PEOPLE

Rolle raps with community at CCB







By Maxine L. Wallace
AFRO Staff Worker

The Community College of Baltimore Harbor Campus rolled the red carpet out for actress Esther Rolle last Thursday. The school's students and staff set out to entertain her and thank her for the years of entertainment she has given.

The campus auditorium was filled with students and faculty-blacks and whites.

On the stage sitting comfortably on a couch was the honoree of the day.

Rolle watched in appreciation as several students read and recited poetry for her enjoyment.

These selections included the work of Robert Forest, William Shakespeare, Nikki Giovanni and others. Some poems were original.

Also for Rolle's entertainment, Citizens Celebrating Baltimore, the city's own choral group, sang triumphantly Rolle's favorite songs. They sang "You'll Never Walk Alone" at the outset of the hour long program. The soloist was Dadiya Kahlid.

Perhaps the highlight of the program was when the famed actress who is currently starring in "A Raisin in the sun" at the Morris Mechanic Theatre, addressed the audience. audience.

Eyes were open wide and ears attentive as Rolle in a very candid and relaxed manner shared her philosophy of learning.

"One must ever learn, if one is to be alive and alert," she said.

You never really stop learning . . ."

Rolle spoke of the necessity of all people learning about people of other cultures.

"If you're just pre-occupied with yourself and about you only, that would bore me to tears," she said in a matter of fact voice.

Rolle challenged the students and all others present to be creative.

"Always do something creative and see how far you can go with it," she said as she pointed her finger with conviction.

Rolle told her audience to not allow anyone to make them think their task of creativity is menial.

"Never mind what some people say . . . There is no menial job . . . It's a great job . . . You may have messed it up, but it's a great job," she said.

Rolle evoked responses of laughter at times as she was frank and to the point.

She told the audience that no matter what color their skin is and what texture their hair is underneath all of that, we all look the same.

"Who cares what your hair looks like . . . Your hair can't talk. Talk to me . . . hug me . . . I get something from that. That's all I care about . . . said Rolle.

An opportunity was given to the audience to ask Rolle questions, and she responded to each in a poised and genuine way.

One student asked her whether it was hard for her to get started as a black actress.

"Well . . . it was and it is," she said. "I don't get the same status as whites."

"The rougher the road, the smoother the stone," said Rolle.

Rolle said she became a star through years of dedication and doing the task in the best way she knew how.

"The worst way to look toward being a star is to try to be a star," she said.

Also as part of the program Rolle was presented a gift from the school by its president Dr. Joseph T. Durham.

The gift was a school bag bearing the school's name on either side.

Rolle was given a dozen red roses as she sat surrounded by the choral group who sang a final selection, "How Great Thou Art."

Herbert Sledge, the school's Director of Development was the sponsor of the very memorable event.

"I wanted to invite her to the school so the students could thank her for years of entertainment, I wanted her to be entertained by us," he said.

Sledge said he invited Rolle to the school also as a thank you to the students for their participation and support.

Esther Rolle is a veteran actress who appeared in numerous film, television, and theatre productions.

She won an Emmy for her performance in the television play, "Summer of My German Soldier."

