

Elombe Brath receives loving tribute, honors

By **HERB BOYD**
Special to the AmNews

It was one of those rare occasions where a warrior receives a tribute while he is still relatively young and can still enjoy smelling the roses. And the roses came in lavish bouquets of praises for Elombe Brath, who has spent a veritable lifetime standing up and "paying the price for his people." That is how the affair's moderator, Dr. James McIntosh, so eloquently put it.

More than 300 people assembled last Saturday afternoon at Beacon School in Queens to honor Brath. He and a few members of his large family were given a rousing reception when they arrived at the event, which was sponsored by CEMOTAP (Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People).

A celebratory tone was estab-

lished from the outset with Keisha and Carla Williams blending their husky but melodious voices in a fine a capella version of "Love Lift Us Where We Belong." And Brath's tribute stayed on a rarefied level as speaker after speaker found a different way to signal his importance and cite a portion of his magnificent resume of commitment.

When you got a problem, said Viola Plummer of the December 12th Movement, the word is "call Elombe." In her estimation, contacting Elombe was like calling a revolutionary 911. "He is as valuable to us as our life blood," Plummer said, "and we are never going to lose because he is on our side."

The venerable but always feisty Sonny Carson followed Plummer to the lectern and began his re-

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MR. ANC'S TRIBUTE — Elombe Brath (2nd from r) holds a plaque presented to him Saturday at a celebration at the Beacon School in Queens. Nearly 300 people attended to pay tribute to the man who first brought attention to the crises in South Africa back in the 1950s and 1960s. As head of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, Brath has developed informative programs at various sites in the city. From left are Betty Dopson, president and founder, Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People (CEMOTAP); Brath's wife, Nomsa, and Dr. James McIntosh, master of ceremonies.

(Brathwaite photo)

Brath

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marks as if he were there to roast his comrade. But on a more serious note, he defined Elombe as a paragon of excellence. "He is the very image of what Black men should be," Carson concluded, "and I am glad to be among his friends, and we are equally committed to freedom or death!"

Professor Tony Martin of Wellesley College in Massachusetts, who has been under fire for using the book *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* in his courses, took time out from

his battles to salute a man who had so often saluted him. "Elombe arranged my first trip to Africa," said Martin, a leading scholar of Marcus Garvey. "Through this trip I was able to meet the great Sekou Toure and later travel to Liberia. I am eternally grateful for this opportunity."

Martin also cited some of Elombe's other talents as an artist and writer, recalling the book *Color Us Colored* that Elombe and his brother, Kwame, published back in 1963. "I still use it in my classes."

The esteemed Gil Noble, like Carson, poked fun at his former colleague on his show "Like It Is" and then soberly recounted some

of his marvelous achievements. "Those weekly programs every Friday at Harriet Tubman School in Harlem," Noble observed, "are a wellspring of invaluable information, and are all the more important since there are so few conduits available to us." Noble said it was all right to honor Elombe, "but not by standing up here and praising him," he added. "Honor him by doing some work and getting involved in the Patrice Lumumba Organization."

Attorney Mike Warren, currently a counsel for one of the men accused of bombing the World Trade Center, compared Elombe to a "boll weevil" eroding away the

crust of lies in his dedication to the liberation of African people. "I've witnessed his astute analysis of legal issues," Warren noted, "and he is as prescient as any thinker on the scene when it comes to international affairs."

Father Lawrence Lucas asserted that Elombe, above all else, was a man of principle with a deep respect for the mind. "Elombe is one who never failed to share his storehouse of information with his sisters and brothers." And this was the theme at the heart of reporter Earl Caldwell's moving recollection. "Some of the things Elombe told me about years ago are now coming to pass," said

Caldwell effusively. "He is a superb teacher and from him I learned so much about Africa that I never knew."

Then it was time for the ordinary people to speak, and they poured out their hearts to a man they held in the deepest regard. Dr. Gerald Horne, Dr. Gerald Deas and Dr. Jack Felder were among other notables at the event. With the tribute a booming success, CEMOTAP is now gearing up for an offensive against hate radio. On October 11, Monday, at 12 noon, CEMOTAP will lead a demonstration at WABC Radio, 2 Penn Plaza (35th and seventh Avenue). Call (718) 528-3312 for information.

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