



LIVING LEGENDS of ALEXANDRIASM

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HONORING
INDIVIDUALS WHO
HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY
IMPACTED THE
QUALITY OF LIFE IN
ALEXANDRIA.



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LIVING LEGENDS OF ALEXANDRIA CATALOG

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MISSION STATEMENT: The Mission of Living Legends of Alexandria is to identify, honor and chronicle the lives of individuals who have contributed to the community in an exemplary and lasting way that has significantly impacted the quality of life in Alexandria and serves as an inspiration to others.

NOMINATE ALEXANDRIA'S NEXT LEGEND

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS GIVEN VISION, ENERGY AND COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA?

Living Legends of Alexandria invites the public to submit nominations for consideration as Living Legends of 2019.

Living Legends of Alexandria is a nonprofit documentary project to identify, honor and chronicle those making history in the City of Alexandria.

INVITATION TO NOMINATE A LEGEND

Join the history makers!

Complete a nomination form and mail it to:

Living Legends of Alexandria

PO Box 918

Alexandria, VA 22313

or submit online at AlexandriaLegends.org

THANK YOU!



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A LEGACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

HISTORY/LEGACY

Living Legends of Alexandria is an ongoing documentary project to identify, honor and chronicle the lives of people making history in Alexandria.

The idea was conceived in 2006 by artist-photographer Nina Tisara and initiated with support by the Rotary Club of Alexandria and the Alexandria Gazette Packet.

“Living Legends began when, within a two-week time in the fall of 2006, the City and the Gazette Packet came to the Tisara Photography studio asking for photos of people who had died to include with stories they were writing. When the photos weren’t there, I thought why not photograph people while they’re still alive. From there it was a natural step to capture their stories at the same time and create an ongoing historical record. Today the project also inspires people of all ages to creative action in the community.”

To date, Living Legends has told the stories of 221 citizens and how they made a difference in our community. The stories and photographs—the work of area journalists, writers and photographers—form an artistic product of historic value to our City. In 2015 the gift of the Living Legend portraits was accepted by the Office of Historic Alexandria to become part of its permanent collection. Approximately 100

framed prints of Alexandria’s Legends from the project’s beginning in 2007 have been donated to The Lyceum, Alexandria’s history museum, and additional prints will be added annually.

Lance Mallamo, then-director of the Office of Historic Alexandria, in a letter to the Alexandria Commission for the Arts, wrote, “Living Legends is doing the research and recording the history of today’s Alexandria. But as important as that is, Living Legends is also an art project. The individual photographs are of extremely high quality. Different from standard head-and-shoulder portraits, these images are akin to master portrait paintings that tell a story. The settings artfully incorporate something about the subject’s passion concerning Alexandria.” As a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, Living Legends of Alexandria is guided in fulfillment of its historical and artistic mission by a community Board of Directors, assisted by partners from business, education, and the media, and by volunteers from the community.

Living Legends is now translating the founder-director’s years of energy and devotion into new structures of leadership and programs of service. Living Legends continues to honor the legacy and encourage individuals of all ages to make a difference in Alexandria.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



There's a saying you've probably heard about thinking globally and acting locally. Our 2018 inductees have certainly made huge impacts locally. They have selflessly worked hard, taken on leadership roles and created new programs and opportunities for others. I have no doubt that what they have done here in Alexandria will have impact beyond our borders.

Living Legends of Alexandria believes that improving the quality of life in our city is important and that we should celebrate and honor those who have made those improvements to the quality of life in Alexandria. By selecting individuals who are exemplary in their service and leadership we can document their lives from their own perspectives for the historical record. We can share these positive stories in the world we live in, right here, at home to create a better world.

Congratulations to our 2018 Legends! Your work is inspirational now and into the future.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Ayers', written over a light-colored background.



Jennifer Ayers
President, Living Legends

THANK YOU!

The Board of Directors of Living Legends of Alexandria would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals, organizations and businesses for their outstanding support for all that we do. We are grateful for your support and leadership.

Alan Carniol

Founding Media Partner: the Alexandria Gazette Packet

Living Legends of Alexandria's Founder, Nina Tisara

Alexandria Cupcake

Alexandria Renew Enterprises, Lisa Van Riper

Alexandria Small Business Development Center

American Legion Post 24 – Mike Lane

Julie Carey

Campagna Center

Capitol Post

Ben Fiore-Walker – Alexandria Town Crier

Black History Museum of Alexandria

Enthuse Creative – Reggie Holmes

Frank Felker

Jennifer Gniady

George Washington Middle School Orchestra

Linda Hafer

Home Grown Restaurant Group – Mike Anderson
and Bill Blackburn

Joyous Events

TC Williams High School Video and Television
Students and Faculty, Ben Lyons and Vilma Zefren

Mayor Allison Silberberg and City Council

Norther Virginia Community College
– Jimmie McLellan and Marcus Henderson

NOVA Studio, Graphic Design Program

NOVA Alexandria Campus Students & Faculty

Lisa Hill, Assistant Dean, Graphic Design; Angela Terr
Assistant Professor, Graphic Design;

Student Designers: Julia Goldberg, Sean Greenfield,

Bethany Keener, Greg Malouff ,Eric Mercado,
Kelsey Mercuro, Shannon Murphy, Sean Zac Redden,

Christine Weeks

Office of Historic Alexandria

Pure Perfection Catering

John Porter

Joe Shumard

Picture This Video - Sharon K. Sobel

Pam St. Clair

TC Williams Student Volunteers

Zebra Press

*Anyone, anywhere, can make a
positive difference.*

Mark Sanborn

*Congratulations to the
2018 Living Legends!*

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LEGENDS ROSTER BY YEAR

2007-08 LEGENDS

David Cleary
Ferdinand Day*
Carolyn Griffin
William B. Hurd*
Vola Lawson*
David B. H. Martin
Stephen Rideout
Debra Roepke
Gladys Seisler*
Patsy Ticer*
Marian Van Landingham
Joe Youcha

2008-09 LEGENDS

Engin Artemel
Donna* and Melvin Bergheim*
Bernard M. Fagelson*
Thomas "TJ" Fannon*
Lillie Finklea and Louise Massoud
Carlton A. Funn, Sr.*
Arlene Hewitt
George Pera
Jane Ring
Charlene Schiff*
Eula* and A. Melvin Miller*
Elbert Ransom, Jr.

2010 LEGENDS

Chet Avery
Rosalind Bovey
V. Rodger Digilio
Nelson A. Greene, Sr.*
T. Michael Miller*
Alice Merrill and Linda Odell
John Porter
Joan and John Renner
David Speck
Pat Troy
Lois Walker*
Betty Wright*

2011 LEGENDS

Mollie Abraham
Lynnwood Campbell
William E. Clayton
H. Stewart Dunn*
Timothy S. Elliott*
Jon Liss
Peter Lunt
Donald Ferdinand Mela*
Fran and Gant Redmon
Carlyle C. Ring, Jr.
Jack Taylor
Joseph Viar

2012 LEGENDS

Bob Calhoun
Al Grande*
Harry "Bud" Hart
Wendy McGann
John William "Bill" Kehoe
Allen Lomax
Jimmie McClellan
Pat Miller
Mike Oliver
Lillian Stanton Patterson
Joseph S. Shumard
The Steuerle Family
Dorothy Turner* and Gwen
Menefee-Smith

2013 LEGENDS

Willie F. Bailey, Sr.
Kathryn A. Brown and Marlin G. Lord
Rosa Byrd
Elizabeth C. Chimento and
Poul Martin Hertel
Joe Guiffre
Thomas Young "Jay" Johnson, Jr.
David M. Martin
Richard E. Merritt
Joann E. Miller
Lonnie C. Rich
William "Bill" Rivers
Lewis A. Stearman

2014 LEGENDS

Mike Anderson
Char McCargo Bah
Rose Enevoldsen Berler
Lee Fifer
Charles Eugene "Tony" Gee
Richard "Rick" Allyn Glassco
Ramona K. Hatten
Gregory "Gregg" L. Murphy
Tricia Rodgers
Shirley N. Tyler*
Converse "Connie" West
Donnan "Donnie" Chancellor
Wintermute

2015 LEGENDS

Kathleen Baker
Marga Fripp
Alice P. Morgan
Fred Parker
Joyce Rawlings
Gayle Reuter
Nina Tisara

2016 LEGENDS

Elizabeth "Betsy" Anderson
Janet Barnett
Herman Boone
Diane Charles
Ruth and Bill Cleveland
Wanda S. Dowell
H. Warden Foley and William
McNamara*
Lorraine Friedman
Ulysses James
Kim Allen Kluge
Steve Nearman
Jodie Smolik

2017 LEGENDS

Kerry Donley
Bill Euille
Carter Flemming
Sandy Modell
Gwen Mullen
Ethel Underwood
Jen Walker
Mary Anne Weber

* – DECEASED

IN MEMORIAM

LEGENDS WE LOST IN 2017 AND 2018

TIMOTHY S. ELLIOT (1938-2017) 2011 LEGEND. Former School board chair and Champion for the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria which gives high school students a chance at college. Worked for construction of a City boating facility to benefit student athletes and local adult rowers.

