

Sorority Sisters Celebrate Vice President Kamala Harris

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Wearing their sorority's signature strand of pearls and clothing in shades of pink and green, Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority members, Martha Coleman and Shirley Dickerson Taylor were filled with awe and jubilation as they watched their sorority sister and fellow Historically Black College and University (HBCU) alum Kamala Harris, sworn in as Vice President of the United States.

Both women are decades-long members of the sorority and are now part of the Zeta Chi Omega Chapter, which is made up of women from Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax counties. Local members supported Harris' election and say their emotions include pride and optimism, for older members as well as younger.

"As someone who participated in the Civil Rights movement of the 60s, I get emotional just thinking about this huge accomplishment and how far we as a people have come," said Coleman, who has been a member for 53 years. "The idea that a woman of color, who attended an HBCU, and who was raised by a single parent is now our Vice President is mind boggling."

"I was overcome with joy and happiness to witness this historical day," added Taylor,



PHOTO BY
ROBIN MCCOY

Robin McCoy, is a 40-year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and serves as the chapter's president.

who has been a member for 63 years. "The tears flowed as I watched Soror Kamala take the oath and become the Vice President of the United States."

"I witnessed something that I never thought I would witness in my lifetime, said 68-year old Linder Gibson who lives in Montgomery County. "I was overwhelmed. "This lets me know that my little granddaughter can grow up and become anything she wants to be, even President."

Those who joined AKA at Howard University felt a special connection.

"She has been an inspiration for many, said Linda Elaine Newman, who has been



PHOTO BY TIA SMITH

Tia Smith wore pink and green on election day to celebrate Vice-President Harris' victory. Both women are members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority

an active member for 43 years. "I was doubly proud because I am also a graduate of Howard University. Her positive accomplishments have given good recognition to HBCUs and our beloved sisterhood."

"From the standpoint of being a black and Asian woman it was a monumental moment," added Patricia Wallace, who has been a member for 55 years. It was astounding since, in both these cultures, women were deemed to be on the bottom rung, thought of as property and second-class citizens. Now the glass ceiling has broken."

The Arlington/Alexandria chapter has been in existence for more than 60 years. "Tears of joy flowed down my face as I watched the first woman, the first woman of color and my sorority sister take the oath of office for the Vice President of the United States of America," said Robin McCoy, who is a 40-year member and serves as the chapter's president.

Many felt a sense of optimism about the possibilities that would be conveyed to the young women and girls in their families.

"The swearing in of my soror Kamala Harris filled me with sadness, joy and delight," said Margarette Peterson, who was initiated in 1959. "Joy came to my heart to know that my granddaughter would continue to grow up in a better world. ... I was filled with sadness because it has taken so long for a black woman with outstanding qualifications to

be recognized. I dried my tears and took a picture ... proudly in my Golden Soror tee shirt."

"I thought of my 10-year-old granddaughter's future in a country that has elected the first woman as Vice President, who happens to be Black, who happens to have been shaped by our founders at Howard University, and who happens to have been the recipient of the unflinching support from women all over America," said Tia Johnson. "My granddaughter's future was looking brighter. Vice President Harris' election provides the answer that all things are possible."

The Arlington/Alexandria chapter includes older members that range in age from 60 to 90. Many thanked a higher power for the victory.

"I was overcome with a flood of emotions and ... a tremendous feeling of gratitude that God allowed me to live long enough to witness this historic moment: the first woman, the first Black, the first Asian American, the first HBCU graduate and the first AKA to become Vice President of the United States of America, a heartbeat away from the most powerful office in the world," said Lula McLain Hicks who was initiated in 1968. "In that moment, Vice President Harris represented every member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and our 113 years of service to humankind."

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The First Shots to Knock Out COVID-19

Fellowship Square's Seniors inoculated.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Lake Anne Fellowship House residents Steve McAvoy, 71, and Jin Liu, 84, of Reston were among the first of seven hundred anxious older adults at one of the three senior affordable housing communities operated by Fellowship House in Reston and Woodbridge who were inoculated last week against COVID-19. Vaccinations began Jan. 18.

"We are so happy and appreciate this so much," said Jin Liu of Reston, who lives with his wife, Geeta. "There are long waits, long lines, and it is so cold outside."

Following many weeks of planning with health departments and local pharmacies, Fellowship Square began bringing the vaccines directly to residents' doors.



PHOTO BY FELLOWSHIP HOUSE
Lake Anne Fellowship House resident Steve McAvoy, 71, receives his long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine from a mobile health team with CVS pharmacy.

"With an average age of 78, Fellowship Square residents are in the high-risk category for COVID," said Christy Zeitz, CEO of Fellowship Square. "Working with Walgreens and CVS teams, (we) are thrilled to be able to bring the vaccine to our residents' doorsteps."