

Thirty-five years of service: Sylvia Loveless retires from Minneapolis Urban League

Written by Ivan Phifer, Staff Writer
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Sylvia Loveless Amos is a long time north Minneapolis resident who loves her community.

The Minneapolis Urban League (MUL) celebrated her retirement in early December. The evening's theme was "Reflections of 35 Years of Service."

"My desire to work in my community and for my people is what led me to the Minneapolis Urban League," said Amos.

More than 150 well-wishers attended, including Dr. Josie Johnson; Matt Little and retired MUL colleagues Laura Scott-Williams, Lee Tillman and Roosevelt Gaines.

MUL board chair and *Insight News* founder, Al McFarlane praised Amos' professional attributes and the value of her service to League operations, while Tyrone Terrill, Spike Moss, former MUL board member, Ora Hokes and other pillars of the community spoke about her commitment to service.

Amos began working with the Urban League in 1977, serving as program secretary for the director of community organization.

"The Urban League was smaller at that time. If somebody needed assistance with housing, or

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employment and (a colleague) was out, I assisted with what was needed," said Amos.

Amos moved up the ranks in the MUL, becoming human resources director in 1993.

Amos received her human resources generalist certificate from the University of Minnesota in 1994. In 1996 she received a resource development certificate from Communities of Color Institute and the Center of Philanthropy at Indiana University and her bachelor's degree in human service administration from Metropolitan State University.

In 1998, Amos ascended to chief administrative officer on the MUL.

Along the way, Amos worked under four Minneapolis Urban League CEOs – Gleason Glover, Gary Sudduth, Clarence Hightower and Scott Gray.

"The Urban League has changed over the years, so I figure it was time for me to move aside and retire, but still continue working in the community and support the Urban League," said Amos.

Amos said her deep rooted interest in community and serving others came from her mother. "My mother was extremely active in the community. When you have parents active in the community, you become active," said Amos.

An alumna of North High School, part of Amos' experiences were instrumental in developing her fighting spirit.

When the civil rights activist attended North, African-Americans could not engage in cheerleading or dance squad. "I'm a very vocal person and speak my mind. I grew up in an era where we were constantly fighting for our civil rights," said Amos. The retiring CAO said she did not participate on either team, but her mother helped pave the way for future generations. "Through my mother's advocacy, both my sister's became cheerleaders and Polarettas."

Amos has always been active in her children's lives and education. "I'm a parent who will show up and sit in the classroom," said Amos. "Even after my children graduated from North, I stayed committed by volunteering in the lunch room, and working with administrators to assist teachers and students."

Amos served as former chair of North High School Parent Advisory Council where she was instrumental in the development of the Girl's In Action Group at North High created by Dr. Verna Price.

Other accomplishments include receiving a certificate of appreciation from the city of Minneapolis for outstanding volunteer service, Urban League Employee of the Year, four time recipient of the Urban League Presidents Award and certificates of appreciation from United Way and YWCA.

At the close of the event, Scott Gray, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Urban League,

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presented Amos with a check for \$3,500, representing \$100 for each year of service.

"I live by the aspect; it takes a village to raise a child," said Amos. "When I was hungry did you feed me, when I was imprisoned did you visit me? I'm not rich, but if I have something and I feel like you need it more than I do, I will give it to you. The only way you build your community is by helping one another."

Amos will continue to serve the Minneapolis Urban League as a special advisor to the President.

Amos says thank you

I want to thank everyone who attended my retirement celebration and those who wanted to attend and couldn't make it. I want to thank those that gave me well wishes personally, through phone calls and emails, cards and gifts of all kind. I want to thank all of those who planned this celebration and made it such a wonderful and beautiful event. I thank the Urban League for the privilege and honor to serve this community for 35 years. We all pass from one season of life to the next. Transitions are a critical part of everyone's life. We move from one learned skill or developed ability to another – from one promotion to another. School gives way to work, and work gives way to retirement. Life is a constant state of change. What's important is that we recognize how crucial it is to make transitions well. It's not the transition itself that's crucial, but how we respond to the changes that come our way. It was time for me to transition into the next season of my life, and it is my intent to make the best of it.

– Sylvia Amos