PATRICIA S. TICER (1935-2017) 2007 LEGEND. First woman to serve as Mayor of Alexandria and a four-term Virginia State Senator. Ticer was recognized for her commitment to improving the health, education and well-being of children and their families.

AL GRANDE (1936-2017) 2012 LEGEND. His ASAP Printing and Mailing store in Del Ray and work for the Del Ray Business Association helped transform Mount Vernon Avenue into a comfortable place for businesses to open and families to visit.

SHIRLEY TYLER (1929-2018) 2014 LEGEND. Her efforts helped bring about the Four Mile Run Flood Control Project by the US Army Corp of Engineers. Tyler was also instrumental in creating racial harmony during the desegregation and redistricting of Alexandria City Public Schools.

The Office of Historic Alexandria

is committed to documenting and preserving the history of our community and is pleased to support the work of the Living Legends of Alexandria program.

We are delighted to continue the partnership with Living Legends to ensure that the photographs and stories of annually honored individuals are included within the collections of the Office of Historic Alexandria to become a permanent part of the city's heritage.



Office of Historic Alexandria

www.HistoricAlexandria.org



**Congratulations from
Fork Union Military Academy
to Ms. Marion Moon**

**on being selected as a Living Legend of Alexandria!
You are already a Living Legend for the many
young men you've helped support and mentor.**



Marion Moon
Living Legend of Alexandria, 2018
Photo Credit: Steven Halpersen Tiara Photography

We celebrate you, Marion Moon

Thank you for your dedication

Your commitment to helping the youth of Alexandria is an inspiration to us all.



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LEGENDS IN ACTION

CITY HALL LEGENDS PHOTO HANGING CEREMONY



PHOTOS BY TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY AND PETER BALDWIN

FAMILY LEGENDS



PHOTOS BY TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY

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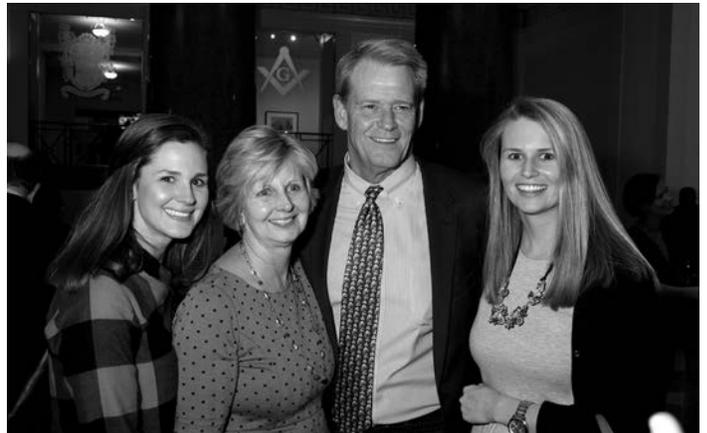
PHOTOS BY TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY



MEET THE LEGENDS 2017



PHOTOS BY TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY





In memory of

Lois L. Walker
2010 Living Legend

from Boyd Walker
and Donna Walker James

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2018 LEGENDS PROFILES

SHERRY WILSON BROWN

ANN & RICK DORMAN

JASON A. ELLIS

CHARLES EURIPIDES

FLORENCE M. KING

GWENDOLYN HUBBARD LEWIS

MARION MOON

LORI MORRIS





Congratulations Sherry Wilson Brown on being recognized as a 2018 Living Legend of Alexandria!

Greetings from your friends and admirers!

“At MetroStage, I appreciated your brilliant box office presence, welcoming all of our patrons. I especially remember you coordinating the bus trip to NYC leaving from the parking lot on Duke St to see Lynn Redgrave and Robert Goulet in Moon over Buffalo. You even prepared the box lunches for everyone!” - Carolyn Griffin

“Always cheerful, efficient, and very smart!” - Marian Van Landingham

“While President of the Arts Forum, you got all the members to appear before City Council dressed in Art – this was the biggest impact ever made on City Council by the Arts -- my sincere thanks!” - Pat Miller

“You are both a great teacher and a hard act to follow at Agenda:Alexandria and the Ladies Annual Sherry Party! Mostly I appreciate your phenomenal memory, multiple Christmas trees, and the way you always ask after everyone’s children and pets.” - Donna Walker James

“I enjoyed working with you at Agenda:Alexandria.” - Russ Bailey

“Sherry Brown is a most dangerous person. She knows everybody and forgets nothing.” - Bill and Teddye Clayton

“Your duties as Executive Director of Agenda:Alexandria were officially part time, but your actual contribution made that description laughably inadequate. In truth, you are probably more responsible than any other person in Alexandria for advancing the goal of reasoned and civil discourse on the important issues facing our City. Your dedication to that goal and to the City has exemplified the highest standard of citizen service.” - Mike Hobbs

“Congratulations for your award and thank you for your service to the community.” - Bruce Johnson and Libby Eife-Johnson

“Sherry - You were an Alexandria legend years before you were nominated. Thank you for your outstanding friendship, guidance and help during my time on the Agenda:Alexandria Board.” - Connie West

“Sherry Brown is a gifted spokesperson who provided a voice for the arts when it was needed. She is also a dear friend of the family. The Living Legends of Alexandria recognition is well deserved. Congratulations Sherry!!” - David, Cheryl Anne and Alexis FuBao Colton

“We are so blessed to know you – and to have had you at the helm of Agenda:Alexandria! (The Anglophilia has been an added and delightful bonus!)” - Hugh and Barbara Barton

“You are always capable, caring and connected!” - Jean Kelleher

“You have always been so kind to Stuart, especially when he set up the computer and printer we donated to Agenda:Alexandria in your apartment. Thanks for writing such a nice recommendation letter for him.” - Bob, Rosalind and Stuart Bovey

“Congratulations from the Sherry Party Ladies.” - Lucy Thomson

“Congratulations, Sherry! Our community is a better place because of your many contributions.”

- Harlene and Bill Clayton

SHERRY WILSON BROWN

By Jordan Wright



Photo by Tisara Photography

When Sherry Wilson Brown moved to Alexandria in 1968, she saw a lot of opportunities to get involved in her new community. The Georgia native dreamed of living in an All-American city. Alexandria seemed like the right fit for her aspirations. At her first Scottish Walk parade, she set out to meet local leaders. By the following year she had met most of them. Inspired by her mother's volunteering, Brown saw she too could make a difference. Jumping in with both feet, she started teaching Sunday School at the Presbyterian Meeting House and got involved with the youth program. Soon after, she

found herself volunteering in the arts program at Jefferson-Houston School, which became an arts focus school in the 1990s and where her mother was a volunteer teacher.

Brown found her niche as Chair of the Alexandria Arts Forum, serving from 1999-2009, as well as Vice-chair of the Alexandria Performing Arts Association and member of the Public Arts Committee, assisting in its steady growth. Now known as the Alexandria Arts Forum, this organization is the cornerstone of the Alexandria arts scene.

According to Cheryl Anne Colton, Regional Program Director, CPRP,

CPP, Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Office of the Arts, "Ms. Brown often testified at City Council on the importance of the arts, increased funding for the arts, the need for funding of public art in the City and the need for increased visibility of the arts within City government structure. She rallied the arts community, businesses and civic groups to also speak on behalf of the arts at Council meetings. Sherry Brown is a gifted spokesperson who provided a voice for the arts when it was needed."

Founded in 1998, Agenda: Alexandria is proud to call itself a non-partisan, non-profit organization. With wide ranging dinner programs on local topics and the motto "Taking a look at issues without taking sides," this informative community group is open to all. Brown served as Executive Director of Agenda: Alexandria for fifteen years from 2002-2017.

