



**ARLINGTON (VA) CHAPTER DELEGATE REPORT
THE LINKS, INCORPORATED
48TH EASTERN AREA CONFERENCE
BUILDING LEGACIES OF EMPOWERMENT: INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Date: April 23 – 27, 2025

Location: Marriott Marquis, Times Square, New York

Chapter Attendees:

- **President:** Suzanne Walker (Delegate)
- **Vice President:** Tameka Tunsil (Alternate)
- **Treasurer:** Rose Boyd (Platinum Member)
- **Recording Secretary:** Yvette Darnaby
- **17th NP:** Kimberly Jeffries Leonard
- **EA Financial Secretary:** Evelyn Gee
- **Platinum Member:** Marietta Palmer
- **Members:** Diane Butts, Sandra Clark, Rachel English, Hope Goins, Angell Jacobs, Dawn Johnson, Francine Lane, Theresa Peterson, DeVera Redmond, Natasha Rountree, LaJuanna Russell, Tammie Smiley, Anita Walker.

Overview of the Eastern Area Conference

The Eastern Area Conference (EAC) of The Links, Incorporated took place from April 23 to April 27, 2025, at the Marriott Marquis, Times Square, New York. This biennial event brought together Link Sisters from across the Eastern Area to engage in professional development, foster leadership skills, and discuss key organizational initiatives.

Key Sessions and Takeaways:

1. Opening Ceremony:

The Conference began with a powerful opening ceremony, featuring remarks from the Eastern Area Director and an inspirational keynote speaker. The theme of empowerment and service was highlighted, reaffirming our commitment to community impact.

2. Workshops and Panels:

Attendees participated in various workshops designed to enhance chapter operations and foster leadership growth. Key topics included:

- **Financial Stewardship:** Emphasizing the importance of sound fiscal management in chapters.
- **Program Implementation:** Effective strategies for executing the Five Facets of Service.
- **Membership Engagement:** Best practices for recruiting and retaining active, engaged members, including mental health and wellness.
- **Ethics and Standards-** Boot Camp – Survival Skills 101

- **Unpacking the Links, Incorporated Pledge** – A Journey of Service & Friendship
 - **Chapter President’s Retreat**
 - **Authors Corner** - featuring Arlington (VA)’s own, Hope Goins
 - **Archives and History** – Best practices to preserve chapter history
3. **National Elections:**
A critical part of the Conference was the election of Eastern Area Officers.
4. **Plenary Sessions:**
- **Addressing the Business of the Area:** Officers and Committee Leadership provided insightful highlights of accomplishments supporting the East.
 - **Building Sustainable Partnerships:** Emphasizing the need for collaborations that enhance community impact while building the capacity of chapters.
5. **Social and Networking Events:**
In addition to formal sessions, the Conference provided ample opportunities for fellowship and networking with Link Sisters from across the East, including receptions, parties, shopping excursions and attendance to the Alicia Keys Broadway Musical, ‘Hell’s Kitchen’. Our chapter attended receptions and luncheons together. The camaraderie fostered at these events will undoubtedly strengthen our chapter's bonds. There was an opportunity for a visit to the United Nations and a shopping excursion to Macy’s.
6. **Service Project:**
A hallmark of every Conference is service. During this event, the Eastern Area, led by the Big Apple Cluster sponsored a “Healthy Walk for Women” that toured many iconic sites of Central Harlem. A health and wellness fair, including a panel discussion followed at the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The Arlington (VA) Chapter supported the service project by donation.
7. **Next Steps and Action Items for the Arlington (VA) Chapter:**
- **Adopting Best Practices:** We will incorporate new strategies learned from the workshops into our chapter’s operations.

CONCLUSION:

The Eastern Area Conference was an enriching experience, providing valuable insights and reinforcing our shared dedication to the Eastern Area’s commitment in support of The Links, Incorporated mission. The knowledge and connections gained will serve our chapter well as we continue to serve our communities with excellence.

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Plenary One Session:

The 48th Eastern Area Conference officially opened at 8:47 a.m. with the Opening Ceremony, led by Eastern Area Director Link Lisa Loury Lomas. Each chapter proudly greeted the conference with its chapter name and chartering date. Past Eastern Area Directors, National Presidents, and current and former Area and National Officers were introduced and acknowledged.

Link Betty Obiajulu, 9th Eastern Area Director, led the Links Pledge and Song, followed by the “Linkspiration” entitled *Only the Strong Survive*, delivered by Link Cecelia Henderson, 11th Eastern Area Director.

Link Denise Lewis, Eastern Area Secretary, conducted the roll call of delegates. Voting strength was confirmed at 84. Link Lisa Loury Lomas welcomed the newest chapter, the Cherry Blossom Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, (Washington, DC) and acknowledged first-time attendees, Platinum and Alumna members, as well as chapters celebrating milestone anniversaries.

The Credentials Report reflected:

- Delegates: 83
- Alternates: 78 (56 on-site)
- Registered Links: 1,695
- Connecting Links: 23

Following the adoption of the Standing Rules and the Conference Agenda, visiting Area Directors—Link Vanessa Falls (Southern), Link Karen Cole (Western), and Link Sheila R. Brown (Central)—brought greetings.

