

LAABP

Honoring the Trailblazers

Black Personnel honors six City employees at reception in recognition of African American Heritage Month.

Story by Yvonne Liu, Finance; Photos by Coverup Productions

More than 100 people gathered in the Tom Bradley Room atop City Hall Feb. 18 to honor six exceptional Black City employees at the Los Angeles Association of Black Personnel's (LAABP) Trailblazers Reception.

Cora Jackson-Fossett, Public Information Director II, Public Works/Sanitation, and LAABP President, presented the prestigious awards with Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and LAABP Vice President Terrence Montgomery.

Other attending the ceremony were Councilmembers and Club Members Jan Perry and Tom LaBonge; Mayor's Chief of Staff Robin Kramer; Public Works Commissioners Valerie Lynne Shaw, Cynthia Ruiz, Julie Gutman and Paula Daniels; City Engineer Gary Lee Moore; Inspector of Public Works John Reamer; Rec and Parks General Manager Jon Kirk Mukri; and Office of Finance Director Antoinette Christovale.

"This event recognized individuals who have contributed to the progress of African Americans in City government as well as achieved notable positions in their City careers," Jackson-Fossett said. "I'm proud to say that in the past years, we've honored individuals from frontline supervisors to General Managers."

This year's honorees were Detrich Brown Allen, first African-American General Manager of Environmental Affairs; Cheryl Chisolm, first female Senior Electrical Inspector, Building and Safety; Michael Holmes, Lot Cleaning Superintendent, Public Works/Street Services; Miriam Scott Long, Deputy Mayor overseeing youth and education and only the second African American of this rank in Villaraigosa's administration; Rashad Mfume, Senior Systems Analyst, ITA; and Jeffery Whitmore, the first African American Revenue Manager, Finance.

There are other criteria to winning the coveted recognition: A Trailblazer must demonstrate a willingness to mentor other African-American employees to advance in their careers and to give back to the African-American communities.

Here are some unique contributions that these award recipients have made:

- Rashad Mfume designed an award-winning business intelligence system that revolutionized the City's procurement process.
- As the Assistant Division Manager, Michael Holmes oversees the Lot Cleaning Division. His crews remove debris from South Los Angeles in both publicly and privately owned lots across six Council Districts. Disposal of fire and health hazards improves the quality of life for the citizens of Los Angeles.
- As an African-American woman in the electrical trade, Cheryl Chisolm has reached out to recruit other African Americans. She said, "As an active member of the Organization of



Trailblazer Award honorees were (from left) Rashad Mfume, Cheryl Chisolm, Michael Holmes, Detrich Allen, Miriam Long and Jeffery Whitmore.

Black Tradesmen, I tutored individuals for apprenticeship entry exams. With the Los Angeles Job Corps, I taught young minorities about job opportunities in different trade professions and did 'hands-on' trade skills."

- Detrich Brown Allen inspires others with a quote that has inspired her own service to the community: "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." -- Martin Luther King."
- Jeffery Whitmore, a former LAABP president, has mentored young African-American males, teaching them more than just to work hard on school work. The USC graduate has taught young men which utensil to use in a fine restaurant, how to speak and behave in a formal social setting, and how to tie a tie.
- When asked to give advice to young people, Miriam Scott Long said, "My approach is to assure young folks that it would be hard to make as many mistakes in their short careers as I have made in my long one. So don't hide the part you are messing up. I say instead, 'fess up, own up and let me help figure out how to fix up.'"

Incorporated in 1972 and approved by the City Council as the official representative for City employees of African-American heritage, LAABP has always been in the forefront of the battle for equal employment within the City's workforce. Besides advocating for equal employment within the City's workforce, LAABP champions for increased opportunities

for people of color to attain management and executive positions. Among the services the organization provides are career development seminars, mock interview program and networking forums.

For more information regarding the LAABP, please go to www.laabp.com/.

MIKE HOLMES

Lot Cleaning Superintendent I, Public Works/Street Services

Mike Holmes started his City career with Rec and Parks in July 1970 as a part-time summer Recreation Assistant. That first job began a series of successful test-takings that led him to Gardener/Caretaker in 1972, Light Equipment Operator in 1976, Equipment Operator in 1980, Lot Cleaning Supervisor I in 1996, Lot Cleaning Supervisor II in 1998, and Lot Cleaning Superintendent I in 2001.

Holmes' lifelong mentor and role model is his father, Isom Holmes Sr. His father was a District Truck Operator and, during his transition as a City employee, he taught him to work hard, be on time and to learn all that he could to have a successful City career. He has followed his father's advice ever since.

