

Summary of the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Phyllis Chapter  
March 7-10, 2018  
Herndon, Virginia

By  
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Executive Secretary

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Phyllis Chapter was held at the Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel in Herndon, Virginia. The theme for the conference: “Inspire, Engage, Research”.

Phyllis members from thirteen (13) states gathered in Herndon to share research information through workshop presentations; engage in business and social activities that will preserve the organization’s structure and purpose; and inspire others to learn and teach our Prince Hall history. The Leila A. Pendleton Auxiliary in Washington, D.C. was the host auxiliary, Sister Catrice Vandross, President. The Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter was the host for the conference, the Most Worshipful Grand Master, Phillip Davis, Grand Worthy Matron, Patricia Young, and the conference and local coordinator, Vanessa Bessellieu, PGM rolled out the red carpet for the conference delegation.

Opening Activities: The Phyllis Chapter’s Executive Board met on Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. Willie Catha-Jones, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President led the morning devotional. Flora J. Simon, Phyllis Chapter President, presided over the business agenda items, which included magazine publication, official symbol, the website, facility to house historical records, procedural guidelines, constitutional issues, and others. Officer reports were presented from the Executive and Financial Secretaries, Treasurer, President, and the Conference Coordinator.

On Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, conference attendees of the Phyllis Chapter and Phylaxis Society attended the Annual Joint Memorial Service. A beautiful ceremony of scripture and song was presented to memorialize ten (10) Phyllis Chapter deceased members and five (5) Phylaxis Society deceased members. Phyllis Chapter deceased members are:

- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| *Edna M. Williams (L), Alabama      | *Ora M. Holmes (L), Louisiana         |
| *Evelyn D. Hildreth (L), Arkansas   | *Patricia Simmons (L), North Carolina |
| *Barbara J. Webb, Arkansas          | *Sandra Harris, Mississippi           |
| *Mary C. Harrison, Indiana          | *Brenda J. Carney (PGM), New Mexico   |
| *Augustine T. Fields (L), Louisiana | *Ruth Popnaugh, New Mexico            |

The highlight of the Thursday morning activities was the tour to the National Museum of African American History and Culture. As buses arrived in front of the museum, you could sense the enthusiasm and anticipation of each person as the buses unloaded. Of course many of the Phyllis and Phylaxis researchers gravitated to the history galleries of the era of segregation 1876-1968, and the slavery and freedom era 1400-1877. The tour was truly a rewarding experience for all as the members toured the culture galleries, viewing musical crossroads, visual arts, and cultural expressions; the community galleries, viewing sports and the African American Military experiences; and the explore more level, viewing the African American Media Arts and the family center.

The Thursday evening entertainment was given by the host auxiliary. A dynamic skit presentation in celebration of Women's History Month was presented by the talented ladies of Leila Amos Pendleton Auxiliary, entitled "Who Am I", characterizing ten (10) women in American history in that era's dress and quoting their favorite quotes; women such as Serena Williams, Manie Till Mobley, Emmett Till's mother, Josephine Baker, Barbara Jordan, and Angela Davis to name a few.

Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> was the official opening of the Phyllis Session with the opening ceremony, installation of the new auxiliary, president's address, workshop presentations, and reports. The opening ceremony was conducted by the officers of the Phyllis Chapter, President Simon presiding. The installation of the new auxiliary, L.R. Palmer Berry Auxiliary, New Jersey, County of Essex, Marjorie P. Ellis, President was conducted by Sister Barbara "BJ" Callier, Vice President of Auxiliaries. In the President's address, Sister Simon outlined several short term goals: Establish a benevolent committee, develop a Procedural Manual with guidelines for activities and awards, and restructure the conference agenda to allow time for interaction, committee meetings, relaxation and fellowship.

Executive Board action items:

- a. The Phyllis Chapter joining fee increased to \$60.00 which would include four (4) booklets (Phyllis Chapter Constitution and Bylaws, Opening & Closing Ceremonies, Installation Ceremony and Removing a Deceased Member Ceremony), and subscription to the Phyllis Magazine.
- b. The Phyllis Chapter Life Member fee increased to \$300.00.
- c. Prince Hall School donation increased to \$700.00.
- d. Establish a Benevolent Committee.
- e. Establish a Financial Committee to determine financial needs.
- f. There will be two Phyllis Conference Coordinators – Local and National.
- g. Updated Phyllis Chapter official forms (destroy all old forms)

Workshops: Workshop presentations started on Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> with the following:

- a. ***Yvonne Rhone A Quiet Soul***, presented by Sister Phyllis Outten, MPC of Minor-Perkins Auxiliary. Life reflections of this shining star illustrated Sister Rhone's commitment to life's civic duty, patriotism and volunteerism. Sister Yvonne Rhone was an Honorary Past Grand Matron of Maryland, Myra Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, PHA.
- b. ***Legacy: the First African American Student at Davidson College***, presented by Sister Leslie Caldwell, MPC of Minor-Perkins Auxiliary. Sister Caldwell presented news excerpts from the News and Editorial Voice of the Davidson College Student Body of May 1, 1964. The featured article was entitled – "Two American Negroes Plan to Enroll This Fall, Three Boys Admitted, But Only Two Accept".
- c. ***Biography: Sister Elizabeth Tilley, Past Grand Matron, North Carolina***, presented by Sister Sandra Carson, MPC of Minor-Perkins. Sister Carson outlined Grand Worthy Matron Tilley's great accomplishments during her administration in the Grand Chapter of North Carolina from 1980-1985.
- d. ***Servant Leadership and the Five Heroines of the Eastern Star***, presented by Tikishia C. Smiley, MPC of Minor-Perkins Auxiliary. Sister Smiley presented a detailed presentation on leadership, and that a servant-leader focuses primarily on growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. She correlated the meaning of servant-leader to our five Heroines of the Order, mainly because they were natural leaders. "Adah, because she freely sacrificed her life to save her father's honor; Ruth,

because she willingly left home and friends to dwell with people of God; Esther, because she was prepared to render up her crown, and even life itself, to save her people from destruction; Martha, from her undeviating faith in the power and merits of her Redeemer; Electa, because she preferred to suffer death rather than deny her religious beliefs”.

