

YMCA Gala Raises Funds for Kids

HOUSTON
CHRONICLE ARCHIVES

Paper:
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Date: MON 09/16/96

Section: HOUSTON

Page: 3

Edition: 2 STAR

YMCA gala raises funds for kids

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Staff.

CONTINUING a diversity of programs for youngsters was the reason behind Saturday's Tribute to Leadership Gala sponsored by the South Central YMCA, a focal point of Houston's black community since that Y's opening in 1919.

Some 650 attended the benefit at the Edwin Hornberger Conference Center which was expected to net \$40,000 for YMCA programs.

The proceeds are earmarked for child care, youth sports, day camp, swimming lessons, teen court, Bible study and parenting classes all offered at the YMCA at 3531 Wheeler Ave.

Receiving community leadership awards were two institutions -the Grizzard Foundation, represented Saturday by Suzanne Werner; and Conoco, represented by Juanita Garner. Those receiving individual leadership recognition were KCOH radio sports commentator Ralph Cooper; Dr. Bettye Davis-Lewis, owner and president of Diversified Health Systems Inc.; Texas Southern University professor and debate coach Thomas F. Freeman; city councilwoman Gracie Saenz; and the Rev. Juanita Rasmus .

Glenda Jemison took the spotlight as dinner chairwoman with tremendous support from her mother, Vivian Perkins of New Orleans. The latter hand made more than 100 Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy dolls, representing the Y's focus on children, which were used as colorful centerpieces, then auctioned at each table. In addition, she made two spectacular dolls for the silent auction.

Honorary chairs were Rice University professor and former Houston police chief Lee P. Brown and University of Houston vice president of student affairs and enrollment Elwyn Lee.

Heading the evening's program were emcees Pam Thorne and Hymer Perkins. Entertainment included the TSU debate team, which presented a tribute to the late Barbara Jordan; a live auction; and the Willowridge High School choir.

Guests dined on a buffet provided by concerns such as Bennie Ferrell Catering, Tony Vallone Restaurant Group, Carrabba's Italian Grill, Harlon's Bar B Que, Family Cafe and Cafe Annie.

In the crowd were Janice and Judge Carl Walker, Cora and Judson Robinson III, Lora and Dr. John Clemmons, Nancy and Larry Berkman, Mick Lewis, Jack McCown, Smith Perkins of New Orleans, Ron Jemison, A.J. Dickerson, Ada Edwards, Redick and Edith Edwards, Larry Hawkins, and Dorris Ellis.