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Robinson steps down as Rahway NAACP president

Will devote his time to another cause

WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING... That would be John J. Robertson's action plan if he had his years with the Rahway NAACP to do over again. He resigned as the local branch president effective Dec. 31 to devote his time to fund-raising efforts as an official of the N.Y. Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation.

by Pat DiMaggio
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People NAACP President John J. Robertson looks back on 12 years of service to the people of Rahway with "no regrets." He relinquished his position on Dec. 31 to devote his time to another cause, but says if he had the past 12 years to do over again, he wouldn't change a thing.

"I am happy to have served during that period of time and if I had the opportunity I would do everything exactly the same way," he noted.

Mr. Robertson served as vice president of the NAACP-Rahway Branch for two years before being elected president 10 years ago. He has joined the Board of Directors of the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation of Greater New York, Inc., in the capacity of Special Benefits Chairman.

His new responsibilities will take up much of his time, hence his decision not to seek another term as president in Rahway. He will, however, remain active with the NAACP, both on the local and national levels.

"I suppose it's a rather trite statement, but I'd like to be remembered as someone who tried to do the best I could," said Robertson at last month's Freedom Fund and Awards Dinner. "As such, the programs we have initiated will be the things that I'll most remember because they have served to help many people individually and the community as a whole."

During his tenure, Robertson saw the implementation of the Scholarship Endowment Fund at Rahway's High School, the Legal Redress Department, the NAACP Job Bank and the branch's involvement with the Prison Program and community-oriented activities.

The NAACP-Rahway Branch was formed in 1974 under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Chapman. The first meetings were held at the Dunbar Community Center once located on East Milton Avenue and focused on anti-lynch protests on a national level rather than on desegregation and discrimination. Locally, African Americans were urged to contribute to the proposed YMCA building fund and to take advantage of the National Defense Act and the intent of the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

During World War II, the NAACP-Rahway Branch investigated reports of discrimination against soldiers and gained footholds on employment and housing opportunities. The 50s found the branch involved in securing equality in labor, industry, housing and voting rights.

In Rahway, members voiced protests against the inaccessibility of a school system that did not allow all students to know the many contributions to America made by African-Americans.

The current focus of the NAACP-Rahway Branch is on strengthening the quality of African American life in the areas of housing, education, health, employment, the drug problem and the attendant increase in crime.

John Robertson thinks Rahway's branch is very strong and hopes it continues into the future. "I would like the NAACP to continue the programmatic thrust set forth by national mandate," he noted. "My only regret is that, because of a lack of total participation in regard to the office, we were forced to move headquarters and churches. It is my hope that in years to come, a permanent site will be chosen and the business of the NAACP - Rahway Branch will be done in that atmosphere of an office."

(Special thanks to Lillian Hambrick, Rahway Branch NAACP Historian.)

John J. Robertson

by Pat DiMaggio
John J. Robertson, the son of the late John Robertson and Mrs. F. Louise Robertson of Rahway, was born on Dec. 15, 1918. He is a member of the NAACP-Rahway Branch and has served as its president for 10 years. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation of Greater New York, Inc. He is currently serving as Special Benefits Chairman.

- Member of the National Association of Public Employees
- Member of the National Association of Teachers
- Member of the National Association of School Administrators
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YMCA lists 1991 programs

With the start of 1991 comes an opportunity to fulfill your New Year's Resolutions to exercise and maintain or improve your fitness level at the Rahway YMCA. A new 8-week class will begin January 21. The class sessions offer an opportunity for persons of all ages to participate in water or land programs suitable to individual needs.

Swimming, a leader for over-all fitness, has many outlets at the Rahway YMCA. Adult lap lanes are set up for several hours a day, and a member can come in according to his or her schedule. Swim lessons are available from 6 months through adults. The fearful swimmer is welcomed. For those adults a little more adventurous, Scuba will be starting soon.

Water Main Break

Residents in the area of Old Lake Avenue had an unpleasant surprise on Christmas Day with the rupture of a water main, causing extensive flooding. (See Letter to the Editor, page 4, "Ghosts...")

Kids: Sign up for Hoop Shoot!

The Rahway Recreation Dept. and Elks BPOE 1075 announce the 19th Annual Elks Hoop Shoot Competition. The national free-throw shooting contest for boys and girls age 8 through 13, will be held in the Roosevelt School Gymnasium Jan. 8, 2:45 to 5 p.m., and in the Franklin School Gymnasium, Jan. 9, 2:45 to 5 p.m.

Valentine portrait to adorn school library named for him

Brown, Valentine's successor as H.S. principal, prepares to retire Brunette responds to Vet's Day criticism

by Pat DiMaggio
The late Roy M. Valentine will be remembered by students and visitors to the intermediate school when his portrait is hung in the Roy M. Valentine Library. Rahway's Board of Education accepted a portrait of the former administrator from Mr. and Mrs. Humphries, Mr. and Mrs. Manfredi, Mr. and Mrs. Delmonico and Mr. and Mrs. Hansen at their last regular meeting of the year.

The portrait, painted by Lloyd Garrison, will be hung in the library that bears the subject's name at the intermediate school. "We were good friends," said Superintendent of Schools Frank Brunette also commented on a letter to the mayor from a resident censuring the school district for remaining open on Veterans Day. "We intended no disrespect," said Brunette who noted that students participated in a MIA/POW flag-raising ceremony on that day. "Veterans Day received better recognition than if the children did not attend school."



The late Roy M. Valentine



WHEELS... Rahway Recreation Department Roller Skating is in full swing at Franklin School on Saturdays. For information, call the Recreation Department at 381-9000, ext. 322.

On eve of departure, 'old guard' reminisces, accepts commendations

Council approves firefighters' contract

by Pat DiMaggio
At a special meeting on December 27, outgoing council members and Mayor Daniel Martin were commended with resolutions for their years of service to the City. The mayor presented plaques to Councilmen-At-Large James Cadigan, Vincent Addona and Walter McLeod.

The three-member team lost their bid for re-election in November and will be succeeded by three Democrats by mayor-elect Jim Kennedy.

Councilman Cadigan has served the City through recreation programs, as a member of the Board of Education and as a council representative since 1983.

Walter McLeod, who ended his tenure as Councilman-At-Large, will continue as a member of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. He presented plaques to Cadigan, Addona and the mayor on behalf of the Freeholders.

McLeod began his service to the City as a representative of the 4th Ward in 1973. "It's been a pleasure to serve with Danny and my fellow councilmembers," noted McLeod. "I've never met more dedicated professionals. They've served the City honestly and fairly."

Mayor Daniel Martin was also cited for 20 years of service to the residents of the City. He pointed to construction of the City Hall as one of the highlights of his political career and noted capital projects such as a new fire headquarters, the modernization of the Public Works Department, the updating of the water plant, street improvements and the separation of storm and sanitary lines as projects completed during his administration.

"We've always worked together - the administration and the council - to improve the City and its residents," said Mayor Martin. "I've been proud to serve with you and to see the City grow and prosper."

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