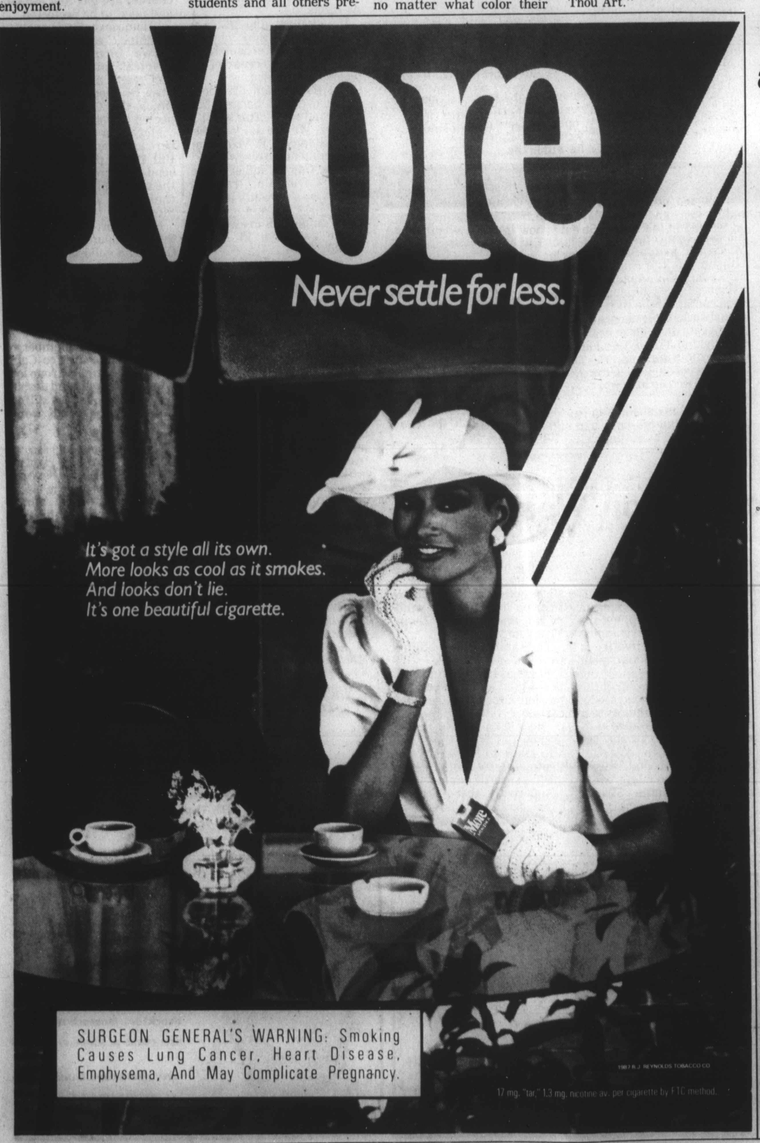
She is probably best known as the star of the "Good Times" TV series, a spinoff of the "Maude" series.

Rolle became interested in theatre when she was attending a writing-acting class in Harlem.

Since then, she has appeared in many television productions, including: "Murder She Wrote," Flamingo Road," "Fantasy Island," and others.

Participants in the program included Robsol Pinlett, Jr. who did the welcome and also the poem "Go Down Death."

The other poetry readers were Instructor Marion Bonaparte's English clases. They were Tanya Miller, Arvel Brown, Charles Massenberg, Leah Gold, Linda Faulcon, James Brooks, David Halliburton, Elva Harris, and Diane Hall.



Nigerian ambassador addresses Africans

By Ejike Obineme
AFRO Staff Writer

Many Nigerians living in Baltimore gathered at Morgan State University recently to listen to their ambassador speak on issues concerning them and their country.

In his address, the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, Alhaji Hamzat Ahmadu, told Nigerians living in the United States to be participants and not observers in the march of progress of their country.

"The role of participation has become necessary for all Nigerians," Ahmadu said, "as our country once more embarks on yet another experiment in democratic rule."

He said that the present administration in Nigeria is determined to ensure the success of the democratic rule this time, and outlined the highlights of an imaginative program announced by the military administration in Nigeria, designed to usher in civil rule by 1992.

The highlights include elections in the three tiers of government; the local, state and federal, and the establishment of necessary organs like the National Electoral Commission, the Constitution Drafting Committee, The National Population Commission and the National Revenue Mobilization Commission.

Ahmadu said that the federal system, modeled after the United States system, will be retained, although greater fiscal autonomy will now be allowed local governments, as the third tier of government, whose activities have a more immediate impact on the lives of the majority of the population.

After the 30-minute address, the ambassador engaged in a two-hour session of questions and answers with the audience, during which many Nigerians expressed their feelings on the way their country was being run. Many people were concerned that the Nigerian government monopolized the industries and most businesses. The government controls about 90% of the total employment, which leaves little room for a competitive market.

Ahmadu answered all the questions put to him, and promised his countrymen that the present administration was aware of the problems facing Nigeria, and was working diligently to solve them.

