

rites of passage 2006



Figure 1. Dr. Bertha Maxwell Roddey, 20th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

On May 5, 2006, the GEMS and Betty Shabazz Academy participated in the Oak Ridge Alumnae Chapter annual Rites of Passage Program. The guest convener was **Dr. Bertha M. Roddey, 20th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.** Featured artists included the Kuumba Drummers, soloist Soror Sylvia Rupert, and pianist Rev. Ronald Fowlkes. The Rites of Passage ceremonies were conducted in the Reggio-Lynch Chapel located on the grounds of the Alex Haley Farm. This property is owned by the Children's Defense Fund (www.childrensdefense.org).

The Delta Academy participants that were promoted to the Growing and Empowering Myself Successfully (GEMS) program are Alexis Brown, Christen Donald, Keanna Fajemirokun, Autumn Gipson, Quesha McClanahan, and Kendra Wells. Shawna Cotham was recognized for her participation in the program. The Delta Academy is a mentoring program designed to offer opportunities to middle school young ladies, ages 11 -14, to gain access to math, science, leadership, and technology experiences. The Academy Directors were Sorors Yolanda Childs, Martha Foye, and LaShun Johnson.



Figure 2. Delta Betty Shabazz Academy

The Growing & Empowering Myself Successfully (GEMS) participant that was promoted to womanhood was Jon'Nesha Stevens. The other participants that were recognized were Ronita Adams, Ethel Bonner, Heather Chisholm, Sharlita Green, Cedricka Harris, Kristen Holt, Joslyn Johnson, Sarah Lewis, Ijanique Mitchell, Tyisha Naeem, Morgan Nelson, Shakoya Orum, Brittany Redmond, and Destiny Turner. The GEMS directors were Sorors Jeanne Bonner, Ursula Henderson, and Mary Willis.

The Rites of Passage event was well attended by the community. A DVD of the event is held in the archives for viewing.



Figure 3. GEMS