

**BWHAA-USA General Meeting & Elections**  
**17<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, Tri-state Chapter**  
**St. George's Episcopal Church**  
**Hempstead, New York**  
**Saturday July 4, 2009**

The National Chairman, Handel Diggs called the meeting to order @ 12:40pm EST and opening prayers led by National Chaplain, Eudora Gardiner. She asked for a moment of silence for fallen Spartans and bereaved Spartans. In a brief invocation, she encouraged every Spartan to give God the Glory even in the worst situations of life. She prayed that the items covered during the meeting yield fruitful results.

1. **Welcome of Delegates/Remarks:** Gudrun Harris, President of the Tristate Chapter welcomed members & friends of the association to Convention 2009. She gave a brief overview of convention activities and expectations. She then pledged her chapter's cooperation in working with National and everyone to help make the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention a successful one. She concluded by inviting everyone to the Chairman's ball and encouraged on time attendance. National Chairman Handel Diggs in brief remarks, joined President Harris in welcoming everyone and thanked them for their sacrifices. The National Chairman then sought a motion to have the agenda adopted for the meeting. Wilhelmina Wilson and Gudrun Harris moved and seconded the motion respectively.
2. **Reports:**
  - a. **Reading of 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Minutes:** The National Chairman, Handel Diggs requested a three minute silent read of minutes and then sought a motion to adopt the minutes, make corrections/additions if any. The motion was made by Budu Shannon and seconded by Bendu Hansford. After motion, three corrections/additions or recommendations were made to these sections of the minutes: **Venue of 2011 convention, expenditures/Awards and Teachers Incentives.** The minutes were adopted to formed part of archives. The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention minutes has been updated to reflect the following: **venue for 2011 convention to be decided @ 2009 session after item ten on the agenda, the Expenditure/Awards session reflects "Questioned" and Teachers Incentives changed to Teachers Upgrade.**
  - b. **Program:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice National Chair, Darren Wilkins and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice National Chair, Eugenia Jelani via an overhead projector, detailed current infrastructure plans/work at the school in Liberia as part of Project Spartan Pride. Darren indicated that his trip and tour of BWHES showed the need and urgency to give the school all of the support we can. He also provided the five tasks he was sent to Liberia to perform. Darren answered several questions from the body relating to the project. Eugenia emphasized that the sacrifices and donations made by the membership are restoring the pride of our Alma Mater. At the end of the presentation, Darren and Eugenia were given a huge round of applause and thanked by the association through the National Chairman for such great work at the school.
  - c. **Financial:** National Financial Secretary, Yvonne Hansford presented the financial statement covering the period of July 2008- June 2009 and 2009 -2010 budget. The financials were accepted and approved by the convention.
  - d. **Membership:** David Moore and Charles Johnson were appointed as Chairman and Co-Chairman respectively for the Membership Committee of the association. Chairman David Moore encouraged the participation of all interested Spartans to this committee.

**3. State of the Association:** National Chairman Handel Diggs in his State of the Association address provided seven bullet points capturing the 2009 highlights of the association:

- a) Produced two quarterly financial statements
- b) Produced annual financial report at convention
- c) Funded \$17,000.00 in teachers salary upgrade
- d) Implemented Smart Tech Project at BWHEs
- e) Generated over \$11,000.00 in Capital Campaign dollars
- f) record-breaking 68 pre registrations
- g) Maintained 15 scholarships at BWHEs

Report also highlighted overview on chapters, capital campaign, public relation, benevolence, audit, Smart Tech project, Teachers Salary upgrade, scholarship, BWHEs and COPSP (committee for project Spartan Pride). The National Chairman 2009-2010 initiatives highlighted the following: Project Spartan Pride, additional five scholarships, 5/500-increase in convention registration in five years to five hundred, Hall of Fame Awards-two additional awards- individual banners displayed at convention-for Hall of Famers and photography donated by Hall of Famer, Mohamedu F. Jones to future Hall of Famers, Alumni Wall Plaque and Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOP).

