

Democrats honor local 'heroes'

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Photo by R.E. Spears III

Standing with state Sen. Louis Lucas, left, and Del. Lionell Spruill Sr., right, are Suffolk Democratic Committee “Community Heroes” honorees James Harold Faulk, Margaret Jones, center, and Angela Chandler.

Three Suffolk citizens who have made especially important local contributions in their fields of endeavor were honored Saturday by the Suffolk Democratic Committee.

The three honorees have widely different spheres of influence, but they share a “selfless commitment” to improving the quality of life in the city and a similar faithfulness to the ideals of the Democratic Party, according to one presenter at the “Celebration of Community Heroes” luncheon.

Honored at the Quality Inn meeting were Angela Chandler, chairman of the Suffolk Humane Society’s Board of Directors; James Harold Faulk, former president of the Suffolk-Nansemond chapter of the NAACP and a local campaign volunteer for many Democratic candidates for public office; and Margaret W. Jones, a retired nurse and advocate for healthcare issues in Suffolk and Western Tidewater.

Pointing to the hard work done for the community by the three honorees, state Sen. Louis Lucas (D-18th) said, “We all need to be involved in this citizenship program, because we can

all make a difference.”

The event was a time of celebration and of hope, as more than 100 friends, family and Democratic supporters saluted the award recipients, met potential Democratic candidates for statewide office and looked to build on the successes they had in the November elections.

“We turned Virginia blue this year, and we want to keep it blue,” Lucas said in her closing remarks.

But the highlight of the event was the presentation of the three awards.

“Thousands of pets would not have homes” if it were not for the hard work of Angela Chandler, William Plemmons said in introducing the woman who was instrumental in founding the Suffolk Humane Society two years ago.

Following a November 2006 meeting with 14 other volunteers interested in reducing the number of dogs and cats euthanized in Suffolk each year, Chandler began working to build an organization that now boasts more than 300 members and sponsors regular adoption events and visits by the Virginia Beach SPCA’s Neuter Scooter.

“Suffolk Humane has enjoyed incredible growth under her leadership,” Plemmons said.

Accepting the award, Chandler thanked those who have helped accomplish the Humane Society’s goals, as well as the “supporters, who have demonstrated that animal welfare is important in Suffolk.”

Jean L. Copeland noted that Harold Faulk had been involved in Suffolk politics since at least the 1970s, when her husband, Enoch Copeland, first ran for local office.

A lifelong Suffolk resident, Faulk took over as president of the local NAACP branch when there was “less than \$40 in the checking account,” she said.

Faulk, who worked at the Newport News shipyard for more than 40 years, now serves as chairman of the Suffolk Economic Development Authority and has taken an active role through the years in helping farmers keep up with land use changes that would affect them, she said.

He also remains involved in many other civic activities and organizations, especially in the

southwestern part of the city.

“Any organization that exists in the Holland area, Harold is a member of it,” Copeland said.

“Please don’t go home and look up the definition of a hero,” Faulk joked when he accepted the award. “It’s only because it was mandated by almighty God that we do what we can to help our fellow man.”

Margaret Jones retired from Obici Hospital after spending more than 30 years as a nurse at the facility, presenter Arthur Singleton told the crowd. She was a product of the original Obici School of Practical Nursing.

Through the years, he said, she has been a force to be reckoned with in promoting improved healthcare throughout the area, and she now serves on the board of directors of the Western Tidewater Community Services Board.

“If there’s anything to do with health or healthcare, Margaret is involved with it,” Singleton said.

“I love people,” Jones said as she accepted the award. “I love doing for people, and for myself, but I come last. I’m going to continue to work for God.”

Telling the group about her personal motto, Jones quoted the Rev. Martin Luther King: “If I can help someone as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or song, if I can show somebody he’s traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain. If I can do my duty as a Christian ought, if I can bring salvation to a world once wrought, if I can spread the message as the master taught, then my living will not be in vain.”

“It’s always good to say thanks to someone while they’re living,” Del. Lionell Spruill Sr. (D-77th) said following the presentations. “I honor y’all today, because the Lord has blessed you.”