Marlin Lord and Kathryn Brown say, "One would say that her role in, and providing the glue that kept together Agenda: Alexandria from its inception, has been legendary." Agenda: Alexandria Chair, Bob Wood, says of Brown, "We offer our highest respect and heartfelt thanks to Sherry Brown as she leaves the Executive Director position. She has been so essential to Agenda: Alexandria's success for so long. She moves to a lifetime emeritus member status of Agenda with our heartfelt thanks."

Throughout the many years Brown was involved in donating her time and talents, she was also working full time as Director of Personnel of the U. S. Customs Service and part time as President of the Board of the 1600 Prince Street Unit Owners' Association.

When the city was planning the concourse beneath Duke Street as an underground pedestrian tunnel connecting Duke Street with the King Street Metro, Brown, as a member of the ad hoc King Street Metro Task Force and PTO – Carlyle Livability Task Forces during the period from 1999-2005, envisioned its vast walls as a place both for local artists to introduce visitors and residents to their work and to inform Metro riders of the city's upcoming arts events. She also was instrumental in convincing the incoming Whole Foods to commission a local artist to design and install the murals on their Duke Street side exterior. During this same time Brown chaired the 2004 Alexandria Arts Festival.

Brown's keen interest in advocating for the performing arts brought her to MetroStage, the city's Helen Hayes Award-winning theater. While attending a performance, she noted the theater manager had run out of change. A friend volunteered her to help out and she soon found herself involved in the usher program, eventually becoming the volunteer Director for Management and Resources for 11 years.

According to Carolyn Griffin, Producing Artistic Director of MetroStage, "Sherry Brown was an invaluable part of MetroStage for 10 years. She was the gracious presence at the box office greeting

every patron as a friend. In addition, she helped in the administrative tasks in the office, taking phone calls and reservations, creating an administrative manual of SOPs, and any duty that needed doing! She has always been an arts advocate and always a believer in professional theatre in Alexandria." In 1991, she was chosen the theatre's "Volunteer of the Year" in recognition of her tireless energy.

Continuing her legacy of total immersion volunteering, Brown served a three-year term on the Board of Living Legends of Alexandria in the role of Corresponding Secretary from 2011 through 2013, writing personalized letters to each donor. She served an important role in organizing the registration process for the 2011 and 2012 Meet the Legends receptions including designing and running pre-event orientations for the volunteers. With her impressive writing skill, she is also the published author of numerous articles about individuals recognized as Living Legends.

Along the same lines, she has enjoyed spinning tales about the English countryside, penning a children's cookbook of recipes from the British Isles and writing fanciful stories featuring her very own godchildren.

For over a decade, she has been instrumental in the implementation and logistics of the Ladies' Annual Sherry Party. Harlene Clayton says, "She certainly has been a terrific help keeping records for the Ladies' Annual Sherry Party. Back in the day when I became a co-host with Lois VanValkenburgh, Bev Steele and Beverly Beidler, no records

were kept. Super-duper Sherry decided to organize us by printing out labels, doing the mailings and presiding at the registration table at this no-cost, bi-partisan, annual event that brings together Alexandria's leading women to influence local policies."

In 2001 on the 20th anniversary of the Commission for Women with Del Pepper and Lois Walker presenting, Brown received the city's prestigious Cultural Affairs Award for advocating for the arts in Alexandria. The committee described Brown's services this way, "She has led the Alexandria Arts Forum, a coalition of artists, arts administrators and patrons to create an ongoing dialogue with City civic, education and business leaders about the multi-faceted role of the arts in our community. During her many years with the Alexandria Arts Forum, she has inspired many collaborative efforts including her creative bus tour of Alexandria's public art called, Site to Sight."

In her role as an innovator and arts advocate Brown would like to see more young people become involved in the arts community. She envisions high school students participating in usher programs where they could watch a program and later bring a friend to see it for free, thus expanding the theater's future audience. Excited by the changes she has seen over the decades – the Old Town Trolley, the Ramsay House Visitors Center and the expansion of the Farmers Market – she holds out hope the city will increase its nonprofit arts funding budget, stagnant for the past three decades.

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ANN AND RICK DORMAN

By William Kehoe and Joseph Shumard



Photo by Tisara Photography

In 1983 Alexandria became home to Ann and Rick Dorman. At that time they were both working for large trade associations in Washington, DC and had expertise as organization managers and planners. But by 2000 they were ready for new challenges: Rick started a nonprofit management consulting firm and Ann started her own events planning company. Too, they wanted to be more involved in the Alexandria community so they began to search for a local project where they could make a contribution.

At the same time, the City of Alexandria was looking for a way to keep the floundering First Night

Alexandria program afloat. This New Year's Eve program had gone on for five years and was part of a nationwide program of alcohol-free celebrations. The concept was started in 1976 and reached a high of over 250 communities participating across the country. But the program in Alexandria was very close to ending because it could not maintain financial viability.

After being dark in 2000, the Dormans agreed to manage this event beginning in 2001, and they have been doing it ever since—16 years. They devised a unique structure for the organization: a public/private partnership. This provides for funding support not only from the City of Alexandria but

also from the business entities that benefit from the enterprise as well as the community at large.

First Night Alexandria has succeeded beyond the expectations of most doubters. In the beginning, attendance was 5,000 at 15 venues featuring 100 performers. In recent years, attendance has grown and is consistently over 10,000. In 2016 there were 29 venues with 163 performers. The Dormans are responsible for hiring performers, arranging venue hosts, marketing, developing corporate sponsors, and coordinating with city agencies and law enforcement to make the event safe and enjoyable.

It established itself in the Washington Region as a very special event that is not to be missed. The city's marketing arm, Visit Alexandria, hails it as a signature event for the city. More folks attend First Night Alexandria than any other performing arts event in the city.

The venues range from store fronts and churches to corporate conference rooms and include a variety of activities to entice singles, families, visitors, date-night revelers and a host of other fun seekers to a night of celebration. These include jazz bands, rock & roll, blues, rockabilly, magicians, dramatic acting and more, all of whom perform for audiences ranging from a dozen to hundreds. The acts are repeated 2-3 times to allow the rotation of audiences from venue to venue. In addition to the evening performances, several daytime

activities have been implemented including a very popular Fun Hunt game, book readings, and activities for young children. All of this is orchestrated by the Dormans in a schedule that takes months to develop.

The success of this enterprise has been such that excess proceeds have made it possible for First Night Alexandria to make donations to the music programs at Hammond, George Washington and T.C. Williams schools. The Battle of Local Stars has provided exposure and support for talented youth. Additionally, donations have been made to local scout troops who provide manpower during the day.

While the Dormans are well known for their efforts with First Night Alexandria they are also involved

