

Venecia C. Bessellieu Research and Education Chapter Holds Historic Inaugural Meeting

By: Sis. G. Delores Ellerbe, MPC

After having it planted in her mind in early 2015, then Grand Worthy Matron Venecia C. Bessellieu made a recommendation in her Stewardship Address to establish a Research and Education Chapter within Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter (GTGC) to work in conjunction with the David A. McWilliams Research and Education Lodge. The purpose and goal of the Research and Education Chapter is to conduct research specific to the GTGC of the District of Columbia and its subordinate chapters. At the 124th Annual Communication of GTGC in December 2016, the Grand Body approved the naming of the Chapter after GWM Venecia C. Bessellieu, thus the name of the chapter became the Venecia C. Bessellieu Research and Education Chapter (VCBREC) and requested that By-Laws be developed and brought back for final approval. The following members got busy developing those By-Laws for VCBREC:

PM Catrice R. Vandross (C-5), Chairperson
PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe (C-4), Co-Chairperson
PM J. Felicia Alexander (C-15)
PGWM Margaret E. Anderson (C-6)
PM Norma J. Brooks (C-11)
Sis. Christine Vaughn (C-5)
AP Milford Alphonso (Al) Vaughn, Jr. (C-5)

After two years of working diligently to develop the guidelines and subsequent By-Laws for this “hybrid” chapter, and after several rejections, at the 126th Annual Communication of GTGC, under the leadership of then GWM Patricia L. Young, the VCBREC By-Laws were approved by the Grand Body and GWM Young appointed the following officers:

Worthy Matron	PM Catrice R. Vandross (C-5)
Worthy Patron	Bro. Milford Al Vaughn (C-5)
Associate Matron	PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe (C-4)
Associate Patron	WP Kenneth Pough (C-14)
Conductress	PGWM Margaret E. Anderson (C-6)
Associate Conductress	PM LaJuan O.G. Hunter (C-14)
Treasurer	PGWM Patricia L. Young (C-1)
Secretary	PM Norma J. Brooks (C-11)
Marshal	Sis. Christine Vaughn (C-5)
Sentinel	PAP James L. Vandross, Sr. (C-5)
Warder	PM J. Felicia Alexander (C-15)

This new entity within GTGC is not a chartered chapter but is comprised of current members of the 15 subordinate chapters who are dedicated to the research and education of the beautiful allegories of Eastern Stardom, in general, and the Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, PHA for the Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia and its Jurisdiction, in particular, to illuminate the Order and be better agents of change and service in our community.

The VCBREC will assist in educating, collecting, compiling, and preserving the history of the GTGC. Members will also assist in providing light and knowledge to educate our membership on the importance of preserving our collective histories, and will research and collect data from

various sources to assist the 15 subordinate chapters in the preparation and compilation of their historic highlights and their various research endeavors. There are three types of membership in VCBREC: Research, General, and Honorary.

A Research Member is one who has completed the required research guidelines. She must have written and presented a research paper, or have conducted a seminar/workshop, or provided light and knowledge in open session within the VCBREC or the Phyllis Chapter. Research Members are eligible to hold elective office.

A General Member is an active member of the Eastern Star who pays dues. S(he) will have a voice and can vote in VCBREC. General membership of a Sister is any Eastern Star who is a member of a GTGC subordinate chapter in good standing. She is eligible to hold an appointed office in VCBREC. General Membership of a Master Mason is any Brother who is a member in good standing of one of the warranted lodges of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of DC and a member of a GTGC subordinate chapter in good standing. He is eligible to hold office in VCBREC.

An Honorary Member is an active member of the Order of the Eastern Star of a Prince Hall Affiliated Jurisdiction. Membership may be granted to individuals who have provided distinguished service to VCBREC. Honorary members will have the right to present their valuable research in our Jurisdiction, but Honorary Members are not eligible to hold office within VCBREC.

Membership in VCBREC cannot be obtained through demit.


In addition to the officers named above, the following list completes the “charter” members of VCBREC:

PM Yvonne D. Baskerville (C-12)
PGWM Dr. Venecia C. Bessellieu (C-5)
Bro. Alonza Tehuti Evans (L-14)
MWGM Quincy G. Gant (C-14)
PM Iceleen Griffin (C-16)
PM Elizabeth L. Howard (C-4)
GS Carolyn D. Joyner (C-6)
PM Dorothy Kittrell (C-5)
PP Marco Kittrell (C-5)
PM Eric Konohia (L-26)
PM James Morgan (L-18)
PGWM Jane R. L. Robison (C-1)
PP Alvin Smith (C-1)
PGWM Ruth C. Smith (C-8)
PM Tamalyn Smith (C-1)
PM Juanita E. Vandross (C-5)
PAP James L. Vandross (C-5)
PM Dr. Shelly Walker (C-8)
PGTru Addie L. Watson (C-6)
PM Juanita Griffin Zani (C-16)

Having met all the requirements to operate under the GTGC, and with the blessings of Grand Worthy Matron Eunice J. Dingle (C-6), VCBREC held its Inaugural Communication on Monday, November 25, 2019, with Appointed Worthy Matron Catrice R. Vandross (C-5) and Appointed Worthy Patron Milford Al Vaughn (C-5) presiding in the East during the ritualistic opening. Special gratitude is extended to WM Yolanda Edwards-Brown for the use of the regalia of Prince Hall Chapter No. 5.