As Assistant Division Manager, Holmes oversees daily operations in Zone I South, which encompasses Council Districts 1, #, 9, 10, 15, and a portion of Council District 14. The Lot Cleaning Division is responsible for weed and debris removal from publicly and privately owned vacant lots throughout the City. Lot Cleaning crews also remove illegally dumped debris from public right-of-ways, streets and alleys. The work performed by his crews includes removing fire and health hazards, which improves the quality of life for the citizens of Los Angeles.



Family and friends congratulate Lot Cleaning Superintendent Michael Holmes (3rd from left) on his Trailblazer Award.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry, one of last year's Trailblazer honoree, enjoys the program.



Councilwoman Jan Perry (right) greets city employees at the reception.



Councilmember Tom LaBonge brings greetings during the reception.

RASHAD MFUME

Senior Systems Analyst II, ITA

In 1992, Rashad Mfume joined the City in Public Works/Engineering's Wastewater Program. From 1992 to 1999, he lead the development of the first easy-to-use reporting and tracking system for the Wastewater Program -- the award-winning Financial Management and Reporting System, which truly integrated the mainframe with the PC network, where users no longer had to deal with the complexity of accessing the City's official financial data. Mfume developed a "Google-like" reporting system, the Time Charging System, which empowered users to create complex labor reports; implemented the Paperless Office Initiative by leading a staff of analyst to develop and deploy the first Oracle-based Omnibus Office System (OOS) that automated and integrated the procurement, inventory and help-desk processes to manage Engineering's hardware and software assets.

In 2002, he established the framework for the now ubiquitous Business Intelligence and Information Delivery System (BIIDS), a collection of sophisticated business systems that manages many aspects of Public Works' enterprise-wide processes from financial management to human resources. The flagship of BIIDS is MERLIN, a high-end business intelligence system that empowers users to analyze data anywhere, anytime. More than 1,000 users in 25 City departments use it in countless ways. He considers MERLIN the high-water mark of his career.

Today, Mfume manages Public Works/Accounting's Systems Development, Maintenance and Audit Division (SDMA) at ITA, and is actively involved in the implementation of the Financial Management System.



Senior Systems Analyst II Rashad Mfume (honoree) and Public Works Commissioner Valerie Shaw



LAABP Board of Directors include (seated, from left) Sharon Loudd, DeWanna Sharp, Cora Jackson-Fossett, Terrence Montgomery, (standing) Adriene Murphy, DeMarlo Sims, Audrey Atkins, and Shelia Brooks-LeFridge



Public Works Office of Accounting employees.



Accounting employee Rio Broussard-Williams and Finance employee Minnie Johnson.

Honoring the Trailblazers

— Continued



Controller employee Henry Chisom and his wife, Lynean.



Street Services Assistant Director Ron Olive, Lot Cleaning Superintendent II Bruce Howell, Cora Jackson-Fossett, and Deputy City Engineer Clark Robins.



Attending the Trailblazers Reception were (from left) William Robertson, Director of Street Services; Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer; John Reamer, Inspector of Public Works; and Gary Lee Moore, City Engineer.



James Burt, Nita Burke, Cathy Montoya and Earl Holmes came to salute the honorees.



Building and Safety employees (from left) Patrick Gilbert, Rickey Jackson and Lisa Yancey.



(From left) Recreation & Parks Executive Officer Regina Adams, CDD Senior Analyst Isophine Atkinson, and Recreation & Parks General Manager Jon Kirk Mukri.



(From left) Bureau of Sanitation employee Jo Ann Moss, Controller employee Shelia Brooks-LeFridge, and guest DeAnn Douglas.

MIRIAM SCOTT LONG

Deputy Mayor,
Mayor's Office

Miriam Long provides management oversight, direction and implementation of the mayor's agenda in the areas of education and the municipal services most related to the city's children, youth and families. She reports directly to the Chief of Staff, works closely with the mayor's legal counsel, and oversees a team of five.

Her primary responsibility is to further the mayor's education reform agenda and stewardship of its implementation, as well as serving as the senior liaison with the City departments and commissions that focus on serving the City's children, youth and their families. These departments include: Rec and Parks; Library; the Commission on Children, Youth and Families; the Department on Disability; Cultural Affairs; and the El Pueblo State Historical District. It is also her responsibility to forge significant partnerships with leaders of the mayor's Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office, the Partnership for LA Schools and LA's BEST.

As a senior staffer, Long also represents the mayor with higher education institutions in the Los Angeles basin and on issues local, statewide and national in the areas of education and children's health, safety, mentoring, literacy and welfare matters.



Mayor's Chief of Staff Robin Kramer, LAABP Treasurer Sharon Loudd, LAABP 1st VP Terrence Montgomery, Deputy Mayor Miriam Long (honoree), Mayor Villaraigosa, and LAABP President Cora Jackson-Fossett.

