## —Elks convention

(Continued from Page A1)

Donald P. Wilson, a native of Baltimore; and Grand Daughter Ruler Mrs. Jean C.W. Smith of Philadelphia.

Wilson joined the Elks in 1952 and was elected as Grand Exalted Ruler in 1982, and re-elected in 1986. Mrs. Smith also joined in the 50's and became Grand Daughter Ruler in 1985.

Since 1938 the Elks have come a long way. Membership has not only risen to a staggering number, but it has managed to keep up with the times as well as remembering it's past.

"We're still growing because we are involved in the mainstream of society, stated Grand Exalted Ruler, The Honorable Donald P. Wilson.

"The Elks have a rich history as a service organization, one who is involved in the community and doesn't do a lot of flag waving about it. Generations of family members keep us going," said Wilson.

The reputation of 'painting the town' during their conventions precedes them, but many don't know what contributions the Elks have made.

Some of the organizations they have benefited include: The American Cancer Society, Lion's Eye Bank, Shoes to the needy, and a investment of thousands of dollars to financial strained black institutions of higher education, and to students (103 this year).

The Elks are active in the civil liberties arena. They hold annual meeting which comprise factions which include education, Chaplains & Shrine departments, fire and safety, and a veterans division.

In the days when Afro Americans were not allowed to participate in local community events, there were the Elk clubs to go to, and social gatherings were held in members homes.

Since that time, hundreds of thousands of members now show their numbers in their annual International Parade, Antlered Guard Military Ball, and Awards Banquets.

Another misconception of the Elks organization is that it only has silver haired members participating in activities, but youth is one of their largest growing segments.

Each year there is a national youth talent search, a popular beauty and talent contest, and a national oratorical contest to keep the blood pumping within the order.


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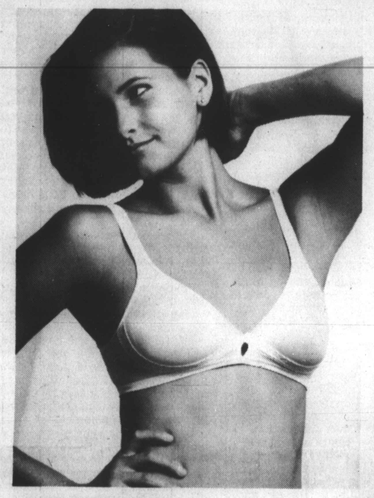

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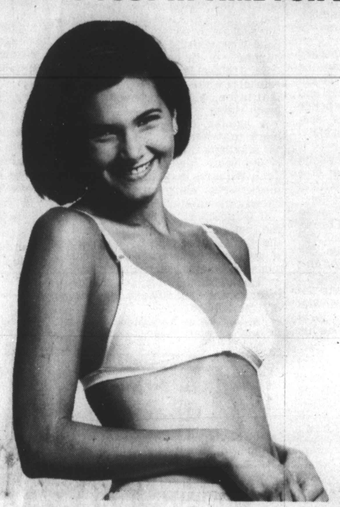

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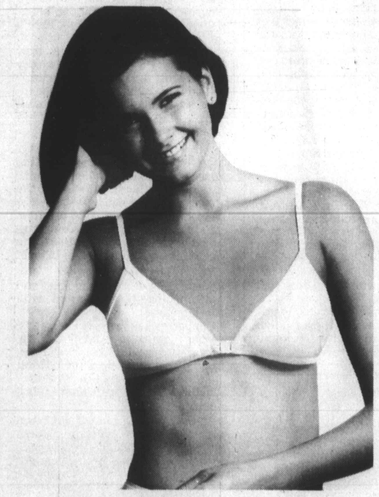

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Front closure soft cup bra features all-stretch fabric, shirred cups and adjustable straps. Available in white or beige. Sizes 32-36. Style #1028. Reg. $13

**SALE 9.98**
**WARNER'S® COTTON PLEASURES™ BRA**
Front closure soft cup bra of stretch cotton/nylon/Lycra® spandex with stretch lace insets. Shirred cups provide great shape and fit. In white. Sizes 32-36. Style #1044. Reg. $13

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**WARNER'S® BRIGHT STRIPES™ BRA**
Front closure soft cup bra features silky shadow stripe fabric, lace-trimmed shirred cups and adjustable stretch straps. White, beige, aqua or peach. Sizes 32-36. Style #1001. Reg. 12.50

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The Afro-American Section B

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Saturday, August 5, 1989

# Elks to hold 90th Annual Grand Lodge Convention in Baltimore

**The Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World will hold its 90th annual Grand Lodge Convention in the city of Baltimore, August 4 thru August 11, 1989.**

**The Elks expect to bring more than 25,000 delegates, family members, relatives and friends to Baltimore. This will be the Elks's First National Convention in Baltimore in 51 years, having last met here in 1938.**