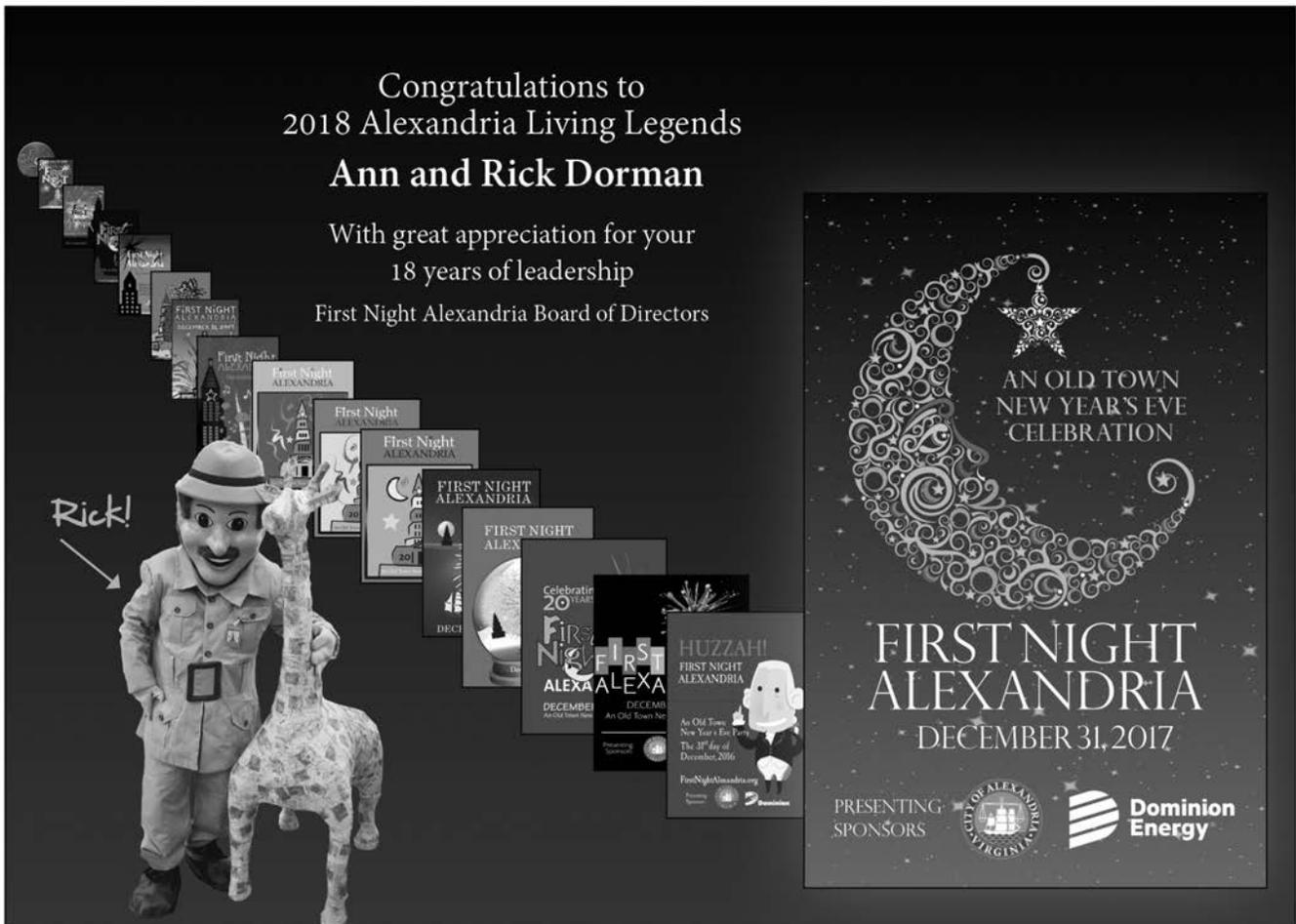
in many other Alexandria activities. Most recently, Ann was the fundraising chair for the Alexandria Police Department's Fallen Officers Memorial, now on display outside Police headquarters. Ann serves on the boards of the Alexandria Police Foundation, Old Town Business & Professional Association and is an ex-officio representative to the Visit Alexandria Board. Ann is a graduate of Leadership Alexandria and both are graduates of the Alexandria Citizens Police Academy.

Rick was a founding member of Leadership Alexandria as well as its second chair and the first program committee chair that created its engaging and memorable program. It developed relationships throughout the city that still produce collaborations today. Rick chaired the National Harbor Collaborative to help position

Alexandria to take advantage of the development soon to appear across the Potomac River. As a result of these activities we have the King Street Trolley, many City dock improvements such as lighting, directional signs and the historical wall painting to name just a few.

Rick has been active in Alexandria as the Chair of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, two-year chair of ACPS' Budget Advisory committee and represents his neighbors on the TC Williams Community Advisory committee.

The impact of Ann and Rick Dorman on life in Alexandria should probably be measured in truckloads. Their generosity and service are almost overwhelming... and legendary.



JASON A. ELLIS

By Shirley Ruhe



Photo by Tisara Photography

Act 2 Scene 1, shortly after the red curtains open, the spotlight shines on three white-clad women dancing in front of a church choir. It is opening night of “Not My Baby” at the Richard Kauffman Auditorium in March 2017.

Jason Ellis, creator of the play, says the theme is adoption. On the right hand side of the stage is the wall of the house where a Caucasian woman adopted two Black children. One of the girls is acting out because she resents that her parents had abandoned her. Despite the efforts of her adoptive mother, she couldn't connect with a Caucasian mother. Another daughter really wanted

to connect with her birth mother. “It’s about what it means to be a mother—is it birth or the mother who raised you.” Behind the brick wall on the other side of the stage is a couple who couldn’t have kids. In the end they surprisingly find they know each other.

This play, like his others, had its seed in someone he knew. “Each show has a component that bridges to another show. That’s my nugget.” He says this adoption idea was mentioned in “U Street,” his play about homelessness. It poses the question of homelessness in the greatness of America with all of its wealth and resources. “How do we look at a country as being

great when this homelessness exists?”

Although most of the plays are set in Alexandria and focus on people who live there, “U Street” is set in DC because it is a socio-political conversation with elements of immigration and race relations. Ellis says he also works hard at recruiting talent from across the bridge. It’s good for Alexandria to get people here who don’t normally come here.” He says he also makes sure he has kids he works with in the cast. “But I tell them they have to audition like everyone else.”

“Not My Baby” was Ellis’ sixth play in Alexandria and his first under his nonprofit, Momentum Collective Inc., which he founded in order to use the arts to educate, enrich and empower the lives of low-income youth. “I produce one play a year that I write, direct, and choreograph, set design, you name it.” His underlying purpose is “to showcase social themes that you don’t usually see in the theatre.”

His first play was “The Berg Diaries” based on stories of people living in public housing. Its purpose was to break the stereotypes of people who live in public housing as having no drive and as being content to live off public assistance. “Some are in college; some are in healthy families.” He says they have the same problems of substance abuse or domestic violence that you would find anywhere. But he explains a lot of people can’t

afford to live in Alexandria and need some assistance. He took the theme from 15 interviews of Alexandrians and integrated them into characters to make the actual people anonymous.

Currently Ellis is the program manager who oversees the programs for youth and families at the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA.) The funds raised from the production of the plays are used to fund the after-school programs, summer programs and workshops for kids in public housing projects. "In any given year we touch well over 200 kids."

He says he had an epiphany in 2009 about not wanting just to entertain but to use his God-given talents with some vision to support a positive impact on the lives of youth. "I saw the need." The idea for Momentum began with a conversation with the just retired CEO of ARHA. "We had programs for residents on substance abuse, parenting but they were poorly attended and no one paid attention." I went to the CEO and said I have an arts background. Why not say the same thing on stage? They will come to that." Do they come? "Absolutely." They mostly fill the 400-seat theatre. "We have built up a diverse audience."

It is rewarding to see the changes. He hears, "That sounds familiar" as they see their own stories reflected in the theme of the play. "It's like a mirror placed in front of them. It provokes a change in their mindset." He remembers a mother who had seen "U Street." Her daughter had run away from home and she never knew why. She saw the situation played out on stage and understood for the first time. "Now she is working hard to mend her relationship with her daughter. It happens pretty often."

He says these plays are truly a community project. The stories are from local Alexandrians. The cast are lawyers, doctors, IT specialists with day jobs "who believe in the work I am doing with the kids in the City." The plays are held in the Richard Kauffman Auditorium donated by Parks and Recreation; he partners with community organizations. Many in the casts are from the City of Alexandria and the modernization staff of ARHA builds the sets.

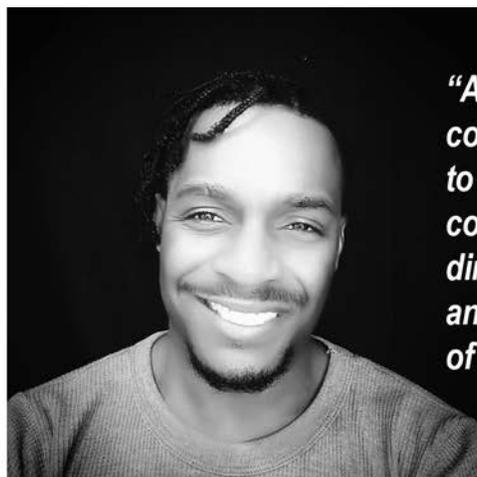
Ellis has been performing since he was two-years-old. "My parents just had me out there because I loved to be on stage." Now he writes all of his lyrics, which are studio produced. "We try to have them as close to professional grade as

possible." "Not My Baby" features 10 original songs. Ellis started dancing at 10 and joined a Dance Company at 14. He choreographs his own productions and next year will do the choreography for "South Pacific" for St. Mark's in the District. He adds, "I perform in 3-4 plays a year."

