Highlights from the NASW Social Work Pioneers® 2010 Luncheon

More than 100 NASW Social Work Pioneers® and their guests attended the 6th annual Pioneers' Event on October 23, 2010. The program was held in Washington, DC at the Cosmos Club through the sponsorship of club member Joan O. Weiss. It was the largest and most representative group that has attended the annual event to date, and the room was filled to capacity.

Bernice Catherine Harper served as Chair of the Pioneer Luncheon Program Planning Committee consisting of 12 NASW Pioneer volunteers. Pioneer steering Committee Co-Chair Betsy Vourlekis served as moderator for the morning program. NASW Foundation Director Robert Arnold brought greetings on behalf of Elizabeth J. Clark, NASW Executive Director and President of the NASW Foundation, who was unable to attend due to an injury. (She is recovering well.) Following the opening remarks, Juan Ramos announced the “Pioneers in Memoriam,” remembering those Pioneers who have died during the past year. Patricia Martin-O’Meally introduced the 24 Pioneers newly elected in 2010, of whom ten attended with friends and family members.

On behalf of Pioneer Fundraising Chair, Jessie P. Smith, Robert Arnold reported on the current status of NASW Legacy and Pioneer funds at the NASW Foundation. The program listed the names of 63 donors to the Legacy and Pioneer programs throughout 2010. Thank you, all!

Bernice Harper introduced the first keynote speaker, Nancy Humphreys, DSW, ACSW, an NASW Past President and Founder and Director of the Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. Dr. Humphreys gave a keynote address entitled, “The American Dream: Is it Obtainable and Sustainable in the Second Decade of the 21st Century?” The second keynote continued in the theme of a clear-eyed look at today’s challenges, while envisioning a path to a more hopeful future. NASW Past President Dorothy Harris introduced the afternoon keynote speaker, Jeanette C. Takamura, PhD, MSW, Dean of the Columbia University School of Social Work.
Dr. Takamura presented on “The Role of Social Work in Helping Individuals Become the Architect of their Futures.” The speakers frankly discussed the challenges facing the social work profession now and in the future, the need for social workers to become more involved in the political arena, and the technological advances with which social workers will have to contend in the day to day application of their social work services.

Before lunch, attendees viewed exhibits developed by Kenneth Carpenter. A panel depicted each of the five years a luncheon has been held, with pictures of attending Pioneers and special remembrances. The annual group photo was taken of all NASW Pioneers present. In addition, group portraits were made of the new 2010 Pioneers, and of the social work students attending the luncheon. Students and faculty from the Howard University School of Social Work and the National Catholic School of Social Service filled two tables each, with students graciously volunteering help throughout the event.

Bernice Harper presented remarks remembering Ruth Irelan Knee, co-founder of the NASW Social Work Pioneers, who died in October 2008. The NASW Foundation presented an award to Ken Carpenter in gratitude for his volunteer support for the NASW Legacy and Pioneer Programs, especially for his tireless efforts to maintain Pioneer biographies and document Pioneer contributions.

NEW PIONEERS
NOV 2009 – OCT 2010

Gemma Beckley
Katharine Briar-Lawson
Deanna Lott Burrell
✓ Robert Connolly
Sylvia Firestone (deceased)
Mose Firestone
M. Robert Gomberg (deceased)
✓ Ruby Morton Gourdine
Mary Hannick
✓ Ella Harris
Harry Lloyd Hopkins (deceased)
Ann Elise Kasteler Hutchings
✓ Sr. Mary Vincentia Joseph
Charles Levy (deceased)
✓ Rufus Lynch
✓ Robert A. Mays
Raymond Peacock
✓ William Pollard
Harry Specht (deceased)
Patricia Volland
✓ Sue Ward
Darrell Wheeler
✓ Paul Widem
✓ James Zabora
✓ Attended the event.
Following an elegant luncheon featuring the Cosmos Club’s famed popovers, there were special presentations honoring Mark G. Battle. Jesse J. Harris served as moderator for these remarks and presentations. Mark Battle was instrumental along with Ruth Knee in the founding of the NASW Social Work Pioneer® program in the early 1990’s. He served as Co-Chair with Ruth Knee from 1997 until her death in 2008, and then continued as Co-Chair with Betsy Vourlekis. In Fall 2010, Mark Battle decided to step down as Co-Chair. The Pioneer Luncheon Program Planning Committee recommended that Mr. Battle be honored during the 2010 luncheon. Robert Cohen, a long-time friend and NASW colleague, presented a personal retrospective of his relationship with Mark. Several gifts were presented, including mementos from Jack Hansan, Bernice Harper, and Cudore Snell, a toast by Richard English, and a book of clippings and pictures from Mark’s term as NASW Executive Director, his contributions as Pioneer Steering Committee Co-Chair, and his years of retirement from NASW. Barbara Glaser offered a tribute to Evelyn Kays-Battle, and presented Evelyn with a poem by Bernice Harper.

Special thanks to volunteer photographer and videographer Patricia McDougall.
Mark Battle thanked the attendees for their words and gifts, and offered remarks that he called a Farewell Address. Jesse Harris, who was elected to serve as Co-Chair when Mark stepped down, provided the closing remarks for the event.

Below, Tommy Wells and Richard English.


TRIBUTE GIFTS to LEGACY AND PIONEER PROGRAM, Nov 2009 – Oct 2010

Sally Alexander, in memory of Chauncey A. Alexander
Gemma Beckley, in memory of Lester B. Granger
Samira Beckwith, in memory of Booker Woods
Susan Blumenfield, in honor of Helen Rehr
James Callcutt, in honor of Fernando G. Torgerson
Kenneth & Margery Carpenter, in honor of Bernice Harper and in memory of Booker Woods
Lois A. Calhoun, in honor of Ruby Gourdine
Robert & Ruth Cohen, in memory of Jack Sternbach
Golda Edinburg, in memory of Ruth I. Knee & Booker Woods
Eleanor Friedenberg, in memory of Ruth I. Knee
Jeanne Gill, in honor of Nancy Humphreys
Robert Graziano, in honor of Margaret C. Shriver
Joyce Higashi, in memory of Ruth Knee
Virginia Karl, in memory of Delwin M. Anderson
Bernard Nash, in honor of Kenneth & Margery Carpenter
Linda Nee, in memory of Emily Lay
Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, in honor of Golda Edinburg
Nancy Perlman, in honor of Mark G. Battle
William and Merriette Pollard in honor of James Dumpson
Catharine L. Ralph, in memory of Alicia L. Smalley
Bernece Simon, in honor of Rhoda Sarnat
Betsy S. Vourlekis, in memory of Ruth Knee and in honor of Mark G. Battle
Sue Ward, in honor of William Bechill
Julia Watkins, in honor of Katherine Kendall & Mark Battle
Joan O. Weiss, in memory of Ruth I. Knee
Josephine Yelder, in honor of Bernice C. Harper and in memory of Booker Woods
Joan L. Zlotnik, in honor of Mark Battle

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s Don Schumacher, left, Galen Miller and John Mastrojohn, right, with Hal Lipton and Bernice Harper, center.