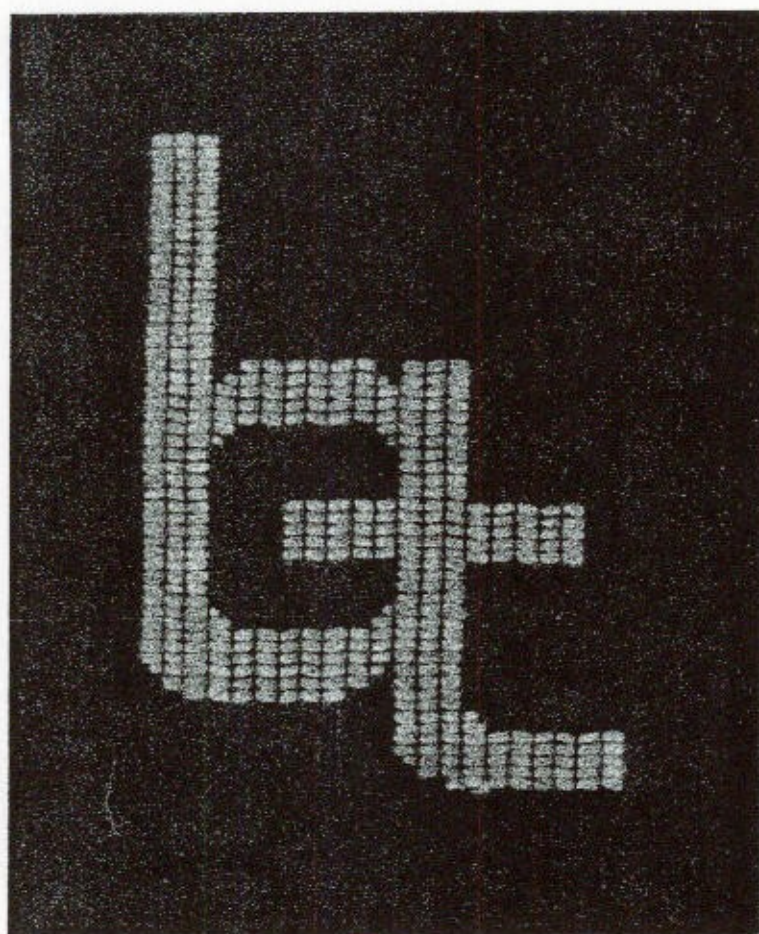


BLACK OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CAUCUS



botc

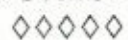


**The First 25
Years:
1974 - 1999**

Lou Robinson, MS, OTR/L

The Black Occupational Therapy Caucus (BOTC)

The First 25 Years: 1974 - 1999



Lou Robinson, MS, OTR/L
Historian

25th Anniversary Edition

The Black Occupational Therapy Caucus

The First 25 Years: 1974-1999



By Lou Robinson, MS, OTR/L
for the
Black Occupational Therapy Caucus

This document is the property of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus (BOTC). All rights reserved. Purchase of this document supports the Frances Swift Memorial Scholarship. Small parts of this document may be reproduced for educational purposes only. However, extensive or complete reproduction of this document is prohibited. Copies of this document may be obtained from the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus, c/o Cheryl Strickland, MA, OTR/L, Secretary; 11854 Melody Lane, Bridgeton, Missouri, 63044; 314-739-5713.

Copyright © 2000 by Lou Robinson and the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data and ISBN pending.

Table of Contents



Preface & Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	8
The Founding of BOTC	11
The Founders	14
Jerry Bentley	16
Wimberly Edwards	18
Yvonne Flowers	20
Dr. Cynthia Harris	22
Agatha Jackson	23
Joyce Lane	24
Dr. Lela Llorens	26
William Lofton	28
Bobbie Smith	29
Javan Walker	31
Leaders and Their Legacies	32
The Leaders	33
Joyce Lane	35
Dr. Doris Witherspoon	37
Brenda Johnson	41
Eloise Strand	45
Jerry Bentley	49
Tanya Cotton Anderson	53
Saburi Imara	56
Margo Strotter: Leadership for the New Millenium	60

Appendix	61
BOTC Photo Gallery	62
Frances Swift Scholarship Award Recipients	69
State Chapters and the Yvonne Flowers Service Award	70
Official Documents	71
25 th Anniversary Brochure	71
<i>Newline</i> Newsletter	75
Bylaws	83
About the Author	84

◇◇◇◇◇

Preface & Acknowledgements



I accepted the challenge of writing the history of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus for several reasons, some of them rather selfish. I have been active in local OT organizations since 1983 and co-founded the Missouri BOTC chapter in 1985. Since I had been only minimally involved with the BOTC until now, writing the history for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration was a way for me to increase my commitment.

As an aspiring writer, I saw this history writing exercise as complementary to my interests. For the last five years I have been researching my family's genealogy, as well as writing historically correct plays. This process has taught me a great deal about the task of writing history. Collecting BOTC documents and putting together the flow of events covering the last twenty-five years has been challenging. However, with each reading of each document, I have become increasingly impressed by the talents, skills, and clear-headed direction of the organization's leadership and their responsiveness to the needs of the membership.

My third and last reason for taking on this project was my need to help deconstruct the myths that have grown up around BOTC and organizations like it, both for myself and for others who have been influenced by them. I moved to Maryland from St. Louis in 1976, three years after becoming an occupational therapist. Shortly after I arrived, I heard rumors of a "militant" group of black occupational therapists out of Washington, D. C. This group was supposedly creating "trouble" for the AOTA and the profession.

Like many of us faced with hearsay, I took the rumors at face value rather than investigate. I allowed the misinformation that I had heard prevent me from exploring how I could benefit from the BOTC, or contribute to it. Although I had experienced discrimination in both fieldwork and on the job, I felt too conflicted about my role as an African American and a

professional. This has indeed been an instructive lesson, one that so many of us learn too late or not at all. I am reminded of the following proverb about such things:

*Not to know is bad;
not to wish to know
is worse.*

Nigerian proverb

Helping the story of the BOTC unfold has been a very satisfying experience. As I have become more acquainted with its work, I feel very appreciative of the contributions of everyone in achieving goal after goal set by the leadership. As an African American, woman and occupational therapist, I am truly proud to be a part of the phenomenon that is the BOTC. I would like to thank Saburi Imara, immediate past president, and the Anniversary Committee for giving me the opportunity to tell the story.

The BOTC first placed its history on the agenda in 1983, just as the organization approached its tenth anniversary. Several years later, an occupational therapist asked permission to include the history in an introductory OT book. In 1989, in response to the request, the topic was placed on the agenda for the second time. The BOTC provided information on the organization's goals and objectives; however, a decision was made to have the history written by a BOTC member.

BOTC's increased visibility resulted in more opportunities to introduce itself to other OTs and the public. *OT Week* published a historical overview in its February 1996 edition, entitled, "The Black Occupational Therapy Caucus...Past, Present and Future," written by Letha Mosley, Eastern Region Member-at-Large.

This accounting of BOTC's past twenty-five years has been gleaned from official documents, OT and other publications, personal interviews, and therapists' personal documents. Extensive records were not kept during the early years of the organization's history. However, I have attempted to present this history as accurately as my current information allows.

This is an abridged history, a work in progress. It is an overview of the BOTC, highlighting the founders and the leadership. It is my hope that a future history will be written that will include more information about the contributions of the membership, more in-depth profiles of the founders, and more of the work of the state chapters and their leadership. Documents will be more accessible for writing future histories now that Howard University in Washington, D. C., the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to establish an Occupational Therapy Program, holds BOTC's archives.

Whenever possible I have attempted to put the events of the BOTC into historical context. BOTC has been in the forefront of addressing concerns about equality, discrimination in educational and employment

opportunities, having a voice in the AOTA, and inclusion. The behavior of the BOTC and other minority groups within AOTA has often reflected concerns and changes in society.

The history of the BOTC continues to be written. Following the 25th Anniversary Celebration, Tom Kerr of Advance for Occupational Therapy Practitioners wrote an article entitled, "BOTC Reaches the Quarter-century Mark," in the June 29, 1999 edition. The article quotes Jerry Bentley extensively, and includes statements by this author and as well.

Again, for all of you who took time out of your busy schedules to sit through interviews, and mail and fax me information, thank you. Thanks also to Saburi Imara and Karen Parker Davis for reading and editing the original manuscript. In addition, thanks to Lela Llorens and other members of the 25th Anniversary Committee, it was a pleasure working with all of you.

L. Robinson.
3/2000

◆◆◆◆

Introduction



A story is best understood within the context of the events of its time. The history of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus (BOTC) is no exception. The founding of the professional organization of African American practitioners and students was a reflection of the times. 1974 was a time of unrest, activism, and intolerance for injustices.

The year of BOTC's founding was almost unforgettable. The 1974 "Watergate Trial" of President Richard Nixon riveted the American public to the television set for weeks. Although Nixon had ended the Vietnam "Conflict" a year earlier, that act did not protect him from the scandal and public outrage that accompanied the trial, contributing to his eventual resignation. Campuses had finally become quiet following years of student protests that resulted in loss of life.

That same year, Henry "Hank" Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth's home run batting record. African Americans felt immense pride with that victory, while racists demonstrated their dismay in a number of ways. In a 25th anniversary appearance on Good Morning America, Hank Aaron talked about the relief he had felt when that famous game was over. Aaron spoke about how burdensome and fatiguing it had felt to challenge Babe Ruth's title. But most of all, twenty-five years ago he most looked forward to getting some respite from the hate mail and death threats. He attested to the fact that some things have changed, but, equality for minorities requires a continual fight against entrenched negative attitudes and behaviors.

On an international level, the violence and inequality of apartheid persisted in South Africa. The United Nations finally acted by forming a Special Committee on Apartheid and reevaluating its relationship to that nation. Nelson Mandela, the current president of South Africa, had already been held a political prisoner in a South African jail for over a decade.

1974 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court decision. That decision struck down the previous law of the land that mandated segregated, "separate but equal" education.

However, it did not eliminate segregation in employment, housing, and other aspects of the daily life of African Americans. Dr. Lela Llorens story about an AOTA meeting she attended, as a student in the 1950's in New Orleans is indicative of the treatment many African Americans faced. Due to segregation, she was not allowed to sit in the meeting room with the white students. AOTA responded quickly to that hotel's action by establishing a policy to meet only in hotels that did not segregate African Americans. AOTA's action was more the exception than the rule, however.

In 1961, President Kennedy introduced an Executive Order to address discrimination in employment and called it "Affirmative Action." For about fifteen years afterwards, some African Americans experienced more equality and access to employment and higher education. However, cries of "reverse discrimination," the backlash against affirmative action, were soon heard. By 1978, a white male won admission to college charging reverse discrimination. His victory signaled the erosion of equal opportunities in those areas.

Black activism took several different forms in the sixties and seventies. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. led a decade of nonviolent civil rights protests before the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Rev. King went on to help get the Voting Rights Act passed in 1965, three years before his assassination. Malcolm X's fiery nationalist rhetoric, on behalf of the Nation of Islam, was quieted by his assassination in 1965. The "Black Power" movement was especially prevalent across college campuses in the late sixties and early seventies. Many leaders of the Black Panther Party, the most visible proponents of the movement, had been murdered and/or incarcerated by 1974. Nevertheless, the Party left behind a heritage of black pride and self-determination.

The AOTA was only fifty-seven years old in 1974, a young organization. Most of the membership has always consisted of middle-class, white females. African Americans have participated in the OT profession since 1940, albeit as a small percentage of the membership. Therefore, it has been rare for more than one or two African Americans to matriculate in the same academic program or work together afterwards, with the exception of programs in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's), such as Howard University, Tuskegee, and Florida A&M.

With so little opportunity to network and provide support to each other, and the infrequency of national meetings, some African American practitioners had begun discussions about forming an organization. However, some African American OTs perceived that the AOTA would not be supportive, due to concerns about racial divisiveness. In addition, not all African American practitioners were comfortable with separating themselves in an era of integration.

The formation of the BOTC was inevitable. African Americans have a long history of forming organizations to meet their needs, society's needs,

and those of the race. The formation of such organizations can be traced back to the self-help and anti-slavery societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By 1974, with almost a quarter of a century of participation in the profession, African American OTs were impatient to wait any longer to have their needs meet. They took action and the BOTC was born.

The first part of this document discusses the founding of the BOTC, and introduces the founders, some of their accomplishments before they founded BOTC, and their contributions to the profession since then. Often founders are identifiable through documentation of who attended the founding meeting. Because of the nature of the founding meeting, and the lack of documentation of attendees, identification of founders has been left to the discretion of the memory of those who were there. Therefore, all those who consider themselves founders may not be known until further research is conducted.

The second section of this document examines the organization's last twenty-five years, told through the activities of the leadership and membership in meeting the goals and objectives set forth by each administration. These activities reflect the struggles of African peoples nationally and internationally.

Part three is the appendix which includes a BOTC photo gallery, listing of the Frances Swift Scholarship winners, current state chapters with recognition for Yvonne Flowers Service Award winners, and official documents (25th anniversary celebration brochure, *Newsline* Newsletter and Bylaws). A brief note about the author concludes this section.

◇◇◇◇◇

**The Founding of the
Black Occupational
Therapy Caucus
(BOTC)
◆◆◆◆◆**

The Founding



The AOTA Conference of 1974 in Washington, D. C., was the birthplace of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus (BOTC). But, even before that event, there had been ongoing discussions by some African American occupational therapists about their concerns regarding issues of employment, discrimination, and isolation. At the previous year's AOTA meeting in Los Angeles, several black OTs, including Agatha Jackson, William Lofton and Bobbie Smith had met informally to discuss their desire to form an organization. However, they were uncertain how such an organization would be received by the AOTA and perceived by other African American occupational therapists.

Jerry Bentley, who was an OT student in 1974, remembers feeling awed and excited by the presence of so many African American occupational therapists at the AOTA Conference. Motivated by their excitement and desire to connect, Jerry was one of several students and therapists who passed out notes inviting every African American OT they saw to come to a meeting. They did not know where they could meet besides the lobby, or exactly what they would talk about, but they felt that they could not pass up the opportunity to network and share. Ms. Bentley recalls receiving a valuable lesson in meeting planning from Yvonne Flowers, who had been part of a group of OTs who had been scheduled to meet that afternoon.

The lobby was too small to hold all the therapists and students when they met later that day. The founders did not know how many African American OTs to anticipate. The meeting had to move to another location. Wimberly Edwards recalls the dilemma created by the unexpectedly large response. Since the meeting was unplanned, steps had to be taken to secure a more appropriate meeting space.

The difficulties encountered in announcing the change of location for the meeting illustrates the precarious position of African Americans in 1974. Once alternative meeting plans were made and a room secured, the therapists asked the hotel to announce the meeting over the public

announcement system. With some reluctance, the hotel agreed to announce the meeting, but left out crucial information. The African American meeting planners had specifically asked that the announcement include "black" occupational therapists, since the hotel was teeming with occupational therapists. The hotel's omission of the word "black" from the announcement created some confusion. Wimberly Edwards recalls explaining to the hotel why it was essential to include "black" in the announcement. The hotel finally acceded to the request, but not without hesitation.

The first meeting of that group of therapists and students in the hotel room was very informal. There was no set agenda; rather, the meeting conformed to the needs of the group. Students expressed frustration over their encounters with racism in their academic and fieldwork programs. Experienced OTs listened, and offered validation, support, and strategies for coping.

The exact number of OTs who came to that first meeting and stayed for its entirety or wandered in and out, is not known. The numbers vary from 25 to 100. Therapists who attended were surprised to see so many black OTs in one room, and pleased to come together with each other. The group decided to meet at the next AOTA Conference to continue the networking and support that they had begun. Joyce Lane graciously agreed to chair the next meeting.