e. **A Glimpse into the Journey of a Select Group of Past Grand Matrons of the Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, PHA, Jurisdiction of District of Columbia**, presented by Sister Margaret E. Anderson, MPC of Leila Amos Pendleton Auxiliary. Sister Anderson highlighted the achievements of three (3) outstanding Past Grand Worthy Matrons of the Washington, DC Grand Chapter: PGWM Ruth C. Smith, a visionary, preservationist and sustainer; PGWM Jane R.L. Robison, a historian and outreach advocate; and PGWM Betty C.V. Reed, emphasized being charitable, staying connected, and giving recognition for outstanding stewardship of officers.

Friday's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Phyllis Chapter Luncheon Program featured guest speaker, Dr. E. Williams, Esq., Author, Professor, Radio Talk Show Host, Business Woman, Human Rights Activist, Ordained Minister, Journalist and National President/CEO of the National Congress of Black Women. She inspired our hearts as she lifted up African American Women in History, and admonished us to research our history, write about it and teach our youth our history.

Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup> marked the final day of the session. Agenda items included workshop presentations, financial reports, and presentation of workshop certificates. Workshops:

a. ***Past Grand Lecturer Emeritus Laretta M. Harris: The Untold Story***, presented by Sister Venecia C. Bessellieu, MPC of Lelia Amos Pendleton Auxiliary, Sister Bessellieu told the story of Sister Harris' accomplishments. She was appointed in 1949 as Grand Lecturer of Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter, served as the first editor for the Grand Chapter OES Newsletter, and was awarded the title of Past Grand Lecturer Emeritus in recognition of her extensive ritualistic knowledge. The untold story was that Sister Laretta Harris was honored by the Department of Interior, National Park Service in recognition and appreciation for her outstanding contributions, achievements, accomplishments, and for her devoted service for being a great humanitarian.

b. ***OES History: Is it Reflected in the History of African Americans in Your Jurisdiction***, presented by Sister Sibyl Moses, FPC. Sister Moses presented a guidebook to African American Historic Sites which included a selected list of resources at the Library of Congress. Sister Moses continues to encourage the membership to gather personal papers and organizational records of our African American history and store them in historic sites in our various jurisdictions.

c. ***What My Family Should Know: A Guide for Getting Your Affairs in Order***, presenter by Sister Annie Jones, MPC. Sister Jones presented a guide for getting your affairs in order for your family when you die. She included worksheets for personal information, family registry, in case of emergency, business contacts to notify, personal finance information, real estate, employee benefits, retirement information, final wishes, and trusts and power of attorney.

d. Biography *of the Past Grand Worthy Matron Patricia A. Mabry*, presented by LaJan O.G. Hunter, MPC. Sister Hunter presented the life history of Georgiana Thomas Grand Chapter's 106<sup>th</sup> Grand Worthy Matron and the second Grand Worthy Matron to be elected to serve two terms – PGWM Patricia Mabry. Sister Jones traced PGWM Mabry history from 1974 when she was appointed U.S. Flag Bearer to 2003 as Grand Worthy Matron. PGWM Mabry's motto lives on – Do your best, God will do the rest.

The 2018 Phyllis session ended with presentation of certificates to all workshop presenters by Sister Velma Hendricks, FPC, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. Reports from the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Audit Committee, and Budget Committee were given and approved.

The Awards Banquet was held Saturday evening as the culminating activity.

Phyllis Awards were:

**Fellow of the Phyllis:** Sister Marlene Pratt, MPC (Life) of Minor-Perkins Auxiliary was elevated to the position of Fellow (FPC) for her literary and meritorious service to the organization.

**Loyola I. Brown Membership Award:** Harris-McCree Auxiliary, Missouri, under the leadership of Sister Peggy McCree received the award for recruiting the most new members.

**Mozelle A. McKay Recognition Award:** Sister Sibyl Moses, FPC (Life) was recognized for using her professional skills to advance the mission of the Phyllis Chapter.

**Meritorious Service Award:** Sister Florence Shephard, FPC, President of Minor-Perkins Auxiliary was honored for her outstanding service to the Phyllis Chapter.

**Life Membership Certificates** were given to the following:

\*Marian George, Rosa Lunkin and Chrystal Hills of Hattie S. Elie Auxiliary

\*Charletta Williams of Blue Grass Auxiliary

\*Marie Hampton, Cynthia McKeown, Corine White and Naomi Hunter of Barbara Jones Auxiliary

\*Sherry Ann Hithon, LaJuan O.G. Hunter and Gloria Jenkins of Leila Amos Pendleton Auxiliary

\*Francina Miller, Rosa S. Nelson, Brenda Thompson and Sallie Pearson of Minor-Perkins Auxiliary

\*Vickie Lee of Ruby V. Forsha Auxiliary

\*Jacqueline Thigpen of F.R. Carter Auxiliary

Safe travel was given by all and the announcement of the 46<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions of the Phylaxis and Phyllis in Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 6-10, 2019, MCM Elegante Hotel closed the 2018 conference.