Venecia C. Bessellieu
Research and Education Chapter, PHA - O.E.S.
GEORGIANA THOMAS GRAND CHAPTER
Order of the Eastern Star, PHA
Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia

Inaugural Program



Monday, November 25, 2019

Masonic Temple
1000 U Street, NW
4th Floor (OES Room)
Washington, DC 20001!

Catrice R. Vandross
Appointed Worthy Matron

Milford A. Vaughn
Appointed Worthy Patron

Eunice J. Dingle
Grand Worthy Matron

Joseph A. Dingle, Jr.
Grand Worthy Patron

THE HONORABLE QUINCY G. GANT
Most Worshipful Grand Master



Above Inaugural Program and Charter Members present (Top Row, L-R): PGWM Venecia C. Bessellieu (C-5), GS Carolyn D. Joyner (C-6), PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe (C-4), PP Kenneth N. Pough (C-14), PM Catrice R. Vandross (C-5), PM Norma J. Brooks (C-11), Sis. Christine Vaughn (C-5). (Middle/Bottom Row, L-R): PGWM Jane R.L. Robison (C-1), PM LaJuan O.G. Hunter (C-14), PGWM Margaret E. Anderson (C-6), Bro. Al Vaughn (C-5), PGWM Patricia L. Young (C-1), PM J. Felicia Alexander (C-15), PM Juanita Griffin Zani (C-16), PM Elizabeth L. Howard (C-4), and PAP James Vandross (C-5). Not pictured but in attendance was PGTRu Addie L. Watson (C-6).

All other officers appointed by PGWM Young were present and performed in their stations during the Inaugural Communication. Visiting PM E. Millá Jordan (C-12) served in the station of Adah. Also in attendance were Associate Grand Matron Sheila A. Smith (C-12) [representing GWM Eunice J. Dingle] and PGWP Albert Pope (C-12) [representing GWP Joseph A. Dingle] who were out of town attending to her ailing father. The following “charter” members were in attendance (alphabetical order):

- PM J. Felicia Alexander
- PGWM Margaret E. Anderson
- PM Norma Brooks
- PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe
- Bro. A. Tehuti Evans
- MWGM Quincy G. Gant
- PM Iceleen Griffin
- PM Elizabeth L. Howard
- PM LaJuan O.G. Hunter
- GS Carolyn D. Joyner
- Bro. James A. Morgan
- PP Kenneth N. Pough
- PGWM Jane R.L. Robison
- PM Catrice r. Vandross
- PAP James L. Vandross
- Sis. Christine Vaughn
- Bro. Milford Al Vaughn
- PGTRu Addie L. Watson
- PGWM Patricia L. Young
- PM Juanita Griffin Zani

The following visitors were in attendance:

- PM R. Denise Better (C-6)
- Sis. Linda B. Cross (C-5)
- WM Yolanda Edwards-Brown (C-5)
- Sis. Gerly Sapphire Harris (C-12)
- PM Asya L. Heatley (C-7)
- Wor. Milton Hopkins
- PM Marion Ethel Howard (C-4)
- Sis. Patricia Ireland (C-5)
- WGCOS Marcus D. James, Sr.
- PM E. Milla Jordan (C-12)
- Sis. Jocelyn Long (C-12)
- Sis. Nataki MacMurray (C-6)
- PM Donna L. Miller (C-4)
- WM Demetrice Parker Phillips (C-2)
- PGWP Albert Pope (C-12)
- Sis. Sharae Sharp (C-6)
- AGM Sheila A. Smith (C-12)

Shortly after the opening, there was an alarm at the door and Most Worshipful Grand Master Quincy G. Gant (C-14), with his core of officers, was admitted. MWGM Gant was greeted at the altar and escorted to the East.

Under the guidance of the very capable Mistress of Ceremonies, PGWM Margaret E. Anderson (C-6), the Inaugural Program commenced. The first half consisted of the invocation by WP Milford Al Vaughn, a welcome by PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe, historical highlights by PGWM Venecia C. Bessellieu, and an inaugural poem by PM LaJuan O.G. Hunter. PGWM Patricia L. Young, along with MWGM Quincy G. Gant, AGM Sheila A. Smith, PGWP Albert Pope and PGWM Bessellieu, presented the “charter” members with a beautiful, frameable Certificate of Membership and the first appointed officers with a Certificate of Appointment.



Above: Presenting certificates to appointed officers and “charter” members of VCBREC were (L-R); PGWM Patricia L. Young (C-1), (under whose leadership VCBREC was authorized), MWGM Quincy G. Gant (C-14), AGM Sheila A. Smith (C-12), PGWM Venecia C. Bessellieu (C-5), and PGWP Albert Pope (C-12).