**The Grand Exalted Ruler, The Honorable Donald P. Wilson, is a native of Baltimore, and is proud to have this 90th Annual Convention in his home town. The Grand Daughter Ruler is Mrs. Jean C. W. Smith of Philadelphia, PA.**

**Local Convention Chairman is Brother Elmer N. Handy of Baltimore, co-chairperson is Daughter Jean Rogers. The Host Lodges and Temples are: East Baltimore Lodge No. 1043, Monument Lodge No. 3, Pride of Baltimore Lodge No. 713, W. Sampson Brooks Lodge No. 981, Spirit of Chesapeake Lodge No. 1107, Greater Southern Temple No. 30, F.E.W Harper Temple No. 429, W. Sampson Brooks Temple No. 682, Zorah Elliot Temple No. 717 and Spirit of Chesapeake Temple No. 761.**

The initials I.B.P.O.E. of W. stands for Improved, Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World. Commonly known as "The Elks," the organization had a stormy beginning, and militant members have waged a continued struggle against the white Elks for 50 years.

American Elkdom had its rise, in 1867, from an organization known as "The Jolly Corks." The group formally changed the name of the organization to Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks when an account of the Elk in a natural history book said:

"Fleet of foot, timorous of doing wrong, avoiding all combat except in fighting for the female and in defense of the young and weak."

In 1890, the requirements of the organization were amended to read: "any white male citizen of the United States..." Yet, on the roster of charter members of the organization is listed: "William Sheppard, Negro minstrel."

* * *

Elkdom among black Americans was conceived by Arthur J. Riggs, who was a Pullman porter, and B. F. Howard, of Covington, KY, in 1897.

In the course of conversation, Riggs and Howard discovered that they both had the same idea - of starting a lodge of black Elks.

Riggs claimed that he could lay his hand on a copy of the rituals, which he did without revealing where he got it from.

Playing it safe, Riggs and Howard took the matter up with George H. Jackson, an attorney, concerning the possible infringement on the rights to the ritual of the lodge of white Elks.

Jackson immediately contacted the Register of Copyrights, and learned that the white Elks had failed to have the ritual copyrighted. Jackson filed a copyright in the name of Riggs for the ritual.

Soon after this, a rumor was persistently circulated describing the fact that Arthur J. Riggs had stolen an Elks Ritual from a traveling man on a Pullman car and had set up a black Elk Lodge in Cincinnati.

* * *

In describing this event, Riggs states: "Whoopee! How the whites did howl, threats of all kinds were made against the members of the black Elks Lodge.

"They assembled their artillery and attempted to march in, take our rituals and put the whole bunch in jail. We demanded to know what right they had to stop our lodge from existing.

"We also demanded that the exalted ruler of the white Elks show us his copyright for the ritual. He said they were here first, and that we had no right to use the B.P.O.E. ritual.

"I then produced my copyright and told them if I heard another word about the black Elk lodge, I'd put the whole lot of white Elks in jail for infringing on my copyright."

The war was on.

* * *

By 1906, more than 100 lodges of I.B.P.O.E. of W. were in existence. Incident after incident occurred where black Elks were hauled into court for wearing Elk insignia.

The state of New York passed a bill which prohibited black Elks from wearing the badge or pin. The Elks began a fight to take their cause to the Supreme Court.

This law, known as the Grattan Law, stayed on the statute books of New York until 1927.

* * *

No history of the Elks would be complete without mention of J. Finley Wilson, who was Grand Exalted Ruler for 30 years, until his death in 1952.

Known as "The Grand," he launched a program of expansion that saw an increase of 73 lodges in a single year. He drew no color lines, and included Chinese and Japanese in the order.

When he ran into a snag in setting up lodges, he went right to the source. In Tennessee, he took his case to the governor to get a charter approved to establish his order.

By 1923 there were 340 Elk lodges and the organization claimed more members than any other black fraternal group.

While many were critical of the "Grand's" methods of operation, his showmanship and flamboyance, it is generally agreed, that he is responsible for the widespread growth and influence of the order.

There have been only thirteen Grand Exalted Rulers since the inception of this powerful organization.

J. Finley Wilson holding the reigns for 32 years, from 1922 to 1953. Judge Hobson R. Reynolds Grand Exalted Ruler, Emeritus, was elected in 1960 and served until 1982.

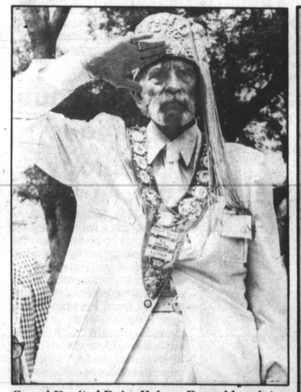
He caused the organization to present a new highly respected image because of its concern with housing, registering, voting and first class citizenship.