Ellis explains the point of the plays moves beyond entertainment. Although his musicals have singing and dancing, "they aren't like 'Cats' or 'Fiddler on the Roof.' They are very heavy on script, having a lot of dialogue." He says entertainment is the first step to capture the audience but he wants to move beyond that to enrich people's lives and empower them. He wants them to think about the next action step so they can improve their lives.

"I don't tell them how to make homelessness go away or what to do about substance abuse but I put alternatives in front of them. I encourage people to see themselves and others through the lens of humanity."

**Congratulations
to Jason Ellis,
the Momentum
Collective, Inc and
all the actors in the
U Street Musical!**



"A renaissance man, the consummate artist ... (who) seeks to "edutain" the audience while covering subject matters that directly affect the underserved and underrepresented members of society."

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We salute with honor
and respect,
our Brother-in-Arms,
Charles Euripides.



The Veterans of
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**Congratulations
Charlie Euripides on
your selection as a
Living Legend of
Alexandria.**



CHARLIE EURIPIDES

By Jeanne Theismann



Photo by Tisara Photography

As a young boy growing up in Cyprus, Charlie Euripides dreamed of one day coming to America. He worked diligently in school, studying Latin, French and English along with mathematics and history. While still a teenager, he left his family behind and immigrated to the U.S. to begin a new life.

“It was my lifetime ambition to come to the United States,” said Euripides, who arrived in 1951. “I had been told the schools here were good so I knew whatever future I had would be here.”

“Here” was Alexandria, where Euripides joined an uncle who owned a small restaurant at the corner of

King and Royal streets. Euripides put in long hours at the restaurant while taking citizenship classes at the former George Washington High School in Del Ray and studying engineering at George Washington University in D.C.

In 1954, with his adopted country in the midst of the Korean War, Euripides enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He served two years aboard the Battleship New Jersey in the Gunnery Division followed by two years with the 6th Fleet aboard the Flagship Salem. Euripides was part of the special services unit where he translated messages from the Greek Coast Guard, Navy and Air Force. He translated everything from high level messages from the

Greek Government to notifications about World War II mines still floating in the Mediterranean.

“The Russians followed us everywhere,” Euripides said of his time in the Mediterranean. “They had camouflaged fishing boats with antennas disguised as clotheslines but that never really fooled anyone.”

Following his military service, Euripides returned to Alexandria where he had a decision to make.

“I wanted to return to school but my uncle was getting older and could no longer work full time,”

Euripides recalled. “While I was in the service he had begun to think about selling the restaurant. It was a difficult choice but in the end I decided to stay and help my uncle.”

Known at the time as The Royal Café, Euripides eventually took over the restaurant, which was popular with local politicians, law enforcement personnel and judges.

“We always had a free cup of coffee or cold drink waiting for the officers before they began their shifts,” Euripides said.

In 1964, as Urban Renewal swept the city, Euripides was forced to vacate the location where the restaurant had stood since 1904.

“The city would not even let us take the restaurant equipment out of the building before bulldozing it,” Euripides sadly recalled. “I still remember seeing my uncle standing across the street with tears streaming down his face as he watched the building come down.”

According to the restaurant's website, Euripides and his uncle were "undaunted by the uncompensated taking of their prime location" and in 1965 moved "The Royal" to its present location on North St. Asaph Street. Euripides, by now married and raising a family, was determined that the new Royal Restaurant would be a success.

"This was our only income," Euripides said. "I couldn't let my uncle or my employees down."

Some of those employees included young immigrants Euripides was introduced to through St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church.

As an immigrant himself, Euripides understood the difficulties faced by young immigrants today. He and his wife Barbara prior to her death in 2001 provided jobs and mentoring to immigrants looking to become American citizens. In that regard, Euripides helped sponsor many T.C. Williams High School students in their quest for American citizenship.

"Barbara and I wanted to help these young people as best we could," Euripides recalled. "I provided them with jobs, tutored them on the basics of government and sponsored them for citizenship."

At the same time, Euripides had become involved with the American Legion Post 24 in Old Town. He first joined the Legion in 1958 and saw how some World War I and WWII veterans were struggling to survive.

"I remember one past Legion Commander who could not afford to get a prescription filled," said Euripides, who did not want to

identify any of the veterans by name. "I couldn't believe it. These guys were outside our own door, out on our own streets so I tried to do whatever I could to help."

That help came primarily in the way of food. Euripides provided countless meals for the veterans and even hosted an open Thanksgiving Day meal for veterans who had no place else to go.

"I wasn't sure what to expect," Euripides said. "These were very proud men. But we had more than 50 veterans show up that night."

For the past 60 years, Euripides has donated his time and resources to many of the programs of the American Legion as well as other military and veteran-focused initiatives.

"Whenever we needed anything, Charlie was there," said 92-year-old Col. Kim Ching, a past Post 24 Commander who served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. "Even though there are more resources available for today's veterans, Charlie is still as generous as he was before support for veterans became common."

In addition to his continuing work with veterans, Euripides has supported many nonprofit and social service organizations such as The Salvation Army, Del Ray Artisans and the Alexandria Police Foundation with substantial financial and in-kind donations of food and catering services.

"Kind and generous don't go far enough in describing Charlie," said DRA vice president John Bordner. "If you ask him to maybe provide a side dish for a fundraising event, he and his staff would roll in with a spread for 100 people. At first I hesitated to ask for his help but then I would see the absolute joy and pride in his eyes in helping you create a beautiful and memorable evening for everyone."

Among his many recognitions and awards, Euripides was presented with the prestigious Distinguished Patriot Award at the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce 2016 Salute to Veterans reception.

At 85 years old, Euripides still greets customers at the restaurant. His younger brother Richard is the chef, having joined Euripides as a refugee when Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974.

In an era when the life span of a successful, independently-owned restaurant is five years, the Royal Restaurant has been going strong for 114 years and continues to be a popular gathering spot for locals.

Euripides, a widower and father of three sons, has served countless politicians and celebrities over the years, including Gerald Ford, Bob Hope, Sammy Davis Jr. and Elizabeth Taylor. But he has never forgotten his community, tirelessly providing generous support to hundreds of local charities, always saying "I wish I could do more."



Congratulations Charlie Euripides!

**From the family of
William G. McNamara**

FLORENCE M. KING

By Shirley Ruhe



Photo by Tisara Photography

The numbers don't change very much from year to year. As high as 14 percent of Americans are classified as illiterate. Despite multitudes of programs designed to reduce that rate, the needle doesn't seem to move.

The numbers don't change much when measuring the financial literacy of Americans either. Shockingly, surveys show that only about 35 percent of us are financially literate. It is the remaining 65 percent who were never taught or even exposed to financial literacy who are at-risk for substantial financial and burdensome debt problems.

Enter Florence M. King, civic activist, classical music enthusiast, descendent of a slave owned by George Washington, and founder and CEO of the FMK Financial Literacy Center, a nonprofit organization.

Imagine over the years you have collected more credit cards than you need. As your needs changed and better offers came along, you opened new accounts but never closed the old ones. As you prepare the application for a new mortgage you are tempted to simplify things by closing a handful or more of your old accounts.

"Don't do it!" warns King. "Every account you close will lower your

credit report score and multiple closures may lower it to the point of disqualification."

Before graduating from George Mason University, King worked at Equifax, one of the major credit reporting companies. The things she learned about managing a credit score have powered a career in credit management and now, credit and financial literacy education.

After a first career as a federal employee, King founded FMK Credit Services in 1991 where she helped clients to repair bad credit ratings. During that time, she was contracted as a consultant to the American Red Cross and evaluated and dispensed millions of dollars in emergency aid to families and victims of September 11, 2001.

She sold that business and in 2005 started FMK Credit Education Center. In 2016 she founded yet a third company, the nonprofit FMK Financial Literacy Center.

The Financial Literacy Center's mission is to ensure that disadvantaged families and senior citizens are educated in such a way that will promote financial stability and independence and provide ways to improve their financial footing through self-sufficiency and home ownership. It empowers underserved and at-risk families by exposing them to financial education programs to reduce the cycle of unsound monetary practices. Foreign born with little or no experience with American financial institutions are another target demographic.

Sometimes working directly with those in need and sometimes joining with a corporate partner, another nonprofit, a school or a church, King holds regular seminars teaching the financially illiterate the skills necessary to enter the financial mainstream. Many of her students have never had a bank account, much less a credit card or bank loan. Others are disqualified from mainstream banking due to their financial history. She also does one-on-one counseling.

