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## Moore Eye Institute honors Justice Nix

*Foundation recognizes his support, contributions*



Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert N. C. Nix poses with Moore Eye Foundation gala host Tamlin Henry, public affairs director for WDAS-FM and WDAS-AM.

By Arlene Edmonds  
Tribune Correspondent

African Americans often suffer disproportionately from blindness as a byproduct of hypertension and diabetes. It is a well-known fact in the medical community that if eye diseases like glaucoma can be treated if caught early. Many African Americans do not get early eye examinations because of lack of health insurance. That's where the Moore Eye Foundation comes in to bridge the gap of insuring that the uninsured, the poor, and even the homeless receive necessary eye care and surgery.

Among those who have supported the Moore Eye Foundation was Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice emeritus Robert N. C. Nix. Consequently the institution honored Nix for his bolstering spirit of the non-profit organization since its inception Sunday. The fundraiser drew a diverse cross section of over 200 from the medical and philanthropic community. It was held at the Overbrook Country Club in Bryn Mawr.

Tamlin Henry, public affairs director for WDAS-FM and WDAS-AM, hosted the awards gala. State Rep. Louise Williams Bishop and Dr. Nancy Morgan, who represented Mayor John Street, gave the honoree addresses. Former Mayor Edward G. Rendell delivered the keynote speech.

"It is a real honor to receive this award," said Renate Nix, the justice's wife told the *Tribune*. "It feels wonderful to know that the board of advisors from the Moore Foundation thought enough of his contributions to do this." A senile Nix's philanthropic spirit was still evident at Sunday's event as he added, "If I can help someone, let me know."

Nix assisted in the inauguration of the Moore Eye Institute's Black History Month program in February 2000. Speaking at the Hutchinson UAME Church of Coatesville, Nix said, "The Moore Eye Institute looks beyond the eyes of a patient and treats the entire human being. It is a style of treatment that is needed."

The program opened with a welcome from the program chair Paula



Pictured from (l-r), Dr. Leonard Ginsburg, Judge Robert C. N. Nix, former mayor Edward G. Rendell, Mrs. Ginsburg, and Mrs. M. Moore take a break for a quick shot during a fundraiser for the Moore Eye Institute, honoring Justice Nix for his contributions to the foundation. — BEN ALLEN PHOTOS

Bonavitacola. After the invocations from Rabbi Abraham Levene and Rev. Steven J. Marinucci, Bishop drew a few words from the last speech of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She stressed that Moore Eye Foundation president Dr. Leonard H. Ginsburg and Nix embodied many of the attributes of ones who provided service.

The minister, radio show host, and state legislator pointed to many health statistics within the African American community that can lead to blindness. She noted that Blacks in Philadelphia have a "diabetes rate 27% higher" than their white counterparts, suffer from hypertension at a "35% higher rate, and the fact that the number of diabetics 'have doubled in the last 35 years.'"

"The most important tool in this fight against poverty is education," said Bishop. "How can a child get an education if they are not able to see the blackboard. I will tell you a story about a white boy who was

diagnosed with a problem, an intellectual deficit. He really had no problem. He was just unable to do his homework because he could not see the blackboard. He then had his eyes checked...and soon was getting A's...This is the kind of work Moore does for the homeless and the poor."

Morgan traced her personal connection to the Nix family and to the legacy of Nix, his father who was also an attorney and his grandfather who was an educator. Marilyn Moore Ginsburg then made the actual awards presentation to Nix, who was accompanied by his wife, Renate Nix thanked the foundation for the accolade. "If you believe in yourself you can live the impossible dream," she said.

Leonard Ginsburg spoke of being 15-years-old and being horrified by his grandmother, Belle Moore's loss of sight. It was a turning point in his life when his grandmother was able to see again thanks to

medical technology, he said.

"The Moore Eye Foundation starts where traditional medicine usually does not even begin," said Ginsburg. "We believe that the best care is prevention, thereby avoiding medical treatment altogether. Education, healthy living and early detection are critical. If medical treatment fails to prevent vision loss, the foundation steps in to offer rehabilitation and optical aids to maximize the remaining vision without regard to the ability to pay."

President Judge emeritus Alex Bonavitacola introduced Rendell. The former Philadelphia mayor recounted the two contributions he made to Philadelphia. First, he spoke the sound of hearing children playing in a previously abandoned swimming pool in North Central Philadelphia. Then, he shared the experience of a young North Philadelphia mother who thanked him for the construction of more

Center City hotels. Since she's been working at the Loew's Hotel, for the first time in her life she was able to support her daughter on her own. "What the Moore Foundation is doing is priceless," he concluded.

Michael Jerrick, host of "Good Day Philadelphia" gave closing remarks. The program ended with announcements of the silent auction winners.

The Moore Eye Institute was founded in 1995 by Ginsburg in Springfield. Its mission is to provide education in eye disease to both patients and professionals. The non-profit organization provides eye care to indigent populations and those of modest means. The foundation is also dedicated to researching the causes, treatments and cures of eye disease. It is helping to pioneer a systemic approach to preventing eye disease and improving the understanding of these diseases by education for both doctors and patients.