

Embrace

Dimensional Friendships, Laugh, Love and Live

National Communications Newsletter

Living
....Our Best Lives



Winter Edition 2022



My Dear Carat Sisters,

It is 2022. Happy New Year! I don't know about you but it feels like 2021 was a very long year.

We navigated many virtual meetings to include the Midyear Board meeting and the 2021 Conclave. We had a successful Conclave with great attendance. Our theme, "Here Comes the Sun: Vision Beyond 2020" with the song sang by the great Nina Simone, was a fitting theme as we tried to put the year behind us with laughter and love. The film, "Resilience", spearheaded by Carat Wallis Tinnie, and presented at the Luncheon was absolutely beautiful and well received. I applaud all of you for your participation in the film. On Saturday night we celebrated the theme "When the Sun Goes Down" with style and grace engaging in much laughter and fun. We installed officers at the Luncheon and as we saluted the outgoing officers, we welcomed the new ones. We hosted a virtual event to welcome the new Carats and then another beautiful event to showcase Carats You Should Know as we celebrated the first National holiday for

Emancipation. The Potpourri, "Laugh, Love, Live - A Quilt of Friendships" was beautiful and shared our ability to still have fun during the pandemic year. We ended our year with a fun filled night of music and laughter- This Christmas with CARATS, Inc. and All that Jazz. We will continue to work to strengthen and enhance our sisterhood. Again, I truly appreciate the participation and support of all. We are still on this journey of pandemic but I am prayerful that we will come through this well. We must Live!

Thanks to the Communications Committee for carrying out my theme of Laugh, Love and Live in the Embrace Newsletter. The last two issues shared moments of laughter and love for all. This time we will show reasons why we must Live. Living is more than mere existence. It is about embracing and enjoying all aspects of life. Yes, we have reason to mourn sometimes but we also have great moments of Joy. Let's seek joy, that feeling that overwhelms you, brings you to a sense of extreme peace. Let's spend time doing the things we love to do, not waiting for the right moment. Let's live in the moment and enjoy what we have been blessed with. Let us not put off today waiting for tomorrow. Tomorrow is not promised! We have persisted and lived through this last, almost two years, now and we want to continue. Think positive, moving forward. Find something that you love doing and do it. Reflect on what brings you joy.

In the first issue we celebrated the Health Heroes and our new members. The last issue we celebrated our Life members and this month we will highlight our General members. We want to use this newsletter to celebrate us and to get to know more about each other. Remember to keep sending notes and calling those we do not often see. Celebrate the fact that they choose to be a part of us even if they are not physically in our midst. Love reaches far and wide.

As we continue to live, we want to ensure our history is recorded and documented accurately. This is Black History Month, a time when we celebrate our history, our ancestors, and those special people who struggled and succeeded in making us all proud of our heritage. Let's remember our CARATS, Inc. history and the women who formed this group of special friends in 1975. (See history on next page.) Where would we be without Carats like Amanda Webb and Bert Wise, Geri Lynch who are Forever Carats, but also those still with us, Carats Clover Elliott, Jocelyn Hodgson, Peggy Epps, Jessie Green and others? Our past is important as it gives us the courage, stamina and eagerness to move forward into the present. Please reach out to our new Historian, Carat Evelyn Chatmon, and to the Heritage and Archives Committee Chairs providing any information requested as we capture our history. Celebrate regularly the charter members still with you in your chapters.

Carats, we have decided to host a virtual 2022 Midyear Board meeting, but let's pray that we will combat this virus and be able to see each other face to face in Chicago in July 2022. In the meantime, Stay Safe and Remember to... Laugh, Love and Live Embracing Dimensional Friendships

Carat Juanita Armbrister
National President

Celebrating our History, Remembering our Past

The Beginning – PIVOTS

The history of PIVOTS is an integral part of CARATS, Incorporated and it is only through this review can accurate documentation of the organization's history be chronicled.

1959 - In the late 1950's a group of New York women, led by Amanda Webb, founded an organization to combat the indignities they suffered as a result of the Jim Crow Laws in our country. Their purpose was to establish a social network that would allow the ladies to meet women of similar ethnic origin, experience and circumstances. As they traveled, this network made it possible to avoid the humiliation of being denied access to public accommodations, such as hotels and restaurants, etc. These connections laid the groundwork for planned activities and subsequently a formal group known as PIVOTS was organized.