DETRICH BROWN ALLEN

General Manager,
Environmental Affairs

Appointed in November 2000, Dee Allen became General Manager of "EnvironmentLA," the City's Environmental Affairs Department (ELA). She is an accomplished environmental professional with more than 20 years of committed public service to the City.

As General Manager, she provides leadership on environmental issues confronting the City, including advising the Mayor and City Council and City departments on citywide environmental issues, compliance strategies, policies and programs.

Ms. Allen is also very committed to help lead the City's efforts through the mayor's GreenLA Climate Action Plan to reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions to 35 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

Ms. Allen leads a citywide advisory committee to engage the community to become more sustainable through developed goals and metrics and a public participation progress involving the community of Los Angeles. She contributed to the City's "Green Team," implementing the City's Green Building Ordinance to support green construction in City and private building. The team is responsible for implementation of the City's Green Business Certification Program to assist Los Angeles businesses to integrate environmental responsibility into their operations by offering a business friendly approach to environmental compliance. The goal of this program is to increase the number of green businesses in Los Angeles through certification programs, outreach, recognition and incentives.



LAABP 1st Vice President Terrence Montgomery joins Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in presenting General Manager Detrich Allen with a Trailblazer Award.

JEFFERY WHITMORE

Revenue Manager,
Finance

Jeffery Whitmore was appointed the City's Revenue Manager in August 2003. He oversees the operation of the Revenue Management Division (RMD), the number of employees having ranged from 25 to 225. The Citywide Collections Program collects a revenue sum of roughly \$8 million annually.

The RMD works with numerous City departments to maximize revenue collections through the implementation and use of industry best practices. The division has also been charged with implementing newly developed programs to establish new revenue streams and create greater efficiencies. These programs include: the sale of delinquent accounts receivable on the secondary market; the centralization of all City accounts receivable under one umbrella organization; and the publication of the names of the City's top delinquent debtors.

Previously, he was Deputy Director of the Human Services, CDD; Assistant Director, Residential Acquisition Program, Airports; and Assistant Inspector General, LAPD.

Whitmore is active in his community. In 1991, he was appointed to the California Commission of the Status of African-American Males. This 15-member commission researches problems relating to unemployment, education, criminal justice, social services, economic empowerment and health; analyze existing state policy and programs; and make recommendations to the California Legislature on how they can legislatively address these issues. He served as the Chairman of the Employment Committee.



LAABP 3rd VP DeWanna Sharp, LAABP 1st VP Terrence Montgomery, Revenue Manager Jeffery Whitmore (honoree), and Office of Finance General Manager Antoinette Christovale.

CHERYL CHISOLM

Senior Electrical Inspector,
Building and Safety

Cheryl Chisolm has worked with the tools as a Journeywoman for 14 years. She is the first woman Senior Electrical Inspector for the City with Building and Safety. She works out of the Hollywood District.

Chisolm was the first woman elected (1997-2000) to the Executive Board of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union Local 11. Her fellow electricians elected her as the first woman on the Contact Negotiating Committee. The 6,000 members of her union elected her to represent them at the 2001 National IBEW Convention as a delegate. In 1994 she was elected Committee Chair of her union district 1 office. She was the first African-American woman instructor to teach the IBEW/NECA Apprenticeship Program and Journeymen Electrician continued education learning. She continues to teach electrical theory, OSHA Safety and First Aid/CPR at the ETI.

Chisolm has earned the California Electrical Vocational Teaching Credential and certifications for Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (10 and 30 hours) Construction Outreach Trainer; Medic First Aid/CPR instructor; Safety and Diversity Orientations; and International Code Council-Commercial Electrical Inspector (ICC).

Chisolm is passionate about recruiting more women into non-traditional careers. Early in her career, she wrote an advice column for women in the construction industry. She has been active in "Electric Women," a support group for women electricians. Also active in "Winter" (Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles), an organization in Southern California that trains, mentors and supports women seeking high-wage, high-skill jobs that are traditionally worked by men. She is a mentor for "Empower" (ETI Mentoring Program Offering Women Extra Resources) at the Electrical Training Institute.

As an instructor for Home Builders Institute at Los Angeles Job Corps, a youth training program teaching, building and apartment maintenance skills, she encouraged and supported young adults and teens to consider blue-collar careers. Many of these youth were ex-offenders, ex-gang members and high school dropouts.



(From left) LAABP President Cora Jackson-Fossett, LAABP 1st VP Terrence Montgomery, Senior Electrical Inspector Cheryl Chisolm (honoree), Mayor Villaraigosa and Building & Safety General Manager Andrew Adelman.