Appointed Worthy Matron Catrice R. Vandross then gave her Visionary Address, where she shared the highlights that brought us to this inaugural evening, the By-Laws of VCBREC that make this chapter a little different from the other 15 chartered chapters, and finally the goals and objectives of VCBREC for the ensuing year. The main goals for 2020 are to (1) research and produce the next edition of the Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter Highlights, covering the years of 2003 - 2020, inclusively; and (2) develop and present several educational workshops to present to the membership at various times throughout the year. The members of VCBREC are in harmony with the direction she outlined.

For the outstanding work performed by Appointed Worthy Matron Vandross, she received many gifts of appreciation for a job well done. She also presented “research kits” to all officers in attendance. After remarks from the Appointed Worthy Patron Vaughn, PGWP Pope, AGM Smith, and MWGM Gant, visitors were invited to retire to the Brent Dining Room where light refreshments awaited them.

After the guests retired, the Chapter was polled with 20 members present and MWGM Quincy G. Gant served as moderator and installing officer for the first elected officers of VCBREC. The following slate of officers were declared duly elected for FY 2020, and with the assistance of Wor. Marcus D. James, Sr., and Wor. Milton Hopkins, they were installed:

Worthy Matron	PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe (C-4)
Worthy Patron	WP Kenneth Pough (C-14)
Associate Matron	PGWM Margaret E. Anderson (C-6)
Associate Patron	Bro. Milford Al Vaughn (C-5)
Conductress	PM LaJuan O.G. Hunter (C-14)
Associate Conductress	PGWM Patricia L. Young (C-1)
Treasurer	PGWM Venecia C. Bessellieu (C-5)
Secretary	PM Norma J. Brooks (C-11)

The following appointed officers will remain in their stations.

Marshal	Sis. Christine Vaughn (C-5)
Sentinel	PAP James L. Vandross, Sr. (C-5)
Warder	PM J. Felicia Alexander (C-15)

Although VCBREC will hold its meetings quarterly (November, February, May, and September) it has a ritualistic opening in November and a ritualistic closing in September. During the course of the year, members engage in research for the identified initiatives and educational workshops for our membership. The theme for this year is: ***“The Past Will Live, So Let’s Get Busy.”***

With all the business being conducted for this meeting, prayer was offered, the altar was attended, and PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe, newly elected Worthy Matron, called Venecia C. Bessellieu Research and Education Chapter to recess until its next Communication.

NOTE: Since inception, the following have become members of VCBREC: GWM Eunice J. Dingle, PM Marion Ethel Howard, and PGTrus. E. Millá Jordan.



Above Left: Incoming Worthy Matron G. Delores Ellerbe congratulates outgoing Worthy Matron Catrice R. Vandross for her unwavering efforts to start the VCBREC.

Above Right: First elected Worthy Matron, PGWM G. Delores Ellerbe, and first elected Worthy Patron, PP Kenneth N. Pough, pause for photo after being installed.

Elected Officers of VCBREC

*PGWM Margaret E. Anderson
Associate Matron*



*PGWM Margaret E. Anderson
Associate Matron*



*PM LaJuan O.G. Hunter
Conductress*



*PGWM Patricia L. Young
Associate Conductress*



*PM Norma J. Brooks
Secretary*

*PGWM Venecia C. Bessellieu
Treasurer*

Venuea C. Bessellien Research
and Education Chapter Meeting
November 25, 2019

MWGM Quincy G Grant
WGCOS MARCUS D. JAMES SR *Marcus D James*
Wor A. Tehuti Evans
Wor. James A. Morgan
WM Demetrice Parker-Phillips
Dr. M. Leland Edwards-Brown
E. Milla Jordan *E. Milla Jordan*
Dona L M *DONNA L. MILLER*
Sharae Sharp *Sharae Sharp* Electa Chapter #6
Nataki MacMurray *Nataki MacMurray* Electa Chapter #6
Trace S. Kellerbe *Trace S. Kellerbe* G. Delores Ellerbe (C-4)
Patricia Trezant PHA'S
JAMES L. VANDROSS
J. Felicia Alexander, PM (C-15) *J. Felicia Alexander*
Kenneth N. Pough, PP (C14, L24) *Kenneth N. Pough*
Gerly Sapphire HARRIS (C-12) *Gerly Sapphire Harris*
Jocelyn Long (C-12)
Aldie L. Watson #6
LINDA B CROSS *Linda B Cross*
Marion Ethel Howard *Marion Ethel Howard*
LAJUAN O. G. HUNTER (C-14) *LaJuan O. G. Hunter*
James R. Morgan *James R. Morgan*
Nancy Tehuti *Nancy Tehuti*
MILTON HOSKINS *Milton Hoskins*

JANE R. L. ROBISON
Carolyn D. Joyner
Albert Pope
ELIZABETH L. HOWARD
ASYA L. HEATLEY
Denise Betton
Patricia L. Young
Juanita Griffin Zani
MARGARET E. ANDERSON
LaJuan O. G. HASTERS
Christine Vaughn
AL VAUGHN
Norma J. Brooks
Catherine Vandross

Jane R. L. Robison
Carolyn D. Joyner
Albert Pope
~~Elizabeth Howard~~
~~Asya L. Heatley~~
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LaJuan O. G. Hasters
Christine Vaughn
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Norma J. Brooks