

**Total Action Against Poverty's
African-American History Celebration**

"Bridging the Gap"

From Slavery to the White House

2010 Honorees

**Golden Chorale Singers
Mrs. Estelle McCadden
Mrs. Cleo Sims
Mrs. Carla Lewis
Mr. William Penn
Vice-Mayor Sherman Lea
Dr. Theodore (Ted) Edlich III**

**Dumas Center for Artistic Development
Tuesday, February 23, 2010
10:00 AM**



Mrs. Cleo Sims is a native of Roanoke, married to Joseph Sims, mother of two daughters (Nicole Sims Terry (Kenny) and Jeanene Sims) and elated grandmother of Alexis Nicole and Erin Renee Terry. She is a life long member of St. Gerard's Catholic Church where she serves on the Finance Committee, Liturgy Committee, Gospel Choir and Coordinator for Ministries of Communion. Mrs. Sims joined TAP in May 1966 as a book-keeper and was promoted to many other positions before becoming Head Start Director in June 1981. During her tenure as Director, the Head Start program consistently received high marks in federal reviews and for supporting and inspiring parents to reach their goals and establish a brighter future for their children; and she ensured that the program continued to grow to serve more children, expanding to un-served areas of Franklin County, Fairfield, VA and the Alleghany Highlands. She also initiated and managed several key programs that received national accredita-

tion. Mrs. Sims was noted for her strong commitment to Head Start children and their parents. As Director, she maintained an "open door" policy and had exceptional listening and conflict resolution skills with parents, staff and community partners. Mrs. Sims is the recipient of numerous awards and commendations which include the only Head Start Director for Virginia to represent the Commonwealth at the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Head Start at the White House Rose Garden; 1996 Key to the City for Outstanding Leadership to the Community and Church; 2003 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Award; and the first ever Mary Steinhardt Champion of Children Advocacy Award.



Mrs. Carla Lewis is a native of Bladen County, N.C. She graduated from Virginia Union University in Richmond with an education degree and has additional studies at Hollins University. Mrs. Lewis is married to Peter Lewis, founder and CEO of Apple Ridge Farms. As branch manager of the Historic Gainsboro Library for 36 ½ years, Mrs. Lewis oversaw a tripling of the collection and a near-doubling of the libraries space. She documented the oral histories of aging black leaders, made the library a magnet for people from all quadrants of the city and mentored untold numbers of young people including Salena Sullivan, a student at Harvard University. Mrs. Lewis launched a monthly salon on topics as diverse as buying your first home, nutrition, great books and love. Mrs. Lewis' leadership at the Gainsboro library was inspired by its first librarian, Virginia Lee. In 1971, at the retirement of Mrs.

Lee, Mrs. Lewis inherited a collection of 3,500 books for the library's black history collection. She maintained black literature and history by Langston Hughes and Paul Laurence Dunbar, who sent signed, first-edition copies of their books. Mrs. Lewis understood even more clearly the importance of the collection because she knew that the white-run city council of the 1940's had advised Ms. Lee to get rid of the collection which was hidden in Ms. Lee's basement to dispatch items upon request. Mrs. Lewis has added to the collection and is known for her service to mankind. She has hand delivered books to the elderly and encouraged young people to stay in school. Mrs. Lewis has received numerous awards and commendations; however, the greatest of these was the successful \$1.3 million expansion of the Gainsboro Library and the contributions she made to enhance the lives of others while preserving Black History.

(Excerpts taken from June 22, 2009 Roanoke Times article.)