Many are trapped in a cycle of high-fee services such as check cashing storefronts, car-title or payday loan companies. Successful graduates of King's seminars receive a certificate honored by local banks which allow them to open their first account. Often a bank representative attends a seminar and opens special no-fee new accounts for graduates right there on the spot.

Over the years, King estimates she has helped upwards of 10,000 clients with their credit and financial literacy difficulties. And she has no plans to slow down.

For almost 20 years, King has also been more than a "key" member of the Financial Counseling Team ministry at McLean Bible Church. The Church describes her as its "most trusted financial counselor" and a "woman of great character, courage, humility and discernment."

Growing up in Fairfax County before integration, Florence was bussed across the county to Luther Jackson High School, the only high school African-Americans could attend. She is a descendant of both Thornton Gray and Thomasine Gray; Thornton

was a freed slave at Mt. Vernon while Thomasina was enslaved at Mt. Vernon until emancipated by George Washington in 1801. King served on the City of Alexandria's Freedman's Cemetery Memorial Steering Committee and is also Recording Secretary of the Laurel Grove School Association, a historic schoolhouse telling the story of many freedmen and woman in the post-civil war era.

A non-partisan city Elections Officer for 25 years, Florence has also served on a plethora of other Alexandria City Citizens Commissions, including the Alexandria Historical Resources Commission where she has contributed to preserving the historical legacy of our city for 15 years.

She is currently Chairwoman of the city's Commission on Employment where her Commission is responsible for developing a citywide plan for employment services that reflects the goals of linking existing City employment and training programs with employment and training programs operated by the City school systems and with the economic development program operated by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with City Council.

Also, in the city of Alexandria Florence is on the Board of

Agenda: Alexandria, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that produces monthly programs with an unbiased, multi-faceted look at controversial topics in Alexandria.

She is an active member of the Board of Directors of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra having recently spearheaded an effort to reduce the ASO's venue costs by thousands of dollars.

King is a Vice-President of the Northern Virginia Urban League and partners with the League to present her financial literacy educational seminars.

Florence is Chairwoman of the Alexandria Regional Council of the United Way.

She has served as a member of the Board and Chair of the Development Committee for Alexandria's Parent Leadership Training Institute, an organization that seeks to teach advocacy skills to parents to enable them to become leading advocates for their children.

The Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce says this about King: "Ms. King has quietly helped others to be better individuals and better members of society."

All of this is why Florence King is a true Alexandria Living Legend.



Tisara Photography

**Congratulations to
2018 Living Legend**

Florence King



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to all the
2018 Legends.*

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The Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria congratulates our Founder/ Executive Director, **Gwendolyn Hubbard Lewis**, for being honored as a *2018 Living Legend Awardee*. She has dedicated many years of service to our community and continues to advocate on behalf of our children and families, especially those with the greatest needs.

Thank you for helping us all REACH and RISE for EXCELLENCE.

Very well done!

www.ccnaalexandria.org

GWENDOLYN HUBBARD LEWIS

By Mike Lane



Photo by Tisara Photography

When Gwendolyn Hubbard Lewis learned in 2009 that Alexandria had the highest dropout rate of any district in Northern Virginia she connected right away. “It is sad. I was one of those drop outs.”

Lewis attended Parker Gray High School but “I never thought I would live to graduate.” So she moved to Arlington to live with a relative there and “kids were so different, respectful and accepting of me.” But the different high school was “a nightmare for me,” so she quit to get a job. “It was the worst decision ever.” She married much too young (16), suffered abuse and now had a child to raise and educate. She realized

she should go back to school not for a “GED” but a regular diploma. After graduating from George Washington High School, she attended college. She was married 25 years to Melvyn Wayne Lewis. They raised 4 girls. Lewis has been widowed since 2003 and has seven wonderful grandchildren.

Now Lewis is Executive Director of Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria (CCNA) and its after-school program “Reach and Rise for Excellence” (RARE), which she inspired several other Alexandria City residents to establish in 2009. CCNA through the RARE program mentors and tutors middle school children and works

with parents to make sure they are engaged in their children’s education. The goal is to catch those students, who are at risk, early in their middle school development. This is a critical period before high school where caring adults can turn young lives around and improve their future opportunities for employment and productive lives.

RARE focuses on students at Hammond Middle School which was enthusiastic about trying the pilot program. Thirty-six children receive after school instruction in math and reading as well as a number of enrichment activities. Lewis says when she initiated the idea of helping kids overcome their obstacles — you are somebody, you can do it — she organized a group of local citizens which spent two years researching what would work, attending forums and developed a strategy using proven practice and evidence-based program methodology.

Each afternoon, RARE starts with a heavy snack and then moves to a review of homework to make sure students understand what is required. After they complete the homework at home, Lewis says students have the regular school teacher initial the homework. The students then bring it back to RARE thus closing the loop on accountability with parents, teachers, students and the afterschool program.

The teachers focus on math and reading “because you can’t do math or anything else if you can’t read.” Lewis says they have certified

math teachers and have added a Reading Specialist for all grades. On Monday they have coding. They also receive information about things such as the importance of having good credit and how to write a check. "We cram in as much as we can in this program. We teach the "whole child."

There have been a number of challenges with the establishment of this new program including insufficient funding, community and Alexandria City Public School's initial skepticism as well as a lack of parent participation. "We have done everything we can do in the last 8 years to let people know about us, but there are still people who have never heard about CCNA." She says, "we had a huge vision, but it was really hard to do. Everyone has his or her own fiefdom. We had to break the ice."

She says it has been a struggle to get the parents to turn out. "We always feed the families and we offer parent workshops on how to discipline their children, that you don't have to take a belt. We also focus on how to build relationships with them. But poor parents may be working 2-3 jobs and they are tired or one may be on drugs or another in jail. And if it rains or snows, that's a challenge." She says this is a nationwide issue for poor families, not just in Alexandria, "and we try to find the carrot to get them engaged."

The program is successful through networking with businesses, organizations and churches to provide resources and funding. For instance, Alfred Street Baptist Church, where Lewis is a member, provides backpacks full of school supplies and new shoes. The Alexandria City Public School gave

RARE two buses to transport the kids after school. A number of people donate time for the special programs such as Career Day when they come in and share their different careers and show the students how they too can have a career in the patent office, as a doctor or lawyer or on Capitol Hill "because your existence is different now you can take responsibility for your own education. They love it; it is very eye opening."

Lewis says she would love to find funding to expand RARE to grades 5-9 and to all the middle schools and Minnie Howard. This year the City of Alexandria budget didn't provide any funding for the program. "I was so disappointed but they did keep the partnership in place."

Lewis wants to provide the same kind of inspiration she got when she returned to George Washington High School at night "because I wanted a diploma, not a GED." She says she had a typing teacher who was so wonderful and kept working with her until "I PASSED" the typing test which allowed her to get a Federal job with the Army, then later the Environmental Protection Agency where she ran into another angel who always hired her back when she quit her job to go back to school full time. After a BS and MS at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) she ended up at the General Services Administration as a Procurement Instructor then at the Federal Acquisition Policy Office and later as an Internal Revenue Service Project Manager. She retired from the Federal Government after more than 30 years of exemplary service.

Along the way she was elected to the Alexandria School Board twice and served one term as its

Vice Chair where she changed the focus with her strong advocacy and strategy for middle school students. Recently she was appointed to the Child, Youth, and Family Collaborative Commission to advise city leaders on the effective integration of services for youth and their families. She now serves on the Board of Trustees for UDC.

Lewis says since 2011, "we've been there. We want the kids to know there is continuity and they can count on us. She adds, "I pray God will make a way. Every time we think we're going to have to shut down, something good happens."

MARION MOON

By Mike Lane



Photo by Tisara Photography

“You learn a lot about people by the way they get through crises.” Marion Moon remembers hearing that advice from her father when she was a young woman.

Having lived in Alexandria since 1951, she attended what was then George Washington High School.

Moon married and divorced young. Her marriage blessed her with two sons: Rick and Craig. She faced the challenges of single-motherhood while successfully pursuing a trailblazing professional career that allowed her to provide for her family.

In the 1970s, Moon began 15 years of volunteer work for Northern Virginia Offender Aid and Restoration

(OAR) mentoring detainees. She was elected President of the Northern Virginia OAR where she pioneered creation of family support groups.

