

# Celebrating BLACK HISTORY

February is a time to recognize and pay tribute to all the contributions people of color have made to society.

It's Black History Month, but history isn't black or white and it

isn't just confined to one month out of the year. History is constant, it's being made every moment of every day; and we are all a part of it. Black history is American history.

Without Black inventors from our past, we wouldn't have many

of the conveniences we enjoy today like blood banks, gas masks, pacemakers, three light traffic lights, refrigerated trucks, golf tees, clothes dryers, potato chips, peanut butter and more.

Great minds and people come in all colors, shapes and sizes.

The pursuit of equality, allowed these great minds access to the critical tools needed to advance America in technology, in the space race and into modern day.

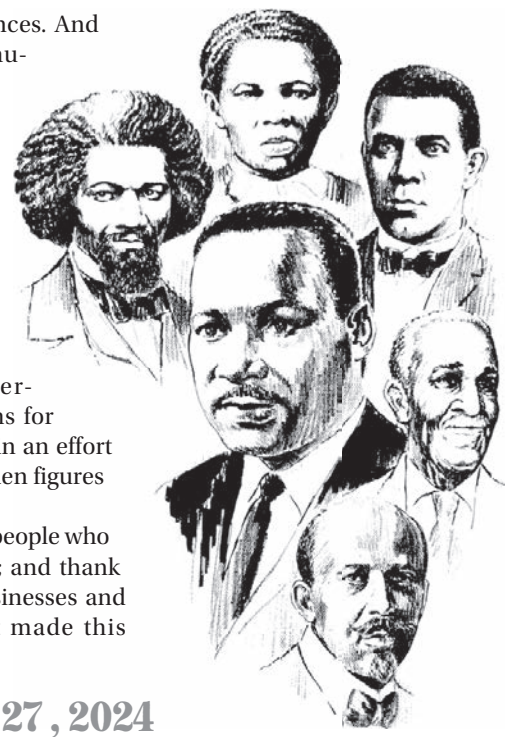
There are several movies and documentaries available that convey the stories of "hidden figures" from history. However, Black history is more than a list of achievements.

It's a reminder of our past and hope for the future. It's understanding that in our shared humanity we find more simi-

larities than differences. And in our small communities, we rely on each other. Our friends, neighbors, classmates and people that smile at the grocery store are all daily reminders that life is better in full color.

The Banner interviewed local citizens for this special edition in an effort to highlight the hidden figures in our area.

Thank you to the people who shared their stories; and thank you to the local businesses and organizations that made this edition possible.



SPECIAL EDITION TO THE MCKENZIE BANNER • TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024



Left, In 2019, retired teacher Geneva Bledsoe with former students who were then MMS staff and faculty members. Pictured are (L to R) Front Row: Principal Dorethea Royle, teacher Paul Carroll, Bledsoe and teacher Mistee Cooper. Back Row: School nurse Vera Shipp, teacher Bess Toombs, school secretary Karen Moore, teacher Gretchen Boucher, guidance counselor Lori Robertson and teacher Rebecca Jones. Above, Geneva Bledsoe's photo when she was a teacher at McKenzie Elementary School along with a recent photo.

## Geneva Bledsoe Celebrates 100th Birthday

McKENZIE — Geneva Bledsoe had the best career and many precious memories of the many students she taught.

She now moves slower but still enjoys a car ride with her daughter, Jennifer, who moved back home to live with her mom and is helping her celebrate 100 years of life. The official birthday was Tuesday, February 20, but the celebration continued as cards, e-mails, and flowers continued to arrive in celebration of Mrs. Bledsoe. The goal was 100 cards for her 100th birthday. Jennifer said the cards, letters, texts, and flowers keep coming.

Geneva Bledsoe grew up in Haywood County as one of 13 children. Each child worked around the house or in the fields of the farm, where they worked as a sharecropping family; the young children went to a one-room school with

grades 1-8 near Brownsville. The five girls had room and board near the school, but the eight boys had to walk five miles to and from the school. The boys had chores around the farm. While the walk was long, the boys were timely for their school arrival.

Jennifer Bledsoe was thrilled to tell her mother's story of challenges and triumph and the influence her mother had on so many children.

Jennifer enjoys driving her mom around and meeting people. When she is out driving, people ask her about her mother. She enjoys telling them, "Ask her; she is sitting right here."

Geneva graduated high school and then attended Lane College in Jackson. After just one year of college, Geneva started teaching and returned to Lane to finish her college education. She taught at a little school known as Prospect, beginning in 1946.

It was Lane where she

met her future husband, L.C. Bledsoe, who was also pursuing a career in education.

He graduated Lane in 1950, and she graduated in 1951.