May 1959 - The New York PIVOTS officially installed a second chapter in Pittsburgh, PA. Due to the professional obligations of their husbands, many of the women in both chapters relocated to other cities. Additional relationships developed and the new chapters evolved in various cities as this migration occurred.

1962 - The Pittsburgh Chapter of PIVOTS assumed the role of "Mother Chapter", drafted a constitution and filed Articles of Incorporation for PIVOTS in the state of Pennsylvania.

1974 - After much deliberation and many revisions, the PIVOTS Constitution was officially adopted at the Cleveland Convention.

1975 - There were PIVOT chapters officially installed in eight cities (Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Macon, New York, and Pittsburgh). Individual members of the Washington, D.C.'s Gadabouts were allowed to join as general members of PIVOTS. Those members were Roberta Wise, Ruth Hurd, Dorothy Gaither, Marjorie Keith, and Dorothy Lander.

April - May 1975 - The Board of PIVOTS decided it was necessary to reorganize the organization. With Amanda Webb of New York, as National President and Roberta Wise, of Washington, DC, serving as Chair of the Reorganization Committee, the restructuring process began. The organization's leaders believed this restructuring would provide for equality in representation and a more clearly defined constitution and by laws.

June 1975 - a draft form of the Articles of Incorporation was presented in Boca Raton, FL. for the newly reorganized group.

- As a result of the reorganization, Pittsburg chapter withdrew from PIVOTS.

June 28, 1975 – The following actions are noted:

- Several names were submitted for the new organization. The Atlanta Chapter submitted the name "CARATS", and showed a visual design to symbolize this name.
- A Statement of Purpose was determined, a Motto was selected and a Creed of Sisterhood was also adopted to signify the principles of this reorganized group.

- Of the eight PIVOTS chapters, only seven of them were installed as CARATS. Thus the original and official chapters of CARATS, Incorporated were and still remain: Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Macon, and New York.

October 8, 1975 - CARATS Articles of Incorporation were issued in Washington, D.C.

As a part of the history of CARATS, Incorporated, the first five national presidents are to be commended and remembered for all of their efforts to make the organization what it represents today. They are Amanda Webb (New York), Shirley Ashley (Atlanta), Adelaide Miller (Detroit), Janet Sullivan (Columbus), and Barbara Gross (Atlanta).

Let's Celebrate CARATS, Inc., Let's Celebrate Us!

Note: My personal thanks to Carat and Past National President Rosalee Johnson and her Heritage Committee for this review of our organization's history. More to come from them.



Living Your Best Life: Redefining Our Wealth

Carat Monique Coleman, Atlanta Chapter



As we are almost completing our full second known year of COVID-19, many have gone through ups and downs. Unpredictability in our own lives and the world around us has forced us to evaluate what is important, valuable, and worthy of our time and efforts. If you have not already considered, I challenge you, my Carat Sisters, to redefine your wealth. If you have already considered doing this, I encourage you to continue expanding and magnifying your definition as you read this article.

Oxford defines wealth as an abundance of valuable possessions or money. We may describe wealth as what we have achieved in our family, careers, and finances. I assert that wealth is far beyond the boundaries the world describes and tries to impose upon us. Wealth is wisdom, knowledge, health, peace, joy, and relationships. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but meant to inspire you in thoughts of YOUR best life.

Be inspired to leave your comfort zone and explore the unknown. This can be outside your home or within your spirit. Push your limits and welcome different experiences. Focus on the positive,

the abundance of your gifts and value. Make an intentional effort to express thankfulness to those around you at least once a day, whether you know them or not. Investing in others and being kind brings wealth beyond measure.

So, as you explore or continue to expand your best life, don't forget to laugh. The Carat Sisters I know and even those I do not have shown themselves to be optimistic, hopeful, powerful, fearless, dedicated, strong, focused, and loving spirits. Peace and Blessings, My Carats Sisters. Continue **LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE** and remember the abundance of wealth we have as **CARATS** because we have each other!



Loving and Lifting Our Youth Today

Carat Patricia Wilkerson-Uddyback, MD, - Detroit, Chair - National Wellness Committee



Our youth are our greatest source of hope. As the mother of 3 hard-working, gifted and faithful young women, I am more aware than ever of how I need to support their continued growth and resiliency. Those of you with grandchildren have the joy of seeing your legacy evolve as you watch them come into their own and journey out into the world to find their true calling. Others are part of a village and support and nurture nieces, nephews, godchildren, and children that need their love and support.

