

WFWP Little Rock, AR, Hosts First Official Bridge of Peace Event

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December 18, 2017



Chief of Staff from Mayor Mark Stodola's office presents Mrs. Selle with key to the city

Arkansas had its first Bridge of Peace event in Little Rock, on Monday, December 18, 2017 at the Hilton Garden Inn. Fifty-three people participated in the event which began with a buffet dinner. Seven guests drove up from Dallas including Christine Cherutich, WFWP Chairwoman of Dallas and also our District Pastor. Our WFWP Memphis Chairwoman came and brought a guest.

The Chief of Staff from Mayor Mark Stodola's office presented to our National President for WFWP USA the key to the city. Mrs. Selle mentioned to us that this is the first time she has ever been presented with such a key, so we were happy for her that she could receive this recognition on behalf of our Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

We showed the video on the vision and mission of the international work of the Women's Federation for World Peace. It is so inspiring and gives such an in-depth understanding of the heart and work of WFWP. Everyone was deeply moved and inspired by it and it also set the perfect stage for the President's powerpoint presentation on WFWP. Mrs. Selle went in depth about the goals and vision for 2018 to 2020 and our hope for this nation and our world. She emphasized deeply about the importance of the mother's heart and compassion for her children, which is the driving force behind all activities of WFWP for bringing about a world of peace and goodness. She endeavored most sincerely to enable those present to understand the heart and motivation of our Founder. She also shared her desire for our world and about her own investments to see that vision become a reality, even sometimes single-handedly.



Brittany Taylor presenting Mrs. Selle with Arkansas Traveler's Certificate

Brittany Taylor of Philander Smith, one of the oldest African American colleges in America, presented an Arkansas Traveler's Certificate to Mrs. Selle from the Governor of Arkansas, making her an Ambassador for Arkansas to the whole world.



Linda Rowe Thomas the Founder of Designing Fashions Foundation

The three ladies who were presented with the HerStory Awards had incredible stories of courage, perseverance, and overcoming great obstacles. Linda Rowe Thomas, the Founder of Designing Fashions Foundation was a burn survivor as a child in a house fire. She lost her sister and the doctor told her mother that if Linda survived, she would not have much of a life. Linda's mother replied, "You don't know the God I serve." With that, she raised Linda with unconditional love and a belief that she was so valuable and had the potential to do or be anything she wanted in life. It is that belief her mother had and the love that her mother showed her that inspired Linda to develop a nationally known fashion line. Linda said that

the most rewarding thing in her life is being a mother. She said that the most important thing one can do in life is serve others.



Anna Beth Gorman, Executive Director of the Women's Foundation of Arkansas

Anna Beth Gorman, Executive Director of the Women's Foundation of Arkansas has worked hard to enable girls and women to succeed. The launching pad for her involvement in the Women's Foundation was her involvement in the Girl Scouts. Her motto and inspiration for her life is the Girl Scout Motto: "To serve God and my country, to help people at all times, and to live by the Girl Scout law." She says God directed her life to be become a public servant to help women and girls.

The third recipient was Joyce Raynor, the Executive Director of Healing Hearts and Spirits. Her life was completely altered when her son was killed by a gang member. She left her job and with her own money, set up a non-profit organization to help crime survivors and to reach at-risk youth and to help those dealing with abuse at home. She emphasized the importance of prayer above anything else: it took long time to reach a point of being able to forgive her son's killer, but it was prayer that brought her to that point. She emphasized that to do this work of healing and reconciliation, one needs patience, persistence, and perseverance. Ms Raynor had received many awards and recognitions, but said that this one, the HerStory Award, has meant the most to her. Through surgeries and accidents that badly affected her health she has always fought her way back to serve again. She has such a deep love for people and it is this love that comes from God that motivates her to keep going.



Joyce Raynor, the Executive Director of Healing Hearts and Spirits

The evening ended with a beautiful Bridge of Peace ceremony between Christian and Muslim women who were inspired to become sisters.

A key person in making this event happen was Sharl Hill, who works for the State of Arkansas. She took responsibility for so many aspects of the program that made it a success. She invited Anjerrio Kameron, a local poet, motivational speaker, and activist to come and recite a poem he had written in honor of the HerStory awardees (please see below for poem). It was deeply moving and stirring, and captured the spirit of the event and occasion in a most perfect way. Needless to say that all women were visibly moved and inspired by those words.. The spirit was very high during the entire evening, and left Little Rock with a solid foundation to work with in Arkansas

Poem from Anjerrio Kameron of Many Hand's One Circle (MHOC)

The poem I wrote (just a simple word of love) for WFWP USA in reflection of the Bridge of Peace Program, which was blessed by God and received with love.



"But it was I who was more than blessed to see not only the most beautiful faces of nature, but also the most powerful and loving forces of nature. The Bridge of Peace Program should anchor its recognition to the ceremonial tributes that decorate the years with hope and promise.

I left there with a different respect and understanding of the tremendous contributions and impact that women have had and are continuing to have in the advancements of our contentious world. May God continue to bless this unifying mission with the rapid success of peace and prosperity."

Reflection from Annie Abrams, noted Civil Rights Activist in Little Rock

(Annie first became an Ambassador for Peace many years ago and has worked together closely with WFWP since then. She went to Washington, D.C. to lobby on behalf of the Japanese members being deprogrammed in Japan.)

"As a member of WFWP, I pledge myself to conquer hate with love. The ceremony Monday night strengthened my commitment to use love to cross all the bridges to eradicate hate. I cherish the friendship with the women at the event for a time like this. This event was a charge for me to keep going to bring peace."

Reflection by S. Kashala, young woman participant

"My experience at the WFWP Arkansas Bridge of Peace Ceremony was very positive. Myself and a handful of other young men and women were tasked with taking registration and taking photos and setting up sound and so on. Because we got to see the inner workings of the night's program, I think we were nervous as to how it would all pan out. We were nervous if there would be enough food and seats because more people came than we had reserved for! However, the event was a success and it was empowering to see and hear so many influential stories.

My favorite part of the night was the presenting of the "HerStory Awards"! All three women were so grateful to be there and I loved hearing the stories of these women who, on the outside, looked no different from any other, but were permeating such great light internally. It wasn't until the end of the event when everyone gathered to take pictures that you could truly feel the warm heart of the 50+ women who were in attendance.

It was a great event and I'm glad we could pull it off for the sake of God and our Founders, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband, Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon, and for the sake of mobilizing women of all generations in this world."

Reflection by Linda Rowe Thomas, Executive Director of Designing Hope Foundation, a 501c3 Non Profit (www.designing-hope.org)

"I was truly honored to be a part of the 25th anniversary celebration of Women's Federation of World Peace. Though I was being awarded, I too was moved and empowered by the many strong, courageous, and compassionate women that have come before me to build such a remarkable platform for women.

Thank you for sharing my story and for honoring my mother's light that continues to shine through me to inspire others around the world."

