



## Dr. Celeste Ashe Johnson

### **Celeste Ashe Johnson, The Lady ~ Smooth as Velvet, Strong as Steel**

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear." Mark Twain said these words several decades before her birth, however, he could easily have said them to describe the young girl who was always known for her courage to step up to the task, to be the first to tackle a task, and to maintain the spiritual and mental fortitude to complete the task.

Among her many courageous tasks are her accomplishments as the first of Robert and Elsie Ashe's six children whose first born is a male; the first African-American to hold an office on the Sussex County Virginia Education Association Board after schools were integrated in the 1970s; the first Director of color and the first female to serve as Academic Administrator of the College of New Rochelle, School of New Resources, South Bronx Campus, the only four-year liberal arts college in the South Bronx; and, the first elected Pentecostal President in the 63-year history of the illustrious, august body of spirited and determined women known as the International Association of Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows, Inc. And, these are just a few of her "first" accomplishments.

Dr. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from the Elizabeth City State University. She earned her Master of Science Degree in Education, Supervision and Administration from the City College of the City University of New York. She studied for the Doctor of Education Degree at the University of Massachusetts and earned the Doctor of Religious Education Degree from Christ Theological Seminary. The Commonwealth University conferred upon her the degree of Doctor of Sacred Literature, *honoris causa*. The Richmond Virginia College and Seminary conferred upon her the Doctor of Laws Degree, *honoris causa*. She holds certification in the Management of Life Long Learning from Harvard University.

### **The Lady ~ Her Life Mission**

Dr. Johnson's personal life mission is to bring religious and secular organizations together to find common goals and shared theology in order to work together to mend the fabric of society. Specifically, she facilitates alliances between religious and secular organizations to address the values that have been overwhelmingly destroyed by the tide of immortality in our society. Further, she has worked aggressively to bring advances to higher education program development for minorities and adults returning to school. As such, she has earned a reputation for being a dynamic spirit, a skilled administrator and an ingenious and sophisticated negotiator.

*Press Release from the Director of Public Relations, CAJ~Charting the Course to Excellence 21C Lecture and Workshop Series, Page 2*

Her magnetic qualities and passion for people and principal has established her as a "Gentle Giant" in her capacity as President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Association of Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows, Inc. In addition, her work as a featured speaker, lecturer, researcher and workshop developer has positioned her as a valuable resource for organizations that work to improve the quality of life for families.

### **The Lady ~ Her Literary Works**

Dr. Johnson has produced several publications including: "On Dating, Courtship & Marriage for Christian Teens," "Don't Ask How Far Can I Go, Rather How Fast Can I Flee," "An Acceptable Role for the Missionary in Church Building," and "Hey You! Teen, Want to Talk About Sex? Education That Is." In addition, she has traveled throughout the country presenting the program she developed, CAJ's Charting the Course to Excellence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Lecture and Workshop Series. The series includes "Changing the Role of The Preacher's Wife In Contemporary Society," "The Traditional Family Values Outreach Program," "The International Chastity Program," The Secular Humanist Movement in Society," "An Overview of the New Tolerance," and "Fishers of Men or Keepers of the Aquarium?" **LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH** is her latest book currently under publication by Precise Communications, Inc., completed June 2004.

### **The Lady ~ Her Professional Accomplishments**

As a professional, she has served as a Teacher, Executive Director for private and federally funded child development programs in New York and Connecticut, Educational Training Specialist, Director of Education and Academic Administrator at LaGuardia Community College, West Chester County Department of Corrections and The College of New Rochelle, respectively. She has also served as the Chairman of the Board of several senior citizen and affordable-housing development initiatives in the South Bronx, New York, and New Britain, Connecticut. Much of her time is spent working with Arch Street Housing Placement Ministry in New Britain, Connecticut, and the Melrose-Morrisiana Urban Renewal Community Organization (MMURO), Bronx, New York.

She served for thirteen years as Dean of Education of the Women's Council's Academy of the International Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc. (COOLJC), and founded and directed its Auxiliary of Apostolic Teens. She is currently President of the Missionary Department of the Diocese of Connecticut Missionary Department (COOLJC), and she designed a Chastity Program for the International COOLC, where she serves as its Director and supervises the program training staff of professionals and paraprofessionals who include public health educators, social workers, urban planners, medical researchers and theologians. She is the Manager of the International Church Convention Planning Committee and a Member of the Presiding Apostle's Cabinet of the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ. She is the Leading Lady of the Urban Hope Refuge (*Lawson Chapel Church*) and proud wife of Dr. William M. Johnson, Jr., her pastor and best friend.

Dr. Johnson has received many honors, citations and awards such as the Black Revolutionary War Patriots Foundation Award for her exceptionally outstanding service on the Black Revolutionary War Patriots Monument Project. She was instrumental in helping to move the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress to provide a two-year extension to the Foundation to acquire the funding to erect the monument. Also, in 1998, she provided key support in getting the Congress to pass legislation for the minting of 500,000 commemorative coins by the U.S. Mint. These coins will have the likeness of Crispus Attucks, the first person to die during the American Revolution. For her work on the Black Child Development Community Grant Project, Dr. Johnson received an appointment to the advisory board of the National Children's Defense Fund.

Dr. Johnson was selected as a featured speaker at the Christian Coalition Women Changing America Conference, along with other first ladies, including former first lady Barbara Bush. Also, she has been featured in various Christian and women's publications including FORUM, the Religious Christian Manager's Association Magazine, the cover article in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette Sunday Magazine* and featured in several other newsmagazines, including the *Richmond Free Press*. The International Association of Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows, Inc. honored her as the Minister's Wife of the Year in 1984.

The Phoenix Life Insurance Company spotlighted Dr. Johnson for her community contributions in the field of education, and sponsored her to spend a day on The Amistad in Mystic, Connecticut. The historic slave ship has been reconstructed and will set sail on July 4, 2000 as a traveling museum of African-American history.

The International Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc. cited Dr. Johnson as one of four of "The Distinguished Women at the Close of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." In 1995, she led the panel of ministers' wives who served as consultants to the research producer for the movie, *The Preacher's Wife*.

Currently, she is the Immediate Past International President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Association of Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows, Inc. The organization's constituency exceeds 43,000 and consists of 138 denominations located in 41 United States, the District of Columbia and 18 nations on five continents. Headquarters for the association is located in Richmond, Virginia. She is the President and Founder of Educational Consultants, Inc., and is Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the WL Bonner Bible College, a four-year college in Columbia, South Carolina, where she also serves on the Executive Board of its parent organization, The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.

In 2005, Dr. Johnson was awarded a contract by the federal government's Youth Initiative Office to develop an Abstinence Tool kit for the faith based community. In 2006 she was invited by the Alliance for Marriage Foundation who drafted the Marriage Protection Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and is the driving force behind the movement to protect marriage in America.

### **The Lady ~ The Wind Beneath Her Wings**

Dr. Johnson is married to Dr. William M. Johnson, Jr. who is Pastor of the Urban Hope Refuge (*Lawson Chapel Church*). He is also the Director of Social Community Development of the International Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc. She is the elated mother of two children. Ashley (AJ), a musically gifted, talented and energetic college senior. AJ has been called to the ministry and has accepted that call. And, William Mylious, III who served in the United States Marines Reserve and is an accomplished musician, often seen on television performing as percussionist with well-known musical groups. She has one granddaughter, the apple of her eye, ten-year-old Cheyanne and one grandson, Mylious Pascal, 16 months old. And, her role model, spiritual support, confidante and biggest fan ~second only to Dr. William Johnson~ was her mother, the late Mrs. Elsie Peace Ashe.