



San Diego African American Alumni Association

NEWSLETTER

San Diego African American
Alumni Association

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Grand Gala Returns To LA For 10th Anniversary

Glamour & Glitz 2006 is the theme for the 10th Anniversary of the New Year's Eve Grand Gala. The L.A. Chapter will host this year's event on Sunday, December 31, at their usual venue—the Sheraton Gateway Hotel at LAX.

This Gala will top them all..it will be the gateway to a fantasy world. Beneath the *Glamour & Glitz* will be the excitement of the past that we all have in semmoiL It will be the perfect chance to live out your dreams..reminisce with childhood friends and new ones too, while you socialize and party in a story-book atmosphere. Everything will be tailored to your desires and taste buds, and you will get first-class service with charm and splendor.

The L.A. Chapter promises to bring back the legendary lip synch show with Ray Charles and the Raylettes headlining the showcase; music from the past and present; special reception upon your arrival - you can even join in for bid whist and dominos - and the popular Comedy Breakfast the next morning.

Book your hotel reservations **NOW** by calling the **Sheraton Gateway Hotel** at 310-642-1111 or 888-627-7104. Be sure to mention that you will be attending the New Year's Eve Grand Gala so you will be given the special hotel rate of \$89 (singles or doubles). And don't forget to take advantage of the Grand Gala's *Early Bird Special*. See Reservation Form insert for details or check out our website at **sd4a.org**.

New Faces of SD4A

R. Curtis McFarland is a native San Diegan and son of SD4A's, Roland McFarland. His love of the sciences and the arts led him to earn a Bachelor's degree in Biology from UCLA and a Certificate in the Culinary Arts at the Los Angeles Culinary Institute. He is a Research Biophysicologist at UCLA, conducting functional outcome research with cancer patients. After completing his undergraduate studies, Curtis pursued his love of Culinary Arts (*continued on page 3*)

President's Message

As President of the Los Angeles Chapter of the San Diego African American Alumni Association, I would like to thank the entire membership for their support. It has ensured the continuing growth of this organization. We have met and surpassed our goals and expectations in the areas of community outreach and tax exempt status, and our fundraising events have touched a responsive cord throughout the community.

Our annual Art Auction attracts world-renowned African American artists and collectors such as Ernie Barnes, Charles Bibbs, Synthia Saint James, Shirley Wallace, Bernard Kinsey and many, many others. This event has created a marketplace to purchase outstanding African American Art and Artifacts, while donating directly to our scholarship efforts. It continues to grow in popularity and will be a keystone in our fundraising efforts in the coming years.

Our annual 4th of July Palm Springs Getaway is enjoyed by both young and old and continues to be one of the most anticipated family and friends events. It's a long weekend filled with games, bid whist, swimming, rap sessions, good food, shopping, gambling and just chillin'. The talent show is the talk of the town, with Tina Turner and Dancing Berry and other "celebrities" who choose to make a surprise appearance. This year Ray Charles will also grace our stage. **Join us for a 4th of July weekend of fun**, call Gloria at 323-295-0888.

The '05 Grand Gala, hosted by President Johnny Gibson and the San Diego Chapter, culminated the year in outstanding fashion. This year the L.A. Chapter will host **this year's New Year's Eve Grand Gala** at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel in Los Angeles. The Gala is our signature event and is not to be missed (Registration Form enclosed).

This past year, the Los Angeles Chapter was pleased to bestow college scholarships to five deserving high school students. We would like to double that number by 2007. Now that both chapters have achieved full tax exempt status, our goal is to actively seek larger donations from members at large. We v/ould like to see endowments made in your name, your family's name or your business name. I can't think of a better way to give back a little of what God has blessed us with so abundantly. Check out our web site at **sd4a.com**.

In closing, I cannot thank the officers and membership enough for their continuous and tireless efforts in creating and supporting the overall operation of our chapter. You are the most creative, diligent and committed group of individuals I have ever been blessed to work with. We are also very fortunate to be working with our sister chapter in San Diego, whose goals and aspirations are in concert with ours. Together we are a powerful organization with an outstanding future. I now ask that we continue with our Mission Statement, which includes growing this organization by finding ways and means to attract new membership. We are at the point where we must ask ourselves whether we are going to stand up or sit down. I say, "Let's Stand Up—Let's Stand Tall."

Roland McFarland
President
Los Angeles Chapter

Call Now, You Don't Want To Get Left-Out...

The PALM SPRINGS GETAWAY, Call 323.295.0888

Artistry on Parade by Gloria Vinson

It was the last Sunday of Black History Month at Regency West in Los Angeles and the room was packed to capacity at *An Art Affaire*, the Los Angeles Chapter's annual art auction. Regency's staff was scurrying around to find more seating for the standing-room-only crowd, as EmmyLu, the famous world-renowned artist from Uganda, strutted through the crowd with his chest puffed out. The featured artist, Charles Bibbs, sat near his exquisite exhibit of \$20,000 originals and soon joined in the bidding with the fervor of a serious art collector. He tried to out bid everyone for pieces he swore he had to have. This was a first.. .past auctions have never had bidding artists, they usually come to sell — not buy. Shirley Wallace, a *serious* art collector from San Diego, out-bid Bibbs more than once. He finally decided to go over and ask her to "cool it"!

