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OUR OPINION

Trailblazer award winners worthy of emulation

Don Sergent 39 min ago

By shining the light of recognition on local African-Americans who have achieved success, the Trailblazer awards program has itself been a beacon of light for the past 21 years.

Started by members of Bowling Green's State Street Baptist Church, the Trailblazer program each year honors high achievers in such fields as government, education, health care, community service and business. Many have overcome obstacles to make their mark in those fields, and that makes their light shine brighter.

As former Western Kentucky University administrator Howard Bailey said during Sunday's Trailblazer awards event, "These are people who have blazed trails and been successful in areas where their ancestors maybe were denied."

Sunday's honorees may not have faced the Jim Crow-era hurdles their predecessors battled, but they are great examples of achievement in education, business, community service and military service.

Educators Bea Isable, Delvagus Jackson and Adrian Oldham, business leader David Davis, military veteran Barry Prude and longtime community volunteer Wathetta Buford all have long lists of accomplishments. But perhaps their greatest achievement is serving as an example to younger members of Bowling Green's African-American community.

Jackson pointed that out when he said: “My desire has been to make a positive impact on the lives of children.”

It’s hard to think of a more worthy desire. Jackson is accomplishing that each day through his work as principal of Bowling Green’s Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School.

The Trailblazers Organizing Committee, made up of representatives from five local churches, is accomplishing the same goal through its awards program. On Sunday, youths from those churches were on hand to perform skits, hear about the achievements of the winners and learn from their example.



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Maybe some of those youngsters will be future Trailblazer award winners, inspired by their contact with Sunday's honorees to make their mark on the community and the world.

We commend Sunday's honorees for providing examples worthy of emulation, and we commend the five churches – State Street Baptist, Mt. Zion Baptist, Taylor Chapel AME, Seventh Street Baptist and 11th Street Baptist – for creating and sustaining this recognition program.

Current Trailblazers Committee members Bailey, Buford, Leisha Carr, Harold Little, Hattie Page, Maxine Ray and Abraham Williams selected well-deserving honorees again this year.

“Twenty-one years after we started, we’re still finding many people worthy of being recognized,” Bailey said.

We hope the committee continues for another 21 years and longer to find such worthy recipients, high achievers who enrich our community and shine a light for others to follow.

Don Sergent