

Seniors make debut, win scholarships at Cotillion

BY SUSAN STEINMUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Kimberly Love, dazzling in a white dress and with baby's breath in her hair, added the title of Miss Debutante 2000 to her accomplishments recently.

Love, 18, of Auburn Hills, however, felt like a winner even before she claimed the title at the 28th Annual Black Pearls Debutante Scholarship Cotillion, held at the Novi Hilton.

"It was a surprise and a great honor," said Love, a student at Bloomfield Township's Marian High School, of earning the title. "But the way I always looked at it is, just by being in the cotillion you are a winner, because it's a lot of work. Also, all the girls, we're friends for life now. I will always remember it. I had a great time."

Love was among 20 young women, all seniors at area high schools, who competed for the title and money for college at the

event, attended by nearly 700 family members and friends. Love received about \$17,000 from her participation, which will help pay her tuition when she enters Clark Atlanta University in the fall. She aspires to be a lawyer, and eventually, a judge.

Karla Hudson of Bloomfield Hills, a student at Bloomfield Hills Lahser High School, was named first runner up. Deitra Officer, a Pontiac Northern High School student, and Ashleigh Kristina Toples of West Bloomfield, a Mercy High School student, were tied for the second runner-up position.

Focus on education

The annual event is sponsored by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Theta Lambda Omega Chapter. The sorority was founded in 1908 at Howard University, and is the oldest black sorority of college trained women.

The primary focus of the cotillion, which has awarded over \$600,000 in scholarships, is academic achievement and scholarship; it also teaches social skills.

Each debutante completes a list of requirements, which include a community service project, an oral response and a written essay. Debutantes also sell advertising for the cotillion yearbook, of which most of the money each debutante collects goes toward their continuing education.

Love raised over \$21,000 in yearbook advertising money and contributions, of which she received \$14,000. The scholarships she received were in addition to that money.

The winning debutante is the young woman with the most points tallied in all categories.

"It was very competitive," said Love. "We started in December. You have to be willing to make the practices and make time to

do what they want you to do. You have to make the deadlines. It's very hectic, but it taught me to organize my time."

The school and community accomplishments of the young women are also considered. Their resumes, announced at the event, include items such as National Honor Society membership, captaining of sports teams, and volunteering for church, school and community service organizations.

"These are very bright young ladies," said Janice Simmons of Rochester Hills, who served as gala co-chairwoman this year, with Frances Walker of Detroit. The event chairwoman was Laura Williams of Troy.

Their escorts, dashing in white top hats, white suits, and carrying white canes, also earned scholarship money based on autobiographical information presented to event supporters.

Travis Moore, a student at St. Mary's Preparatory, won the most scholarship money: \$19,000. He is the son of Pontiac Mayor Walter Moore, one of the dignitaries who spoke at the event.

Fond memories

For former debutantes attending the evening brought back fond memories.

"I was a debutante in 1991," said Tiaann Burns-Whitehead of Clarkston. "I won a scholarship. It was an honor for my father and my mother to present me.



BRUSH PHOTO BY DEBRA McLAUGHLIN

Preparing: Deitra Officer of Pontiac Northern High School and Latren Marshall of Mercy High School in Farmington Hills get ready for their grand entrance.

That was special, just like when I got married. If it wasn't for this," said Rogers, who sat at a table with Simmons, her aunt.

Other debutantes were: Naomi Edwards, Rochester Adams High School, Lavette Farmer, West Bloomfield High School, Adrienne Hall, Rochester Adams High School, Kristen Irby, Troy High School, Erica Terrell, Lahser High School.

"I probably wouldn't be going there, if it wasn't for this," said Rogers, who sat at a table with Simmons, her aunt.

Other debutantes were: Naomi Edwards, Rochester Adams High School, Lavette Farmer, West Bloomfield High School, Adrienne Hall, Rochester Adams High School, Kristen Irby, Troy High School, Erica Terrell, Lahser High School.



Officers: West Oaks Junior Civitan charter officers: Cassie Cook, treasurer; Caitlin Chamberlin, secretary; Kirsten Kamerman, vice president; Alexandra Stankovich, president; and advisers Deb Conroy and Michele Meyers.

Junior Civitans hold charter ceremony

On May 22, the official charter ceremony for members of West Oaks Junior Civitans was held at Beechview Elementary in Farmington Hills. Junior Civitan is a community service organization for young people.

A sixth grader at East, charter president Alexandra Stankovich, accepted the charter, banner, gavel and official bell on behalf of the new organization comprised of 21 members ranging from fifth grade through high school.

In attendance were family and friends of new charter members and Ron Kulas, Michigan district junior Civitan chair; Barb Polich, Michigan district Civitan governor; as well as the current president and more than 20 members of the West Oaks adult division.

The group has spent over a

year growing their membership and enjoying community service projects such as a bottle/can drive benefit for Mott Childrens Hospital, a bowl-a-thon for Special Olympics, and performing a comedy play for senior citizens and assisted living homes.

Under the guidance of adult West Oak Civitan members Michele Meyers and Deb Courty, these junior members have provided these services as well as dressing in character costumes to collaborate in various "reading programs" presented by the senior organization.

Sponsored by Civitan International, it affords opportunities to join other young people in pro-

viding aid to those with disabilities, assisting the less fortunate, promoting environmental, speaking out against drug abuse, and providing school assistance in some areas.

Charter officers are Alexandra Stankovich of Farmington Hills, president; Kirsten Kamerman of Commerce, vice president; Caitlin Chamberlin of Farmington Hills, secretary; and Cassie Cook of Farmington Hills, treasurer.

For more information regarding services or membership in either the West Oaks Junior Civitan Club or its parent organization for adults, call Meyers at 248-428-5046.

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