In the early 1980s Moon became the first woman leasing manager for Chrysler. She called on the transportation manager at Washington National Airport to inquire if they ran their own taxi service. After demonstrating how the airport's best option was to lease 100 taxis from her, Moon became Chrysler's top leasing manager nationwide, earning her an incentive trip to see the Washington Redskins beat the Miami Dolphins in Super Bowl XVII. But all trip awardees were required to share a room and Moon was the only woman who earned the award. She decided to take Rick

and Craig on the trip, pay for all their expenses herself, and share her room with them. Mini-crisis solved!

A decade later, Moon founded Convention and Tradeshow Freight Specialists (CTFS, né Convention Freight Services) with her son Rick. This was another industry where women were not prominent players. Today, CTFS is a nationally recognized leader among its peers. This successful business venture provides the resources for her wide-ranging philanthropic activities.

To what does she attribute CTFS' success? “We encounter a myriad of challenges with an immediate deadline for resolution. I find that I am much better at solving a problem if I have five minutes than if I have five days.”

As CTFS grew, the business acquired a large warehouse, half of it often unused. When the Alexandria Police Department (APD) inquired about terms to use the available space for training their Special Operations Team as well as their K-9 Unit, Moon donated the space. Soon first responders from surrounding localities as well as the federal government had complimentary access to the building to meet their critical training needs.

It was the untimely deaths of her sons that became Moon's most difficult and poignant crises. She learned a lot about herself responding to these events.

Craig passed away unexpectedly in 2009. When Craig was in elementary school, a recruiter visited from Virginia's Fork Union Military Academy (FUMA). He excitedly said he wanted to attend high school there. Moon first thought, “What

have I done wrong that he wants to go away to high school?" The answer was nothing and the next year Craig enrolled as a cadet at FUMA. "They took a boy and turned him into a man before my very eyes," she remembers.

Craig completed his service in the United States Air Force and was a FUMA Director-elect when he died. The Board asked her to serve in his stead. She enthusiastically accepted. "I get involved in places where I have confidence in their leadership – where they are making a difference," she said.

Moon also established a FUMA scholarship in her son's name. Since the Major Craig Moon Access Scholarship was created, 100 cadets have benefited from her generosity. "It is a wonderful way to celebrate his memory," she notes. As of this writing, 14 FUMA cadets from Alexandria are receiving assistance.

Tragically, in 2013, her son Rick died, also unexpectedly. Although it was not easier, Moon already knew the path to acceptance. Relying deeply on her faith, she determined to honor the memory of both sons with a continual "joyous celebration" of their lives.

As a seemingly forever member of the Alexandria Sportsman's Club (ASC), Moon was elected the first female board member in the 1980s. She established a scholarship in Rick's memory at ASC to help Alexandria's student athletes. In 2017 she raised and donated more than \$20,000 to benefit ASC's award recipients. In 2017, Moon was recognized as Alexandria's Sportsman of the Year, the highest honor of that organization.

Moon also heavily supports the Alexandria Seaport Foundation, an organization that provides leadership and shipbuilding skills

training for troubled youth who might otherwise wind up on the streets unskilled and directionless.

Moon has served on the board of the United Community Ministries (UCM) and provided trucks to collect donations to the UCM Back Porch collection facility.

Moon has been a presenting sponsor and donor to the EOD (explosive ordinance disposal) Warrior Foundation which provides financial assistance and support to active-duty and veteran EOD warriors as well as to families of the wounded, injured, ill or fallen. These specialists' medical conditions are often among the most severe as a result of their work with explosives.

First Baptist Church of Alexandria has been Moon's worship home since childhood. As a woman of deep faith, she takes personal reward in volunteering and generously supporting its ministries. Not surprisingly, she was a leader in the church's grief-counseling ministry.

She has also donated generously and served on the board of the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, an evangelical seminary that prepares both men and women to become Christian leaders in ministry.

The Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC) has long-been an important institution in Alexandria. Moon serves on the board of the ODBC and is the outside liaison to many charitable events that ODBC hosts.

She also is immersed in fundraising events for such other charitable groups as the Hiring our Heroes Corporate Fellowship Program and is a designated Companion of the Legion de Lafayette of the National Guard Foundation recognizing the highest-level donors to the Foundation.

She is a generous contributor to the Mount Olive Ministries (MOM) of Mississippi, an organization that provides educational excellence to underprivileged students in a poverty-stricken locale whose only other option is a failed public school. Her support allows MOM to continue to educate all students regardless of race, creed or color. MOM students typically perform at a level two-grades above the alternative.

Moon does not talk about the amount of financial assistance she has provided to needy causes over the year. Clearly it is generosity at levels well above average and beyond expectations.

Why does she do it? "Because I can," she once told the Alexandria Gazette. She takes great joy in helping others achieve and reach new heights. "I haven't missed a single dime of all the money I have been able to contribute. It is personally rewarding to honor my sons' memories. I just thank God I have been able to do so."

Personally, she likes to bowl and fish. She aspires to learn both flyfishing and bocce ball. At the end of the day, you might catch her drinking a glass of her favorite pinot grigio. It is a well-deserved reward for all she has done.



**Incredible accomplishments
and proud to have met
Marion Moon**

Your friend Barry Moore



Congratulations Marion on your selection as a 2018 Living Legend of Alexandria!

We are so proud of you, your contributions and endless work to help so many young people!! You are a true leader! With admiration from your friends at the Old Dominion Boat Club!



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Christine Mica
Dan Mica
Martha Mica
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Sue Rushkowski
Donnie Simpson
Bob Waters
David Wilkes

LORI MORRIS

By Jeanne Theismann



Photo by Tisara Photography

“Find the ringleader.”

That was but one bit of advice Lori Morris learned from her mother as she embarked on a career in education.

“Before I finished college I would spend my vacation time substitute teaching,” Morris recalled. “My first day was a total disaster. At the tender age of 19, I was in charge of a raucous group of 12-year-olds who were very happy to see a newbie sub in charge. I was devastated by my apparent inability to be effective in my new career.”

Morris remembers driving straight to her mother’s classroom for advice.

“She was great and gave me several tips, which gave me the confidence and tricks I needed to get a grip and keep going,” Morris said.

For Morris, the importance of education was instilled in her at an early age. For 40 years, her mother taught children of all ages after becoming the first in her family to go to college en route to completing a Master’s degree.

So it was natural for Morris herself to follow in her mother’s footsteps. She received her Master’s degree in Early Childhood Special Education from the George Washington University then taught in the Alexandria City Public Schools system.

Morris is the co-author of the book “Inclusive Early Childhood Education: A Model Classroom,” and the article “3 Keys to a Successful Circle Time.” She also worked on federally funded education projects focused on developing and then disseminating a model inclusion program for the public schools.

“I grew up with a brother with learning disabilities,” Morris said. “When he was in school there were no real services for children that learned differently. We all knew he was smart but that he didn’t fit the system. It was terrible for him. I felt this injustice very deeply and wanted to help other kids have a better education experience. I went into special education at the same time laws were being passed to ensure these services.”

Born and raised in New Jersey, Morris worked for a short while with adolescents in a New Jersey psychiatric center and did social work with adolescents in England.

“While that was important work, I learned that working with younger children was for me,” Morris said. “In Early Education you have the opportunity to work with children at a time in their lives when they are developing rapidly and you can make a huge difference in their schooling and future life experience.”

Morris left teaching full time when her children were born but continued to look for ways to help improve early education.

“I sat on a couple of preschool boards and began to understand the need for strategic growth

of these programs,” Morris said. “Starting the foundation and hiring a CEO has enabled me to work in partnership with folks in the City, City Public Schools and community members to determine ways of working wisely.”

That foundation is the Bruhn-Morris Family Foundation, which Morris founded in 2003 and continues to serve as its President. Through the foundation, Morris supports public private partnerships and early care and education systems building, with a geographic focus in Alexandria. Through a combination of investments in research, evaluation and capacity building support, the foundation strives to enhance organizations’ abilities to use data to inform and enhance program design and deliver high quality services.

“Lori was the board chair of the Child & Family Network Centers for several years where she was instrumental in increasing the number of students served,” said CFNC Executive Director Lisa Ferrari Carter. “Lori has always been at the forefront of ensuring low-income children in Alexandria receive an early education and the start they deserve in life so they can be successful. Her passion for children and helping those less fortunate has been evident in all of her work for the last two decades.”

