

100 Black Men host Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham

Posted: Thursday, May 14, 2015 5:30 am

VALDOSTA — The 100 Black Men of Valdosta recently continued the tradition of featuring a noted speaker at its annual Black Tie Gala.

Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham delivered the keynote address to the group's 20th annual fete.

Benham noted that he delivered the address to the organization's first Black Tie Gala in the 1990s. The justice lauded the 100 for its long-term commitment to young people and implored others to employ time-honored, old-fashioned ways to inspire and motivate young people.

Benham was accompanied by his wife, Nell.

Benham was introduced by Gabriel Cloud, who referred to Benham as a giant amongst members of the legal profession. Cloud also noted that he was the first African-American in Georgia to win statewide election. Benham was appointed to the state Supreme Court in 1989 by Gov. Joe Frank Harris.

The event was catered by the culinary staff of South Georgia Medical Center.

Donald "Butch" Williams served as the master of ceremonies for the evening and entertained attendees with humor and a variety of African-American history facts. Entertainment for the evening was provided by saxophonist Kwame Holder whom Williams referred to as the next great jazz saxophonist.

As part of the annual event, the 100 presents three community service awards. The awards are presented to community members who make meaningful contributions to one of the number of programs sponsored by the 100 or who serve area youth through other organizations.

This year's recipients were Ida Nelson-Williams, Chad Pigford, and Mike Patel.

Roy W. Copeland, president of 100 Black Men of Valdosta and protege of Benham, provided closing remarks. He recognized all members and thanked those in attendance.



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Johnny Ball, Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham, Bernard Perry and Roy W. Copeland pose at the 100 Black Men of Valdosta Black Tie Gala.

Sponsors of the gala were First Federal Bank, Walmart stores, the Langdale College of Business Administration, Valdosta City School System, Southeastern Federal Credit Union, the City of Valdosta, Elkins Construction Company and 100 members Nathaniel Haugabrook and Jeremiah Lawton.