In the end, most people agreed that the afternoon provided a very fruitful interaction between them and their ambassador and hoped that such meetings will continue in the future.

A Nigerian professor at Morgan State University, Dr. Udoh Essien, said, in an unofficial vote of thanks, "You (the Ambassador) have given me much hope in Nigeria, more than I could read in any book or magazine."

The Ambassador was accompanied on the trip to Baltimore by C. C. Ifedigbo, Information Attache; Bisi Olawunmi, News Agency of Nigeria; S. A. Adekoye, Deputy Head of Mission and David Adebayo, Political Counselor. Others were A. B. Chukwurah, First Secretary Political/Protocol; F. Otukoya, Second Secretary, Counsular/Welfare and Nonye Udo, Special Assistant to the Ambassador.

CLEAN BLOCK GETS UNDERWAY

The AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers kicked off their 54th Annual CLEAN BLOCK Campaign with a leadership breakfast last Friday morning at the Cross Keys Inn.

In attendance were representatives from various city agencies such as Housing, Animal Control, Bulk Trash Removal and Rat Rub Out. All of these agencies serve as consultants to the program.

Representing Mayor Kurt Schmoke was his executive assistant for operations, Clarence T. Bishop. Bishop presented a citation on behalf of the Mayor, proclaiming May 13, 1988 CLEAN BLOCK Kick-Off Day. The citation was accepted by the Chairman of the Board, Mr. John Oliver, Jr.

Also on hand was Superintendent of Inspections for the Division of Housing, Russell Cooper. Cooper presented AFRO Charities Director, Elyn Garrett, with a check for $2,500.00, on behalf of his department.

CLEAN BLOCK will start its weekly meetings for participants after the closing of public schools. Watch these pages for meeting schedules, sites and times.

Black contractor plans to sue city over $305,000 job

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

A black contractor plans to file a civil lawsuit against the city for not allowing minority contractors to bid on a Leakin Park project, which was awarded to a huge corporation, instead.

Arnold M. Jolivet, president of the Maryland Minority Contractors, Inc., said the mayor and the Board of Estimates violated the City Charter, Article VI, Section 4, when they neglected to advertise the contract for the construction of a pipeline and conduit to give electrical power to the Leakin Park Pumping Station, to minority contractors.

The city awarded the $305,000 contract to the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company at Tuesday's Board of Estimates meeting, waving the Minority Business Enterprise and Women Enterprise laws, which require minority and women participation in city contracts.

"But the Charter does not allow us to waiver the competitive bidding process," Jolivet said.

"I am appalled by this board," said Jolivet.

He said the board denied qualified minority contractors, particularly blacks, from bidding on the contract and it opted to give the contract to B.G. & E., a viable and thriving company.

Jolivet said, "They just gave it to B.G. & E. without any concern for minorities."

". . . Every week we lose contracts," Jolivet said.

Council President and board member Mary Pat Clarke told Jolivet, "There's always a next time."

B.G. & E. was anxious to get the board to approve the contract to begin work and the city complied.

Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke said, "It's important for us to move ahead (to approve the contract), but we'll look into it."

But a dissatisfied Jolivet asked, "How can (the city) do it for B.G. & E. and not for blacks. B.G. & E. is a big conglomerate.

He added, "When you let one bid and not let the other bid, it's a violation of the law."

He claimed he will charge that the city violated the city charter's rules on awarding contracts and violated equal protection under the charter.

The Board of Estimates is responsible for awarding contracts and supervising all purchases by the city.

Jolivet represents hundreds of black contractors in the state and his business has been in operation for eight years.

He said he knows plenty of black contractors who could handle the Leakin Park contract, but when the board asked him to name some, he refused, because he did not want to give preferential treatment to some and not mention others.

According to Jolivet, B.G. & E. does not have to use minority subcontractors during the construction, because when the city awarded the contract to the company, it waived minority participation.

"This is a clear denial of equal rights," Jolivet said. "I don't think it'll stand up in court."

He is expected to meet with Public Works Director George Balog.

"But I think it's a waste of my time," Jolivet said.