Not all African American OTs agreed that they should have their own organization apart from AOTA. Their belief was one side of the ongoing debate over how African Americans should relate to the dominant group that has been active since emancipation. In 1974, the country, and especially African Americans, had fervently debated integration versus separation for almost two decades. The integrationist position of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the NAACP often went head-to-head with the nationalist position of organizations such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party. Although each of the aforementioned groups lost supporters prior to 1974, integration seemed to be the most politically correct position for many African American professionals.

Even with the mood of the country swaying toward integration, and the reduction in African-centered organizations, the founders of the BOTC stood firm in their desire for an African American centered organization to address their needs.

◇◇◇◇◇

The Founders



The impromptu nature of the meeting that resulted in the formation of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus belies the usual mechanism for identifying founders. Often, the official formation of an organization occurs after initial meetings by interested parties. Many therapists and some students attended that historic meeting in Washington, D. C., in 1974, and many have been attending since then.

Records of those first meetings of the BOTC are scarce to nonexistent. BOTC documents have not consistently identified founders. This final list has been prepared through review of documents and discussions with members and officers, past and present. It is very possible that additional founders could be identified in the future.

Although the work experiences of the founders varied from five years to over twenty, at the time of the founding, they were all deeply involved in their profession, several of them serving in various capacities on committees in AOTA. It is important to remember also that some of the founders attained their degrees in the 1950's, when segregation was fully entrenched in American society, and very few African Americans attended college. The founders' strong beliefs in education are made apparent by the remarkable successes many of them have attained in the educational arena. African American practitioners are indebted to them for their commitment, talents, gifts, and for the path they blazed for all of us.



The Founders

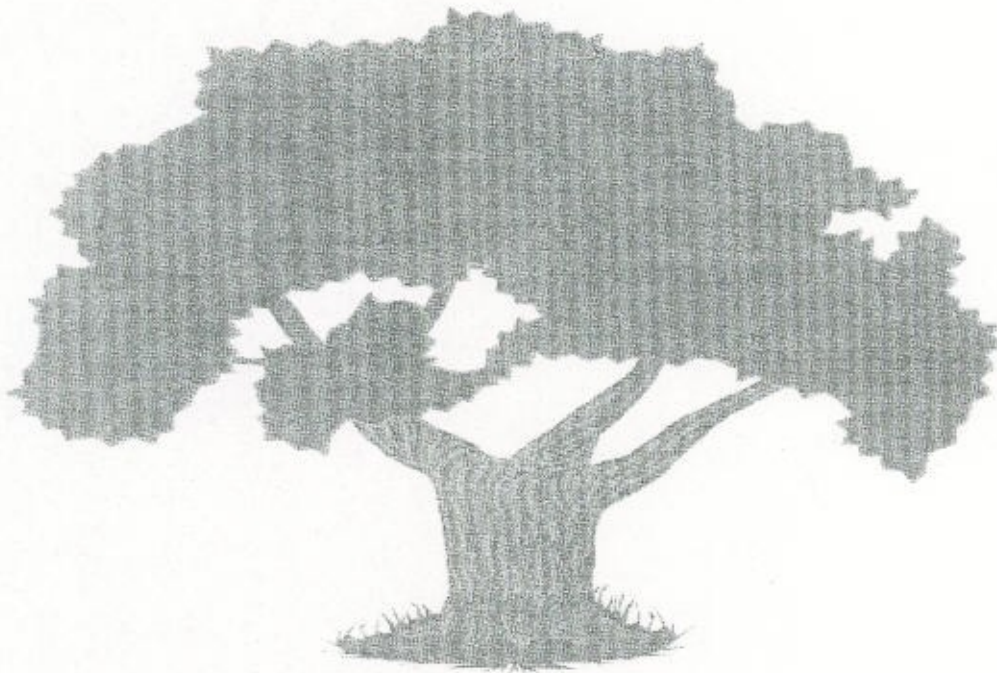
◇ Jerry Bentley

◇ Wimberly Edwards

◇ Yvonne Flowers

◇ Dr. Cynthia Hughes Harris

◇ Agatha Jackson



◇ Dr. Lela Llorens

◇ Joyce Lane

◇ William Lofton

◇ Bobbie Smith

◇ Javan Walker

**If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the backs of those
who came before us.**

Yoruba proverb

◇◇◇◇◇

Jerry Bentley



In 1974, Jerry Bentley was an occupational therapy student at Virginia Commonwealth University, matriculating toward an MSOT, which she received in 1975. She had obtained her BS in Physical Education from South Carolina State College in 1972. She still has vivid memories of that day in 1974 when she and several other students and therapists were moved to invite African Americans to that historic founding meeting.

Ms. Bentley's clinical career has consistently focused on services for the mentally ill, starting with her first position as staff therapist at West Philadelphia Community Mental Health Center in 1975. Two years later, she became a staff therapist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D. C.. She was promoted to supervisor in 1978, where she remained until 1981. From 1981-1986, she held director positions in several Community Mental Health Centers in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Bentley joined the D.C. Commission on Mental Health Services in 1986 as Director of Community Outreach, and served as Special Assistant to the Commissioner for the next three years. From 1989-1991, she held positions as director and consultant in mental health programs in the Washington, D.C. area.

In 1992, Ms. Bentley relocated to California and assumed the position of Director of Rehabilitation at Kedren Community Mental Health Center. During her two year there, she designed a comprehensive psychosocial program and developed the clinical education program for students. From 1994-96, after leaving Kedren, she worked as an independent therapist/consultant for several facilities. She joined Howard University as an instructor in 1996, where she remains today.

Ms. Bentley has taken her commitment to the occupational therapy profession with her wherever she has lived. She became active in the Washington DCOTA early in her career, becoming chair of the Administrative SIS, Alternate Representative, and Fellow. She sat on the D.C. Board of Occupational Therapy Practice in 1984, becoming chair in 1985. Under her leadership, rules and regulations for licensure were developed and approved within one year.

After moving to California, Ms. Bentley's activism and leadership continued. She helped to reactivate the Southern California BOTC, which subsequently established OT and OTA scholarships in memory of Michelle Daisy. She used her leadership and managerial skills as Membership Chair and Chapter Director of the COTA. She also served on the OT Advisory Committee for California State University at Dominguez, whose OT program was approved in 1997.

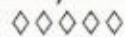
In addition to serving two terms as BOTC president, Ms. Bentley has been active at the AOTA level. She was on the Advisory Board for the AOTA Minority Affairs Program, having helped to lay the groundwork during her administration. She was on AOTA's first State Regulatory Advisory Committee for the Certification Board, and is a past member of the Editorial Board for *OT Week*.

Ms. Bentley has taken her expertise in mental health and management to community organizations and projects. In 1982, she helped to develop an ongoing partnership with her church's missionary society and St. Elizabeth's Hospital to provide community experiences for clients experiencing mental illness. In 1992, she developed an after school program for inner city youth.

Currently, Ms. Bentley serves as Chair, Professional Action Committee of BOTC. She is a "walking history" and griot of the BOTC, having been immensely active in the organization since she helped to found it in 1974. Her leadership role in BOTC will be discussed in the section on leaders.

◆◆◆◆

Wimberly Edwards



Wimberly Edwards has been a driving force behind the forward movement of the BOTC since that day in 1974 when she became involved with scheduling the first meeting of African American OTs and students. She was instrumental in making arrangements for that first meeting, including facilitating the announcements made by a reluctant hotel attendant. However, her dedication to occupational therapists and students had started a long time before the founding of the BOTC.

AOTA had been in existence less than forty years when Ms. Edwards entered the OT profession. Her membership places her with other African American OT pioneers. After receiving her BSOT in 1956 from New York University, she immediately entered management as Director of OT at Richmond County Cerebral Palsy Treatment Center on Staten Island. A year later she moved to Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center as a senior OT. She rose through the ranks to become Chief of OT in 1963 and remained in that position until 1969. During that time, Ms. Edwards also served as clinical instructor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine.

Ms. Edwards has been a leader and educator throughout her professional career, at the local, state, and national levels. Between 1969-1972, she was an instructor in the OT Program at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, where she began her career in education. In 1973 she received her MSOT from Boston University and began teaching at York College. At the same time she served on the Technology Consulting Panel at the NY Metro Regional Medical Program. In 1974, when BOTC was founded, so was the New York State Black Occupational Therapy Caucus, which Ms. Edwards immediately became involved.

At York College, Ms. Edwards rose consistently through the ranks. A year after beginning there as a full-time teacher, she became Associate Professor and Coordinator of the OT program. She maintained that position until 1996, when she became Health Sciences chair. She later assumed the position of chair of the Health Sciences Department at York College, which she held from 1996 until her retirement in May 1999.

Ms. Edwards has been actively involved in AOTA, becoming a member in 1957. From 1963-68, she led the NY District of the NY State OTA, at the same time serving on the Executive Board of the NY State OTA and the Council on Education for COE. Her involvement continued in the 1970's, as she chaired AOTA committees and the Metro NY district of the NY State OTA. From 1970-72, she was the alternate delegate of the NYSOTA to the

AOTA. From 1979-82, she served on the Executive Board of the COE, and was elected chair of the Documents Review Committee.

Ms. Edwards began the 1980's as Alternate Representative to the RA, and served three years. Spread throughout the 1980's were presentations sponsored by the AOTA and the Metro NYOTA. She concluded the 1980's as Vice-Chair of the NY State Board for OT.

Ms. Edwards entered the 1990's as chair of the Professional Program Director's Council of COE, where she served until 1992. This recounting is by no means complete. In addition, it does not include the numerous educational and leadership activities that required energy and commitment at York College where Ms. Edwards was a dynamic force for thirty-six years.

Wimberly Edwards has worked tirelessly as an educator, organizer, and policy maker in the OT profession. Her contributions to the BOTC will be discussed in more detail when the progress and activities of the BOTC are discussed. She has stated that a major contribution of the BOTC has been its ability to give African American OTs a sense of their own control. Equally important has been the financial support given to students. She has also expressed the importance of the BOTC remaining consistent, and keeping African Americans educated about their history. Toward that end, she has co-chaired the 25th Anniversary Celebration and the acquisition of the Kente strip.

◇◇◇◇◇

Yvonne Flowers



Yvonne Flowers has been referred to as a poetess, pianist, drummer and all around activist, both within the OT profession, psychology, and the broader community. When Ms. Flowers discovered that a meeting of African American OTs was being called for the same afternoon as the one she already had scheduled with several African American OT, she immediately sought out the organizers to get more information, according to Jerry Bentley's recollections. It seems that a group of African American OTs had scheduled a meeting for that afternoon, and the impromptu meeting could conflict. She obviously deferred to the larger meeting, and the BOTC and the profession have benefited from that decision.

Ms. Flowers was a New Yorker who received her BA in Psychology in 1959, and went to work as a psychiatric attendant at Wassai State School in New York. She held a similar position at St. Vincent's in New York from 1958-1965. In 1966 she received her BSOT and became a staff therapist in Psychiatry at Long Island Jewish Center. She was promoted to supervisor in 1969.

Ms. Flowers entered academia as a guest lecturer at Columbia and Temple Universities. In 1974 she began as an instructor at Columbia University and became a tenured professor in 1981. For ten year, from 1984-1994, she was Director of Rehabilitation Services at Washington Heights Community Services of the Psychiatric Institute of New York. She joined the faculty of York College in 1994, where she remained until her death on February 15, 1995.

Ms. Flowers was a dedicated activist to the causes of cultural diversity and inclusion. She worked diligently with the BOTC, where she served as secretary from 1989-1986. She helped to establish the New York State BOTC the same year that BOTC was founded. She was a role model for members of the Network of Gay, Lesbian and Bi-sexual Concerns in OT, and volunteered with the feminist political journal, *Heresies*.

Ms. Flowers' involvement included interests outside of occupational therapy. She participated in the New York Association of Black Psychologists, and sat on the Board of Directors from 1984-1985. She was a member of the National Association of Poetry Therapy, and a reader for Women's Research and Development Fund at CUNY from 1985-1986. She published in various journals.

Throughout the more than twenty years that Ms. Flowers was involved with the BOTC, first as a founder, and later as an officer, her commitment and energy helped to mobilize the organization. She never lost sight of the

importance of the profession and society extending equal rights and privileges to everyone.

Upon her death, the Yvonne Flowers Service Award was established by the BOTC in her honor and memory. The award encourages each chapter to pursue an active agenda of addressing the goals and objectives of the BOTC as well as their own. The first awards were given out at the BOTC in Chicago in 1996.

◆◆◆◆

Dr. Cynthia Hughes Harris



Cynthia Hughes Harris remembers that attending an AOTA Conference was always "strange and wonderful," because she was not used to seeing so many African American occupational therapists. She considered the thrust of the new organization one of unity, solidarity, and role modeling. She had had a "great role model, the epitome of womanhood," in Winifred Scott at the University of Illinois, where she received her BSOT in 1969.

Dr. Harris began her career as a staff therapist at the University of Illinois Hospital in 1969. She later became an instructor and assistant supervisor in the OT Program. After obtaining her Master of Education from the University of Illinois in 1973, she moved to New York and became senior therapist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, later becoming director. During that same time between 1974-1978, she was assistant professor and associate director of the Program in Occupational Therapy at Columbia University. She returned to Chicago in 1978 as Assistant to the Dean at Rush University, College of Health Sciences until 1980, when she became Director of the OT Section. She was Acting Chair at Rush from 1980-1986, and became chair in 1991. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Illinois in 1995. Since 1996, she has chaired the OT Program at Columbia University, New York.

Dr. Harris has been involved in professional leadership activities at the local, state, and national levels, and received awards and honors. From 1972-1973, she was the recipient of the Kellogg Foundation Fellowship for Teacher Education for Allied Health Professions. She has received the AOTA Service Award four times, and was added to the Roster of Fellows in 1988. She has chaired and sat on numerous AOTA committees, currently chairing the COE. Ms. Harris held various leadership positions in the Illinois OTA, including chairperson of the Illinois COE from 1986-1989.

Dr. Harris has published in AOTA publications and other publications. She consults and presents internationally, in several areas of expertise, including curriculum development in higher education, mental health, AIDS and adolescents, and minority students. She presented at the WFOT in 1998 on developing competence in novice and experienced therapists.

Dr. Harris expressed that she hopes she has served as a role model for others. She observed that in the scheme of things, twenty-five years is not a long time to make changes, but acknowledges the impact that BOTC has had on the profession.



Agatha Jackson



Agatha Jackson remembers conversations with Bobbie Smith and William Lofton about starting a group for African American OTs. Some of them had met informally the year before at the AOTA Conference. This group perceived some discomfort with the idea coming from AOTA so did not pursue a plan. Fortunately for the profession, Ms. Jackson was right there when an opportune time presented itself.

Ms. Jackson came to the OT profession late, and was one of the earliest nontraditional students. After her father had a stroke, she went to visit him at the VA hospital. While there he was taken to occupational therapy and she accompanied him. She didn't know what OT was at first, but the more she saw of it, the more she realized that it was something she wanted to do.

Ms. Jackson received a BS in Psychology from the Detroit Institute of Technology in 1950, and went on to obtain a BA in nursing in 1955. She obtained a Certificate in OT from Wayne State University in 1960, and began her career at Colorado State Hospital as a staff therapist. Three years later she became Director of OT at Essex County Overbrook Hospital in New Jersey. While working there she obtained her MA in Vocational Education from Montclair State University in New Jersey.

After leaving Essex in 1966, she worked for four years as a Health Education Specialist/OT Consultant for the State of Wisconsin. From 1970-1980 Ms. Jackson was Director of Restorative Services in Milwaukee. She entered the Ph.D. program in gerontology at Columbia University, Satellite, University of Wisconsin in 1980. At that time she became Program Administrator (Director of OT/EEO/Affirmative Action Officer) at Colorado State Hospital, where she is employed at this time.

Ms. Jackson has been active in local, state, and national professional organizations. She served as president of the New Jersey OTA for a year during her membership from 1963-1966. She has held long term positions in organizations, including the COE of Colorado State University since 1983, BOTC Scholarship Committee since 1983, and the AOTA Accreditation Committee since 1987.

