

# Washington, Knight-Preddy shine at awards event

City fire chief, black community matriarch recognized at Elks' 51st dinner

Dianna Saffold  
Sentinel-Voice

Las Vegas was immersed in a sea of elegance as 1,800 formally attired members of the Improved, Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World crossed the ballroom floor during Grand Temple's Emma V. Kelley Achievement Awards Dinner.

The 51st achievement awards dinner was held Wednesday, Aug. 6 at Bally's Hotel & Casino. The Elks, with 450,000 members strong, is the largest predominantly black fraternal organization in the world.

This banquet was one of many events celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Grand Temple, Daughters of Elks and the 104th Elks Grand Lodge.

The Daughter of Elks honored Las Vegas Fire and Rescue Chief David L. Washington and Sarann Knight-Preddy, former Moulin Rouge owner. She was the first African-American female to receive a non-restricted gaming license in Nevada.

Washington received the "Lovejoy Award," which is given for "Fraternal Benevolence: The Heart and Soul of Elkdom."

Accompanied by his wife of 30 years, Marcia, the chief was striking in his dress uniform.

"I am absolutely honored and humbled," Washington



Las Vegas Fire and Rescue Chief David Washington, left, is the first African-American to lead the city's fire services department. He received the Elks' "Lovejoy Award."

said. "I've never spoken to this many people. This international flavor will make a brother cry. Thank you, I am a warrior, and I have a warrior's spirit."

The sincerity and humility of his speech was well received by all. The Honorable Dr. Donald P. Wilson, Grand Exalted Ruler, and the Honorable Margaret D. Scott, Grand Daughter Ruler, pre-

sented Washington with the annual tribute.

As chief, Washington oversees a department serving a population of 520,936, supervises a staff of 633 with an annual budget of \$76.5 million.

Presented to Knight-Preddy was the Emma V. Kelley Achievement Award. This award honors the memory of Emma Virginia

Kelley, who on June 13, 1902 organized the Daughters of Elks in Norfolk, Va., later being adopted by the Grand Lodge and becoming an auxiliary body to the Brothers of the Elks.

Recognized as one of Las Vegas' most prominent citizens, Knight-Preddy is regarded as a pioneer. Her awards and honors include "NAACP Woman of the Year



Photo special to the Sentinel-Voice

Sarann Knight-Preddy, the first black female to get a Nevada nonrestricted gaming license, won the achievement award. Zenobia Poyner (right) presented the plaque.

in 1967," "Black Achievement Business Award" in 1986, "Woman of the Year" of Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce in 1987 and the "Acme Award" of the Women's Council of Real Estate Broker's Inc. in 1993.

She formerly owned Club Tonga Casino in Hawthorne, Nevada. In Las Vegas, she owned the People's Choice Casino, Playhouse Lounge and the historic Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino for 14 years.

"I never joined because they used to say you had to ride a goat," Knight-Preddy said, explaining in a warm and gracious way why she never joined this prestigious group. The comment brought much laughter from the Elk-filled ballroom.

As she expressed gratitude and praised the women of the Daughter of the Elks, she reminded the gathering to "leave it to the women to get the job done." The audience responded with roaring applause. Again, I want to thank you, thank you, thank you,"

said Knight-Preddy, who was presented a check and plaque by Grand Temple Secretary Zenobia Poyner.

The banquet was well organized. Additional tables were needed to accommodate a larger-than-expected crowd of Elks and guest.

The dinner menu included chicken with a delightful cheese filling, vegetables and ice cream.

Officers were in full Elk uniform, as many of the Daughters of the Elks were dressed in gold, transforming the ballroom floor into a kaleidoscope of beautiful black people.

The organization promotes and enhances its purpose which is the welfare and happiness of its members. Nobleness of soul and goodness of heart is cultivated in principles of "charity, justice, brotherly and sisterly love."

Not only are there lodges and temples in the United States, but also Canada, Mexico, Cuba, the West Indies, Virgin Islands, Bahamas and Alaska.

## Tribute to Fisher, Washington help foster teens

By John T. Stephens III  
Sentinel-Voice

The Moka Resource Scholarship Foundation will host a tribute and awards banquet honoring the work of Antwone Q. Fisher and Denzel Washington.

The foundation raises money to help aging-out foster teens and at-risk teenagers.

Fisher was a former foster child who is now a Hollywood screenwriter. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his book "Finding Fish." Denzel is a major Hollywood player, producing, directing and acting in many films. Several other celebrity guests have been invited.

The fourth-annual celebrity benefit will be held in the Ballroom of Treasure Island Hotel, 3300 S. Las Vegas

Bld., Saturday, Aug. 16 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Cocktails will be served at 6:30 p.m., followed by a gourmet dinner, live entertainment and dancing.

"We work with aging-out foster teens and at-risk teenagers," said Madelyn J. (Mandy) Moka, director of Moka Resource Scholarship Foundation (MRSF). Her husband, famed actor Zakes Moka ("The Serpent and the Rainbow" and "A Vampire in Brooklyn"), is a co-founder.

"I realized that there was very little preparation for these teens to handle life on their own after leaving the foster care system," she said.

The Mokaes were foster parents for six years and in the past have opened their hearts and homes to 21 foster

children.

"We specialized in taking in sibling groups," she said. "Keep the kids together that come from dysfunctional families."

Today, they operate the resource scholarship foundation that has given away 18 complete computer packages and nine \$1,000 scholarships for college.

"They (foster teens) are not used to getting things of

this magnitude," Moka said.

Money for books, clothes, gang tattoo removal and life skills lesson are also offered by the foundation.

Cocktail attire is required for the benefit.

The Woody Woods Ensemble, featuring vocalist Melanie Moore, will entertain. Admission is \$75 in advance.

For more information, call (702) 474-7911.

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