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SIX HOMETOWN HEROES TO BE HONORED

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Foster



BELOIT — Six people will be honored during the Hometown Heroes Luncheon set for March 24 at the Angel Museum, 656 Pleasant St.

The museum will be open for socializing and viewing of displays of the honorees at 11 a.m. and lunch will be served at noon. The cost is \$25 for those interested in attending and guests are asked to RSVP by March 15. Checks can be sent to the Angel Museum. For information, call 608-364-4667.

This year's honorees include Patricia Foster, George M. Ingram, Walter E. Ward, David Wilson and James and Novella Johnson.

Patricia Foster

Patricia Foster was born in Mississippi and moved to Beloit when she was 5 years old.

She graduated from Beloit Memorial High School in 1963 and went on to graduate from the administrative assistant program at Madison Business College. She worked at Bendix-Besly Corporation as administrative assistant to the president and as the company's marketing coordinator. She went on to work for Blackhawk Technical College, retiring in 2013.

She was very active at Merrill Elementary School, serving as president and member of the schools Parent Teacher Association. She also served as secretary of the Beloit Branch of the NAACP and was a long-time member of the Rock County Opportunity Industrialization Center (OIC) and she was a charter member of its Women's Auxiliary.

She currently serves as a member of the Women's Fund for the Stateline Community Foundation. She serves on the Beloit Daily News Volunteer of the Month committee and on the committee for Back-to-Beloit, an African-American homecoming event that is held bi-annually.

George M. Ingram

George Marion Ingram, 23, formerly of Pontotoc, Mississippi, and Beloit, Wisconsin, died on Nov. 22, 1952, when the U.S. Air Force C-124 cargo plane he was a passenger in crashed near Anchorage, Alaska.

Ingram was born in Pontotoc and he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, attaining the rank of Airman First Class. On July 26, 1951, he was assigned to the 34th Air Transport Squadron at McChord Air Force Base in Washington. On Nov. 22, 1952, he departed the air base on a flight to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska, but the flight encountered severe weather and crashed. Due to poor weather conditions at the time of the plane's disappearance, a search was not started until three days later. The tail section of the plane was spotted sticking out of the snow near the summit of Mount Gannett at about 8,100 feet. A recovery crew was sent, but no survivors were found and no additional wreckage was seen and the operation was called off due to inhospitable conditions.

The 11 crew members and 41 service members on board were declared deceased and the plane was lost for 60 years. On June 9, 2012, the wreckage was spotted. On July 28, 2016, Ingram was laid to rest at Eastlawn Cemetery in Beloit.

Walter Ward

Walter Ward was born on July 23, 1947, in Buena Vista, Mississippi. After graduating from Houston Chickasaw County High School in 1966 he was drafted into the U.S. Army. He served in Fort Dix, New Jersey and Erlanger, Germany.

In 1970 he joined Wisconsin Power & Light (currently known as Alliant Energy) as a lineman apprentice. He later became the first African-American lineman. He retired as a line crew foreman in 2009.

He is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church, and presently serves on the Usher Board. He is a member of the NAACP. He is a Beloit Health System/Beloit Hospital Patient Escort volunteer, Unity Grand Chapter Foundation Board Member, chairperson of the Christmas Cheer Committee for the Rebecca Chapter No. 4 and helps senior citizens with lawn mower and snow blower repairs.

David Wilson

David Ramar Wilson was born on Dec. 7, 1981. He attended Morgan Elementary School and Aldrich Middle School in Beloit. He graduated from Beloit Memorial High School in 2000 and he attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee until 2002 and attended the University of Wisconsin - Rock County in 2011-2012.

He became program coordinator, program director and unit director at the E.J. Dalton Beloit Boys and Girls Club between 2004 and 2016. He currently serves the school district as Community Learning Center Coordinator.

James and Novella Johnson

James and Novella Johnson have been married for 62 years and they have six children.

James is a native of Beloit and he served as an infantryman in the Korean War. He returned home in 1951 as a decorated hero earning five medals of courage and valor. He started Johnson's Roofing in Beloit in the 1960s.

Novella, a native of Ripley, Mississippi, was employed by the School District of Beloit as a teacher's assistant. She also worked for the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped from 1985 to 2000. They are members of Emmanuel Baptist Church.