

Annual Robert Bruton Memorial Dinner is held

The Robert Bruton Memorial Dinner was held at the Masonic Lodge in Lexington on April 26. The dinner, scheduled on the last Saturday in April, has been an annual event for more than 20 years. Bruton was the beloved, longtime superintendent of the Junior Order Children's Home, now known as the American Children's Home.

The group was welcomed by Morning Bruton Lopp and the dinner, prepared by the Lexington Chapter 98 Order of the Eastern Star, was blessed by Jesse Smith of Lexington who entered the Junior Home on the third day it opened in 1928. Special guests recognized were the current president of the American Children's Home, Russ Gobble, and his wife, Beth, and Craig Burrus and his wife, Bobbi. Burrus is a member of the Junior Order High Point Trophy Council No. 29.

Guests were entertained by Ashley Burkhart of Lexington, the granddaughter of Jean Padon Walser, who sang "A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes," followed by the viewing of the film, "Long May It Wave," which was produced in 1953 depicting the lives of three of the children who were once in the Junior Home and the influence of Superintendent Bruton. It was a time of reminiscing inasmuch as the film recalled life at the home at that time and many of the guests or their friends were in the film. The introductory portion of the film showed the proper treatment and respect of the American flag and hailed the principles of the Junior Order.

Following dinner, the committee members of the Robert Bruton Memorial Scholarship Fund were introduced and the retiring members, Eva Manual Younts, Joan Padon Guest and Alice Jarrell Tilley were recognized for their service.

Committee members serve for a three-year term with three members rotating off the board each year. The current committee members are Earl Blanton, Larry Edmondson, Morning Bruton Lopp, Hilda Adams, Nancy Sherrill Edmondson, Michael Skabo, Kenneth Gregory, Carolyn Gallion Parks and Jean Padon Walser.

The 2008-09 recipients of the Robert Bruton Memorial Scholarship were announced. They are Mindy Ballard, granddaughter of Wanda Gullett Ballard, and Danielle Bishop, granddaughter of Ted Bishop.

Skip Guest, a member of the Finance Committee, announced that the scholarship fund has a current value of \$127,163. This was an increase of over \$21,000 since the fund's annual meeting in February.

Ashley Burkhart drew the winning tickets of the raffle that had been under way since January. The winners are: Chris Styers of King, winning "A Piece of Heaven" — a shadowbox containing a piece of Carmichael gym floor and other UNC-CH memorabilia; Anthony Bivens of Sutherlin, Va., winning a Duke University baseball and bat signed by the 2006 Duke Baseball Championship Team; John Pittman of Kinston, winning a numbered print by Jim Harrison called "Rural Americana"; and David "Skip" Guest of Lexington, winning a numbered print by Jim Harrison, "Fallow and Forgotten." Kenneth Gregory held the winning ticket for the half-n-half drawing.

The group heard from Emy Owens Smith, the daughter of the late Emma Bruton Owens and the granddaughter of Robert Bruton, who announced plans for a motorcycle caravan to raise funds and awareness for the Robert Bruton Memorial Scholarship Fund.

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