

Stockton Council of Black Faculty & Staff Presents Nine Awards at Annual Scholarship Fundraiser

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Galloway, N.J. - A record 257 guests attended the Council of Black Faculty & Staff's 35th Annual Scholarship Awards Dinner and Dance Fundraiser on Nov. 4 at Renault Winery Resort & Golf in Egg Harbor City, N.J.

Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to Patricia Reid-Merritt, Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Africana Studies, and Minister Cynthia James, the widow of Olympian and longtime Stockton athletics administrator G. Larry James.

Reid-Merritt, currently celebrating her 40th year at Stockton, launched the first annual Council of Black Faculty & Staff (CBFS) awards dinner in 1981 and spearheaded the annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium, among her many academic and civic contributions. "Pat defines what it is to be a modern Renaissance woman - an author, teacher, dancer, civil rights activist and speaker on television and radio," said Brian Jackson, chief operating officer of the Atlantic City Campus, in presenting the award.

James became pastor of the House of Prayer International in 2012, after being ordained and licensed at Jamieson Theological Seminary as an evangelist in 2001. Her religious life began in Sunday school as a child and continued through decades as a church officer and lay speaker. She and her late husband came to Stockton in 1972 and she "is as much an institution here at Stockton as Larry," said Jackson.

Donnetrice C. Allison, associate professor of both Communication Studies and Africana Studies, and Arleen C. Gonzalez, Esq., associate professor of Criminal Justice, each received merit awards.

Allison serves as coordinator of Africana Studies and has served as president of the CBFS. She is the vice president of the Faculty Senate. She was cited by alternate student trustee Ike

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Ejikeme as an inspiration. She has authored articles and presented at national and international conferences on hip hop culture and media portrayals of African Americans.

Gonzalez earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology at Stockton and was an active member of Los Latinos Unidos, a student group she later served as faculty advisor. She earned her law degree at Rutgers University, where she was the only Puerto Rican member of the graduating class. Her love of teaching led her back to Stockton, where she has taught for nearly 30 years.

Jessica Grullon ('09), graduate enrollment counselor and events coordinator, and Alexander C. Marino ('91), assistant to the provost for Atlantic City instructional sites, were recognized with distinguished alumni awards.

Grullon is a CARE mentor and designated school official for the Student and Exchange Visitor Program for international students and serves as the primary liaison to English Language Centers (ELS) and the Office of Global Engagement. Marino provides operational leadership for the Carnegie Center, Dante Hall Theater and the Noyes Arts Garage. He also oversees Lead Atlantic City Tomorrow, a citizen leadership training collaboration of Stockton and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA), and the Municipal Planning Board for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods, funded by the N.J. Attorney General's Office.

The Outstanding Stockton Club or Organization award went to the Graduate Student Council, with President Andrew Bishop, Vice President Horace Leung and Secretary Selena Sacchetti accepting.

Susan Davenport, executive vice president and chief of staff, received special recognition. She oversees the Offices of Development and Alumni Relations, University Relations & Marketing, Policy & Procedures, and the operations of the President's Office. Sonia V. Gonsalves, who was mistress of ceremonies, said Davenport "has always zeroed in on what action she can take to help the most under-represented people."

Gonsalves, who is professor of Psychology and director of Academic Assessment, was surprised by an award presented by President Harvey Kesselman, as the council recognized her as she nears retirement. "She always represents the best of faculty," he said. "I'm not sure there will ever be anyone who can fill your shoes."

Patricia W. Collins, president of the CBFS said, "Dr. Gonsalves was presented with the Special Tribute Award for her numerous years of service to the council and dedication to Stockton."

Since 1981, the CBFS has awarded \$294,000 to Stockton students, which includes \$19,000 for 21 students in the 2016-2017 academic year. Proceeds from the event support the CBFS Scholarship Endowment for Stockton undergraduate and graduate students.

Collins also said, "This year marks a historic year. The council was the first organization formed at the institution — in September 1971. We are so excited to celebrate our 45th anniversary as a group, and 35th year of awarding scholarship dollars to Stockton students."

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