Ms. Jackson is very proud of her role in development of an OTA program in Pueblo Colorado. For her excellent work in promoting the profession, especially the advocacy for OTAs, her name was added to the Roster of Fellow by the AOTA in 1988. She reports feeling very pleased with the contributions she and the BOTC have made to students.



Joyce Lane



Although she had just graduated from OT school five years earlier, Joyce Lane was already making her mark on the profession as a leader and organizer. The year before, she had been the local coordinator for the AOTA Conference that was held in Chicago.

Ms. Lane received her BSOT from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1969. She worked in staff therapist positions in the Chicago area from 1969-1974, starting at Illinois State Psychiatric Institute, and moving to the Northwestern Memorial Day Hospital in 1974.

After relocating to Washington, D. C., she became an instructor in the OT Program at Howard University, while working part-time as a staff therapist. She started full-time at Howard in 1977 as an assistant professor and co-chair, and completed her Masters of Education in Guidance and Counseling at Howard University in 1979. From 1984-1989, she served as chair at Howard.

Ms. Lane became a PEW Doctoral Fellow in Health Policy at Brandeis in 1987, a position she held until 1989, when she became Coordinator for Educational Programs, Heller Graduate School, Brandeis. During some parts of those years, she also lectured at NASA and Northeastern University in Boston. From 1992-1999, Ms. Lane was Research Coordinator and Assistant Professor, Rush University. She is currently Associate Professor, Chicago State University.

Ms. Lane has received numerous professional awards and grants. She was a Kellogg Foundation National Fellow from 1982-1985. She joined the AOTA Roster of Fellows in 1985 and received the Continuing Service Award from the DCOTA in 1986. The Joyce Lane Clinical Recognition Award was developed in 1996 by the DCBOTC, in her honor, and has been presented annually to an outstanding clinician since that time.

Ms Lane's leadership and involvement in professional organizations did not end with the expiration of her term as chair of the BOTC. She was a member of the AOTA Accreditation Committee from 1980-1984. She chaired the DCOT Licensure Board of the District from 1981-1984. She was DC Representative to the AOTA RA from 1983-1986. From 1992-1996, she chaired the Illinois OTA Research Committee. She currently sits on the Board of Directors of the National Society of Allied Health, which she has done since 1995. In addition to the numerous professional and community organizations, Ms. Lane has published and presented at OT and other professional workshops.

Throughout her participation in the BOTC, Ms. Lane has been dedicated to increasing communication among the members and supporters

of the organization. She took leadership consistently in producing the directory, improving it each time so that it better served the needs of those who would receive it. She presented a thought-provoking, dynamic keynote address at the BOTC 25th Anniversary Celebration at the 1999 AOTA Conference.

◆◆◆◆

Dr. Lela Llorens



Dr. Lela Llorens had been an OT for twenty-one years when the BOTC was founded. She was already a well-known educator, researcher, and lecturer/presenter by 1974. She had published numerous articles and some book chapters in OT and other publications. Many of these publications addressed her work in pediatrics. Various honors had come from universities and community organizations. AOTA had honored her with an Eleanor Clark Slagle Lectureship in 1969, and her name was added to the AOTA Roster of Fellows in 1973. She has been one of the most visible African American occupational therapists in the profession. She graced the cover of the April 17, 1997 edition of OT Week, when it wrote a story about her receipt of the Wilma L. West AOTA & AOTF President's Commendation. The title of the story, "Laying the Groundwork for Modern OT Practice," was a salute to her dedication to research and practice.

Dr. Llorens began her career in 1953 after graduating at the top of her class from Western Michigan College, with a BSOT. For the next fifteen years, until 1968, Dr. Llorens worked at several facilities in Michigan, rising from staff therapist, to supervisor, and finally to head of OT at Lafayette Clinic in Detroit.

Her academic career began in 1960 when she became instructor in the Department of OT at Wayne State University in Detroit, where she remained until 1968. While there, she completed her MA in Rehabilitation Counseling in 1962.

After leaving Wayne State, Dr. Llorens served as a consultant for the Comprehensive Childcare Project at Mt. Zion Hospital of San Francisco, CA, until 1971. Over the next decade, her considerable skills and talents were shared with the University of Florida at Gainesville, where she began as an associate professor. She became Graduate Coordinator in 1972, and rose to Chair of the department in 1976. That same year, she earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Education/Occupational Therapy from Walden University in Minneapolis, MN.

Dr. Llorens moved to San Jose State University in San Jose, CA in 1982 as professor and Graduate Coordinator. By 1984 she was chair of the OT program, a position she maintained until 1993. She continued to progress administratively at San Jose State and served as Co-Director of the Division of Health Sciences from 1990-1993. By her retirement in 1996, she had been Associate Academic Vice-President/Faculty Affairs (Interim) for the last three years. She is now Professor Emeritus, San Jose State University Occupational Therapy Department.

Dr. Llorens had participated in a variety of community and professional activities by 1974 as a member or chair of committees. She served on several AOTA committees, including as chair of the Sub-committee on Standards for Student Affiliations, 1965-1968, and Clinical Advisory Committee to AOTA Consultant in Psychiatric OT, 1964-66.

After 1974, Dr. Llorens continued her active involvement in the profession. She received the Award of Excellence from the Florida OTA in 1977. Florida OTA initiated the Lela A. Llorens Research Fund in 1978. From 1978-1989 she chaired the Research Advisory Council of AOTF, and has been a grant reviewer since 1979.

From 1985-1989 she was a member of the AOTF Board of Directors. She received the AOTF Meritorious Award and the AOTA Service Award in 1989. In 1991, she received awards from Michigan BOTC, and Wayne State. In 1993, the Dr. Llorens A. Llorens Collection was initiated at the Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman's University. In 1996, she chaired the Diversity in Research Committee of AOTF. And, in 1997, was presented with the President's Commendation in honor of Wilma West, by AOTA and AOTF. She has been invited as Keynote Speaker for a variety of occasions.

Upon the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the BOTC, Dr. Llorens, who served as co-chair for the anniversary celebration, reflected on her involvement with the organization that she helped to found.

"Mentoring has been a very important part of my professional development and in my view a way of "giving something back" to the profession. I have viewed much of the work that I have engaged in within BOTC as mentoring, teaching leading and/or modeling. It is notable as I review my credentials, contributions, and honors, that they reinforce each other throughout my career. My publications and presentations have reached many people within the profession and through them I have come to know and touch the lives of many of my colleagues. This has been reinforced by many comments received from students and others throughout the years. Accepting the many awards over the years has been an honor for the whole community. Many have shared in this and feel as I do the pride of accomplishment as a community. The message is clear to many - you can do it, too!

My role in BOTC has been a bridging one between students and the organization, between colleagues who do not or did not understand the need for such a Caucus, and the Caucus. BOTC was the first such group to be established. Over the years, others have seen the need for similar coalitions and caucuses. However, for many the question still remains 25 years later and the need remains 25 years later."

◇◇◇◇◇

William Lofton



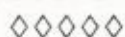
Unfortunately, William Lofton was not available to provide information about his participation in the BOTC. Therefore, the information presented here will be sketchy.

According to Bobbie Smith, William Lofton had been concerned about the isolation and discrimination African American OTs were experiencing, and he'd been in favor of the formation of an organization. He'd met informally with others of like mind the year before. Fortunately for the BOTC, he was also present at the 1974 founding meeting.

Mr. Lofton has been referred to as a retired colonel in the BOTC records. He became involved in the BOTC immediately, serving on committees and offering ideas and suggestions. He was the chair of the committee that developed the initial bylaws during Ms. Strand's presidency, and was commended by the membership for the outstanding quality of the work. In 1982, his name was added to the AOTA Roster of Fellows for program development and management in occupational therapy.



Bobbie Smith



Bobbie Smith missed the founding meeting of the BOTC, but she holds a firm place in the organization as a founder. Her interest in beginning an organization like the BOTC had been expressed in previous years to various African American occupational therapists. The year before the founding, she'd participated in the meeting to discuss the formation of an organization.

Ms. Smith received her BSOT from Wayne State University in 1962, followed by her MSOT in 1974, with a specialization in Gerontology. She received her first Certificate in Gerontology from the University of Michigan's Institute of Gerontology in 1968, and a second Certificate from the University of Florida in 1991. She received a Certificate in the Consultation Process from Case-Western University in 1969, and became a Certified Gerontic OT Trainer, AOTA, in 1985. During the first decade of her career, Ms. Smith worked in hospitals and long term care facilities in several states that included Ohio, Michigan and Colorado. Many of her positions were supervisory or managerial, and involved development of various programs for geriatric populations.

Between 1972 and 1989, Ms. Smith practiced in Colorado, primarily in Denver. She continued as a manager and consultant developing programs for long term care, home health agencies, the Veteran's Administration, and private agencies. In 1989, Ms. Smith joined the faculty of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Florida, as Coordinator of Clinical Education and Assistant Professor. In addition to coordinating the fieldwork contract recruitment process, teaching clinical seminars for Fieldwork I & II, and advising students, she has taught Therapeutic Media, Group Dynamics, Assistive Technology and Psychosocial Dysfunctions. In 1996, Ms. Smith also served as Interim Director of the OT Program, and is doing so again, beginning in 1998 to the present.

Ms. Smith has published on a multitude of topics since 1990, including, geriatric issues such as health, safety, and feeding, recruitment of occupational therapists, and time management. She co-authored, *An Investigation of the Interview Process in Selecting Students for Admission to OT Programs*, AJOT, 7/8/98, and contributed to the Colorado Activities Task Force, *Activities Director's Guide*. She was Advisor to the Jimmy Carter Long Term Care Advisory Committee of HEW from 1975-7, local coordinator of the AOTA Conference, 1978-89, faculty for the ROTE workshop 1985-86, and paper review for several AOTA conferences.

Ms. Smith has received numerous awards and honors, including addition to AOTA's Roster of Fellows in 1984, Colorado Association's Service Award in 1987, and the Florida OT Association's Service Award, 1996. She belongs to several professional associations and has served in leadership positions in all of them, at various times in her career. She is currently chairperson for the Florida OTA's EDSIS, and serves on the Executive Board. She has participated in community, civic, and church activities and been the recipient of scholarships and grants.

One of the most significant contributions Ms. Smith has made to the BOTC, has been her unswerving devotion to the Frances Swift Memorial Award. Following the death of her friend and colleague, Frances Swift, Ms. Smith set out to create an award in her honor. She has co-chaired the Awards Committee since its inception in 1984.

◆◆◆◆

Javan Walker



According to Jerry Bentley, Javan Walker clearly considered himself one of the founders of the BOTC. His activism in the organization is documented throughout the records, until his death in 1996.

Mr. Walker received his BSOT from Wayne State University in 1966. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel during his career in the U. S. Army and Army Reserves. He worked as a consultant and in supervisory positions in various healthcare settings.

In 1976, Mr. Walker began a thirteen-year affiliation with Illinois Central College in Peoria, Illinois, where he was curriculum director in the OTA program. During that time, he obtained his MA in Education from Bradley University in Peoria in 1978. In 1990, Mr. Walker helped to develop the occupational therapy program at Florida A & M, where he was director. Mr. Walker was a popular speaker and contributing author to several publications.

Mr. Walker participated in the BOTC through his membership and leadership of committees. He was the Chair, Professional Action Committee, for several years. He was also university liaison, facilitating communication between educational programs and the BOTC.



**Leaders and Their Legacies:
Growing the BOTC**



The Leaders



*When spider webs unite,
they can tie up a lion.*

Ethiopian Proverb

From an unplanned meeting at an AOTA Conference twenty-five years ago, the BOTC has become recognized as a significant force in helping to shape AOTA policies and activities related to occupational therapy practitioners and students from diverse cultures. Men and women of vision and ideas, leadership and managerial skills, great communicators, humanitarians and activists, have led the BOTC from an informal, networking, mentoring, support group, to a formal, well-structured, activist organization still dedicated to the purpose and objectives established in the beginning.

That first meeting of students and therapists helped to validate what many therapists had known for years. They were living the experiences of isolation, discrimination, and lack of support. As discussions continued during those early years, the purpose and goals for the organization evolved to address additional needs that were identified.

Early in its formation, the BOTC functioned as a collective without a hierarchy. Minimal formal organization was in place, although the need for a chair was recognized immediately. At the end of the first meeting, Joyce Lane agreed to chair the next meeting, and continued to do so until 1977. Eloise Strand soon became treasurer to manage revenues and expenses generated by various activities, and continued in that position until 1983 when she became BOTC president.

The leadership of an organization is effective only if the membership embraces the vision and is mobilized in response to it. All leaders rely on the support and dedication of their Executive Boards (vice-president, secretary, treasurer, committee chairs, etc.) and the membership. Although

all the therapists who've worked long and hard to move the BOTC forward will not be highlighted here, it is critical to recognize their efforts and contributions to the accomplishments of the BOTC.

In its twenty-five year history, eight chairs/presidents have led the BOTC:

- ◇ Joyce Lane: 1974-1977
- ◇ Dr. Doris Witherspoon: 1977-1980
- ◇ Brenda Johnson: 1980-1983
- ◇ Eloise Strand: 1983-1987
- ◇ Jerry Bentley: 1987-1991
- ◇ Tanya Cotton Anderson: 1991-1994
- ◇ Saburi Imara: 1994-1995; 1995-1999
- ◇ Margo Strotter: 1999 -2003

The purpose of the BOTC is to identify, share and attempt to resolve issues that are germane to black certified occupational therapists, certified occupational therapy assistants and students and to enhance participation in professional associations.

The objectives of the BOTC are:

- ◇ to increase communication among black therapists, assistants and students
- ◇ to increase student recruitment, retention and certification
- ◇ to promote equal opportunity in employment and education
- ◇ to encourage professional association participation and leadership

Many have participated in the progress of the BOTC in achieving the purpose and objectives set forth in the bylaws. Countless members and supporters have also made tremendous contributions, including state chapters and their memberships. Hopefully, future histories will be expanded to acknowledge more individuals to whom BOTC owe its existence and success.

◇◇◇◇◇

Joyce Lane



During the three years that Joyce Lane was chairperson of the BOTC, the group operated like a collective, as there was minimal formal structure in place. Besides the chair, the treasurer, Eloise Strand, was the only other officer.

Joyce recalls that during those early years African American OTs relied on their oral tradition for communicating about the BOTC. Because they did not initially have a formal structure for communicating with other African American OTs, they relied on word-of-mouth to inform them about the BOTC's existence, purpose, objectives, and plans to meet at the AOTA Conference.

In those first formative years, it became important to provide a mechanism to offer support and networking opportunities to therapists and students, in response to identified needs. Support helped African American therapists and students to deal with isolation and feelings of discrimination in employment and education. Networking opportunities facilitated sharing information about employment opportunities. Developing a directory became a priority, and at least two directories were completed during Joyce's administration.

A second important objective was to support students financially to help defray some of the costs of their education, thereby increasing their chance of graduating. Eloise Strand volunteered to act as treasurer, and continued to give of her time and talents in developing the financial accounting system for the organization until 1983, when she became president.

Early on, the question arose concerning the relationship of the organization to AOTA. There had been some perceptions by African American OTs before the founding of BOTC that AOTA would not support such an organization. However, once the organization was formed, authorizing the use of meeting rooms and printing meeting information in the conference brochure evidenced some level of support from AOTA. Unfortunately, the times that were available for the BOTC to meet conflicted with an already crowded agenda, resulting in much difficulty getting interested persons together.

The question of how the BOTC would relate to the AOTA membership resulted in lively discussions of whether the meetings should be open to anyone, or open to only BOTC members, or African American OT practitioners and students. At the 1976 meeting of the BOTC, the membership voted to close the meeting for two years to non black members of AOTA. BOTC members expressed a desire to have time and freedom to discuss concerns and issues relevant to African American OTs.

Participation in the BOTC was not desirable for all African American OT practitioners and students for political reasons. With the Civil Rights legislation in place and the "Black Power" movement crushed, some African Americans held reservations about the use of "militant" tactics to obtain the rights that had been legislated. Organizations that excluded whites or other ethnic groups were sometimes viewed as undesirable, and a hindrance to the legacy of integration left by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This characterization of the BOTC as a "militant" organization continued to persist for many years.

