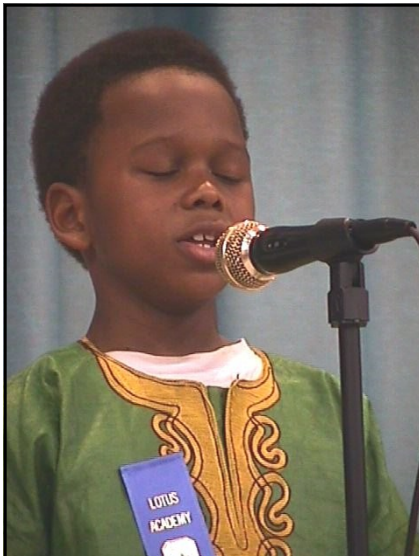


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Oratorical Contest XXI



“If we don’t know ourselves, not only are we a puzzle to ourselves; other people are also a puzzle to us as well.”
AMOS N. WILSON

19th Annual Lotus Oratorical Contest Winners, Highlights, and Thanks

This year's 2002 edition of the Lotus Academy Oratorical Contest was a fitting end to the month that is referred to as "Black History Month". It was a day to honor the memory of our African heroes and sheroes, and to appreciate our young people for their talent, energy, and commitment to the celebration of our history and heritage.

This year's event was held again in the auditorium of the Grover Washington Jr. Middle School. We were fortunate to have Earl Brown as our master of ceremonies for the event, and he did a fantastic job of spicing up the program and keeping everything moving at an energetic pace.

As always, the judges for the event were a distinguished group of professionals who took on the very difficult task of sorting out the excellent from the even more excellent. They were Robert Archie, a corporate attorney in our area; Pharalyn Dove, professor at Temple University; Dr. Lillian Safisha Gaskins-Green, museum educator at the Balch Institute of Ethnic Studies; Lloyd Ayers, a former parent and present deputy commissioner for the Philadelphia Fire Department; Oseye Omowale, chairman of the board of directors of the African Peoples' Action School in Trenton; Philip Lord, Esq., a community development attorney; Renee Whitby, administrator at the Harambee Charter School; and Arifah Shaheed, a director of the Metropolitan Career Center.

The Lotus teaching staff should be very proud of the work that they did in getting all of the students prepared.

The student performances at the twenty-first annual Oratorical Contest were as good as any we have seen over the years. The age group presentations were especially impressive for the teamwork that went into them. The recitation of the principles of the Order of Maat were very inspiring and contained much wisdom and food for thought.

The judges for the preliminary contest did a great job of getting this event started. Our gratitude goes out to Kweli Archie-Porter, Meryl Brown, Hikmah Gardiner, Charlene Glenn, Patti Griffin, James Ingram, Richard Isaac, Marquita Middleton, Pam Moss, Ajamu Nkosi, and Greg Ray.

Those Lotus students who were selected on Sunday by the judges for the trophies awarded to the finalists are as follows:

The winners for Lower School Poetry Competition, grades 1-2, were—

- 1st Prize: Trez Wootson
- 2nd Prize: Gian Ray
- 3rd Prize: Romaine Horton
- 4th Prize: Elan Fray

The winners for Lower School Poetry Competition, grades 3-4, were —

- 1st Prize: Yeshemebet Turner
- 2nd Prize: Shakuwrah Muhammad
- 3rd Prize: Kolonji Smith

The winners in the Upper School Original Speech Competition, grades 5-8, were—

- 1st Prize: Tenagne Turner
- 2nd Prize: Camilla Williams
- 3rd Prize: Romaine Hill

The winners in the Upper School Original Poetry Competition, grades 5-8, were—

- 1st Prize: Romaine Hill
- 2nd Prize: Jasmine Ingram
- 3rd Prize: Sheiree Brown

The winners for Upper School Poetry Competition, grades 5-8, were—

- 1st Prize: Kwame Watkins
- 2nd Prize: Tenagne Turner
- 3rd Prize: Janysha Taylor

The Oratorical Contest also represented an opportunity to honor one of the great men of our time, the Honorable David P. Richardson, Jr. He was one of our original judges, and always offered his help and guidance to Lotus. Dave was a powerful orator himself, and represented his legislative district and Black people in general with courage and conviction. All those who were present at the Oratorical Contest helped us ensure that though he may be missed, he will never be forgotten. In his name, the students did as much last Sunday to make Black history as they did to participate in it.

The Parent Partnership Program is going extremely well this trimester. There is another "In-Service Day" planned for March 23rd to do some collective work at the school.

Back To The Beginning

This article is designed to dispel the myth perpetrated by mainstream America that Africa was “The Dark Continent” and contributed nothing to world civilization. On the contrary, both African and European scholars have proven that Africa, the mother of all civilizations, has given birth to numerous scientific discoveries. Throughout history, African people from all parts of the world have made significant contributions in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology. Among the most significant was the development of the scientific method, which serves as the foundation upon which almost all key scientific advancements are built.

