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Oprah's "Stand and Deliver" Moment for Charlotte's UNCF Maya Angelou Women Who Lead Luncheon Changes Lives for Many



MAYA ANGELOU WOMEN WHO LEAD HONOREES – JOAN ZIMMERMAN, TIFFANY EUBANKS-SAUNDERS, OPRAH WINFREY, TISH GUERIN AND MADELYN CAPLE – PHOTO BY KEYNA B



TINA BONNER-HENRY, OPRAH WINFREY, TIFFANY L. JONES AND SONJA P. NICHOLS



TAYLOR BARNES, MISS UNCF, IMANI AND CIERRA GRAHAM, BENNETT COLLEGE ALUMS, AND MCKENZIE ESTEP, A SOPHOMORE AT LOCAL UNCF-MEMBER HBCU ST. AUGUSTINE'S UNIVERSITY



WELLS FARGO EXECUTIVES (L-R) REGINA HEYWARD, GIGI DIXON, OPRAH WINFREY, DR. CELESTE CLARK, MICHELLE LEE, MADELYN L. CAPLE

When you're a fundraiser, how do you break records when you keep pushing the line every time you go to bat? How do you find that moment at the plate where you "stand and deliver," the time that brings a lot more attention—and cash donations—than you could have ever imagined?

Well, for UNCF's Charlotte office, that moment came in September 2019 when Oprah Winfrey—THE OPRAH—stood up and delivered for UNCF's 17th Annual Maya Angelou Women Who Lead Luncheon, helping raise a record-breaking \$2.3 million for students and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in North Carolina and across the United States.

The legendary former talk show host, philanthropist, actress and business mogul made major headlines during the Sept. 28, 2019, event as she matched the donations made at the fundraiser named for the poet and loyal UNCF supporter, the late Dr. Maya Angelou, dollar-for-dollar. The luncheon annually honors local women whose footprints positively impact the Charlotte regional community and proceeds benefit students in North Carolina and the HBCUs that educate them, and Winfrey called Dr. Angelou her mentor. Winfrey also gave all the guests in attendance a jaw-dropping moment by matching the live fundraising efforts, donating \$1,149,000 to UNCF.

More than 1,000 guests adorned with fascinators and hats attended the party with a purpose in support of higher education. The sold-out afternoon event featured shopping, entertainment provided by Johnson C. Smith University's jazz ensemble, Harvey Cummings Trio and national recording artist Maria Howell, event favorite, the HATitude competition, and student testimonials from Taylor Barnes, Miss UNCF, Imani and Cierra Graham, Bennett College alums, and McKenzie Estep, a sophomore at local UNCF-member HBCU St. Augustine's University.

Estep's powerful testimony underlined the event by including a quote from Avinash Gupta. "Don't let your life change your goals," she said, "because achieving your goals can change your life," which brought the audience to their feet. Estep continued, "It is through the power and lesson of these words that inspired me to overcome adversity and become a first-generation college student."



The 2019 Women Who Lead honorees were Madelyn Caple, western region managing director, Wells Fargo Bank; Tish Guerin, director of player wellness, Carolina Panthers; Tiffany Eubanks-Saunders, market executive, Bank of America; and Joan H. Zimmerman, CEO, Southern Shows.

The event was made possible with support from presenting sponsor Wells Fargo; platinum sponsor, Bank of America; gold sponsors, Atrium Health, Duke Energy, Lowe's Home Improvement and Novant Health; and individual supporters, including long-standing UNCF supporters, Tina Bonner-Henry and Kevin Henry, the Joan H. Zimmerman Trust and many others.

And, while Oprah Winfrey's presence certainly made the difference for this spectacular special event, everyone pulled together to stand and deliver for both the UNCF students and HBCUs who truly needed them that day—making an impact that no one will forget.