By the end of Joyce Lane's administration in 1977, Alex Haley's "Roots" television miniseries, one of the most watched television events to date, had reinforced the pride of African Americans in their heritage. At BOTC, better communication among African American OT practitioners and students was occurring through participation in the BOTC meetings, and the use of the directory. Much more work was still to be done to address the goals and objectives of the BOTC.

◇◇◇◇◇

Dr. Doris Witherspoon



Dr. Doris Witherspoon remembers attending the formative meeting of the BOTC. At that time, she was already active in BOTC through her chairing of the Michigan Black Occupational Therapy Caucus, which she did concurrently with chairing BOTC. She brought with her the administrative skills of developing the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program that she had directed at Wayne County Community College since 1972.

Dr. Witherspoon received her BSOT from Eastern Michigan University in 1968. She began her academic career At Wayne Community College, where she was instructor and director from 1972 - 1990. During that time, she received her MA in Occupational Education from the University of Michigan in 1976, and began work toward a Ph.D. in that area. She received her Ed.d. in Higher Education Administration from Wayne State University in 1996..

From 1979-1981, Dr. Witherspoon directed the Allied Health Division at Wayne County, supervising the allied health program. She was Acting Dean, Vocational Technical Programs, 1985-1990. In 1990, she moved to Henry Ford Community College in Michigan, as Director, Industrial Technology Division, where she is currently employed.

Her activism has included chairing numerous professional organizations and committees, including the COE of the Michigan OTA from 1978-1981, presiding over the OTA educators of AOTA from 1985-1987, and several committees related to her occupational education employment.

Dr. Witherspoon was a contributing author to, "The Occupational Therapy Assistant Roles and Responsibilities," published by Slack in 1985 and 1991, and has presented at conferences in Michigan and Tennessee. She received the Distinguished Service Award from the Detroit OTA in 1985 and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the College of Health Sciences at Eastern Michigan University in 1986.

At the 1977 meeting of AOTA in Puerto Rico, members of BOTC met and decided that the need to continue to improve communication with other African American OTs should be addressed further. Joyce Lane's administration had started the process by providing many OTs with resource information through the publication of the directory. At the start of her administration in 1978, Dr. Witherspoon initiated the publication of a newsletter that was initially distributed only to the membership. *Newsline* was one method used to meet the BOTC objective :

- ◇ To increase communication among black therapists, assistants and students.

In 1978, Marie Moore became *Newsline* editor and continued in that position until 1982. Although the newsletter was initially developed and distributed to members, by its second publication it was also mailed to nonmembers. The *Newsline* continues to be one of the most enduring features of the organization.

BOTC addressed several important issues during Dr. Witherspoon's administration. By 1978, the decision to have closed versus open meetings had expired, and a new vote was needed. Rather than rely on only the attendees at the 1978 meeting, a paper vote was mailed to all members. Although the response was low (14 total), there was a definite desire to keep the meetings closed (10 closed, 4 open).

The decision of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) Council to meet in South Africa in 1980 drew very strong reactions from the BOTC. The BOTC contacted the WFOT Delegate to express their concerns. In a 1978 communication to Joyce Lane, Moya Kinneally, WFOT Delegate, reported that the WFOT Executive Board contacted the World Health Organization, and the AOTA also sent a letter of protest. AOTA was assured that the South African Occupational Therapy Association's (SAOTA) code of ethics was nonpartisan and promoted OT practice and services delivery on a nonpartisan basis.

On April 24, 1979, the BOTC submitted a proposal to AOTA recommending that:

“AOTA delegate and alternate delegates to the WFOT be instructed to boycott the scheduled meeting in South Africa and announce this intent to all member nations of the WFOT.”

AOTA decided to send a delegate to WFOT, but it did note BOTC's position against sending a delegate in its correspondence to WFOT, and attached a copy of BOTC's proposal. AOTA's rationale for attending the WFOT meeting was expressed as concern about losing input into WFOT for eight years should a delegate not be sent. They did offer an alternate site in Pennsylvania for the WFOT meeting.

Forty-nine African American OTs and students attended the 1979 meeting of BOTC at the AOTA Conference. Membership was up to ninety, and dues were ten dollars for occupational therapists, five dollars for certified occupational therapy assistants, and free to students. Membership had increased by twenty since the directory was published in the late seventies. An update of the directory was planned for 1981-82.

During breakout sessions at the 1979 BOTC meeting, which marked the organization's fifth year, issues facing the BOTC were scrutinized. Issues examined included:

- ◇ future direction of BOTC and the relevance of the goals
- ◇ black students' special needs, recruitment and retention
- ◇ cultural implications of treatment
- ◇ WFOT meeting in South Africa and the BOTC resolution

Members affirmed the direction of the organization as being consistent with the original purpose. Ideas to further facilitate communication included expanding *Newsline*; increasing support of students and other professionals and using the AOTA newsletter to increase visibility of the organization. Members concluded that the BOTC needed to become more assertive and to increase the number of nominations for AOTA Roster of Fellows.

The special needs of African American students were identified. It was observed that most African American students were not aware of OT as a career and had limited exposure to the delivery of health care, such as volunteering as candy strippers. Consequently, applicants to OT programs often did not have the prerequisite science classes, GPA, or community service experiences. Recruitment efforts needed to start at high school and through Upward Bound. Retention problems often resulted from students having poor study habits, inadequate oral and written communication skills, and reluctance to seek experienced therapists out for assistance. It was recommended that practitioners put more effort into seeking out students, which would support their success. A recruitment project was soon put on the agenda, with Wimberly Edwards overseeing it.

Issues related to discrepancy between white and minority receipt of services due to cultural differences were discussed. It was noted that conflicts often existed between the values of African Americans and the predominantly white therapy force delivering services. Racism in hiring African American OTs was considered to be a major factor. Suggestions were made to develop and distribute a questionnaire to the membership so that concrete examples of racism could be identified.

In a paper entitled, "Some Issues of Concern for Black Occupational Therapists," Yvonne Flowers, Pamela Lezama, Jill Moore, and Curtiss Waddy, summarized concerns related to student recruitment, retention, and racism. The report also emphasized that African American students' needs were best addressed within the context of their culture. The report discussed positive steps that the BOTC had taken, including the publication of a recruitment and promotional brochure.

That same year, Yvonne Flowers took her concerns related to cultural and diversity issues to the community. She made a presentation at a

meeting of the Association of Black Psychologists entitled, "Homophobia in the Black Community."

Participation in local, state, and national organizations was encouraged and supported. The New York State Black OT Caucus was consistently active. This chapter was formed at the same time as the BOTC by Yvonne Flowers, and was led by Delores Chandler. They took a proactive role in getting the word out about OT. Some of their activities included a poster presentation at a conference of black psychologists, a recruitment brochure, student survey, and examination of state and national legislation as it affected health services in the black community. A research paper entitled, "The Black Woman as an Occupational Therapist" written by Sandra Anderson in fulfillment of a degree requirement, was presented at the NYSBOTC, and later read by Delores Chandler at the BOTC meeting in 1979.

Some Michigan BOTC members were very active in the state OTA. Lettie Redley, who was local coordinator for the 1979 AOTA Conference held in Detroit, Michigan, also served as Michigan OTA chairperson of the Council on Government Affairs. Doris Witherspoon was saluted by the BOTC for her leadership as chairperson of BOTC and of the Michigan Commission on Education. That role also placed her on the Board of Management for the Michigan OTA.

Alabama was another active state whose leadership (Jacqueline Moore, president; Yvonne Madison, secretary; and Betty Wells, treasurer) was recognized. Lela Llorens was also recognized by the BOTC for her active involvement in and contributions to research. Members were encouraged to send contributions to AOTF in her honor.

Throughout her administration, Ms. Witherspoon verbalized the importance of communication, organizational participation, leadership, and support of students and therapists. In an effort to increase contributions to *Newsline*, Dr. Witherspoon implemented Communication Awards, which were given to winners at the 1980 meeting, the last one over which she presided. Other projects were progressing, including Wimberly Edwards' efforts to develop a recruitment film, and Joyce Lane's revision of the directory.

◆◆◆◆

Brenda Johnson



Brenda Johnson had combined clinical practice with education since receiving her BSOT from Western Michigan University in 1971. For eight years she was a staff therapist at the Bronx Veterans Administration Medical Center in New York. She entered OT education in 1979 as an instructor at Tuskegee University. During her five years there, she was also Acting Director from 1982-1983. Before becoming Active Director, Ms. Johnson was Director of OT Services at Montgomery Rehabilitation Center, Inc., in Alabama for two years. When Ms. Johnson became president of BOTC in 1980, she also entered the United States Reserves, Army Medical Specialist Corps, where she now has the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After leaving academia in 1984, Ms. Johnson practiced in a variety of settings in Alabama and Georgia. She became Director of Occupational Therapy Services for Allied Rehab Associates, Inc., located in Georgia in 1994, where she remains.

The issues of importance for BOTC had been identified at the 1979 meeting under Doris Witherspoon's leadership. When Ms. Johnson assumed the chairperson's position at the 1980 meeting of the BOTC, only fifteen members were in attendance. The low attendance was attributed to the meeting schedule, which was late in the week when many conference attendees had returned home. The problem of scheduling meetings at the AOTA Conference had persisted since the first scheduled BOTC meeting in 1975, and can still present a challenge with a crowded meeting agenda.

An important milestone in the organization's development occurred at the 1980 meeting when the membership voted for open meetings to begin at the 1981 meeting. Previous meetings had been closed. But, this vote would not be the final word on whether the organization would restrict the meeting to African Americans. The decision and its implications were to become an ongoing debate within the organization.

Ms. Johnson's administration attempted to add more infrastructures to the organization. The first secretary, Yvonne Evans of Detroit Michigan, was elected to serve a two-year term. An attempt to increase dues from ten dollars failed, but Eloise Strand continued as treasurer.

Ms. Johnson was very excited and pleased with two initiatives that began with her inauguration. Each state elected a resource person, someone who acted as a liaison between the BOTC and state organizations between annual meetings to improve communication. State resource persons were also charged with recruiting more African Americans into the state BOTCs. States and their resource persons were identified as: New York-Delores

Chandler; Washington, D.C., -Joyce Lane and Jerry Bentley; Michigan-Doris Witherspoon and Yvonne Evans; Indiana-Ann Randall; Georgia-Eva Adeside; Texas-Betty Stoker; and Bahamas-Hugo Bowloey.

Four task groups, which were established to respond to issues that had been identified in 1979, were also established. They were:

- ◇ Recruitment Project-an ongoing project coordinated by Wimberly Edwards to develop slides and publications
- ◇ Organizational Structure in Relation to AOTA-to garner support for improving the national image of BOTC
- ◇ Special Needs, Recruitment and Retention of Black OT's-coordinated by Joyce Lane
- ◇ Focus and Future of BOTC- charged with developing a questionnaire and the new directory, which had been voted for publication in 1982-'83

The 1981 BOTC meeting was better attended than the previous year, as thirty to thirty-five members were in attendance. The WFOT Council meeting in South Africa continued to be a concern. AOTA provided the BOTC with correspondence between them and the South African OTA (SAOTA). AOTA continued to reiterate its lack of support for the oppressive South African regime, as did the SAOTA.

Financing projects within BOTC had to be revisited in response to a decision to publish a directory in 1982. Although dues had been in place for several years, additional funds were needed. For the second time in its history, dues were collected from all members.

Further discussion about the relationship of BOTC to AOTA evoked some concerns about the ability of the BOTC to maintain its autonomy. BOTC decided to maintain a caucus status so that the agenda and advocacy role of the BOTC could be maintained. However, it was considered important to continue to influence AOTA's activities in relation to the concerns of African American practitioners and students. With that goal in mind, Wimberly Edwards sent some suggestions for black recruitment to the director of education at AOTA.

There were few state BOTC chapters in the early eighties. The use of state resource persons/liaisons, improved communication among the states and the BOTC. With state liaisons already in place, it was decided to organize the newest directory regionally. Other activities occurring at the state level was the development of memorial scholarships. The first state to develop a scholarship was New York State, to honor the memory of Delores Chandler, upon her death. The scholarship was for one hundred dollars. Now several state chapters have scholarships in memory of deceased members.

Participation in professional organizations continued to be encouraged and reaped some rewards in increased recognition of African American therapists by AOTA. In 1980, Both Marie Moore and Marianne Maynard were added to the Roster of Fellows. Joyce Lane was appointed to the AOTA Accreditation Committee. Ann Randall, who served on the Executive Committee of the Indiana OT Association, presented a paper at the AOTA Conference entitled, "Administrative Considerations in Initiating OT Services." She had established an OT department at a hospital in 1977.

By 1982, seven African American OT's had become members of the Roster of Fellows: Wimberly Edwards, William Lofton, Lela Llorens, Marianne Maynard, Marie Moore, Marian Ross, Dorothy Wilson. And, three African American OT's directed OT Programs in Illinois alone (Artice Harmon, Cynthia Hughes, Winifred Scott). They joined long-time academicians Wimberly Edwards and Lela Llorens who were also program directors.

President-elect of AOTA, Robert Bing, took an active interest in the BOTC. He attended the 1982 meeting and extended an invitation for members to become involved with AOTA through serving on committees. He encouraged members to review the AOTA bylaws for specific qualifications to serve on the Executive Board and serve as chairs.

Further structuring of the organization began in 1982 when a committee to develop standard operating procedures (SOP) was established, chaired by Colonel William Lofton, with Lettie Redley and Jerry Bentley as members. Both the NYSBOTC and Washington D.C., BOTC were developing bylaws or S.O.P.'s. The logo for the BOTC was first displayed on the February, 1983 edition of Newline, which was then under the editorship of Barbara Townsend.

Brenda Johnson reflected on the progress of the BOTC in her outgoing message from the chair in 1983. She noted that

"It may appear that we are making very small strides in the movement of BOTC, but as I reflect on all that we do on our individual jobs as professional OT's coupled with active participation in our local, state and national organizations—put this all together and we are doing plenty. We should be proud of the fact that a great many of our colleagues are in leadership positions and do actively assume the responsibility of being good role models for future Black OT's."

When contacted for this history, Ms. Johnson also had a message she wanted to share with her colleagues:

"At the conception of the BOTC in 1974, twenty-five years ago, we came into being "because there was a need to meet collectively and to collectively help each other." So it remains that on the brink of a new millenium, black occupational therapists continue

to meet new challenges. More than ever before, our being is dependent upon our care and support of each other. I challenge each of my colleagues and the future black occupational therapist to continue to realize this worthy goal for success of our professional careers as occupational therapist.”

◇◇◇◇◇

Eloise Strand



Eloise Strand came to the presidency of the BOTC after serving as treasurer since it began, and holding leadership positions in other organizations for twenty years. From 1963-1969, she was involved in leadership activities in the California and District of Columbia OTAs first as Chairperson of the Northern California OTA Membership Committee from 1963-65, and then President of the District of Columbia OTA from 1966-69.

Ms. Strand received a BS in Home Economics from Virginia State College in 1950 and taught for five years in the Virginia public schools. She went on to get a Certificate in OT from the University of Pennsylvania in 1956 and an MA in OT from New York University in 1966. She later received a MHA from Baylor University in 1974. She was also a Colonel in the U.S. Army for twenty years, but is now retired.

From 1962-1965, Ms. Strand worked for Letterman General Hospital, progressing from staff therapist to supervisor and clinical affiliation coordinator. She began her career with the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 1966, serving three years as educational coordinator and clinical affiliation coordinator before going to Germany. Upon her return from Germany, Ms. Strand completed an internship as a Health Care Administration resident at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center while pursuing her MHA.

In 1974, Ms. Strand resumed her position at Walter Reed. In 1976, she became Chief, OT Section of the Office of the Surgeon General. She was promoted to Chief, Army Medical Specialist Corp, in 1978, where she served for four years. In 1982, she became Special Assistant to the U.S. Army Surgeon General. That same year she began part-time employment as Recruitment Coordinator for OT at Howard University. Since 1988, she has been International Program Manager for the AOTA.

