, Anthony and R.L. Day, Inc., chairman of the Charter Day Dinner corporate committee.

The six distinguished alumni who were honored at the dinner are: Faye B. Bryant, associate superintendent of the Houston Independent School District; Revella E. Hughes, a musician with a long career of performing jazz and classical music on Broadway, in clubs, in concert appearances and as a recording artist; Colbert I. King, executive vice president at Riggs National Bank in Washington; Althea T.L. Simmons, director of the Washington bureau and chief lobbyist for the National Association for the Advancement of Col-

ored People; May Miller Sullivan, renowned poet and playwright; and Gerald E. Thomson, a professor at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and executive vice president for professional affairs at The Presbyterian Hospital in New York.

Both Douglas Wilder and Jessye Norman are also Howard alumni. Wilder graduated from the Howard School of Law in 1969, and Norman graduated from the College of Fine Arts in 1967.

Also, at the Charter Day Dinner, a \$500,000 pledge to Howard from the McDonald's Corporation and its National Black Operators' Association was announced by Robert M. Beavers Jr., vice president/zone manager for McDonald's.



Louis E. Martin, assistant vice president for communications at the university, received the annual communications award at the 16th annual Communications

Conference held on campus in February.

The conference brings together hundreds of communications professionals, academicians and students.

Martin has been with the university since 1981, having formerly served as special presidential assistant for minority affairs in the Carter administration. Often dubbed "the godfather of Black politics," he also has been an adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, special assistant to Sen. Adlai E. Stevenson III (D-Ill.), and deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

He came to politics via journalism. He has been editor and publisher of the *Michigan Chronicle* in Detroit, editor of the *Chicago Daily Defender*, adviser to Amalgamated Press Ltd. in Nigeria and president and editorial director of Sengstacke Newspapers, which publishes the *Chicago Daily Defender*.

Among others receiving awards at the conference were five School of Communications faculty members: Oscar H. Gandy, Abraham Tishman, Marion Hayes Hull, Noma Anderson and James Tinney.

"AFTER THE RAINS," a powerful documentary that examines Africa's long drought and its aftermath, premiered on WHMM-TV in February.

Nearly two years in the making, the hour-long film presents a thorough examination of the disastrous effects of drought and its stepchildren — famine, desertification and deforestation — on the people of the areas affected. The documentary also examines how Africa, with the assistance of the world community, continues to cope with the crisis, as well as the failures of some African leaders to develop effective national economic and agrarian policies.

Film footage from four different parts of the continent are reinforced by comments from scholars, development experts, foreign

aid officials and representatives of donor agencies.

"Drought and famine are part of a recurring cycle in Africa" and the documentary "looks at what African people are doing to recover from the recent crisis," says "After the Rains" producer Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley of Howard University's WHMM-TV.

The documentary is narrated by Kojo Nnamdi, host of WHMM-TV's popular Evening Exchange program, for which Bowens-Wheatley is a co-producer.

"After the Rains" was produced in cooperation with the United Nations Office of Emergency Operations in Africa.



Luther Elliott, formerly director of personnel for the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., has been named the new general manager of the Howard Inn. He replaces Jacques Wilson who was general manager until his death in September.

Elliott brings a variety of management experiences to the post. In addition to his work with the Omni Shoreham, he has been an executive assistant to the superintendent of the D.C. public schools, deputy director of the Oklahoma State Office of Economic Opportunities, organizer of a farmers' cooperative in Mississippi and a consultant to the federal government on feeding programs. A native of Enid, Okla., he holds a

bachelor of science degree in social psychology from the University of Oklahoma.

The 160-room Howard Inn houses a coffee shop, two cocktail lounges and a supper club. In addition to being a full-service hotel, it serves as a training site for students enrolled in the three-year-old hotel management program offered by the School of Business and Public Administration.

"The Image of Black Slavery in Creative Documents of the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries" was the title of a major conference held at the university in February which attracted humanities scholars from around the nation.

The conference was sponsored by College of Liberal Arts' humanities division and supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Conference co-chairman Paul E. Logan, chairman of the university's German and Russian department, called the event "singularly unique in that it is the first to lift the theme of Black slavery out of the traditional framework of historical investigations and present the responses of poets, dramatists, novelists, musicians, visual artists, travelers and eyewitnesses to this most ignoble act of man against his fellow man."