In conclusion, National Chairman Diggs saluted his National Officers for their dedication, commitment and sacrifice and that they represent the finest examples of Spartan pride. He also acknowledged the sage counsel of former principals, Father Johnson and Mr. Bedell. He thanked the membership for their commitment and sacrifices, indicating they are the pillars of sustaining BWHEA making it the epitome of alumni association. In conclusion, he challenged the body that this is our time and our moment; let us restore the pride of Sparta: "If Not Now, Then When, If Not Us, Then Who"? Budu Shannon moved that the annual report form part of the archive but quickly pointed out based on report received and different initiatives relating to funds being disbursed and upgrade of teachers' salary, recommended a letter be sent to the Board Chairman in Liberia indicating the association in the United States is a major stake holder of the school. He thanked National Chairman Diggs for such remarkable leadership.

**4. Adoption of Resolution:** Article IX Nominating Committee was presented for adoption. This resolution requests the National Chairman with the expressed approval of the board during a meeting, shall appoint a Nominating Committee no later than six months before convention in the year in which elections shall be held. This committee will consists of five members in good standing with the association and must be members of at least three different chapters. This committee will solicit information from candidates whose names are submitted as nominees including resume, photos and other information that present candidates under consideration to the members of the association. The committee will publicize the slate of nominees in writing through the newsletter, website and direct electronic mail no less than fourteen days before the election. Gudrun Harris motioned for adoption of this resolution and it was seconded by several Spartans.

**5. Other Business:**

- a) **Pledge Time:** Budu Shannon indicated there was **\$6450** made in pledges from the CC committee solicitation. He used the time to encourage every Spartan to make good of their pledges and thanked those who have already paid. He quickly indicated it is an ongoing process and henceforth every Spartan should be able to contribute to some level of giving in the year.
- b) **Honorarium:** Nee Allison suggested that honorariums be abolished since the school has little funds for operation. The National Chairman indicated that before his term, honorariums were disbursed to National Officers and Chapter Presidents three times a year for convention and two board meetings. He recommended and the Executive Committee approved one honorarium annually at the in-coming convention host chapter Board Meeting. Budu Shannon made an appeal to the body in reference to the honorarium stating "understanding the times, these people are doing their best; let's continue to encourage our leaders". He then made a motion for honorarium to

be continued and Dora Ernst seconded the motion. The matter was voted and the vote was carried to keep honorarium for board meeting: forty seven Spartans voted for the motion, three opposed and one abstained.

- c) **Issue of Concern:** Spartan Joanna Richards from the Boston, MA area made an appeal to have the Boston area Spartans merged with the Rhode Island Chapter and have a new name as New England Chapter. The president of Rhode Island Chapter was in agreement with the merger, but Chairman Diggs asked the chapter to make decision and get back to the body via board meeting teleconference in April 2010.
  
  - d) **Convention 2010, Georgia Chapter:** the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in 2010 will be hosted by the Georgia Chapter under the leadership of Gail Farngalo. The National Chairman asked Spartans to come out in 2010 and party with a purpose while they give back to BWHES. He also pointed out the next two years convention hosts: Rhode Island Chapter hosts 19<sup>th</sup> Convention in 2011 and Midwest Chapter 20<sup>th</sup> Convention in 2012.
  
  - e) **Elections of National Officers:** National Chairman Diggs appointed a five- member committee to manage the elections for new corp. of officers. Those appointed were H. Kwaku Addy, Comfort Rennie, Joseph Walker, Gail Farngalo and Massa David. With current National Officers renominated and no opposition, a white ballot casting confirmed the will of the membership and all officers were reelected for another two year term; 2009 to 2011. Elected officers were:
    - ❖ Handel Diggs- National Chairman,
    - ❖ Eugenia Roberts -1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson
    - ❖ Darren Wilkins-2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson
    - ❖ Stephen Taylor- National Treasurer
    - ❖ Yvonne Hansford- National Financial Secretary
      - ❖ Famatta Zeon-National Secretary
      - ❖ Eudora Gardiner-National Chaplain
6. **Closing Prayers:** Ciata Diggs, Chaplain of the Tri-State Chapter closed the meeting with a word of prayer thanking God for a beautiful deliberation and display of Spartan spirit. The meeting was adjourned by National Chairman Handel Diggs at 4:26PM EST.

**Compiled, Recorded & Submitted By: Famatta Zeon  
National Secretary, BWHAA-USA**