

The Gray Classic

Welcome Reception, Women's Empowerment Brunch, Golf Tournament and Farewell Brunch

Welcome Reception

Guests danced, sipped cocktails and got ready for a fun-filled weekend at **The Gray Classic's Welcome Reception** in Delta's Restaurant's jovial atmosphere on July 19. Participating golfers could check in to receive their tee assignments and Herb and Felicia Gray, Founders of the Gray Classic, welcomed the crowd and thanked the sponsors. The high energy continued well into the night thanks to the reception's sponsors, the Kee Group.

More than 400 people attended the opening event. Among them were State Representative Malcolm Graham; Vi Lyles, Candidate for At-Large City Council Membership; Councilmember James Mitchell, Candidate for Mayor; Jesse Cureton, Title Sponsor and EVP Chief Consumer Officer at Novant Health; and At-Large Councilmember David Howard. The reception was created to bring together the sponsors and supporters in an exciting atmosphere to kick off the weekend. The tournament was founded in 2009 to be the premier event for golf and networking for local business, civic and political leaders.

"For the last four years [The Gray Classic] has benefited the 100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte; more specifically their mentoring programs," said Jina O'Neill, Gray Classic Event Manager and Project Manager for Life Enhancement Services, LLC. "Our goal is to empower our local youth. By doing so, we want to offer an opportunity for the people of Charlotte and surrounding to get involved in a socially conscious way."

Since partnering with **100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte** in 2010, the Gray Classic has raised \$30,000 per year to benefit the program's Movement of Youth mentoring and education program. ■

Written by Rémy Thurston. Photos by PPT Photography. More photos at www.societycharlotte.com



Felicia and Herb Gray, and Rochelle Bellamy



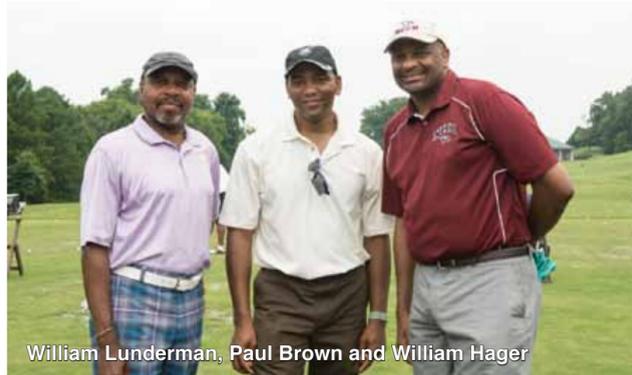
David Burch and William Ager



Valerie and Gary Davis



Jay and Rosemary Jackson, and Eric Watson



William Lunderman, Paul Brown and William Hager



Steve Benjamin, Herb Gray, James Mitchell, David Howard and Joel Ford



Herb Gray and Patrick Cannon



Michael Boyd and Michelle Barber



Anthony Haywood, William Haygood and Alan Grier



Ron and Carter Brinson

Golf Tournament and Women's Empowerment Brunch

Although the Gray Classic has grown into a weekend-long series of events, the **Herb Gray Golf Tournament** is what started it all—and it remains at the heart of this fundraiser. Established in 2009, the first tournament was made up of 10 golfers. This year's tournament, held on July 20 at the Ballantyne Hotel and Lodge, drew 250 golfers—140 in the morning and 110 in the afternoon. Herb Gray, Founder of the Gray Classic, said: "We have some very serious golfers who have been playing for years, we have some beginning golfers, we have children, and we have some people who are just playing for fun."

While the men dominated the golf course, 360 women attended the **Women's Empowerment Brunch** at the Ballantyne Hotel and Lodge—more than double the previous two years' attendance. "The format for the ladies brunch was three women reflecting on their lives for their generations," Gray said. Chirl Girl from V101.9 served as moderator, and guests from the audience were encouraged to ask questions. Gray's wife Felicia helped oversee the event with a committee that included Cynthia Ham, Angela Willis, Kendal Bryant and Jina O'Neill.

The Gray Classic's original purpose was to promote fellowship and socialization, but now the event also benefits the 100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte, which mentors youth within the Charlotte community. Although the money is still being counted, Gray said they expected to pull in around \$100,000 from this year's event. ■

Written by Erica Jackson Curran. Photos by PPT Photography. More photos at www.societycharlotte.com



Charlene Beatty, Shawn Williams, Camille Moore, Felicia Fluid, Danielle Mathis and Mara Davis

Farewell Brunch

The Gray Classic's weekend of fun and fellowship wrapped up on July 21 with a **Farewell Brunch** at Upstream Restaurant in SouthPark. Upstream's General Manager and Proprietor Ken Higgins, a good friend of Herb Gray, offered the use of the restaurant for the event. About 100 guests attended, enjoying a delicious brunch buffet while discussing the past weekend's events. A percentage of the proceeds from the event were given to the fundraiser.

"I am very pleased with the results of these events," Gray said. "Felicia and I are very thankful that so many individuals and corporations have gotten behind this initiative. We are also thankful that this year the mentees of the 100 Black Men were able to be involved with the Golf Tournament, Women's Empowerment Brunch, and Business Roundtable discussion."

Gray said he didn't foresee any major changes to the Gray Classic 2014, although he did hope to add a tennis tournament to the weekend's lineup. Get those rackets ready. ■

Written by Erica Jackson Curran. Photos by PPT Photography. More photos at www.societycharlotte.com

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The Gray Classic • www.thegrayclassic.com • 704.560.4332



Brittani Menina, Sonja Nichols, Geraldine Broadway



Tanya Topazio and Marett Mattox



Brene Johnson and Crystal Mason



Jasmine Smith, Debra Clark, Ashli Hale, Idris Stover, Joi Canady, Ana Espinoza and Eunice Murray



Bill Council and Erica Cureton



Renata Henderson



Ron Tate Sr., Ron Tate Jr., and Don Lewis



Tina Bonner Henry and Denice Brown