Today we have to adapt to a different way of communicating and, more importantly, how we listen to our youth. Sometimes they need a wise ear to hear them and not necessarily solve whatever problem they may be discussing. Sometimes they just want to get a nod that all will be okay and they are heading in the right direction in life. Other times they may need your advice, and this is when you really need to pause and think before you speak. It is really important to provide guidance rather than telling them what to do. Encouraging them to search their hearts and tap into what will bring them the greatest joy can be very powerful.

While we all have had our share of trials and tribulations, it is important to share our own stories and those of our ancestors. Understanding how we persevered can also become a source of inspiration and truth to our youth. As African American women, we are known for our resiliency, grace under pressure, and leadership during tough times. We must be sure to let the next generation understand how we came through it, under it, and over it! Sometimes they look at the fabulous person you are and do not know that you had to work hard and navigate a few things to be the wonderful person you are today.

Finally, I encourage all of my Carat Sisters and Carateers to take some time to uplift and love on the youth in your lives. Taking a moment to tell them you are thinking about them and you are there in support as they navigate the world today is a moment you will spend investing in the future.



Distance Means So Little When Sisterhood Means So Much

Sisterly Love, Gwendolyn West, General Member Chicago Chapter



CARATS, Inc. is an awesome part of my Life. Friendship, Love, and Laughter are always a part of my experience. Currently, I live in Rancho Mirage (near Palms Springs), California. I have lived here for a wonderful three years. In the past, I traveled here as a “snowbird” for many years. To move from my home in Chicago was an easy choice. Unfortunately, there is not a Carats chapter here. As I was familiar with the area, I found many opportunities to connect to the community by volunteering, connecting with my sorority (Alpha Kappa Alpha), and discovering a fun group entitled Women of Color.

As I reflect on what it means to be a 3-year general member of CARATS, Inc. I think first of my beginning as a Charter member of the Chicago Chapter, installed in 1993. All the years of enjoyable chapter activity spent Conclave & party planning, travel, meetings, and gatherings. I never wanted to miss a meeting because they were always such fun times, and the champagne was endlessly flowing. Yes, it was difficult leaving my Chapter. I still find my Sisterhood and friendships with the Chicago Chapter a sustaining part of my Joy and Laughter. Since the onset of the Pandemic, I have spent time with Carats on zoom calls

and light-hearted group chats online. Not a week goes by when I don't talk to a Carat from Chicago and other Chapters. Prior to COVID, I had several Carat visitors who traveled to this area on vacation and for a quick visit. I'm sure when it's time to travel again, we will continue to meet up here and across the country.



Denise Hayes
General Member of
Columbus Chapter



Lisa Adams
General Member of
Columbus Chapter



Charlotte McCaskill-Wright
General Member of
Chicago Chapter



Dorothy Florence
General Member of
Chicago Chapter

Not Pictured Carat Theresa Patton, General Member of Chicago Chapter

Live Through The Eyes Of Art

When I paint, I am free. I see only the paint, brush, and canvas. I paint alone in quietness; through art, I see the world, the beauty, the ugly, and the undecided. It gives me energy that God allows us to enjoy the sun, moon, rain, storm clouds in many forms as we gaze into the unknown.

When I paint on canvas, others do not see what I didn't paint, and that's okay; that means the eyes see what the mind is wondering.

As I paint, I feel peace, love, joy, forgiveness, closure, all the above, and more. Painting is an art, the universe that the Master left for us to enjoy. I had a hiatus for years, and now I'm painting again and hope to share it with you in the future.

My painting reflexes the mood that I am in. I paint a black and white oil piece that scares me in the dim lite hallway. Painting is fun; I feel alive, lost in the energy of the universe, "free." The world is a canvas, painted by the divine, left for us to enjoy. Live, life is short, love what you see, see what you love, that my message.

Live, enjoy and be happy.

Carat Joyce Bowles, Chattanooga, TN



Celebrate Life with a Carats Signature Drink

Chattanooga Carats hosted a festive virtual celebration featuring Mixologist Kim White. Kim was given the task of creating several cocktails that would delight Carats. The highlight of the event was the Carats' Cocktail.



CARATS' SIGNATURE COCKTAIL

Ingredients

- 1 oz Blue Curaçao
- 1 oz Ciroc Summer Citrus
- 1 ¼ oz Lemon & Ginger Soda (or 7-Up/Sprite/Gingerale/Ginger Beer)
- Splash of Grapefruit Juice
- 2 oz Vodka
- 2 Orange Juice

Instructions

Layer 1: Mix 1st four ingredients in a shaker over ice cubes. Shake vigorously. Pour into chilled glass. Place a lemon slice in glass so it floats on top of the mixture.

