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90th birthday celebrated

Rufus Lewis is affectionately called "Coach" by people who know him, and on his 90th birthday recently, Coach had many friends to help him celebrate the milestone event.

A party was held in his honor by Trenholm State Technical College, to which Coach recently donated a collection of writings, letters and other memorabilia he had accumulated during the years he was a leader in the voting rights drive. He became involved in the early 1940s, and in 1960, he was one of the founders and the first county president of the Alabama Democratic Conference, the black caucus of the state Democratic Party.

Appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1976, Coach was the first black United States marshal. In the early '50s, he opened the Citizens Club, a nightclub for blacks. Its purpose was to motivate black people to vote, but in a social setting.

He is a partner in Ross-Clayton Funeral Home.

The donation of the papers is the first in the school's archival collection, which is to be preserved for public use. They will be housed in the college's state-of-the-art Library/Learning-Resource Tower.

Dr. Leroy Bell, interim president of Trenholm, attended the celebration, as did Peggy Tatum, the vice president. Also in attendance were Dr. Gwen Patton, Dr. Nina Beauchamp and Yvonne Williams, members of the library staff at Trenholm.

Eleanor Dawkins, the honoree's daughter, and his granddaughter, Karen Dawkins, were there to help him celebrate his birthday.

Others attending included James and Mildred Hall, Joseph and Virginia Dickerson, LaRue Pringle, Maxine Kimbrough, Charles Conley, Herman and Barbara Harris, John Knight, Mark Gilmore, Leu Hammonds, Sidney Williams, James Brown, Idessa Redden, Zecozy Williams, Johnnie Carr, Dot Moore, Ella Bell, Diane Ward, who took pictures to record the occasion, Jerome Gray, Darryl Sinkfield, Richard Bailey, Michael King, Joseph Knight, Paurel Johnson, Lulander King, Janice Franklin, Juanita Owens, Mary Wilhaite and Edwin Bridges.

Elizabeth Via Brown writes about social events.



Rufus Lewis, center, celebrates his 90th birthday with his daughter, Eleanor Dawkins, left, and granddaughter, Karen Dawkins.

SPECIAL TO THE ADVERTISER

The Montgomery-Tuskegee Times

VOLUME 20 NO. 10

KEEPING THE BLACK COMMUNITY INFORMED OF ISSUES AFFECTING ITS SURVIVAL

JAN. 30-FEB. 5, 1997

Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis



From left to right: Daughter Eleanor Dawkins, Honorable Rufus Lewis and Granddaughter Karen Dawkins. Standing Left to right are: Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President) and V.P. Peggy Tatum of Trenholm State Technical College. Photos By Diane Ward. See other photo page 10.

Family, friends and colleagues were on hand to wish Hon. Lewis "Happy Birthday."

Affectionately called "Coach," Rufus Lewis was born November 30,

1906, in Montgomery County. Coach Lewis began an earnest, consistent and persistent voting rights drive in the early 1940s.

A graduate of Fisk University, and

Alabama State College football coach and partner in Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, he opened the Citizens Club (a night club for Blacks) in 1952. The primary purpose of the night club was

to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. The club was also a "citizenship school" where patrons learned how to fill out the literacy test, the prerequisite for be-

coming registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first county president of the Alabama Democratic conference, the Black caucus of the State Democratic Party. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis as a United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

"This is the first in our archival collection to be preserved for public access," said TSTC archivist Gwen Patton. "It is a joy processing the Lewis papers because much is already categorized. Coach Lewis drew up his library science skills in maintaining a prodigious voting rights record of struggle."

Dr. Leroy Bell, TSTC interim president, said, "We are delighted that Hon. Lewis has entrusted his invaluable papers within our College. They will be housed in our state-of-the-art Library/Learning-Resource Tower. His collection, to be shared SEE LEWIS PAGE 11

Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis

LEWIS

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with students, scholars and the general public is considered one of our most precious resources."

On hand to celebrate with Coach Lewis were family members Mr. and Mrs. James Hall, The Hon. and Mrs. Joseph Dickerson, LaRue Pringle, Maxine Kimbrough, elected officials, Hons. Charles Conley, Herman (Barbara) Harris, John Knight, Mark Gilmore, Leu Hammonds, Sidney Williams James Brown; community activists Idessa Redden, Zecoz Williams, Johnnie Carr, Dot Moore, Ella Bell, Diane Ward, Jerome Gray, Darryl Sinkfield, Richard Bailey, Michael King; and Joseph Knight, Peurel Johnson, Lulander King, Ross-Clayton Funeral Home staff, Janice Franklin, Juanita Owes, Mary Wilhaite and Edwin Bridges with the State Achi ves.



From left to right are: Library Staff, Dr. Nina Beauchamp and Ms. Yvonne Williams, sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Gwen Patton. Photo by Diane Ward



Enjoying Honorable Lewis' birthday celebration from left to right back row, Vice President, Peggy Tatum, Ms. Yvonne Williams, Dr. Gwen Patton and Dr. Nina Beauchamp. Sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President).-Photo by Diane Ward

