







Subscribe Now | Pay Bill | Place an Ad | Contact Customer Service | Contact The Detroit News  RSS | E-mail Newsletters | PDA | E-Edition

**The Detroit News**  
**detnews.com**

Archive: [Wed](#) | [Thu](#) | [Fri](#) | [Sat](#) | [Sun](#) | [Mon](#) | [Tue](#) | [Today](#)

Home | News | Local | Sports | Autos | Business | Entertainment | Lifestyle | **Opinion** | Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Real Estate | For Rent | Shopping

Editorial | Columnists | Editorial Cartoons | Blogs | Forums | CyberSurveys

**Columnists**  Columnists RSS Feed  e-mail headlines  Text alerts  On your PDA 

*(The main content area of the page is currently blank.)*

Print Email Comment Read Comments Text Size: Save and Share

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

**Chuck Bennett: Society**

## Black-tie Unity Festival celebrates African-American achievements



The Unity Festival Who's Who black-tie gala put on by the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit was an evening of touching moments and special touches. A celebration of the achievements of African Americans, around two dozen prominent and high-profile Metro Detroiters were honored at the event that took place Feb. 28 at the Park West Gallery in Southfield.

Touching moments included an emotional acceptance speech from WXYZ news anchor Diana Lewis after receiving her award, and an amazing performance from entertainer Vonne, her first since recovering from a stroke she suffered late last year. Among the special touches were a variety of singers placed throughout the gallery singing soft, soulful music. Particularly impressive was a young man named Wilmonie, who delivered his love songs in a soothing, Luther Vandross kind of style.

About 150 people attended the event, paying \$50 each, enjoying a spread of various cuisines from local restaurants. The event was chaired by entertainment consultant Gisele Caver and musician Paul J. Miles.

Miles was joined as emcee by a young University of Detroit communications student named Whitney Williams, who did a very impressive job introducing the honorees, which included restaurateur Frank Taylor, Southfield Mayor Brenda Lawrence, State Rep. Jimmy Womack, television news reporter Al Allen and entertainer Ortheia Barnes-Kennerly.

Advertisement

The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit dedicates itself to working with American and foreign-born residents on social problem solving, education and acceptance.

*Chuck Bennett is a Metro Detroit freelance writer and editor of [www.the-real-scoop.com](http://www.the-real-scoop.com), an online magazine. You can reach him at [chuckbennett@hotmail.com](mailto:chuckbennett@hotmail.com).*

Article Tools: Print Email Comment Read Comments Save and Share

### In the Blogs...

#### American Idol Blog



**Karen Hepner:** On tonight's "American Idol," Michael Sarver said it's all about fun, but actually it's a singing competition and about song choice. During country night, ... [Continued](#)

#### Detroit City Hall Insider

#### MORE IN: COLUMNISTS

- ▶ Daniel Howes: AIG bonuses should outrage Detroiters - 03/17/2009
- ▶ Angelique S. Chengelis: Sizing up the NCAA Tournament field: Angelique's picks: Expect a No. 1 and three No. 2 seeds to reach Motown - 03/17/2009
- ▶ Bob Wojnowski: Detroit players give U-M a new life -

**Santiago Esparza:** The City Hall Insider caught up with Council President Monica Conyers over the weekend, and couldn't help but notice the look she gave her hubby, U.S. Rep. John ...  
[Continued](#)



**MichMoms Blog**

**Kate Storey:** I came across an intriguing Web site the other day - Teething Bling, which is marketed as practical jewelry for moms of teething babies. Essentially, it is a ... [Continued](#)

[More blogs](#)