Layer 2: In a separate shaker, add ice cubes, vodka and orange juice. Shake and pour slowly over lemon. Use a knife or spoon to carefully remove lemon slice.

Garnish: Candied ginger and lemon slice

Celebrate life, fun, and dimensional friendships; let's make this our signature drink.

Carat, Gwendolyn Williams
Chattanooga Chapter



Hello, My Dear Carat Sisters!

It is with heartfelt love and sisterly affection that I connect with you!

Our National President's theme is to "Live, Laugh and Love," and that's exactly what I do each and every day of my life. In the midst of joys or concerns, this is my daily mission.

Carateer Everett and I set a goal decades ago to "follow the sun" during the final chapters of our lives. God blessed us with a relocation to Florida shortly after retiring from our very busy careers. We are thankful and grateful for the sunshine, warmth, healthy minds and bodies, and the very nice people we've met here. We miss our family and friends back home in Maryland and Virginia; however, we're comforted knowing that God is protecting them in their daily lives. Plus, through the miracle of technology, we often talk "face to face."

I truly miss my Dear Carat Sisters of the Baltimore Chapter! They gave me a "Live, Laugh and Love" send-off that I'll always remember! I'm in constant contact with my Carat Sisters because they are all very dear friends. Starting with Carat LaVerne Gaither, who invited me into this

wonderful organization. I will forever owe her a debt of gratitude and sisterly love for seeing characteristics in me that matched ones of this illustrious sisterhood.

With the sisterly support of my Baltimore Carat Sisters, I served as National Amenities Chair for two consecutive Presidents – Carat Sandra Kent and Carat Donna Roddy. For me, that wonderful experience reiterated the need to always "Live, Laugh and Love." The hundreds of Amenities sent and several Forever Carat ceremonies that I conducted made me realize the importance of those three words and how we need to cherish each day. I quickly learned that unconditional compassion, sisterly kindness, and heartfelt caring are necessary to "Live, Laugh and Love."

Today, as a General Member, I am very fortunate that my Baltimore Carat Sisters keep me informed of Chapter business, social activities, and National Carat information and Amenities. I feel very much a part of the Chapter, even though physical distance separates us. Since becoming a General Member in 2018, I've attended every Conclave, in-person and virtual. I truly miss the in-person smiles and hugs, the hospitality suites, the informative meetings, and admiring Carat Sisters' beautiful attire!

I know one day we will convene in person, and I look forward to continuing the journey of "Living, Laughing and Loving" with all of you!

***Sisterly Love, Carat Anita Jackson
General Member of Baltimore Chapter***



*Carat Marquita Harris,
General Member of the Chattanooga Chapter*

Live-It's A Good Day

It's a good day to talk, share and find strength in connecting with Carat Sisters. It's a good day to reflect on Carat Sisters and how we live out loud. Conclaves, hugs, laughter, and dancing the night-a-way.

It's a good day, my health is failing, but the love of my daughters and family keeps me abreast of how precious life is. Relationships are worth having, and life seems more vibrant than ever before. It's a good day because I'm able to laugh through my pain and fears; my faith helps me take one day at a time!

Live your best life; time is shorter than you realize; be brave and beautiful with your own being; embrace yourself and others. Carat Sisters has shown me to be my best self, and as a General Member, those that I love and have embraced me with undying love are a vital part of my life. Smile more, complain less, trust God. It's a good day.



*Carat Hester Buie
General Member of the Chattanooga Chapter*

Life Is A Treasure

I treasure life each day and live it to its fullness! Being the Past-President (2006-2010) of the Chattanooga Chapter and now not being accessible to my Carat Sisters gives me treasurable memories of fun, laughter, and lasting friendships. Although Carateer Larry and I enjoy being with our grandchildren, we find solitude knowing we have Carats and Carateers in 15 chapters that we yearn to see once the pandemic allows us to travel. I can only imagine the grand times to come at the next Conclave.

Life is a journey; cherish your memories, past and present, and look forward to the future with promise. Be bold, go beyond your circumstances, and know that if you hit a bump along the road, it's ok; continue to find your purpose and stay the course.

Life is a treasure; be yourself and nourish the uniqueness you have been blessed to have.