There were oohs and aahs when the works of Ernie Barnes, Charles Bibbs, Ja'net DuBois, Albert Fennell, Simone Fennell, EmmyLu, Jerry Logans, Synthia Saint James, Reynaldo Rey and Chuck Rucker were on parade. Serious bidding and appreciation for Black art prevailed throughout the day. The excitement was so electrifying, I had to take a walk outside to get rid of the static. EmmyLu, with chest still out, said he had been to art shows all over the world and this was the most exciting and successful one he had ever attended.

The L.A. Chapter was established in 1996 and this fundraiser brought in the largest amount of money since the organization's inception. All proceeds will go to the SD4A Scholarship Fund. This unprecedented fete was made possible by the generous support of all the artists, especially featured artist Charles Bibbs.. .and to the dedicated student volunteers from Cal State Dominguez Hills and community volunteers who worked from sun up to sun down.. .we love you and express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. We couldn't have done it without you!

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by completing his formal training in Los Angeles and internship in Munich, Germany. He has worked for some of the best chefs in Los Angeles and was hired by renowned chefs Michel Richard and Alain Giraud to work at Citrus Restaurant, which in 1987 was voted *Best Restaurant in the United States* by Traveler's magazine. In addition to his scientific work at UCLA, Curtis works as a personal chef for numerous Hollywood celebrities and owns a catering business, providing professional catering for special events and several studios, including ABC and Fox Broadcasting Network.

Deborah Bennett is a native of Los Angeles. She attended Langston University in Oklahoma for two years then transferred to Cal State University Dominguez Hills, earning a B.A. degree in Sociology and completing her graduate studies in Behavioral Science. As a liaison for the California Council for Veterans Affairs she has been involved in numerous community and civic organizations, affording her the opportunity to work with many esteemed political leaders. She played a leading role in the City's first Annual Veterans Day Parade and has been a children's Social Worker for the Department of Children and Family Services since 1986. Deborah has an abundance of respect for the families she helps, is a devout Christian, a loving mother and has a genuine spirit of community.

Lillian Fletcher-McDowell was born in Bloomington, Illinois and moved to San Diego when she was a mere child. A graduate of Lincoln High School in San Diego, she retired from Chevron USA and now spends much of her time volunteering at her church. She is a member of the church choir, works with the needy and enjoys being a storyteller at the Pacoima Senior Center. After moving to San Fernando Valley, Lillian began interviewing seniors who had been living there since the turn of the century. Her interviews were published at the Los Angeles Public Library and Cal State University at Northridge's History Digital Library. They are also available in oral form at "Stories from my Hometown" at the L.A. Public Library in Panorama City, Senior Center of Pacoima and was presented at the Senior Oral History Conference in San Diego in 2005. She is one of the producers of the musical, *Precious Lord*, and is a collector of African American memorabilia. Lillian has been living in the Los Angeles area for almost 35 years.

Mission Statement

San Diego African American Alumni Association, Inc.

We are committed to raising scholarship funds to be awarded to high school students who have been admitted into a four-year college, are in need of financial support and have shown a commitment to the community. We will offer encouragement, mentoring and financial aid to youth and young adults and to actively promote events and cultural activities that will produce positive effects in the African American community. We will also promote the development of other SD4A chapters.

The membership is composed primarily, but not exclusively, of individuals who attended high school in San Diego. We invite you to become apart of the dream. For membership information call San Diego Chapter at (619) 475-5757; Los Angeles Chapter at (323) 295-0888.

Browse our Web site for more information about San Diego African American Alumni Association. If you have any questions or would like to speak with a San Diego African American Alumni Association representative, please e-mail us at www.SD4A.ORG or call us at (323) 295-0888.

Austin Jones - 2004 SD4A Scholarship Recipient

Graduated from Crawford HS, San Diego, CA

Austin Jones, currently attends California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, California. He will be busy this fall, not only with academics, but the junior will also preside over the Black Students Union (BSU). A Marketing Communications major, Austin finished the 2006 school year with a 3.15 GPA and is excited about his membership in the American Marketing Association and his internship with Caltech Investment Group. After graduation, Austin plans to pursue a career in sports marketing. The junior is a linebacker for the CLU Kingsmen, who finished the 2005 season with a 9-1 record. We salute and honor Austin, an intelligent and athletic young man with a very promising future.



Scholarship recipient, Austin Jones

Palm Springs Getaway..... 2006

There are still a few spots available!! You can be there if you act now. Don't wait, act now, pick up your phone and call 323.295.0888. Find out what everybody has been talking about. The Palm Springs Getaway is just that. So threat yourself, be good to you for once.