Webb School, a Rosenwald school for African Americans located in McKenzie, was the alma mater of L.C. After the two married, Geneva taught Special Education at Webb School until 1966, when Webb closed and the African American students all transferred to other public schools in McKenzie, Huntingdon, Trezevant, Atwood, Clarksburg and Hollow Rock-Bruceton.

He later became the principal at Trezevant High School. The couple had two children, Jennifer and her older sister, Melba Tucker. L.C. died in 1985.

Mrs. Bledsoe transitioned to McKenzie Elementary School, where she taught fourth grade English. In the summers, she taught at Head Start in McKen-

zie and art throughout the county. Her first class of fourth graders was the 1975 graduating class.

She taught at McKenzie until 1992 when she retired. Her work continued at her local CME church and around her house.

Jennifer said her mother loved teaching and certainly loved her students. Each time a student gave her a gift, she kept a written record of the student and the gift. And, through the years, she has enjoyed seeing her students and chatting with them.

She was honored by her fellow retired teachers in 2019 and again at McKenzie Middle School in 2020, close to her 96th birthday. On that day at MMS, the students showed their appreciation to Mrs. Bledsoe and to Odell Pate, the oldest living black WWII veteran, who also attended the event.

One of Bledsoe's elementary students at MES was Dorethea Royle, principal



Geneva Bledsoe celebrated her 100th birthday on Tuesday, February 20. She is sporting a hoodie bearing the name of her college alma mater, Lane.

at McKenzie Middle School. During the 2019 event at MMS, Bledsoe was joined by her students, who were teachers or staffers at MMS at that time. Those were (as pictured above) Principal Dorethea Royle, teachers Paul Carroll, Bledsoe and Mistee Cooper, school nurse Vera Shipp, teacher Bess Toombs, school secre-

tary Karen Moore, teacher Gretchen Boucher, guidance counselor Lori Robertson and teacher Rebecca Jones. The group presented a bouquet of roses to Mrs. Bledsoe.

A celebration of her birthday and her accomplishments was held at her church on Sunday, February 25.

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

— Booker T. Washington

from City of  
McKENZIE



Celebrating  
BLACK HISTORY MONTH



# Cheryl Oglesby-Townes

**O**n February 21, 2024, Cheryl Oglesby-Townes walked up the sidewalk to McKenzie High School, not as a student as she did some 30 years ago, but as an honorary speaker for a program held at the school to commemorate Black History Month.

"It's not just black history. It's our history," said Oglesby-Townes. History in Carroll County for the Oglesby family runs deep. During the program, Oglesby-Townes said it was an honor to recognize names of notable local citizens who lived during the early history of the civil rights movement in Carroll County.

"I realized that a lot of the names were members of my family," she said.

For just over a year now, Cheryl Oglesby-Townes has served as the first black female director of the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council. It is to her family's legacy in the church that she attributes the foundation that led to her career and life successes.

"My grandfather, Willie Eugene Oglesby was a minister, my great uncle James Stewart and aunt Sharon Oglesby were both ministers," Oglesby-Townes said. "I didn't get here on my own; it is His grace."

Oglesby-Townes graduated from McKenzie High School as

an honor student. At the time, she said she didn't know what she wanted to do, but knew she didn't want to go to a four-year university. She wanted to go to business school, and she did, earning an administrative assistant degree from West Tennessee Business College.

Despite her previous reservations, she followed up her two year degree with a bachelor's in management and organizational development from Bethel University.

"A quiet woman with a beautiful spirit," said Oglesby-Townes, "introduced me to the Head Start program." That quiet woman was Lorice Hillsman, and that program would become her life-long career.

Oglesby-Townes has served for nearly 32 years in the Head Start program, occupying positions as human resources coordinator, executive secretary, and Title VI program coordinator.

On being named the agency's executive director, Oglesby-Townes said, "I never thought it would happen for me, it never occurred to me." The agency had a vacancy for that job though, and she had already been asked to fill in temporarily as the interim director of Head Start by the outgoing council director, Don Ridgeway.

"If he felt confident in my ability to lead Head Start, I thought, why not apply for it," Oglesby-Townes said.

Cheryl's first supervisor at Head Start was a man named Eric Dupree, who would go on to be-



come the first African American to serve as the council's executive director.

"He was always supportive, encouraging, and he led me on the path to understanding the agency and how to get into it," Oglesby-Townes said.

Oglesby-Townes is proud of the work they do under the council. "We serve the disadvantaged population, supporting kids and encouraging with a positive in-

fluence," she said. "Be good to people and treat them like you want to be treated."