The Eastern Area Nominating Committee Report was presented by Link Sharon Hopson, who announced the certified slate of candidates for the 2025 elections, including:

- Eastern Area Director: Link Lisa Loury Lomas
- Eastern Area Vice Director: Link Barbara McEachin Burton
- Eastern Area Secretary: Link Denise Lewis
- Eastern Area Treasurer: Link Dawn Hankin, Link Blanche L. Jackson and Link Lisa Maria Jones
- Eastern Area Nominating Committee: Link Monica Dash, Link Sharon Hopson, Link Constance Moses and Link Curtistine Walker (Link Annie Augustin (Atlantic City (NJ) Chapter was nominated from the floor
- Eastern Area Foundation Representative: Beverly Roberts-Atwater

❖ **Program Luncheon:**

Congratulations to the Arlington (VA) Chapter for being recognized in **Legacy** and **Program** categories. We also received the **first-place award** for the prestigious **Oral Chapter History** initiative.

Second Plenary Session:

The session reconvened at 4:17 p.m. with updated Credentials:

- Delegates: 83
- Links: 1,695
- Connecting Links: 27
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Link Lisa Loury Lomas, Area Director delivered the “State of the Area,” highlighting 83 active chapters and over 5,000 members. Gratitude was extended to all Area Officers, Chairs, and Committees. A hard copy of the report will be archived for our chapter records.

The "Friendship Ceremony" was conducted by EA Rituals Chair, Link Judy Johnson and Eastern Area Director, Link Lisa Loury Lomas. The Elections Committee Report, led by Link Cimmon Burns, Elections Chair confirmed that *Election Runner* will be used as the voting platform. Candidate speeches for Eastern Area Treasurer followed:

- Link Dawn Hankin (Greater Metro Manhattan, NY)
- Link Blanche Jackson (Dover, DE)
- Link Lisa Maria Jones (Charlottesville, VA)

Friday, April 25, 2025

Workshop Attended: *Breaking Barriers – Understanding Clinical Trials and the Need for African American Participation*

This vital session underscored the importance of African American inclusion in clinical trials to ensure research reflects our community's health needs. An excellent and timely presentation.

Third Plenary Session:

Called to order at 2:31 p.m., the session began with the Links Pledge and Song, led by Link Alethia Spraggins. Link Gwendolyn Boyd delivered the Linkspiration. Link Denise Lewis gave the roll call and credential update:

- Delegates: 83
- Registered Links: 1,695
- Connecting Links: 27

National Vice President Link Shauna Tucker Sims introduced our 19th National President, Link Ethel Isaacs Williams, with the Isley Brother’s song *Who’s That Lady?* In her *State of the Organization* address, Madam President William’s remarks highlights include:

- Support for Black-owned businesses
- Civic engagement “Link up the Vote” and NAACP membership campaign
- Launch of *Future Leaders* initiative (targeting 3rd and 4th year college students)
- Focus on intentional membership selection/members who will work vs their resume
- Use of webinars as tools—not substitutes—for in-person service
- Upholding standards of dress and decorum
- Membership in The Links, Incorporated is a privilege/Focus on Friendship
- When gathering as Links, leave Sorority activities out.
- Fundraising – Stop spending too much to raise too little
- Develop a deeper commitment to the organization
- New initiative – Future Leaders Pilot program (funded by FedEx)
- Emerald Wall Street Project – exchange for Black Businesses
- Establish a portal for Health Information
- Increase philanthropy
- Preserve History

A special recognition was held for members celebrating 25 and 40 years of service, conducted by Link Barbara McEachin Burton, Link Judy Johnson, and Link Ethel Isaacs Williams. Our chapter recognized member:

Link DeVera Redmond – 25 years

Positions that were unopposed were voted by acclamation. Candidates for the position of EA Treasurer gave speeches on their qualifications on Thursday. Link Cinmon Burns, Elections

The Chair shared the results. **Link Dawn Hankin** won the election and is the new 2025-2027 EA Treasurer.

Saturday, April 26, 2025

The Memorial Service was held honoring Links, Connecting Links, and Heir-O-Links. Our chapter recognized and celebrated the lives of:

Link Debra Long-Doyle
Connecting Link George Brown
Connecting Link Terence Peterson
Connecting Link Thomas L. Walker

Fourth Plenary Session:

Convened at 9:11 a.m., the session began with the Pledge and Song, led by Link Diane Hardison Yates, 15th Eastern Area Director. Link Veronica Jeter delivered the Linkspiration. Roll call, led by Link Denise Lewis confirmed 83 voting delegates.

Reports were presented by:

- Area Officers: Link Barbara McEachin Burton (Vice Director), Link Denise Lewis (Secretary)
- Link Cherylayne Brown Walker (Treasurer): Audit Report and 2025–2027 Budget (adopted)
- Link Wanda Nelson (Parliamentarian)
- Additional Committee Reports

Sunday, April 27, 2025: A Sunday Worship Service was the final event of the conference.

The BERNS Cluster consisting of the Buffalo (NY), Erie County (NY), Niagara Falls (NY), and Syracuse (NY) Chapters presented the invitational to the **49th Eastern Area Conference** with the theme “*Boots on the Ground.*”

Thank you for entrusting me to represent the Arlington (VA) chapter at the Eastern Area Conference conducting the business of The Links, Incorporated.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Walker

Suzanne Walker
Chapter President and Delegate
Arlington (VA) Chapter
April 30, 2025