



National Black Deaf Advocates

2008 Southwestern Regional Black Deaf Advocates Conference

Second Biennial Southwestern Regional BDA Conference
Arkansas School for the Deaf
Little Rock, AR
August 1-2, 2008

Report submitted by Glenn Anderson

Over 70 people gathered in Little Rock August 1-2, 2008 for the Southwest Regional Black Deaf Advocates (SWBDA) Conference. Hosted by Little Rock Deaf Advocates (LRBDA), the conference was held on the campus of the Arkansas School for the Deaf. The theme was, “Empowering Our Black Deaf Community.”

Member chapters in the SWBDA region include Dallas, Houston, Little Rock, and New Orleans. Everyone was delighted to see several members of New Orleans BDA (NOBDA) at the conference. NOBDA members received an ovation and warm welcome since the chapter was in January 2008 as the city of New Orleans continued its recovery and rebuilding from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Conference activities included a welcome reception on Friday evening, a general meeting with reports from the SWBDA regional representative (Glenn Anderson, LRBDA) and the alternate representative (Cathy Ware, DBDA), afternoon workshops, catered lunch and dinner, and an evening entertainment program. The following workshops were presented: “Miss Black Deaf America Pageant—What NBDA Chapters Need to Know” by Florence Pratt (Miss NBDA Pageant Coordinator) and Jonelle Thames (Miss Black Deaf America, 2007-09); “Enhancing Your Experience with Wireless & Video Communications Technology” by Tommy Walker (Sprint Relay); and “Empowering Our Black Deaf Community: What are Our Concerns? What Do We Need to Do?” (Panel Presentation moderated Glenn Anderson & Evon Black; participants included NBDA Vice-President Benro Ogunyipe and Secretary Cory Parker along with officers from each of the four SWBDA chapters).

During the general meeting, Cathy Ware of DBDA was elected SWBDA regional representative for 2008-2010 and Ella Irby of LRBDA was elected alternate representative. New Orleans was selected to host the next SWBDA regional conference in 2010.

Conference participants were treated to a terrific evening of entertainment by Nathie Marbury of Austin, TX and Evon Black of Birmingham, AL. Both have performed

their own “one-woman” shows in a variety of cities throughout the U.S. for many years. Their performance during the SWBDA, however, was the first time they had ever performed together as a tandem. Their performance was titled, “An Evening with NAVON.” They shared stories of their life experiences and performed deaf comedy, ASL poetry, and ABC stories. Evon Black performed a terrific song titled, “Deaf Education Rap.’ It was an enjoyable evening filled with lots of laughs.

Sponsors of the conference included Arkansas Relay Services/Sprint, Sorenson Communications, CSDVRS, Arkansas School for the Deaf, NBDA, and Arkansas Association of the Deaf.