The present Grand Exalted Ruler, Donald P. Wilson, elected in August 1982 has many years of experience within the organization. He has accepted the challenge to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors.

The purpose of the organization is: "That the welfare and happiness of its members be promoted and enhanced, that nobleness of soul and goodness of heart be cultivated, that the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity be inculcated, that its members and families be assisted, and protected, that the spirit of patriotism be enlivened and exalted."

The Grand Temple was founded in 1902 by the late Dt. Emma V. Kelley and to date the entire organization boasts a membership of over 450,000 with Lodges and Temples in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, West Indies, Virgin Islands and Panama.

**Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter in executive session which was convened Oct. 2, 1940. None of the names were listed in this rare photo.**



**Grand Exalted Ruler Hobson Reynolds salutes during the 1977 Convention in Washington, D.C.**

**Always present is a bevy of beauties who bring happiness to the crowds.**

## Convention Guide

**Baltimore Convention Center**

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 4**
12:00 Noon Registration
5:30 p.m. Grand Temple Degrees
6:00 p.m. Tam & Pageant Rehearsal

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 5**
8:00 a.m. Registration
10:00 a.m. Official Joint Opening Grand Lodge & Grand Temple
1:00 p.m. Ritualistic Opening Grand Lodge Session
1:00 p.m. Grand Temple Opening Session
5:00 p.m. Antlered Guard Meeting
5:00 p.m. Past Grand Daughter Ruler Degrees
7:30 p.m. National Oratorical Contest
10:00 p.m. Open House: All Elk Homes
Exhibits: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 6**
8:00 a.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Chaplains & Shrine Department Joint Breakfast — Stouffer's Hotel
10:00 a.m. Joint Memorial Service
2:00 p.m. Education Department Meeting
2:30 p.m. Civil Liberties Department Meeting
3:00 p.m. Shrine Department Meeting
3:00 p.m. Grand Temple Deputies Meeting
3:00 p.m. Joint Collaring (Brothers & Daughters)
8:00 p.m. Health Department Program
9:30 p.m. Open House: All Elks Homes
Exhibits: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 7**
8:00 a.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Grand Temple Degrees
9:00 a.m. Grand Temple Session
9:00 a.m. Grand Temple Session
1:00 p.m. Joint Civil Liberties Luncheon
5:30 p.m. State President (Brothers)
5:30 p.m. Education Department Meeting
5:30 p.m. Fire & Safety Department Meeting
5:30 p.m. National Youth Program
5:00 p.m. Shrine Department Meeting
5:00 p.m. Veterans Department Meeting
5:30 p.m. National District Deputies Meeting (Brothers)
6:00 p.m. Tam & Pageant Rehearsal
7:30 p.m. Beauty & Talent Contest
11:00 p.m. Open House: All Elk Homes
Exhibits: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 8**
8:00 a.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Grand Senior Mother, Juveniles & Junior Department
10:00 a.m. International Parade Assembly
11:00 a.m. International Parade Move Out
2:00 p.m. Antlered Guard Drillarama
2:00 p.m. Past Grand Daughter Ruler Council Meeting
5:00 p.m. Past Grand Exalted Ruler Council Meeting
6:00 p.m. Tam & Pageant Rehearsal
6:00 p.m. Education Department Program
9:00 p.m. Antlered Guard Military Ball
Exhibits: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9**
6:00 a.m. Sunrise Services, Goodwill Department Grand Temple
7:00 a.m. Missionary Department
8:00 a.m. Registration
9:00 a.m. Grand Lodge Session
9:00 a.m. Grand Temple Session
10:00 a.m. Grand Temple Voting Polls Open
4:00 p.m. National Youth Department Meeting
6:00 p.m. International Achievements Awards Banquet (Honoring Victorine Adams)
10:00 p.m. Open House: All Elk Homes
Exhibits: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 a.m.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 10**
8:00 a.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Grand Temple Session
9:00 a.m. Grand Lodge Session
1:30 p.m. Joint Meeting Brothers & Daughters
4:00 p.m. Past Grand Daughters Rulers Council Election
6:00 p.m. Grand Temple Pageant
9:00 p.m. Grand Lodge Charity Ball
Exhibits: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 11.**
8:00 a.m. Registration
9:00 a.m. Grand Lodge Session
9:00 a.m. Grand Temple (Installation)
2:00 p.m. Grand Lodge Installation of Officers (Announcements and Adjournment)
Exhibits 8:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon

**Highlight of all Elk Conventions is the parade. Here, float with Grand Directress Alice L. Nichols enthralls the 1977 crown.**

**Uniformed guards are the flag bearers, carrying the colors.**