The scientific method (also known as the experimental method) was not invented by Sir Francis Bacon, but instead was invented and perfected by ancient Africans. Its development came about as a result of careful and accurate observations and record keeping done by Africans. African scientists observed nature for thousand of years. Long-term study enabled our ancestors to record mating cycles, animal migration, etc. The culture and economy of the Dogon people of Mali depended upon their observations and recording of stellar activity. In order to maintain a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature, many of the sacred holy days coincided with the rising and setting of certain stars.

Imhotep, the true father of medicine was the first to discover the medicinal properties of plants. Chemistry, the study of the utilization of natural substances and the creation of artificial ones comes from the word “Kemet”, the proper name for Egypt and the ancient civilization that was regarded as the

“seat of scientific knowledge.” Our ancestors used plants and dyes extensively. They studied the Earth’s surface and its surrounding water. Africans explored and discovered that the Earth contained many types of soils, minerals and sands. Scientists today have reported that ancient Africans had geological knowledge so thorough that even their extraction techniques for rocks and minerals were very complex.

Ancient Africans were the first to explore and investigate the mysteries of the sun’s light and shadows. They were the first to make clocks, sundials, and calendars, which were all used to keep track of time. Our ancestors learned much about sound through the creation of elaborate musical instruments.

African scientist observed and recorded the mysteries of the skies and their relationship to the weather. They observed changes in vegetation growth cycles and developed gardening techniques based on weather changes and seasonal cycles. These observations gave birth to the science of agriculture.

Timbuktu, Mali, Songhai, and Kemet all had great institutions of knowledge and established foundations for all civilizations that followed. It is from these institutions that ancient Africans obtained extensive knowledge of the human body and were masters of healing. They wrote hundreds of medical books, and specialized in surgery, bone setting, dentistry, care of the eyes, and in mummification.

Our ancestors, in order to enhance their survival and improve their livelihood, invented tool technology. They invented the six simple machines: the lever, the wheel and axle, the pulley, the screw, wedge, and the inclined plane.

The genetic blueprint for the continuation of our scientific advancement lives in each and every one of us. We must use the methods and examples that our ancestors left us to solve the myriad of problems that plague Africans throughout the Diaspora. For it is time for us to stop depending upon others to do for us what we must do for ourselves.

The foundation has been laid. Let us not use our great legacy for the annual science exposition and then shelve it until next year. Science is used to identify and find the answers to problems. This is our duty, our aim, our goal, our obligation, and our destiny. Always remember that knowledge is only powerful if and when it is properly applied.

Lotus Academy Science Expo

The planning and preparation for the annual exposition of scientific knowledge and application is very much underway. The students have begun work on their projects, and under the watchful eye of Mothura Marcia (who also wrote the excellent article on this page), they have started to bring them into being.

All parents are encouraged to help us make these science projects high priorities for all of the students. All individual and class projects will be shown and judged at the Science Expo. It will be held on Wednesday, April 24th, in the school auditorium. Judging will be done during the school day, and all parents and the public are invited to see this quality scientific work at 7:00 p.m. on that date.

Annual Fashion Show Is April 6th



The Lotus Academy will be presenting its fourth annual fashion show on Saturday, April 6th, from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. It will feature beautiful clothing and accessories (both contemporary and African-centered), professional models, and vendors who will offer some quality items at bargain prices. The show will take place at the North American Motor Inn on City Line Avenue in Philadelphia.

The price of a ticket is \$25.00 (\$10.00 for children), and includes a full buffet lunch. A ticket also automatically enters all those who attend in a raffle for some great prizes. Of course, every Lotus parent has already paid for one ticket as a part of the annual activity fee that is charged to each household. This is an event that you do not want to miss. Please call the office if you have any questions.

National BAEO Members Visit The Lotus Academy



The Lotus Academy was honored on Thursday, February 28th, to be one of the schools that was on the BAEO visiting list. BAEO is an acronym for the Black Alliance for Educational Options organization, and it is dedicated to promoting vouchers, home schooling, private schools, charters, and all other responsible efforts to offer the children in our communities viable alternatives to the public school system when that system fails to deliver quality education

BAEO was having its annual convention in Philadelphia from February 28th to March 3rd, and visiting some of the non-public schools in the area was at the top of its agenda. Lotus made a very impressive presentation as the sixteen visitors had an opportunity to see our opening for the whole school. Two of our Oratorical Contest winners (Gian Ray and Kwame Watkins) repeated their fine performances, the Vishna Age Group recited the principles of the Order of Maat, and the entire group joined Lotus in singing the South African national anthem.

Our visitors also had a chance to tour the school, and to visit some of our classes. At a gathering after the visit in their center city hotel, they shared with the audience how thoroughly impressed they were with the Lotus Academy, its teachers, and its students. It was a worthwhile experience for everyone involved.

“The only thing white people have that Black people need, or should want, is power—
and no one holds power forever”
JAMES BALDWIN