- ▶ 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Dave Dye:** NHL Forum: Personnel pressure on the Florida Panthers - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Laura Berman:** Common sense is lacking at AIG - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Neal Rubin:** Blood, sweat & 'Sweeney Todd' - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Dr. Molly O'Shea:** Ask the Pediatrician: Herpangina (it's not what you think) - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Tom Greenwood:** MDOT courtesy patrol aids 35K - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Mekeisha Madden Toby:** 'Mr. Belvedere' is released by Shout - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Chuck Bennett:** Society: Black-tie Unity Festival celebrates African-American achievements - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Jeanne Phillips:** Dear Abby: Medical diagnosis can ease stress for mom, son - 03/17/2009
- ▶ **Dr. Paul Donohue:** Your health: Spleen is an integral part of the body's immune defense system - 03/17/2009

ADVERTISEMENT

**Most Popular**

[Most Read](#) [E-Mailed](#) [Printed](#)

- ▶ Lions GM Mayhew stays mum on Cutler
- ▶ A heap of stimulus: 'Cash for clunkers' bill could jumpstart new auto sales
- ▶ Oakland says Cobo deal sour
- ▶ Red Wings still safe at home
- ▶ Teens 'didn't get to grow up'
- ▶ Tigers' staff ace cements his role
- ▶ Madison Heights school chief's 'wasteland' comments rile DPS
- ▶ Woman was 'lost soul,' family says
- ▶ WJBK drops anchorwoman Lazarus
- ▶ Will Wolverines zone out? U-M has tried to

**Site Index**

**Essentials:**

- Home
- Page One PDF
- Sports PDF
- Weather
- Horoscope
- Lottery
- Crossword
- Sudoku
- Contact Us
- Multimedia:**
- Photos/Video
- News Photos
- Autos Photos
- Audio Galleries

**News:**

- Nation/World
- Politics/Govt.
- Elections
- Religion
- Local/State:**
- Metro/State
- Wayne
- Oakland
- Macomb
- Livingston
- Commuting
- Schools
- Michigan History
- Charlie LeDuff

**Autos:**

- Autos Insider
- Drive
- Joyrides
- Auto Shows
- Auto Reviews
- Auto Photos
- Autos Talk
- Test Drive blog
- Business:**
- Business News
- Personal
- Finance
- Stocks
- Technology

**Sports:**

- Sports
- Lions/NFL
- Pistons/NBA
- Red Wings/NHL
- Tigers/MLB
- Shock/WNBA
- MSU
- U-M
- More Colleges
- High Schools
- Golf
- Motor Sports
- More Sports
- Scoreboards

**Entertainment:**

- Entertainment
- Music
- Calendar
- Movies
- Movie Finder
- TV Listings
- TV/Radio
- Restaurants
- Wine Report
- Celebs
- Performing Arts
- Puzzles/Games

**Forums:**

- Forums Index
- Lions Talk
- Wings Talk
- Pistons Talk
- Tigers Talk
- Ask John Niyi
- Big Ten Talk
- News Talk
- Autos Talk
- Faith Talk
- Opinions:**
- Editorials
- Letter to Editor
- Blogs

**Lifestyle:**

- Lifestyle
- Homestyle
- Food
- Recipe Finder
- Health/Fitness
- Fashion/Shopping
- Families/Parenting
- Travel/Recreation
- MichMoms
- MichDads
- Other**
- Special Reports

**Special Reports**



**Fifty fabulous years of Motown**

Motown Records, one of the most iconic sounds of the 20th century, was founded in Detroit in 1959 by Berry Gordy. - Jan. 7, 2009

▶ **Rep. John D. Dingell, America's longest-serving Congressman** - Feb. 6, 2009

[Video](#)  
[Photo Store](#)

[Obituaries](#)  
[Death Notices](#)

[Columnists](#)  
[Cybersurveys](#)

- ▶ [Detroit in transition - Sep. 11, 2008](#)
  - ▶ [The inauguration of Barack Obama, 44th U.S. president - Dec. 4, 2008](#)
  - ▶ [Continuing coverage: Auto industry in crisis - Nov. 13, 2008](#)
- [More Special Reports](#)** ▶▶

© Copyright 2009 The Detroit News. All rights reserved.

[Terms of Service](#) | [Contact](#) | [Help](#)