In addition to her contributions to CFNC, Morris was a founding member of the ACT for Alexandria board of directors and continues to chair the ACT Community Investment Committee which helped create innovative community initiatives benefiting the nonprofit sector including ACTion Alexandria, Spring2ACTion, IMPACT: Innovation + Philanthropy

Forum, and the Capacity Building Grants program.

Morris has had significant impact on education programs benefitting Alexandria’s children. She was a member of the Children & Youth Master Plan Strategy Work Group and a founding member of Alexandria’s Early Care & Education Work Group. Her support and expertise were critical in the development of the Center for Alexandria’s Learn & Play Group Curriculum.

“Lori immersed herself in every aspect of the curriculum creation, from facilitating steering committee meetings to observing playgroups to writing developmentally appropriate content,” said Carter in nominating Morris as a Living Legend of Alexandria. “It is thanks to Lori’s willingness to wrestle with every piece of a project, her responsive nature and expertise in early childhood that the curriculum was completed and is now used to serve hundreds of children and families in the City of Alexandria each week.”

Morris credits both her parents for instilling in her the value of education and philanthropy.

“My parents had very little extra money when I was growing up so the actual word philanthropy was not part of the vocabulary,” Morris said. “However, the idea of helping others was very dominant. Both my parents were givers. There are many examples but the one I remember most clearly was when my dad, who was an engineer, designed and built a way for a paralyzed friend to turn the pages of a book. And my mom spent endless hours helping students

who didn’t have a home and the support needed to help them at school. As I entered the work of teaching and philanthropy many wonderful people have influenced me. However, like any good early educator would, I do believe that it was my early family life that set the foundation for how I work and think today.”

Morris currently serves on the board at Community Wealth Partners. Previously, she served as Vice-Chair of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and as a board member of the INOVA Health System.

Morris and her husband Nigel have been married for 33 years and together have four children. When asked if she realizes the impact she has made on the lives of Alexandria’s children, Morris replied:

“I am ever hopeful that the projects I work on positively and directly influence the lives of children. When I was teaching special education, I had a direct relationship with children and families and found that very rewarding. I am now working more at a system level because that is where I believe I can have the most impact, but as a result I have less of the direct personal connection I once had. It is important to me to have a project or two going that is a direct investment in helping a family, child or classroom. Constantly remembering the people behind the data is super important to me.”

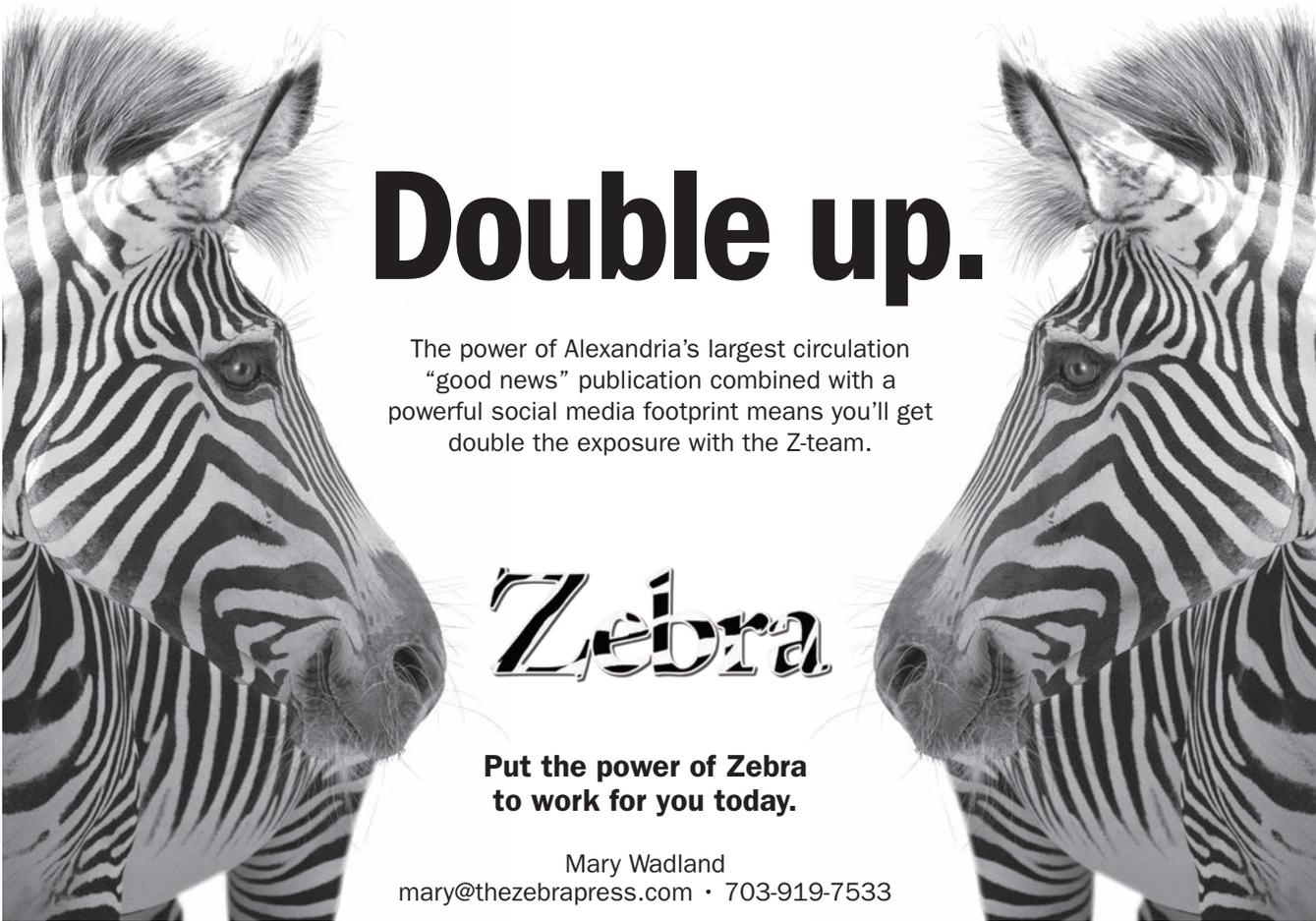
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Congratulations Mrs. Moon for being selected as a Living Legend! This honor is well deserved. Thank you for supporting numerous Fork Union Cadets through The Major Craig Moon Scholarship Fund. I will remain grateful for all that you have done for me and for the Fork Union Community. God Bless!

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Thanks for video assistance!

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Thanks to all of the past and present Board Members who work so hard to identify and chronicle the lives of these worthy citizens who give so much to our community and congratulations to them for being role models inspiring others to do the same....

Gregg and Monica Murphy

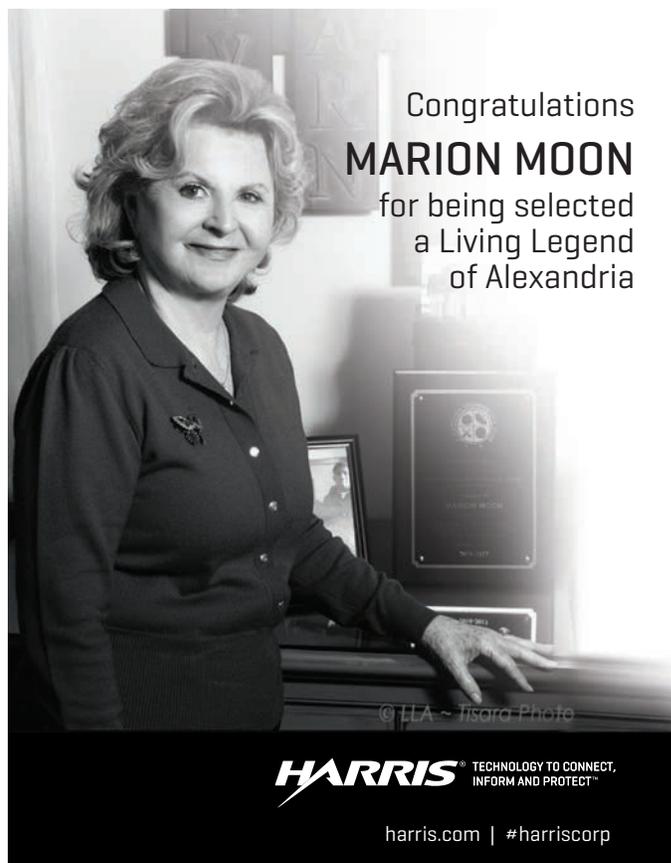
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