CARATS at A GLANCE

Atlanta Carats
PROVOCATIVE
with their moves



Baltimore Carats
EXQUISITE
by design



ENTHUSIASTIC
Chattanooga Carats



CARATS at A GLANCE

EXCITING **Chesapeake** **Carats**

Chesapeake Carats carved out time to safely dance the night away. Everyone was fully vaccinated to allow for the festive and exciting evening celebrating “LIFE – LIVING, TOASTING IT UP,” something we haven’t been able to do for some time now.



ENGAGING **Cleveland** **Carats**

Cleveland Carats held their Annual Holiday Party at Pine Ridge Country Club. The Carats, Carateers, and guests had an engaging time, enjoyed a delicious meal, listened to live music by the Mike Austin Band, and exchanged gifts. The Cleveland Carats “engage” with each other to build lasting friendships and create a strong sisterhood among members.



St. Louis Carats

We are “DARING Carats,” as we take on a COVID world in a safe and protective way.

We dared to resume “in-person” meetings and activities starting with our October meeting. It was a monthly meeting/painting party held at the Norwood Hills Country Club. Carat sisters were instructed by Carat Nell Cheatham to use their creative painting skills to paint a picture depicting a “Halloween Fall Scene.” So much fun with food, make-believe stories about the paintings, and of course libations as Carats do so well. The year-end activity, planned by the social committee, was a Holiday Brunch to include our Carateers. This activity, “Mingling under the Mistletoe,” was hosted at the lovely gorgeous home of Carat Dana and Carateer Ron Redwing. Most daring was the presence of Carat Patricia Hernandez and to see her go down the stairs, with crutches, to the lower level where the party really started. Remember, she broke both ankles earlier in the Fall. This was a festive holiday event where we enjoyed a scrumptious catered menu, good conversation, libations, dancing, sharing gifts, and just being together in this COVID world.

Now, on to the new year with more exciting and daring activities; that’s what STL Carats are all about.

CARATS at A GLANCE

Miami Carats

CUTTING EDGE Magic

Like Miami, Miami Carats and Carateers operate on the Cutting Edge, living, laughing, loving, and basking in the South Florida sun. In April, we hosted the first Virtual Mid-year Board Meeting in Florida. During the evening activities, a fun time was had by all.



Montgomery Carats

LIVING AN EXCITING Life

Montgomery Carats know how to “Live Life Like It’s Golden.” Excitement always filled the air every year as we wined and dined with each other and our guests at the fabulous Capital City Club. Located at the top of the RSA Tower, on the 21st and 22nd floors, we could gaze out over the City of Montgomery at the beautiful Christmas lights of downtown and as far as the eyes could see. The room was always



CARATS at A GLANCE

Montgomery Carats Continued

elegantly decorated, compliments of our Social Committee. We dined on delectable dishes prepared by the head chef and staff. Then played games, sang Christmas songs, exchanged gifts, and danced the night away to music played by a local famous artist, Ron Handy. Just look at our group picture and see the excitement on all our faces! This was our last Christmas Party before the Covid-19 Virus shook the WORLD!

Even though we continue to be shut in, the Montgomery Carats still enjoy each other's company, even on Zoom. This year we met earlier in the day, as we did last Christmas, and picked up prepared meals that we carried back to our homes and joined each other on Zoom. We laughed, ate, and drank a toast to the holidays. This year we even shared stories of Christmas memories and family traditions. Look at our smiles, even on the tiny screen, and you can still see that we felt we were having an EXCITING experience with each other as we continue to "Live Life Like It's Golden."

**Philadelphia
Carats**
UNIQUE



**CARAT COOK AND
SIP**

APR 30, 2021



National Carats Communications Committee

“I don’t want to get to the end of my life and find that I just lived the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.” – Diane Ackerman

Let your hearts be open to love, your spirit filled with joy, and the courage to pursue your dreams. Embrace life and be encouraged to live your best life. As we embrace the upcoming days, which are the days of new beginnings, remember the “brilliance of our Carat sisters and the reward of living a life of purpose.”

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the National Carats Communications Chair. The Communication Committee is honored to be appointed to serve CARATS, Incorporated, and we thank our National President, Carat Juanita Armbrister, for embracing us in Dimensional Friendships in Love.

We also extend our sincere “Thanks” to each Carat sister that shared their talents producing this issue of “Embrace.” Rounding out the circle of “Laugh, Love, and Live.”



*Carat Lily Leslie
Chair/Chattanooga*



*Carat Maria Herbert
Co-Chair/Chesapeake*



*Carat Andrea Langster
Washington*



*Carat Andrew Lee
Macon*



*Carat Renee Mance
Philadelphia*



*Carat Glenda Moss
Cleveland*