Examples of the 30 papers read at the conference were "The Image of Blacks in Dutch Art and Literature in the Era of Slavery," "The Popular, Humorous Image of Blacks in the 1780s and 1790s: Anecdotes about Blacks in American Newspapers," and "Make a Joyful Noise? Reflections on Slavery in Early English Hymns."

The conference's emotionally-charged keynote address, "To Hold Captivity Captive: The Narrative of Memory," was delivered by Eleanor Traylor, professor of English at Montgomery College.

Lois Mailou Jones Pierre-Noel, professor emerita of art, delighted a packed audience in an auditorium of the National Museum of

American History one evening in January with a "show and tell" of her life and work as an artist.

The slide talk was a highlight of a conference on Twentieth-Century Afro-American Artists sponsored by The Visions Foundation, publisher of *American Visions* magazine.

"My paintings have many, many stories," she said, as examples of her prolific output over the years were projected on an overhead screen. The paintings ranged from Impressionist scenes of Paris and Martha's Vineyard to poster-like protest art and bold, geometric compositions with African motifs.

"I'm 81 and still growing," she said at the end of her talk, and then practically danced off the stage — to thunderous applause.

Frank Smith and Jeff Donaldson, two current members of the art department faculty, moderated panels at the two-day conference.

Taft H. Broome Jr., director of the university's Large Space Structures Institute, took a provocative look at the ethics of engineering in a recent article in the Outposts section of *The Washington Post*.

Such technological horror stories as the Challenger, Chernobyl, Bhopal and Three-Mile Island disasters, he warns, "tell of a cancer growing on our values. These engineering disasters are the results of willful actions. Yet these actions are generally not seen by engineers as being morally wrong. They are judged to be *ordinary*. What's more, some engineers now espouse a morality that explicitly rejects the notion that they have as their prime responsibility the maintenance of public safety."

And the Howard engineering professor lays some of the blame for this on the public itself, as he writes:

"In fact, the public may not want the truth about how one engineers a space shuttle or a toxic-waste dump. It may prefer to delude itself that the system is fool-proof rather than learn enough to

influence the technological decisions that affect their own lives. But if such ignorance of engineering — as well as math and science — becomes increasingly widespread, loss of control of technology would be a probable result."

James A. Momoh, an assistant professor of electrical engineering, has received a Presidential Young Investigator Award from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

A specialist in power systems, Momoh is one of 200 researchers in the nation to receive the prestigious award. Two years ago, another member of the electrical engineering faculty, Michael G. Spencer, received the same award.

The award carries an annual base grant from NSF of \$25,000. In addition, NSF will provide up to \$37,500 per year to match industrial support on a dollar-for-dollar basis, bringing the possible total support to \$100,000 per year.



Nguyen Tien Hung, a professor in the department of economics, is co-author of a new book on Vietnam which has received favorable reviews in the media.

"The Palace File" is described as "The remarkable story of the secret letters from Nixon and Ford to the President of South Vietnam and the American promises that were never kept."

The book is rich in revelations into American-Vietnamese relations from 1968 to 1975. The source of these revelations includes letters in which the two American presidents pledged unswerving support to the government of South Vietnam, other

declassified letters and documents and interviews with key players in the Vietnam War.

Before the fall of South Vietnam, Hung served as a special assistant to South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu. His co-author, Jerrold L. Schecter, covered Vietnam for *Time* magazine.

The special issues which affect disabled Black Americans were the focus of a conference held on the Howard campus in February which was co-sponsored by the university and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

The aim of the conference, according to conference coordinator Sylvia Walker, director of the university's Center for the Study of Handicapped Children and Youth, was "to identify and communicate the employment successes, as well as the needs and problems of disabled Black Americans and to develop a plan to advance their employment."

Among the crucial factors leading to the successful employment of the disabled, she said, are "strong family support, role models and the opportunity to interact within the larger community."

Sessions at the conference examined these factors as well as such topics as employment training, rehabilitation, networking and the media portrayal of the disabled.

Aetna Life and Casualty has committed \$10,000 to a scholarship program and a mini-lecture series at the School of Law.

The scholarship program will award \$1,000 to first-year law students for their second and third years of legal study. Winners will be chosen through a competition.

The lecture series, named for Clarence Clyde Ferguson Jr., dean of the law school from 1963 to 1969, will be presented annually beginning in 1988. Aetna previously supported a similar series in honor of William Henry Hastie Sr., the first Black federal judge in the U.S., who was dean of the law school from 1941 to 1944. □