Ms. Strand continued to participate in local, state, and national professional organizations after joining BOTC. She was the Chair of the AOTA Manpower Committee for the 1974 AOTA Conference, DCOTA Representative to the AOTA RA from 1974-1980, and continues to serve on the OT Admissions Committee at Howard University. In 1974, she wrote an article published in *OT Week* entitled, "OT and the Army."

Ms. Strand recalls that she wandered into the first BOTC meeting. She volunteered to become treasurer, knowing that the new organization would need an accounting of any financial transactions. During the ten years that she held the position, there were no term limits for offices. She was the only

person to hold a position for ten years, as the bylaws that were completed under her administration required that positions be rotated.

In her message to the membership in a 1984 *Newsline*, Ms. Strand stated:

"We have done well since our beginning in 1974, but the BOTC has passed its infancy and is here to stay. We do not need an elaborate bylaws document, but we do need some structure and a means by which to get things accomplished in a timely, orderly and businesslike manner. Both the bylaws and SOP will help do this."

Ms. Strand set the following as objectives of her administration:

- ◇ to facilitate development and approval of BOTC bylaws
- ◇ to facilitate the development of SOPS for BOTC officers and chairpersons of standing committees
- ◇ to secure BOTC tax exempt status
- ◇ to explore the mechanism and feasibility of a BOTC scholarship
- ◇ to develop and strengthen state BOTC liaison systems

Members elected with Ms. Strand included: Yvonne Flowers-secretary and Major James Mills, treasurer. The first standing committee established was the Nominating Committee, which was chaired by Sandra Page, and included Bobbie Smith and Penny Kyler-Hutchison. It was charged with developing an election schedule, preparing a slate of nominees, making awards, and maintaining a scholarship fund. Barbara Townsend continued as newsletter editor. What had started out as an informal mentoring and support group was fast becoming a stable, activist organization, on the eve of its decade anniversary.

In 1983, the nation was shaken by a tragic plane disaster. The Soviet Union shot down the Korean Airliner KAL007, which was on its way to Japan. Frances Swift, an OTR and graduate student at the University of Michigan, was a passenger on that flight and was killed, along with all the other passengers. She had been on her way to Japan to explore African American and Asian linkages. Bobbie Smith agreed to co-chair a committee with Agatha Jackson to establish a scholarship in Ms. Swift's name, with Colonel William Lofton assisting. The Frances Swift Scholarship Award, which is supported by donations, was first awarded in 1985 at the Atlanta BOTC meeting, for \$200.00. Qualifying students had to be of African descent pursuing a career in OT, demonstrate financial need and be in good standing.

By 1984, the *Newsline* was mailed to 239 African American OT practitioners and students. The first draft of the BOTC bylaws from the committee headed by William Lofton was submitted for review with that newsletter. At the 1984 BOTC meeting, Colonel Lofton's work was praised. A motion that the "essence of the bylaws with suggested changes be adopted," was accepted unanimously. Long-term projects, such as the directory and audiovisual slide presentation were still on the agenda. Progress had been stalled by a limited response from the membership for information and donations of slides. However, Wimberly Edwards shared her expertise with the membership when she presented a workshop entitled, "Making Your Resume Work for You," at the 1985 BOTC meeting.

As BOTC approached its first decade, notable events in African American history were occurring. Martin Luther King's birthday was declared a holiday fifteen years after his death. An African American astronaut finally went to the moon. And, in 1984, Desmond Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize.

As with all organizations, maintaining a high level of participation was difficult. The Strand administration set forth some ambitious objectives, with continued expansion of projects that had been discussed or started earlier, as well as new objectives. Ms. Strand called upon the membership to support the activities of the organization financially, since the treasury was very limited.

The tireless efforts of those who had worked to educate AOTA about the concerns of African American therapists and students began to pay off again. The AOTA Manpower Report finally verified what BOTC had been saying all along. It noted that minorities, which included males and other racial and ethnic groups besides African Americans, represented only eight percent of the profession. With the changing demographics, it was becoming more important for AOTA to actively recruit minorities and use strategies to retain them. Fran Acquaviva of AOTA shared the results of the Manpower Report with the BOTC membership at the 1986 meeting.

At that same meeting, a Professional Action Committee, chaired by Javan Walker, was added to the list of standing committees. It was charged with assuring that BOTC had a voice in the actions of AOTA as they affected African American OTs. It was a timely committee because Resolution #620-86 was introduced to RA calling for study of recruitment and retention issues and actions needed to diversify the workforce. This resolution was approved and the two-year study completed by the Ad-hoc Committee of the Executive Board was submitted to the RA. The report, "Recruitment and Retention of Nontraditional Students," included minorities, the physically challenged, and men.

By the last year of Ms. Strand's term in 1987, the bylaws were firmly in place. Elections had been held per the schedule developed by the Nominating Committee. Officers were Penny Kyler-Hutchison-treasurer, Yvonne Evans-secretary, Jerry Bentley-president-elect, and William Lofton-

vice-president. Regina Stevens-Ratchford edited *Newline*. The Frances Swift Scholarship Award had been awarded for two years, and the Professional Action Committee was two years old.

Also by 1987, AOTA had established the Minority Recruitment Task Force, with African American OTs Cynthia Hughes, Jerry Bentley, Shirley Wells, Joyce Player, Phyllis Lane, and Brenda Faison as members. The Task Force, under the leadership of Suzanne Carlton of the National Office, initiated several recruitment activities. Students from Howard and Towson State Universities were invited to the National Office for a focus group to discuss career choices and ways to approach and influence African Americans toward making career choices. A survey was conducted of minority students in OT programs. AOTA solicited photos of blacks OTs for publication in recruitment literature.

Even with this initiative by AOTA, there was still not total acceptance of the need for the profession to become educated about the unique cultures of minorities. Penny Kyler-Hutchison's proposal for a 2-hour workshop entitled, "Implications for Treatment in a Cross-Cultural Therapeutic Alliance" was rejected. One reviewer commented that the topic was not timely or appealing. Not much had changed in South African and members continued to be concerned. A decision was made by the BOTC membership to send a letter to WFOT with suggestions.

At the conclusion of Eloise Strand's administration, three of five of her objectives had been achieved. The tax-exempt status was tabled for the following year until the implications of new tax laws could be assessed. Committees continued to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), with the *Newline* Committee submitting theirs that year. A Membership Committee was established at Ms. Strands recommendation, and was chaired by Pamela McAfee Jenkins. The committee would continue to develop directories in addition to coordinating membership activities. Ms. Strands led the BOTC to structural stability, establishing a foundation on which future work could be completed.

◆◆◆◆

Jerry Bentley



Jerry Bentley took over the reigns of an organization whose infrastructure had been firmly built by the previous administrations, especially the prior one. The groundwork of communicating with AOTA had been laid. But, the work was not all done. Ms. Bentley saw a need to "expand the organization from a once-a-year energizer to a year round active and productive force." She established increased communication and visibility as her main goals, and set forth some specific objectives:

- ◆ Increase Visibility
 - ◆ submit at least two articles on achievement of Black OTs to OT Weekly, Newsletter, and Forum
 - ◆ identify ourselves as members of BOTC in news articles, presentations, resumes, etc.
 - ◆ nominate at least one member to the FAOTA and ROH
 - ◆ submit a proposal for the 1988 Conference
 - ◆ produce a BOTC brochure
 - ◆ announce your meeting in your state and local OT newsletter
- ◆ Increased Communication and Networking
 - ◆ produce BOTC directory by 4/88
 - ◆ develop local chapters to serve as a support group, problem identifiers, and create innovative solutions
 - ◆ share job information and other opportunities for advancement
- ◆ Enhance the scholarship
 - ◆ increase amount to \$500.00 annually
 - ◆ submit pictures of recipients/ceremony to OT newsletter
- ◆ Establish the scholarship and membership committees as standing committees

The Executive Board at the beginning of Ms. Bentley's leadership included: William Lofton-vice president, Yvonne Evans-secretary, Penny Kyler-Hutchison-treasurer, Lela Llorens-member at large. Standing committees and chairs were: Budget-Kyler-Hutchison, Newslines-Regina

Stevens-Ratchford, Nominations-Sandra Page, Professional Action-Javan Walker, and Membership-Pamela McAfee Jenkins.

The new Membership Committee took off immediately with many ideas for attracting and retaining members. Pamela M. Jenkins had already been active in the Kansas OTA and was appointed chair of the Capital District of the Kansas OTA about the time she became chair of membership.

In response to the request by the Minority Task Force for photos of blacks in OT, a guide for taking photos was printed in the *Newsline*. The *Newsline* itself changed, including the addition of more graphics and eye-catching headlines. Discussion in response to Peg Bledsoe's request for history resulted in the realization that historical information needed to be archived. Marie Moore agreed to be archivist.

Apartheid in South Africa continued to be a concern of the BOTC. A proposal had been sent to AOTA about a decade earlier expressing BOTC's request that AOTA not attend WFOT's meeting in South Africa. BOTC formed an ad hoc committee on South African OT in response to the report from WFOT entitled, "OT Training Systems and Service Delivery in South Africa, 1987." The Ad Hoc Committee (Joyce Lane, Pam Lawton, Curtisse Waddy, Eloise Strand, Michelle Mills, Jerry Bentley and Wimberly Edwards-chair) responded to the report by drawing up a letter to WFOT, stating that upon examination of the report, it was felt that the South African Occupational Therapy Association (SAOTA), should not be allowed to sit on the WFOT Council. The letter was dated 4/12/89.

In 1989, Columbia University's OT Program sponsored a 4-5 week visit of a South African OT, Mr. Gordon Le Belo. He was a guest speaker at the BOTC 1989 meeting. Both the NYSBOTC and the BOTC assisted him in obtaining lodging, food, and transportation during his visits to New York and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Le Belo expressed his gratitude for the interest the BOTC expressed in apartheid. He observed that Americans were more aware of apartheid than many South Africans because of media censor. He discussed the deplorable conditions of blacks in South Africa. 23 black OTs had been trained since they were allowed to in 1976. Black OTs could not treat whites and were not allowed to participate in the SAOTA. Mr. Le Belo expressed a need for black OTs in South Africa to increase support among themselves. He met with BOTC and state chapter officers and committee heads to share communication strategies. After his return to South Africa, Mr. Le Belo sent a letter back to the BOTC in June expressing his thanks for the support and information he had received.

AOTA's attention to minority concerns increased in the latter part of the 1980's. In response to a study on minority, disabled and male students in the profession, the AOTA revised the Strategic Plan to include allocation of resources to minority recruitment. The Minority Recruitment and Retention

Committee (H. Kay Grant, Joy Scott, Shirley Jackson and Carl Sunstrom) was subsequently formed.

The Minority and Retention Committee sought out the assistance and support of the BOTC. AOTA representative Carl Sunstrom and Carol Hersch attended the BOTC meeting in 1989 to discuss the results of AOTA's study of minority recruitment, and to request assistance. AOTA asked BOTC to share information it had collected about minority participation in OT, as well as requested assistance from the state chapters in collecting additional information on minority participation.

Ms. Bentley forwarded the names of six state chapter representatives to the Committee. The state representatives were: Brian Gibbs-CA, Michelle Mills-NY, Rhonda Steward-MI, Margo Strotter-IL, Valerie Barnes-D.C., Pamela Jenkins-Tx, and Agatha Jackson-CO. In 1990 AOTA appointed Brian Gibbs the first Minority Program Manager, a position he held until 1991. The program later became Minority Affairs and was moved to the Public Relations department.

In 1990/91, AOTA fully embraced the necessity to recruit and retain minorities. A posture of inclusion encompassed minorities, the disabled and males. Many official AOTA documents and programs now required inclusive language, that referred to gender, diversity and multiculturalism. AOTA's diversity efforts included production of a brochure, presentation of a workshop at the National Office, and development a poster targeted at adolescent African American males.

AOTA's attention to minority affairs was truly welcomed, as progress toward the goals and objectives set by Ms. Bentley's administration was being made at the end of the decade. There were now eight state chapters with two in development. Ms. Bentley's focus on communication had resulted in increased communication from state chapters, often in the form of letters discussing their efforts toward promoting the profession. In 1991, Ms. Bentley praised *OT Week* for highlighting African Americans during Black History Month.

The goal of increasing the scholarship to \$500.00 was achieved. A new goal of increasing the amount to \$1000.00 was set during Ms. Bentley's administration. The schedule for the presentation of the 1990 Frances Swift Scholarship was published in the AOTA Daily Bulletin, and attended by Eleanor Gilfoyle and Ann Grady. Publicity around the award set off a storm of protest when *Advance for Occupational Therapists* printed an article in the June 6, 1990 edition with erroneous information. The article stated that BOTC was a part of AOTA, and that the Frances Swift Award had been developed by AOTA "to demonstrate AOTA's commitment to increase the number of minority practitioners in the field." A letter was subsequently sent to the publication expressing BOTC's displeasure at the inaccuracy of the reporting.

African American OTs continued to make significant strides in the involvement in the profession. Barbara Townsend, who had earlier edited the *Newsline* for several years, was elected vice-president of AOTA. Mary Sands was elected to Chairperson of AOTA's Commission on Education. BOTC members nominated for AOTA awards regularly received them.

At the end of her administration, Ms. Bentley summed up her accomplishments at the 1991 BOTC meeting. She had achieved her objectives of sharing job information, increasing scholarships, establishing the membership and scholarship committees, and increasing the number of chapters. She recognized nine BOTC members with awards for the work they had done, including officers and chairpersons (Agatha Jackson had assumed the chair of *Newsline*, and Charles Stewart was treasurer and chair of Budget), and former officers Penny Kyler-Hutchison and Eloise Strand.

In her outgoing message, Ms. Bentley recognized that the work of the BOTC was ongoing, and that some of the goals she had set had yet to be accomplished, including development of a brochure, and revision of the bylaws. Those tasks and others yet to be identified were turned over to the next generation of leaders.

◇◇◇◇◇

Tanya Cotton Anderson



Tanya Cotton Anderson came to the presidency of BOTC after being active in the Michigan BOTC. During the previous year she had devoted much energy to starting a business, OccuPaths, Inc., with partner Toni Thompkins, OTR. She had also garnered publicity about occupational therapy from a cable network and the Detroit Press. She thought it important to educate the public about occupational therapy. With the changes in healthcare and early discharge from hospitals, she thought it especially important that African Americans be informed about OT services in home health, since African Americans tend to keep family members at home rather than send them to nursing homes.

Ms. Anderson obtained her MSOT from Wayne State University in 1983. She worked at several hospitals, including Lafayette Clinic in Detroit. She became interested in OT as a teenager when she helped her mother with a home exercise program. She considered both physical and occupational therapy as careers, but was especially attracted by the diversity in treatment offered by OT.

In an article published in *OT Week* in November 22, 1991, Ms. Anderson discussed the low participation of African Americans in the OT profession. Out of approximately 45,000 AOTA members, African Americans OTs constituted 2.7% OTR and 5.8 % COTAs.

When Ms. Anderson moved into the presidency, the AOTA was fully committed to an inclusion agenda and capitalizing on the groundwork laid by previous administrations. Ms. Anderson set an ambitious agenda for the next four years, building on the infrastructure already in place. An important project was to improve communication within the eight state caucuses and between them and BOTC. She and her administration established the following goals:

- ◆ acquire increased personnel, financial and educational resources
- ◆ expand student mentorship and scholarship
- ◆ organize professional support, resources, and recognition programs
- ◆ assist the professional association with minority recruitment and retention programs
- ◆ enhance overall public relations

Ten auxiliary committees were established to further address stated goals. The committees and their chairs included Student Recruitment-

Kathleen Conyers, with a focus on elementary and high schools; Conference Planning and Reception; Public Relations/Publications-Barbara Townsend and Pamela Woods; Job Network/Resource Bank-Gwen Cherry; Special Recognition-Mae Brandon; University Liaison-Javan Walker; Archives; Mentorship-Linda Robinson; Fundraising-Jerry Bentley; and Adopt a Charity-Cheryl Haynes.

