

NYC Chancellor Dennis Walcott to receive Educational Champion Award

By Audrey J. Bernard
Lifestyles & Society Editor

Dennis Walcott, Chancellor, New York City Department of Education, will be honored by the **One Hundred Black Men, Inc. of New York City** at its 32nd annual benefit gala on Thursday, February 23, 2012 in the grand ballroom at the New York Hilton Hotel. Walcott will receive the coveted educational champion award at the themed "A Commitment to Excellence" black tie dinner.

In 2011 Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** tapped his longtime deputy mayor Chancellor Walcott in this position replacing the former Hearst executive **Cathleen Black** as head of the city's 1.1 million-student school system. Chancellor Walcott, a former kindergarten teacher who lives in southeast Queens, joined the mayoral administration during Bloomberg's first term in 2002.

In his post as deputy mayor for education and community development, he oversaw the city's education reform, school construction, and public housing and youth services initiatives, among other tasks. Prior to this position, he served as chief executive of the New York City Urban League for 12 years where he enjoyed a successful reign.

At the press conference announcing his appointment, Chancellor Walcott, a father of four and grandfather of two, said that his family is comprised of "four generations of public school students." He's the grandson of Caribbean immigrants and the son of two city employees. His mother was a social worker, and his father an exterminator. "I'm just a guy from Queens whose parents were raised in Harlem," he said.

He attended public schools, including Francis Lewis High School, in Fresh Meadows, Queens, where he was among an early group of Black students to be brought in to help integrate what was then a predominantly white school.

He has two master's degrees in education and social work, bringing to the job a résumé far more suited to the task than that of his predecessor, who was a top magazine executive but had no professional experience in the education field.

In addition to Chancellor Walcott, the other dynamic civic and business leaders include: **Cheryl McKissack Daniel**, president & chief executive officer, McKissack & McKissack (trailblazer award); **Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.**, president and chief executive officer, TIAA-CREF, (global economic



Honoree Dennis Walcott



Honoree Cheryl McKissack



Special Guest presenter Loida N. Lewis



Honoree Roger Ferguson



Honoree Michelle Y. Lee



Honoree Mike Muse

achievement award); **Michelle Y. Lee**, executive vice president, northeast region president, community banking, Wells Fargo (corporate achievement award); and **Mike Muse**, chief executive officer, Muse Recordings (artistic achievement award). In addition, Jessie Wooten will be honored as Mentor of the Year.

"We are honored to be given the privilege of presenting awards to these outstanding Americans and to celebrate the One Hundred Black Men, Inc.'s 32nd annual benefit," said the One Hundred Black Men's New York president **Philip Banks, Jr.**, who will participate in photo ops with the honorees and

VIPs during the reception.

Another high point of the evening will be the **Reginald F. Lewis Foundation** presentation of scholarships to five high school students. The awards will be presented by OHBM's special guest Mrs. **Loida N. Lewis**, chairwoman & chief executive officer, TLC Beatrice, LLC, the Lewis Family investment firm, and chairman and chief executive officer, TLC Beatrice (China), Limited, a Cayman company which operates retail convenience stores in five major cities in China and TLC Beatrice Foods (Philippines) which operates a fresh meat processing plant.

Emmy Award-winning co-anchor of My9 TV's The 10 O'clock News **Brenda Blackmon**, Fox 5's meteorologist **Mike Woods**, and Reverend **Jacques Andre DeGraff**, second vice president, One Hundred Black Men, Inc. of New York, will serve as co-emcees of the black tie fundraiser that features a sponsor's reception at 6:30 p.m. followed by awards presentations and dinner at 7:30 p.m. in the grand ballroom.

The gala committee is co-chaired by **Michael Garner** and **Hilton O. Smith**. Gala committee members are: **Philip Banks, Jr.**, **Will Brown, Jr.**, **Curtiss Jacobs**, **Tyrene McKinney**, **Fitzgerald**

Miller, **Sadiq Murray**, **Mark Smith**, and **Myron Williams**.

About One Hundred Black Men, Inc. of New York City was founded in 1963 when a group of successful African-American men came together to pool their resources to positively impact the Black community. One Hundred Black Men, Inc.'s service projects focus on mentoring, education, health and wellness, and economic development. The organization has a long and successful history working with its corporate and community partners to make significant differences in the lives of the communities it serves.

A celebrated example of the One Hundred Black Men, Inc.'s mentoring of young people was the establishment of The Eagle Academy for Young Men in the Bronx, with a focus on academic excellence, leadership and character development and more recently, Eagle Academies have opened in Brooklyn and Queens. Proceeds from the annual benefit galas raise funds to support the programs of the One Hundred Black Men, Inc. New York City.