

Sorority sisters heralded for volunteerism

By *Lés Pierres Streater*
Sentinel-Voice

A group of about 75 people gathered on Sunday to pay tribute to two sorors of the historic Gamma Phi Delta Sorority-Alpha Rho Chapter, Las Vegas, at Nevada Partners located at 710 W. Lake Mead Blvd. The two veteran community volunteers, Ruby Garland and Irene Parker,

were recognized for serving the organization for the past 40 years.

Las Vegas City Councilman Lawrence Weekly, D-5, was master of ceremony, and Dorothy Muhammad was the event's chairperson. The event was a fundraiser for educational scholarships the organization provides. The activities featured a Men's

Fashion Show along with musical entertainment.

Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, founded in 1943, strives to improve the economic, social and political status of all women; to motivate the members of the organization to further their education and training; to maintain a better relationship among women of all races; and to be of



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater

Ruby Garland, left, and Irene Parker, members of the Alpha Rho chapter of Gamma Phi Delta Sorority Inc. were honored for more than 40 years of service to the group.

greater service to the community, country, and to each other.

The organization includes women who work in or have past experience in a wide range of professions and business. The membership also includes young women who join while pursuing their

educational and career goals as undergraduates, according to Muhammad. Volunteer services are an integral part of the members' responsibilities and each is encouraged to contribute her time and expertise in needed areas.

Garland stated, "It meant a lot to me for the simple rea-

son that this was the first Black organization to be chartered in this state. We have been able to do many nice things like give away scholarships to deserving people... I established the first Black chapter of the AARP, chapter 4395, and it's still going on very well. I retired as an inspector for the board of Cosmetology; I was over all the beauty schools and beauty colleges. I hope that we would be able to establish a scholarship for the beauty school trades, realizing that most of those students are struggling..."

Parker said, "It's a wonderful affair for me because I have done a lot of things in my life, and this is the first time that I have been honored. The Lord is letting me know that my work has not been unnoticed and it has not been in vain. I was a former registrar of voters, and we were instrumental in getting a lot of politicians elected to office to make things better for all of us. Many people don't know of the work we have done to march in Carson City and on the strip during the Civil Rights Movement."

Rosa Parks: Timeline

Special to the Sentinel-Voice

1913 - Rosa Louise McCauley is born February 4 in Tuskegee, Alabama.

1928 - Rosa, then in ninth grade, drops out of Booker T. Washington High School when her mother becomes seriously ill. She later attends Alabama State Teachers College for Negroes.

1932 - Marries Raymond Parks, a barber, at age 19.

1934 - Receives high school diploma.

1943 - Twelve years before her historic stand, Parks is ejected from a bus for refusing to board from the back. She is brought on as a secretary at the NAACP in Montgomery, Ala.

1945 - After being denied the right to vote two previous times, Parks receives a certificate to vote on her third attempt.

1955 - The Civil Rights Movement begins in earnest when on December 1 Parks refuses to give up her seat on the bus to a White man. She is later found guilty of breaking segregation laws. The situation results in a 381-day bus boycott.

1957 - Parks relocates her family to

Detroit where she initially works as a seamstress.

1987 - The Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development is established. The institute, named after she and her husband offer mentoring and guidance to young African-Americans.

1988 - Parks retires from John Conyers' office, after working for him since 1965.

1992 - "Rosa Parks, My Story," published by New York Dial Books represents Rosa's first published work.

1994 - After being robbed and assaulted in her own home, Parks moves to Riverfront Apartments. She makes peace with her assailant after his arrest and conviction.

1999 - President Clinton awards Parks the highest American civilian award, the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor.

2000 - Across the corner where she had refused to give up her seat on the bus, the Rosa Parks Museum and Library opens in Montgomery, Alabama.

2005 - On October 24, Rosa Parks dies at the age of 92.

Parks

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legislation to rename the INS building the Rosa Parks building. Although the legislation has been in the works for several months, it is not yet official.

"Rosa Parks was like precious gold. She increased in value as each year went by," said Rev. Wendell Anthony, president of the Detroit NAACP. "She was a treasure, putting her life on the line for so many others who are the beneficiaries of the struggle that she helped to ignite over a half century ago. The fact that we, in Detroit and all over the world, can celebrate victories and freedoms and democracy is a tribute to the fact that the power of one person reaches beyond their grasp, and it shows us that we can make a difference," he added.

"One of the challenges of our struggle is that we've gotten comfortable in our success, and, therefore, many of us do not struggle or believe that there's still one to be waged. We fail to transfer the necessity to be engaged in the civil rights and equal rights movement. We've not transferred it into the spirit and the lives of our young people, and, therefore, I still think we still must get out and cast our ballots, because if you really want to pay tribute to Rosa Parks, vote like your life depends on it."

Former Mayor Dennis Archer, who was recently named as Parks' court-appointed attorney and who now serves as chair of Dickinson Wright PLLC, also spoke of the sizable impact she made on his own life.


"As I grew older and began to develop my profession, I began to fully appreciate, in a more global way, the impact that Ms. Parks

had," Archer said. "When you appreciate her demeanor, her sensitivity, her concern for children, the advancement of civil rights, you begin to understand the broader global impact of what one person — without title, without having been in elected office, without owning or running a corporation — can do to make enormous impact on both America and the world."

Parks worked for a number of years as an officer for the NAACP during the 1940s and '50s. She continued to be an activist long after her 1955 historic act. She spent more than two decades working for Congressman John Conyers. Parks received numerous honors and awards for her contributions, including the NAACP's highest honor, the Springarn Medal, which she received in 1979, and the U.S. government's highest honor, the Medal of Freedom, which she received in 1999 from President Bill Clinton. She met several other national and world dignitaries, among them the late Pope John Paul II and former South African President and freedom fighter Nelson Mandela, and she was honored by many of them.


At press time Parks' family and advisors were in process of deciding the arrangements, according to a spokesperson for the Swanson Funeral Home in Detroit, Mich. There had been earlier reports that a viewing would be held in Parks' former church in Montgomery, Ala., and the funeral held in Detroit, however the spokesperson declined to confirm and said the family will announce final plans later today.

Keith A. Owens writes for the Michigan Chronicle.




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