BOTC's increased visibility was not without consequences. In November of 1991, Ms. Anderson received a letter from an OTR from Mississippi in response to an article, "OT Caucus Seeks More Black Professionals," published in the November/December issue of *Team Rehab Report*. The letter decried the BOTC for being a segregated organizations that "only promotes racism and prejudice feelings." The letter agreed with BOTC's efforts to reach out to young people, but suggested the black OT's participate in AOTA and state organizations, where therapists of all races could be found. It further suggested that the organization was discriminatory and that such behavior from a white organization would not be tolerated. In addition, the writer stated that it was unrealistic to expect that very many blacks would become OTs since the percentage of blacks in the population was only 10%.

The writer expressed similar sentiments of those that had not supported BOTC or any special interest group, since its inception, and continue to withhold support still. African Americans and others have expressed both mixed feelings and objections to the Caucus. Although many more African American attend AOTA Conferences today, and there is more information about BOTC activities, there are still a significant number of African American OTs who have no involvement with BOTC activities.

The letter of protest no doubt had something to do with the lively discussion that ensued at the 1992 BOTC meeting regarding the issue of open versus closed meetings. The issue had been voted on in the early eighties, and the decision was to keep the meetings open. A motion was made and passed that the membership be polled again about the open versus closed meeting decision. Part opened/closed was also added to the ballot.

AOTA was actively pursuing its mission of minority recruitment and retention in 1991. In November, AOTA sent out press releases to career counselors in an attempt to introduce their new PR poster, "OT Jamming," directed at African American adolescent males, that included pictures of Brian Gibbs, OTR. Ms. Anderson worked with the AOTA external program manager and created a press release that was placed in African American general media in February 1992. The press release, "African Americans Needed for Growing Healthcare Profession" included quotes from Ms. Anderson about the profession.

Ms. Anderson observed a slowing of participation in the activities of the organization in the latter part of her administration. Records indicated that paying membership had been dropping since 1989. This was never more

evident than in 1992, when the Frances Swift Scholarship Award was not presented due to lack of candidates. However, sixty therapists attended the 1992 meeting. Patricia Morris assumed chair of the Membership committee in 1992, after a vacancy. The new directory was published with over 350 names. Dues were raised from \$25.00 to \$30.00 to help defray operating expenses and to finance the directory and *Newsline*, which was now edited by Sophia Kimmons-Battle.

State activism, however, was growing. Thirteen chapters were now active, with one developing. Many of them wrote to Ms. Anderson telling her of their recruitment and fundraising activities. Ms. Anderson suggested that active chapters adopt a state to facilitate communication and development. Ms. Anderson continued her efforts to secure external resources by requesting financial support from AOTA to cover expenses for a reception at the 1993 meeting. She was not successful, although AOTA had provided meeting space for the BOTC meeting for many years. The expenses associated with hosting groups at the Conference were becoming a concern to AOTA. The discussion heated up in late 1992 when the Networking Group of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Concerns in OT requested and was granted meeting space at the 1993 AOTA Conference.

At the 1993 BOTC meeting, Shirley Wells, Multicultural Affairs Program Manager spoke about AOTA initiatives. A state liaison mention program, and cultural diversity packet, financial aid resource packet had been developed. Shirley was also discussing minority issues in articles in *OT Week* that highlighted BOTC leaders. She also conducted a survey of the AOTA membership. Ms. Wells also discussed pending projects that included partners for student growth, minority database, multicultural workshop, and a survey of educational programs to determine what schools provide versus what students need. That year, AOTA president, Mary Evert, who spoke about diversity, attended the Frances Swift Scholarship Awards presentation.

Prior to the 1994 BOTC meeting, Ms. Anderson resigned for personal reasons and time constraints. At the end of her administration, BOTC had succeeded in addressing some of the objectives she had set forth. The publicity about occupational therapy to African Americans had definitely increased as a result of the BOTC working in partnership with AOTA.

The number of state chapters had increased from eight to fourteen, and states had increased their publicity efforts as well. Communication between state chapters and the BOTC had improved. Efforts had been made to acquire additional resources, and committee had been put into place to further help organize professional support, resources and recognition programs. Two African American OTs were added to the Roster of Fellows. The scholarship program, though stalled temporarily, quickly recovered. Filling offices and committees continued to be a challenge.

◆◆◆◆

Saburi Imara



When Saburi Imara assumed the leadership of BOTC in 1994 with the resignation of Tanya Cotton Anderson, she was no stranger to leadership. Since 1991 she had served as BOTC vice-president.

Ms. Imara received her BSOT from the University of Kansas in 1959. Between 1959 and 1968 Ms. Imara worked in OT departments and for the Visiting Nurse Associations in Ohio and Chicago as staff therapist and consultant. By 1968, she had risen from staff therapist to director. She then took a break from OT and taught learning disability elementary education in the Boston Public Schools and St. Joseph's Community School, from 1972-76. She then moved to the Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center in Boston as director, until 1979. While working at the Center, she obtained her MSOT from Boston University in 1977.

From 1980-'83, Ms. Imara was OT manager in Indiana, lectured for a short time at the Indiana University School of Medicine, and served as a faculty for a year for AOTA' TOTEM program. From 1984-1991, she was OT Manager at Georgia Baptist Medical Center in Atlanta. She became Rehabilitation Clinical Consultant at Therapy Management Innovations from 1991-'93. She began her career with Visiting Nurse Health System of Atlanta in 1993 and remains there today. During 1994, she was a Case Manager with the Visiting Nurse Health System. She is currently certified as a case manager.

Ms. Imara has been an active participant in the OT profession on the local, state, and national levels, active in her community. She has been actively involved with local activities since 1985, including volunteering for ten days at the Centennial Olympic games in 1994, and chairing the Visiting Nurse Health System Quality Council. Ms. Imara has also given lectures and workshops to professionals and community groups.

At the state level, she has been president of the State of Georgia Licensure Board since 1994 and held leadership positions on the Georgia OTA. She now sits on the Brenau University OT Advisory Board. At the national level, Ms. Imara was a member of the NBCOT Regulatory Advisory Committee for two years, and the AOTF Diversity in Research Advisory Committee for a year. All these activities have occurred simultaneously with her presidency of the BOTC. She has presented at regional and national OT Conferences. She is currently Alternate Representative to the RA.

When Ms. Imara assumed the presidency of the BOTC, membership and participation were flagging. She immediately injected energy and positivism into the organization, including her trademark proverbs, which first

appeared in the 1994 *Newsline*. She quickly assessed the needs of the organization, making a priority of electing a full slate of officers to strengthen the Executive Board and increase its activity.

At the 1994 BOTC meeting, attended by eighty OT professionals and students, and 18 state chapter representatives, Ms. Imara stated her objectives, which were reminiscent of those of the early leadership, focusing on:

- ◇ increasing communication
- ◇ increasing student recruitment, retention, and certification
- ◇ promoting equal opportunity in employment and education

Focus groups were utilized to look at several issues, including the needs for the BOTC, direction the organization should go, and the contributions individuals could make toward achieving objectives. Many good ideas for addressing those issues were generated by the groups.

Increased interactions were observable between BOTC and AOTA by 1994. AOTA's Director of the Multicultural Affairs Program, Shirley Wells, gave updates on AOTA's initiatives and activities related to multiculturalism and inclusion. A resolution to include a minority representative in AOTA was defeated by the RA, however it passed four motions to insure inclusion and diversity. Shirley Jackson was appointed chair of the AOTA Multicultural Task Force, an outgrowth of the defeated resolution regarding minorities in the association. The Committee was charged with studying the AOTA's activities to assure that diversity, multicultural and inclusion procedures were adequate.

By 1995, a full slate of officers had been elected (Jacquelyn Bolden-vice president, Jacquelyn Curry-Reasor-secretary, Regina Stevens-Ratchford and Rhonda Steward served as *Newsline* reporters, Jerry Bentley chaired the Nominating committee.). Lynette Byarm acted as secretary until Jacquelyn was elected. Later that year Mae Brandon chaired the Membership Committee, Ms. Stevens-Ratchford became editor of *Newsline*. And Kelli Frey was installed as member-at-large for the Central Region.

The Executive Board expanded the objectives for their four-year term to include:

- ◇ updating the bylaws
- ◇ obtaining tax exempt status
- ◇ establishing an endowment for the Frances Swift Scholarship
- ◇ creating a Recognition/Nomination Committee
- ◇ increasing communication by publishing *Newsline* quarterly and attending regional and state meetings

- ◇ increasing membership by 100% and active state chapters by 10.

The Executive Board became active immediately, attending two regional meetings in the fall of 1995. By the end of the year, communication had improved with quarterly publication of *Newline*, sent to about 350 members and supporters. Several African American OTs were elected to the Roster of Fellows: Mary Sands, Valerie Walker, and Barbara Townsend, bringing the total to twelve since 1973.

The organization was saddened in 1995 by the death of one of its activist founders, Yvonne Flowers. The Yvonne Flowers Service Award was subsequently developed to recognize the activities of the state chapters in meeting BOTC's goals and objectives. The first awards went to chapters in Washington, D.C., Georgia, and Metropolitan Kansas City in 1996.

Progress was being made on all fronts in 1996. To help endow the Frances Swift Scholarship, a BOTC booth was manned at the 1996 Conference, earning five hundred dollars and publicity for the organization. The membership objective was reached and Ms. Imara set it again for another 100% increase. Approximately seventy-five OT practitioners and students were dues paying members at that time. *OT Week* published an article on the history of the BOTC, entitled, "BOTC, Past and Present."

At the annual meeting, Shirley Wells reported on the development of a booklet, "Multicultural Education and Research Guide." She planned to write part two and develop a video. Mary Evert spoke at the meeting on cultural diversity." The Multicultural Task Force reported that they had conducted a survey of how comfortable African Americans felt attending the AOTA meeting. Recommendations were made and well received by AOTA.

Again, the BOTC was saddened by the unexpected death of Javan Walker, an active participant in the BOTC since its beginning. Mr. Walker, who helped to develop the OT program at Florida A&M and was its first director. He had been active for many years as Professional Action Chair and was also university liaison.

By 1997 there were twenty state chapters, meeting the 1995 goal of adding ten additional chapters. The Yvonne Flowers Award was given to several states each year. A start-up kit had been developed for states wanting to develop chapters. BOTC recognized some of its founders at the meeting that year. And, Javan Walker was added to the Roster of Fellows posthumously. However, the biggest event was Lela Llorens' receipt of the President's Award, followed by a cover story in *OT Week*. The 25th Anniversary Celebration Committee was formed, and a historian appointed. At least one regional meeting was attended. The Scholarship endowment program was well under way. In addition to the booth at AOTA Conference, a doll had been raffled, and state chapters sent in donations of \$200.00. Other non-OT supporters were also donated various amounts.

At the 1998 meeting, newly elected officers were installed, including Margo Strotter, president-elect, Kathleen Conyers-vice president, and Cheryl Burton-secretary. Special recognition was given to the first African American student to become vice chair of ASCOTA. Both the Swift Scholarship and Flowers Service Awards were given to a student and state chapters, respectively. 19 state chapters were active. The bylaws were submitted for review. Goals were set for the 25th-Anniversary Celebration. Paul Ellsworth of AOTA attended the meeting and discussed International Focus Day, set to honor peoples of African descent on the 25th anniversary of BOTC.

An unexpected turn of events occurred in October, 1999, when AOTA realigned its resources and eliminated several programs, including the Multicultural Affairs Program (MAP). It is now housed under Education and Ethics. The Diversity Coalition submitted a resolution for the reinstatement of the program, which did not pass. AOTA assigned Penny Kyler to coordinate diversity programming. Ms. Kyler regularly publishes "cultural tidbits" on the AOTA listservs.

At the close of her administration, Ms. Imara can look back and see many of her objectives met, or that progress is being made. Of the objectives established at the beginning of her term, all were met except obtaining tax-exempt status. She continues to edit the *Newsline*.

◇◇◇◇◇

Margo Strotter

Leadership for the New Millenium



Margo Strotter assumed leadership of the BOTC at its 25th Anniversary Celebration in April 1999. Her Executive Board will include: Kathleen Conyers-vice president, who has chaired the Nominations Committee; Cheryl Burton-secretary, a founder and past treasurer of the Missouri BOTC, and secretary of the Missouri OTA; Rodney Black-treasurer; Jerry Bentley-Professional Action; Barbara Palmer-Bylaws, Mae Brandon-Membership, and three Regional Members at Large: Letha Mosley-Eastern; Janyce Johnson-Western; and Kelli Frey-Central.

Ms. Strotter received her BSOT from the University of Illinois at Champaign/Chicago, Illinois in 1978. She has had a varied career in OT, working for eight years in pediatrics for the Chicago Regional Project and eight years in nursing home consultation for Comprehensive OT Consultants. From 1988 - 1998, she was consultant and owner of the Therapeutic Work Center. She is now Rehab Director at Dawson Nursing Center.

Ms. Strotter has participated in local, state, and national activities. She has been an active participant in the BOTC, is a founder and past president of the Illinois Caucus of Black Occupational Therapists, and served on the AOTA Task Force. She sits on the Advisory Board of the OT Department at Chicago State University, and sat on the Board of Allied Health at the University of Illinois.

In Ms. Strotter's letter to the membership, published in the Jan/Feb. 1999 edition of *Newsline*, she expressed these thoughts:

"As we fast approach the year 2000, we are faced with an ever changing health-care environment that will significantly impact our personal and professional lives. In order to keep pace and meet the demands of changes in practice, service delivery, ethics, and legislation, we must adapt and take these changes as an opportunity to promote and support our professional organizations. For it is through these organizations that our support comes, and it is through these organizations that O.T. has continued to be a dominant player in the healthcare area... It is because of the commitment and support of BOTC members that we have come thus far and we can only move forward into the new millenium with your continued support..."



Appendix

◆◆◆◆

BOTC Photo Gallery

Frances Swift Scholarship Award Winners

State Chapters and Yvonne Flowers Service Award Recipients

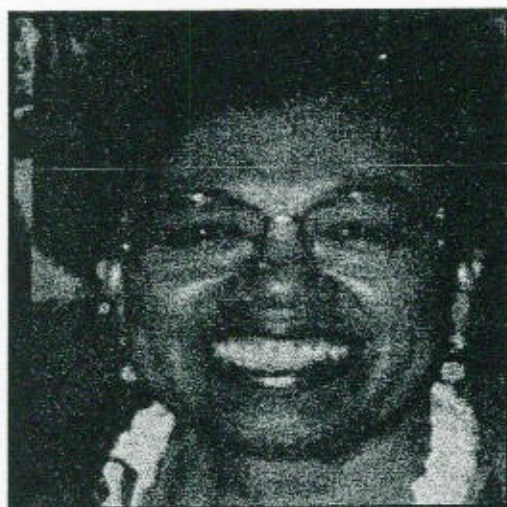
Official Documents

- ◆ 25th Anniversary Celebration Brochure
- ◆ August/September 1999 *Newsline* Newsletter
- ◆ By-laws

BOTC Photo Gallery

Founders & Leader

Founders



From L - R.
Top row:
Jerry Bentley, Cynthia
Harris.
Middle row: Agatha
Jackson, Joyce Lane.
Bottom row: Lela Llorens

Leaders



From L - R:
Top row: Brenda Johnson,
Tanya Anderson.
Bottom row: Saburi Imara,
Eloise Strand

More Memories of BOTC



Danetta & Tarone Claybrook at 1st BOTC booth -1996



BOTC members at Great Southern Conference 1996



Missouri OIs with Imara and Edwards-1998



Anngie Sharp, Dr. Llorens, Vineda Waiters, Dr. Brian Gibbs -1997



Dr. Lela Llorens receiving Preident's Commendation -1998



Dr. Llorens delivering Keynote Address 1998



From L - R:
Top row: Penny Kyler, Dr. Regina Strvrnd-Ratchford.
Bottom row: Wimberly Edwards models Kente strip-1998
Shirley Jackson is receiving FAOTA-1996.