Black insurance firms celebrate heritage

By Jill P. Carter
AFRO Staff Writer

Black insurance companies are celebrating National Insurance week, May 9-14. This year is the 54th annual observance of the week set aside for black insurance companies to engage in all out efforts to educate the public on insurance options.

They hope to inform as many as possible about the benefits, uses, and value of life insurance to achieve economic security.

Once there were 35 black insurance companies that could partake and participate in the intentions of this week, but, now there are only 28. Two, North Carolina mutual and Supreme Insurance, have offices in Baltimore.

Some of the previously existing insurance companies have been bought out, or have merged with the larger black companies, according to Robert Young, District Sales Manager for the Baltimore office of North Carolina Mutual.

North Carolina has secured three of the smaller companies.

"We are encouraging agents to put out extra efforts to get the public interested in finding out more about their insurance options," he said as he explained National Insurance week activities.

The company kicked off National Insurance Week with a rally featuring George Buntin, executive director of the NAACP.

Young feels that the message they are trying to relay this week should be a year round one.

"A lot of people are not familiar with the way retirement or pension plans work. They are not up on the cash benefits that life insurance provides, and the various options a person can take," said Young.

He feels that one of the most commonly made mistakes comes from people's ignorance of how many policies work.

"If a person had been carrying a policy for 10 years, he might feel he is out of benefits totally after that time, but many times it is not the case," Young said.



Robert Young

The manager of Baltimore's North Carolina Federal is confident that his company will be around for a long time.

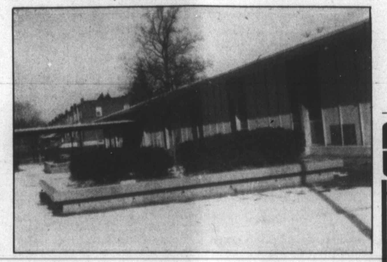
"We have ninety years of stability. I doubt we'll be going out of business," he assured.

North Carolina Mutual was founded in 1898 by two black men, John Merrick, and Paron M. Moore, in Durham, North Carolina. The company now has offices nationwide and under the current president, W. J. Kennedy, III, is the largest black insurance company in the country.

The all out surge the agents will be conducting this week will culminate in a big awards ceremony, May 19, for the top producers. Trophies will be given to the leaders, and consulation prizes will be awarded to those who meet the minimum quotas.

PROPHET
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Deltas open new learning center

The Baltimore, Maryland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., will be opening the doors of the newly renovated Delta Community Center.

The Center, which was formally Springhill Elementary School No. 52, will house such projects as the Delta Family Life Project, which offers teenage pregnancy counseling, tutorial services for students, and employment training and counseling.

It will also provide space for New Era Day Care Center as well as an Infant Center which will be run and operated by the YWCA.

Dr. Rebecca Carroll, President of the Organization, says that the center, Cottage Avenue and Spring Hill Avenue off Park Heights Avenue, "will open its doors on Saturday, May 14 for the sorority's monthly meeting. However, it will have its grand opening to the public within the upcoming months."

Job training for youth

If you are interested in becoming a trainee weatherization auditor you can "learn while you earn." The Baltimore Masjid located at 514 Wilson Street is now interviewing for paid stipend weatherization auditors. You will learn how to insulate windows and doors, read meters, interpret cost projections and much more; and you will get paid!

Contact Siraj at 462-4960.

NAACP STARTS JOBS PROGRAM

The NAACP in cooperation with Jubilee Jobs of Baltimore is now offering job counseling, orientation, and job search skills training every Wednesday at 9 a.m. at the NAACP office at 8 W. 26th Street. Persons who participate in this training will have access to the job banks of Jubilee Jobs and the NAACP, and will continue to receive job counseling until a job is found.

Persons seeking employment should come to the NAACP on any Wednesday at 9 a.m., or call the NAACP at 366-3300.

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05/88
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- The best time to get your car inspected is *THIS WEEK*. After that, waiting times are likely to be longer.
- Least crowded days are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- Best hours are afternoons and evenings.
HOURS OF OPERATION
Tuesday through Friday - 9:00 AM — 7:00 PM
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