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Junior League of Baltimore Celebrates 50 Years of Singing in the Community

Baltimore, MD (April 12, 2007) The Larks is the longest running community project of the Junior League of Baltimore, celebrating 50 years and over 100 members since its inception. Currently the group is made up of 21 dedicated volunteers of the Junior League of Baltimore (JLB), who provide recreational and emotional support to the elderly, disabled and people in need through the "gift of song" by performing at area nursing homes, hospitals and day care centers during the year along with special Christmas concerts each December. Polly Behrens, a member of The Larks since 1987, remembers one holiday story: "One of the elderly residents at Alice Manor asked to sing to The Larks during a holiday performance. He beautifully sang his emotional rendition of "O, Holy Night!" We learned later that he communicates very little and this song was special treat for his fellow residents as well as the staff. His song put all the Larks in the holiday spirit! Music seems to touch the core of people, some of whom are quite ill or impaired. To see a person tapping their foot while in their wheelchair or singing an old favorite along with us is why we do this work."

This singing group rehearses or performs every Tuesday morning for 9 months of the year under the direction of professional music director, Leo Wanenchak, and is open to women in all singing sections with diverse musical backgrounds. Some members have musical training or have sung previously in high school or college or church, but many do not. Leo claims he can teach anyone to sing!

The Larks singing group was originally called "The Monotones" and was founded by a group of JLB women and led by Sally Murphy (Mrs. Clarke Murphy, Jr.) in 1957. Sally was a singer while she attended Connecticut College and gathered fellow JLB members to form a singing group, many of whom were Board members. Sally also played the guitar and bongo drums. The

group was renamed "The Larks" in 1962. The Larks and their children cut a kids record in 1986, "Warble 'N Whistle," under the direction of Jean McHale. It is now in CD form.

The Junior League of Baltimore will celebrate the Larks' 50th anniversary on Sunday, April 29, 2007 from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The celebration will be held at the Ruxton home of Larks volunteer, Polly Behrens. Ticket cost is \$50.00 and includes cocktails, buffet, celebration and singing, of course! For tickets, please contact the Junior League of Baltimore at 410-435-5521.

ABOUT THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF BALTIMORE

Founded in 1912, the Junior League of Baltimore is committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. The Junior League of Baltimore is a volunteer organization of 350 women interested in making an impact in their community. We are part of the Association of Junior Leagues International, which is made up of 294 Junior Leagues in four countries. For more information, visit our website at www.jlbalt.org.

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