Larone Claybrook and Shirley Wells



BOTC Annual Session - 25th Anniversary Celebration.
Historian Robinson-far right

Frances Swift Memorial Scholarship Award Winners



Following the tragic death of Francis Swift in 1983, the BOTC voted to establish an award in her memory the following year. The first scholarship of two hundred dollars was awarded in 1985.

Ms. Swift received her BSOT from the University of Buffalo. During her career she had been employed at Washington, D. C. General Hospital, and was Chief of OT at Mt. Carmel Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. She was active in her community, BOTC, and AOTA. At the time of her death, she was a graduate student at the University of Michigan. She was traveling to Japan to explore linkages between Asians and African Americans when her flight was shot down by the Soviet Union on August 31, 1983.

Bobbie Smith has chaired the Scholarship Awards Committee since its inception, aided by Agatha Jackson, and other BOTC members at different times during its fifteen-year history. The Committee with the support of the BOTC, whose members donate funds for the scholarship, has been successful in raising the award amount from two hundred dollars in 1991, to one thousand dollars today. The Committee has set the goal of raising twenty thousand dollars to endow the scholarship by the twenty-fifth anniversary. That goal is ongoing.

Scholarship Recipients 1985-1999

1985 Stephanie Lester	1995 Carolyn Porter
1986 Stella Gethi	1996 Kim Branch
1987 Glenda (Brown) Butt	1997 Tracy Carter
1988 None	1998 Judith Adams
1989 Dawn Sobers	1999 Dionne Charlton
1990 Benjamin Turner	
1991 Lillian Lewis	
1992 None	
1993 Barbara Jean Bufford	
1994 None	

State Chapters & Yvonne Flowers Service Award Recipients



State chapter development in BOTC began with the founding of the organization. New York State and Washington, D. C. immediately formed chapters in 1974. Currently there are nineteen state chapters. In 1995, Anne E. Jenkins, ED., OTR, developed the "State or Area Black Occupational Therapy Caucus Start-Up Kit," document to assist with state chapter development. The document was included in the "Chapter Development & Programming Manual," which was distributed to the membership at the 1997 annual meeting.

Since 1996, state chapters have received the Service Award in recognition of their activities toward accomplishing to purpose and objectives of BOTC. Below is the list of state chapters, with award recipients indicated by an asterisk.

At the 25th Anniversary Celebration the historian, Lou Robinson, charged state chapters to begin documenting their histories for inclusion in future history publications.

Alabama
 District of Columbia*
 California *
 Florida*
 Georgia *
 Illinois *
 Indiana
 Metropolitan Kansas City *
 Michigan
 Middle Tennessee
 Missouri *

Mississippi
 New England
 New Jersey
 New York State *
 Ohio
 Oklahoma
 Pennsylvania
 Texas

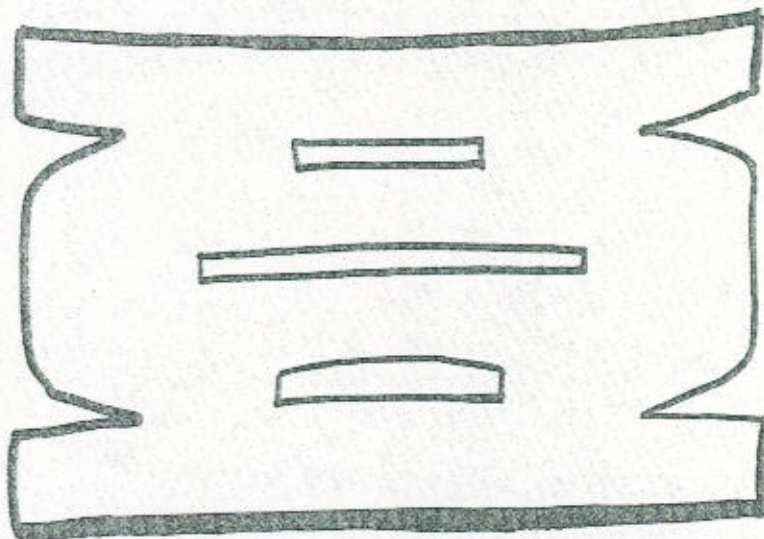
25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

of the

**BLACK OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY CAUCUS**



HONORING THE PAST - CREATING THE FUTURE



**AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
APRIL 17 - 18, 1999**

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

**BOTC 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Annual
Conference of the American Occupational Therapy
Association Indianapolis, Indiana**

Friday, April 16, 1999

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. "A 25-Year Legacy: The Untold Story of the Black Caucus"
Jerry Bentley, M.S., OTR/L and Lou Robinson, M.S.,
OTR/L

Saturday, April 17, 1999

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Black Occupational Therapy Caucus Annual Session
Ancestors Honored
Presidents and Directors Honored
Aspects of History of BOTC
Keynote Address by Joyce Lane, M.S., OTR
First President, BOTC

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. "Postscript: Exploring First Blacks and Historical
Contributions to Occupational Therapy." Shirley Jackson-
Jackson, M.S., OTR/L and Saburi Imara, M.S., OTR/L

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Reception/Refreshments
Honors and Recognitions
Frances Swift Scholarship Award
Yvonne Flowers Service Award
Past Presidents
Past Scholarship and Award Recipients

**Sunday, April 18, 1999 International Focus Day
World Federation of Occupational Therapy**

7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. International Exchange (Continental Breakfast)

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Poster Session, "The Black Caucus: Ten Years of Increased
Visibility", Jerry Bentley, M.S., OTR/L and Lou Robinson,
M.S., OTR/L

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. International Luncheon

2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. International Panel "Celebrating the Culture Among People of
African Descent", Paul Ellsworth, MPH, OTR, FAOTA; Lela
Llorens, Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA; Sonya Brown, OTR; Samuel
Kibe, OTR; Victoria Titiloye, Ph.D., OTR, RN.

3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. "Communication Dissonance: Factors Contributing to Minority
Student Stress in Occupational Therapy Education
Cynthia Hughes Harris, Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA

BLACK OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CAUCUS
National Officers and Committee Chairs

Saburi Imara, M.S., OTR/L, CCM; President

Margo Strotter, OTR/L; President - Elect

Kathleen H. Conyers, M.Ed., OTR/L; Vice President

Cheryl Burton, M.S., OTR; Secretary

Rodney B. Black, OTR/L; Treasurer

Kelli S. Frey, OTR; Central Region Member at Large

Letha J. Mosley, M.Ed., OTR/L; Eastern Region Member at Large

Janyce Johnson, OTR; Western Region Member at Large

Barbara Palmer, OTR; Chair, Bylaws Committee

Mae Brandon, OTR/L; Chair, Membership Committee

Jerry Bentley, M.S, OTR/L; Chair, Professional Action

HONORING THE PAST - CREATING THE FUTURE

Cultural tradition includes beginning ceremonies and special occasions with libations. Libations set the tone and provide opportunity to remember and honor our ancestors. Participants are invited to take part. The leader will pour symbolic liquid in the directions of north, east, south, and west. Participants are asked to recall and speak aloud the names of people of African descent who have been important in their lives - grandmother/fathers, uncles, aunts, favorite teachers, ministers, African leaders, African-American leaders, and occupational therapy colleagues who has gone before and left us with important life lessons. For this ceremony in addition to your recollections, we will invoke the memories of: North - Sojourner Truth; East - Malcolm Shabazz; South - Dr. Martin Luther King; West - Helen Latimore and Cora Harvey. May their spirits be with us this afternoon.

Culture and cultural events provide opportunities for bonding and for establishing a sense of self-worth, provide opportunities for spiritual rejuvenation and instill responsibility for continuing the culture, as well as providing a locus of protection, self-respect, and defense. (Reference: Wade Nobles)

Frances Swift Scholarship Award

Founded in 1984 and granted to a first or second year occupational therapy student pursuing professional (OTR) or technical (COTA) education. Purpose to increase the number of occupational therapy personnel from the Black community. Award amount varies. Applicants must be Black and enrolled in an accredited program leading to the OTR or COTA.

The first scholarship awarded in 1985 was \$200.00. By 1991, the award had increased to \$1000.00. Recipients are:

1985	Stephanie Lester, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, Georgia
1986	Stella Gethi, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota
1987	Glenda (Brown) Butt, University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana
1989	Dawn Sobers, Howard University, Washington, District of Columbia
1990	Benjamin Turner, Louisiana State University Medical Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
1991	Lillian Lewis, Sinclair Community College, Dayton, Ohio
1993	Barbara Jean Bufford, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington
1995	Carolyn Porter, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado
1996	Kim Branch, University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois
1997	Tracy Carter, Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, Florida
1998	Judith Odette Adams, Howard University, Washington, District of Columbia

#####

Yvonne Flowers Service Award

Established in 1996 in honor of Yvonne Flowers. Awarded to State Chapters who actively contribute to the goals of the national BOTC by holding 4 or more meetings per year, having officers who are active members of the national BOTC, have chapter bylaws, submit an annual report to the national BOTC annually, and by implementing one or more service oriented activities per year such as guest lecturing, providing/participating in student orientation, scholarship fund raising, mentoring, and/or recruitment.

1996	Washington, D.C. BOTC, Georgia BOTC, Metropolitan Kansas BOTC
1997	Florida BOTC, Georgia BOTC, Illinois BOTC, Metropolitan Kansas BOTC, Missouri BOTC, New York State BOTC, Southern California BOTC
1998	Washington, D.C. BOTC, Georgia BOTC, New York State BOTC, Metropolitan Kansas BOTC

#####

Past Presidents of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus

1974 - 78	Joyce Lane	1987 - 91	Jerry Bentley
1978 - 80	Doris Witherspoon	1991 - 92	Tanya Cotton Anderson
1980 - 83	Brenda Johnson	1993 - 95	Saburi Imara
1983 - 87	Eloise Strand	1995 - 99	Saburi Imara

#####

Committee for the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus 25th Anniversary Celebration

Jerry Bentley, Karmen Brown, Wimberly Edwards (co-chair), Saburi Imara, Shirley Jackson, Lela Llorens (co-chair), Bobbe Paul, Lou Robinson, and Rodney Black



Newsline



Volume 18 Issue 2

Newsletter of the National Black Occupational Therapy Caucus

Aug/Sept 1999

President's Corner

Dear BOTC Members:

What a glorious time we had in Indianapolis celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus. I'm sure all in attendance will agree the our celebration was certainly one of the highlights of the AOTA Conference. (See article on summary of the BOTC meeting).

At this time I would like to introduce the national officers and committee chairs of the BOTC:

- ◇ Margo E. Strotter (Illinois), Pres.
- ◇ Kathleen Conyers (Georgia), Vice President
- ◇ Cheryl Burton (Missouri) Sec.
- ◇ Rodney Black (Georgia) Treas.
- ◇ Kelli Frey (Kansas) Central Region Member at Large (MAL)
- ◇ Letha J. Mosley (Georgia) Eastern Region MAL
- ◇ OPEN-Western Region MAL
- ◇ Rebecca Anderson-Davis (Texas) Membership Com Chair
- ◇ Leslie Jackson (Maryland) Nominating Com Chair
- ◇ Shirley Wells (Texas) By-Laws Com Chair
- ◇ Jerry Bentley (Washington D.C.) Professional Action Chair

I am currently in contact with several BOTC members in hope of filling the remaining open position for Western Region Member at Large. If you are interested in becoming active with the BOTC on the national level and would like to run for this position please contact me or complete the nomination form in this issue of the *NewsLine*.

There is a lot to be done over the next four years. We are currently up-

dating the BOTC By-Laws and Membership Directory. We are continuing our efforts to endow the Frances Swift Memorial Scholarship. Jerry Bentley is working on a Memorial Quilt for the next meeting in Seattle. We would also like to develop a web page for the BOTC... if anyone has any expertise in this area we would certainly like to hear from you.

Our goal is to increase the membership roster by 50%; develop new state BOTC chapters; and support all current chapters in their efforts. I was approached at the last conference by James L. Mills, MHA, MSEd, OTR/L and Ron Talley, BA, COT/L, ATP to begin a consulting network of practitioners as a resource for BOTC members. I will follow-up with James and Ron and provide an update on our progress in the next newsletter.

All suggestions, ideas, resources, comments, etc. are welcome. Please feel free to contact me or any of the officers at any time. **YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED!!!**

We all know the challenges we are faced with in todays ever changing healthcare environment. We certainly need to stand tall and begin working together to keep our profession and our organization alive. Please continue to be active members physically and financially. Thank you for your support thus far! See you in Seattle!!!!

Margo E. Strotter, OTR/L
BOTC President
(773)233-7945 (H)

25th Anniversary Celebration

Thanks to all for your contributions toward making the BOTC 25th Anniversary a success. We think that our efforts, while focused on our celebration of our heritage, were also appreciated by our colleagues.

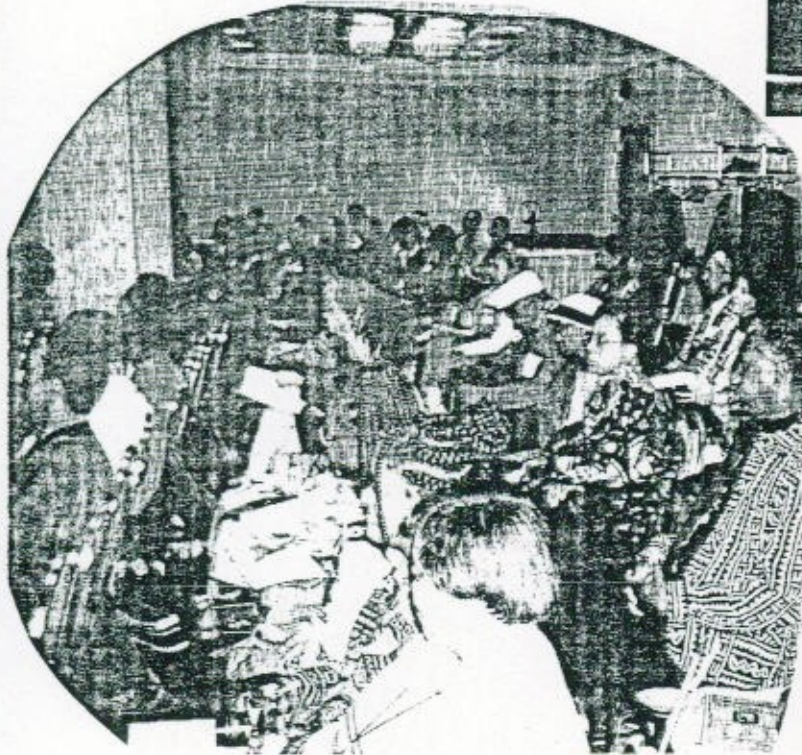
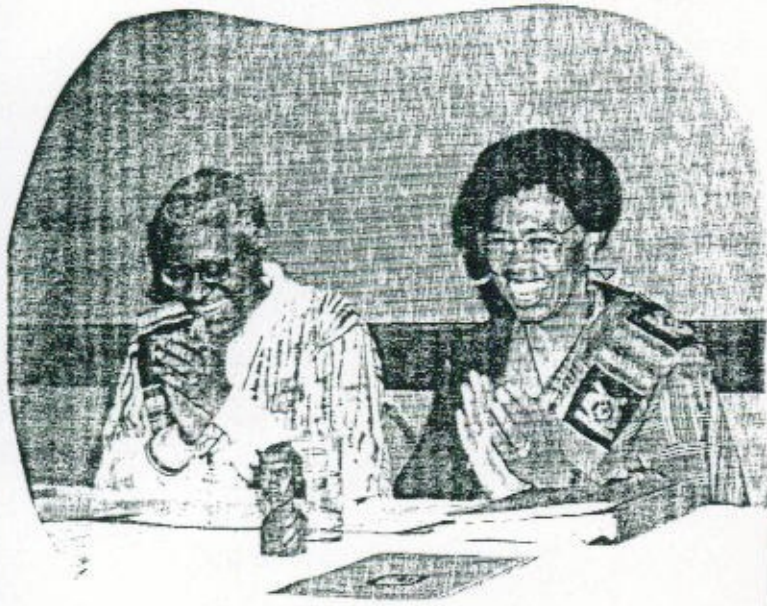
We believe that our vision for the weekend was realized and honored in the various events. As with any worthwhile undertaking, we find that there are some continuation projects. Shirley and Lou still need assistance with the Pioneer Project and the History and, of course the Frances Swift Scholarship Fund needs our support. We do not need to "preach to the choir" but we think that by next year in Seattle, we will hope to have the Pioneer Project and History up-to-date.

Lela Llorens, Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA
Wimberly Edwards, MS, OTR,
FAOTA
Co-Chairs,
BOTC 25th Anniversary Committee



If we stand tall it is because we stand on the backs of those who came before us. A Yoruba Proverb & the BOTC Executive Board's theme through the year 2000.

Kodak Moments of the 25th Anniversary



***Special Thanks to the Official Photographer of the 25th Anniversary,
Mr. Llorens (the husband of Dr. Lela Llorens)***

More Kodak Moments.....



BOTC Kente Report

August 31, 1999

Expenses:

- ◆ 200 Kente Strips @ \$12.06 each \$2,412.00

Income:

- ◆ 32 Strips Sold Prior to Conference 471.75
(Includes Postage)
- ◆ 80 Strips Sold at Conference 2,000.00

Total Income to Date: \$2,471.75

Expected Income:

- ◆ 88 Kente Strips Remaining \$2,200.00
(Excluding Postage)

Summary: The Kente Strip Project has paid for itself and provided some revenue for the BOTC. The sale of the remainder of the Kente Strips through the NewsLine and Conferences should prove to increase the actual proceeds. Thank you for your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Wimberly Edwards, M.S., OTR/L, FAOTA

Significance of Our Kente

The Kente has many meanings, as does much of what is done on the Continent. The

- Red Stripe stands for the blood that was shed
- Green Stripe stands for the Fruitful land.
- Black Stripe stands for the color of the people
- Initials stand for the Black Occupational Therapy Caucus as does our Logo
- 1974 stands for the year we were organized
- Repeated design also has meaning. It was based on the description of what we do as occupational therapists which was interpreted by the Ghanaian who designed the Kente and sent it to Ghana to be made. In the center is an "ANKH", the sign of spirituality, this because we deal with the whole person; the outer sign means "HEALTH" and "TO BE ABLE TO DO" which is the purpose of occupational therapy.

Wear your Kente with pride and understanding!!! If you do not have one and would like to purchase one, please do so by using the order form enclosed in this issue of the NewsLine.

1999 BOTC Meeting

The 1999 BOTC Annual Meeting at the Indianapolis was in a different format this year as we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the BOTC. Below are the highlights for what occurred during this year:

- ⇒ Introductions and Acknowledgments of the following: Jerry Bentley, Carmen Brown, Shirley Jackson, Bobby Paul, Lou Robinson, Rodney Black, & Saburi Imara; acknowledgment of Wimberly Edwards' Retirement
- ⇒ Presentation to Co-Chairs Dr. Lela Llorens and Wimberly Edwards
- ⇒ Acknowledgment of New Officers; Margo Strotter (Pres); Kathleen Conyers (Vice Pres) & Cheryl Burton (Sec)
- ⇒ Acknowledgment/History of Multicultural Affairs Program; Shirley Wells & Bryan Gibbs as past chairs and current representative Penny Kyler
- ⇒ Presentation to the President of AOTA, Karen Jacobs
- ⇒ Presentation to the President of the AOTA Foundation- Jane Rock accepted by Martha Kirkland
- ⇒ Presentation of the "BOTC: The First 25 Years 1974-1999" book compiled by Lou Robinson to be placed in the Wilma West Library at AOTA
- ⇒ Presentation to the World Federation of OT President Carolyn Webster
- ⇒ Presentation to the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapy; Marie Reed Executive Director
- ⇒ Acknowledge to Fred Sammons
- ⇒ Introduction of Keynote Speaker: Joyce Lane, MS, OTR; First President of the BOTC. This was an inspiring and informative presentation entitled "Leadership: Lifting as We Climb". All participants were energized to continue the legacy.
- ⇒ Presentation and summary of the History of Organization by Lou Robinson
- ⇒ Shirley Jackson presented the Pioneer Program
- ⇒ Recognition was given to Carolyn Brayley, Marie Moore and Karmen Brown for donations of dolls for the raffle to benefit the Frances Swift Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The next national meeting of the BOTC will be in SEATTLE in 2000..... See you there!!! :-)

Memorial Service...

Ms. Artice W. Harmon

Memorial Services were held on October 13, 1999 at Chicago State University for Ms. Arice W. Harmon, M.S., OTR/L who died on August 30, 1999. Ms. Harmon started the Occupational Therapy program at Chicago State and was an active member of the AOTA and BOTC. She was also very involved with the educational and accreditation process as she completed her second term as a member of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. In honor of her many contributions, the Artice W. Harmon Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established. The purpose of this scholarship is to provide under-represented minority students with financial needs who pursue a degree and career in occupational therapy at Chicago State University. If you are interested in making contributions to this fund, please make checks payable to the "CSU Foundation, Memo: designating Artice Harmon Scholarship Fund" and send it to:

The Artice Harmon Scholarship Fund
 Chicago State University Foundation
 9501 S. King Drive
 Chicago, IL 60628

Retirement Celebration...

Wimberly Edwards, M.S., OTR

Wimberly received her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy in 1956 and a Master of Science in 1973 at Boston University. She has served as Associate Professor and Director of the OT program at York College and as Chair of the Department of Health Sciences at York College. Her Retirement Celebration was held in May 1999 in New York with colleagues and friends from around the world in attendance, including representatives from the BOTC. Wimberly... YOU ARE LOVED!!! We appreciate your initial efforts in founding the BOTC, your present efforts in keeping us grounded and look forward to your continued participation and support. Enjoy your retirement, after 43 years, its well deserved.... YOU GO GURL!!!!!!

*** * * CALL FOR NOMINATIONS * * ***

Western Region Member At Large

The above position is now vacant. The role of the MAL is to enhance communication between the state chapters and the national organization and provide a voice for his/her constituency to the Executive Board of the BOTC. The Western Region MAL represents the following states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. If you are interested in this position or know of someone else who is interested, please send in your nomination... self-nominations are welcome.

Name of Nominee: _____ Telephone Number: _____
 Person Making Nomination: _____ Telephone Number: _____
 Nominee's State of Residence: _____ Member of BOTC: ___yes ___no

The Chair of the Nomination will contact you for further information, please send this form to:

Leslie Jackson, OTR
 7873 Briardale Terrace
 Rockville, MD 30855

or send via email to: lesliej@aota.org

**GREAT SOUTHERN
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
CONFERENCE**

**October 21-23, 1999
Destin, Florida**

**BOTC
EASTERN/SOUTHERN
REGIONAL MEETING
October 22, 1999**

This is a great opportunity to get an update on BOTC activities, Networking, meet national officers and contribute to the goals of the national organization.

Please look at the conference brochure for more details...

**NEWSLETTER
INFORMATION**

Send Newsline submissions to:
Saburi Imara, NewsLine Editor
4550 Orkney Lane
Atlanta, GA 30331

*Mail Camera-Ready
advertisements with check or
money order made payable to
"BOTC" to:*

Rodney B. Black, OTR/L
BOTC Treasurer
110 Wolf Downs Court
College Park, GA 30349-2477

Cost for advertisements are:
Full page \$80
Half page \$40
Quarter page \$20

*Deadline for the next issue of
NEWSLINE:
November 15, 1999*

National Officers

President	Margo Strotter, OTR Chicago, IL
Vice Pre	Kathleen Conyers, MEd, OTR/L Jonesboro, GA
Secretary	Cheryl Burton, MS, OTR St. Louis, MO
Treasurer	Rodney B. Black, OTR/L College Park, GA
Members at Large:	
Central Region	Kelli S. Frey, OTR Overland Park, KS
Eastern Region	Letha J. Mosley, M.Ed., OTR/L Augusta, GA
Western Region	POSITION VACANT

Newsline

Black Occupational Therapy Caucus
C/O Saburi Imara, MS, OTR/L, CCM
NewsLine Editor
4550 Orkney Lane
Atlanta, GA 30331

Black Occupational Therapy Caucus Membership Application

Name _____ OTR COTA Student
Home Address _____
Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone Number _____
Work Facility/Address _____
E-Mail Address: _____ Best time to call: _____

Membership Category: OTR \$30.00 Membership Fee \$ _____
 COTA \$30.00 Scholarship Donation \$ _____
 Student Free Total Paid \$ _____

Make check payable to the "Black Occupational Therapy Caucus". Return the check and this completed application to: Rodney B. Black 110 Wolf Downs Court College Park, GA 30349-2477

Area(s) of specialization (check up to two): Developmental Disabilities Pediatrics
 Gerontology Physical Disabilities Home Health
 Hand Therapy Mental Health Education
 Work Rehabilitation Administration Ergonomics
 Other (please specify): _____

Highest Degree received: Associates Bachelor of Arts/ Science Entry level Masters
 Advanced Masters Doctoral

Educational Institutions Attended:

Institution: _____ Year of graduation: _____
Institution: _____ Year of graduation: _____
Institution: _____ Year of graduation: _____

Awards Received: FAOTA ROF Other (State and/or National) _____

Which of the following are you willing to participate in? Mentoring program Newsletter
 Membership Committee Nominations Committee Scholarship Committee Officer
 Education Network Public Relations Other (specify): _____

Do you agree to allow this information to be placed in the BOTC Membership Directory? yes no
Do you have a copy of the National BOTC Constitution and Bylaws? yes no

Black Occupational Therapy Caucus

Education Network Proposal

Name: BOTC Education Network

- Purposes:**
- 1) To increase the involvement of African American practitioners in educational programs.
 - 2) To provide a faculty mentor program to facilitate the successful transition of African American practitioners into academia.
 - 3) To provide a support system for African American students enrolled in occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant programs.
 - 4) To facilitate networking among practitioners and encourage continued professional growth through continuing education, graduate studies, and scholarly activities.

Format: A current faculty member or retired faculty member will serve as Education Network Coordinator for each region, totaling three Education Network Coordinators. One of these Coordinators will serve as primary coordinator.

A list will be obtained at the BOTC Annual Business meeting of 1) faculty interested in being mentors for new faculty or practitioners interested in becoming educators, 2) practitioners interested in having a faculty mentor to help them with the process of entering academia, 3) practitioners interested in being a mentor to a new graduate, 4) practitioners interested in being a mentor to students that have not graduated, 5) students in need of a mentor.

The primary coordinator will make a copy of the list and give it to each Education Network Coordinator who will play "match-maker" by providing individuals who seeking a mentor with the name, address, and/or phone number of a potential mentor.

After the Education Network Coordinator makes the match, it becomes the responsibility of the mentor and mentee to continue the "relationship".

Mentors: Activities include, but are not limited to the following: discuss relevant issues, act as a sounding board, facilitate critical thinking skills, facilitate problem solving for conflict resolution, provide information about available resources or courses of study, speak from personal experiences, provide an objective point of view, give constructive feedback, maintain confidentiality, etc.

Mentees: Activities include, but are not limited to the following: keep in touch with the mentor, listen, weigh information carefully and make informed decisions, draw from the mentors expertise, ask pertinent questions, be respectful and considerate of the mentor's time, take responsibility for own personal and professional growth.

About the Author

Lou Robinson, MS, OTR/L



Lou Robinson has been Assistant Professor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator in the Occupational Therapy Program at Maryville University in St. Louis, Missouri since 1996. Prior to that time she was Instructor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Sanford-Brown College in St. Louis and Kansas City.

Before joining Sanford-Brown in 1995, Ms. Robinson practiced as an independent contractor in St. Louis, Missouri for nine years, treating clients across the life span in various settings. She has held clinical and managerial positions in Maryland and Missouri since beginning her practice in 1973.

Ms. Robinson obtained her BSOT from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1973. She received her Master of Science in Mass Communications from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Illinois in 1995. In addition to occupational therapy positions, she has worked as a rehabilitation specialist and a communications coordinator. Ms. Robinson is the co-founder, past president and former secretary of the Missouri Black Occupational Therapy Caucus.

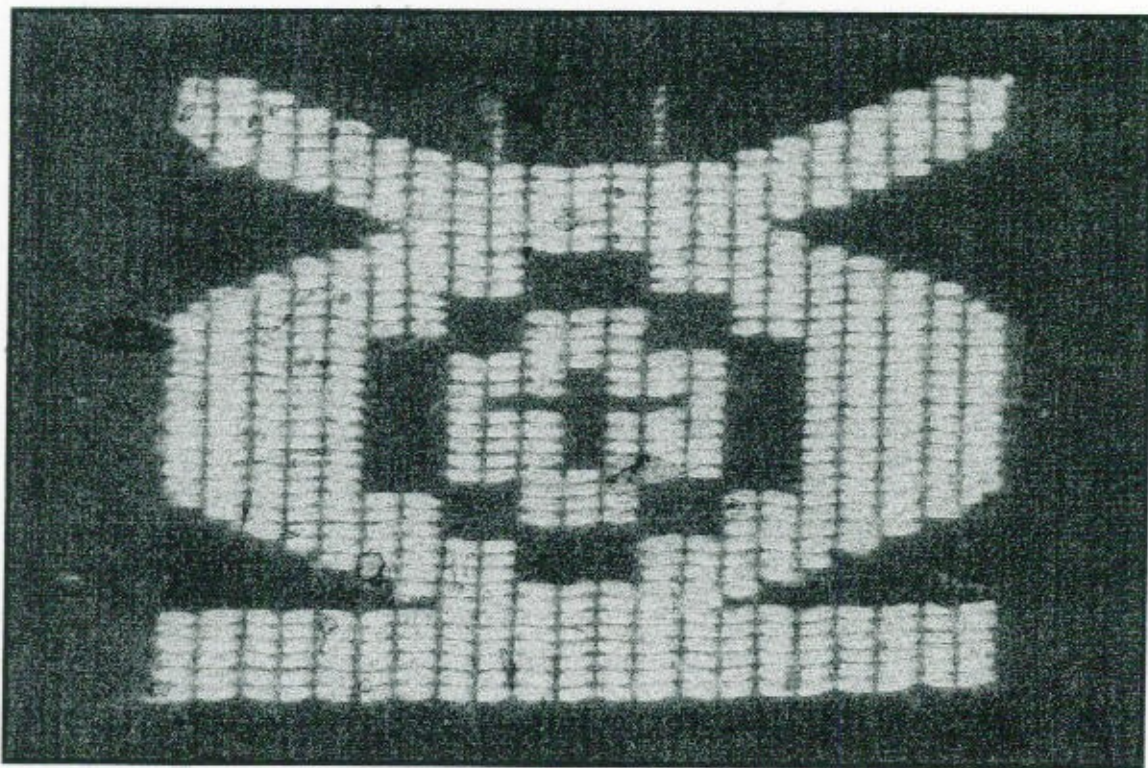
Ms. Robinson has been a member of the Missouri Association of Playwrights since 1994. She has had two 10-minute plays staged by the organization, dealing with African American health and history. The one-act play, *Secret Ways*, about a slave escape using the Underground Railroad, coded quilts and Negro Spirituals, is scheduled to be produced at Maryville University in April.



The Black Occupational Therapy Caucus (BOTC)

The First 25 Years: 1974-1999 25th Anniversary Edition

Lou Robinson, MS, OTR/L



The design above is from the Kente strip worn by BOTC members and supporters at the 25th Anniversary Celebration, April 1999. The strip, which was made in Ghana, was based on an interpretation of occupational therapy. The center is an ankh, the sign of spirituality, which deals with the whole person. The outer sign means "health" and "to be able to do," which is the purpose of occupational therapy.