Oglesby-Townes said she is grateful for her career opportunities, and most of all for her family. Cheryl Oglesby was a single mother of one daughter before she became Cheryl Oglesby-Townes in 2008. She married Jessie Townes, also a hometown resident of McKenzie, currently serving as vice mayor for the City

of McKenzie. Together, Cheryl and Jessie formed a family, with children Breonna, Jessie, Jr. and Samantha, along with six grandchildren.

Cheryl's mother, Dorothy was also a strong influence for her, as she too raised three children as a single parent, including Cheryl, her brother, Julius, and her sister, Shawna. "I don't recall ever going without," Oglesby-Townes said.

Cheryl recalls working since high school in summer programs where she worked for places like the Park Theatre, in a daycare and at Walmart. "I worked a part-time job with a full-time job," she said.

This February, Oglesby-Townes not only celebrates Black History Month, she celebrates the 51st anniversary of the founding of Head Start and of the Community Action Network. These programs fall under the umbrella of the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council over which she presides.

Oglesby-Townes said that the connection of that organization's anniversary and returning to McKenzie High School to speak at a presentation is symbolic of what Black History Month means to her.

"It was an honor for me to return to my alma mater," she said.

Looking forward, Oglesby-Townes has no plans to leave the community nor the council which she has dedicated much of her life's work to.

Oglesby-Townes said, "I love what I do, and I look forward to retirement."

## FIRST BLACK FEMALE CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER

# Shirley Chisholm

(November 30, 1924 - January 1, 2005)

**S**hirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm was born in Brooklyn, New York to immigrant parents who came to the United States from Barbados. Chisholm graduated from Brooklyn College and the Teachers College at Columbia University. In 1968, she became the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress and represented New York's 12th congressional district for seven

terms from 1969 to 1983. Early on in her Congressional term, Chisholm was first assigned to the House Agriculture Committee. She soon found more relevant committee assignments that would better serve her constituents, where she worked to expand the food stamp program and help to create the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Legislation she introduced also focused on gender and racial equality,

and ending the Vietnam War. In 1971, she became a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).

In the 1972 United States presidential election, she became the first Black candidate to seek a major party's nomination for President of the United States, and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. After the unsuccessful bid for President, Chisholm continued serving in the House of Representatives. In 1977, she was elected as Secretary of the House Democratic Caucus. Chisholm retired from Congress in 1983, where she was succeeded by Major Owens. In 2015, Chisholm was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Source: The National Archives

*History is not just black or white, it is in full color, vibrant and being made every day. The people featured in this edition are proof that anything is possible with determination and hard work. We salute you.*

— The Banner

## Color a Masterpiece

*Dorothy Vaughan*

Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> 1910 - Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> 2008

Dorothy Johnson Vaughan was an American mathematician who worked for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and NASA. She was the first African-American woman to supervise a group of staff at the West Area Computers center, and prepared for the introduction of machine computers by teaching herself and her staff the programming language Fortran. She was recognized in the book and feature film "Hidden Figures" alongside fellow mathematicians Katherine Johnson and Mary Jackson.

Posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal

Worked on the Scout Launch Vehicle program

I CHANGED WHAT I COULD, AND WHAT I COULDN'T, I ENDURED

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**Allegion celebrates Black History Month and recognizes the hard work and dedication of all African Americans past and present.**

*Do the right thing and serve others, not yourself are two of our core values at Allegion and have never been more important. It's our aim to act honorably and responsibly in everything we do, and we hold our employees at all levels to the highest standards. Diversity and inclusion are important. At Allegion, I expect that all people be treated with dignity and respect – no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status or any other personal characteristic. From CEO Dave Petritis.*

*"Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness." -Ola Joseph*

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**"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."**

— Desmond Tutu

**Rotary Club of McKenzie**

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A327

# Ricky Price

## 50 Years with Pepsi

In 1974, Ricky Price was a senior at McKenzie High School. While many of his fellow graduates visited area colleges on their 'career day,' Price chose instead to visit Pepsi, based in Martin at the time. In 2024, Price celebrates 50 years at the family-owned Pepsi MidAmerica and as a graduate of McKenzie High School.

Price is slowing his workload with Pepsi, reaching the pinnacle of the company as vice president and Division General Manager of Western Kentucky and Tennessee. Price is a well-respected team member, who started as a route driver and advanced through the ranks. But today, Price will still perform any job necessary to accomplish the goal of excellent customer service.

Price is such an honored associate, the Marion Illinois-based company named the Pepsi distribution center in Paris in honor of Price. The dedication ceremony of the naming of the building was accompanied with a proclamation of Henry County Mayor Brent Greer naming the 2016 event as Ricky Price Day in Henry County.

Price is very humble in his approach to job titles. He says its all about customer service. That's what he instills in the approximately 165 employees, serving in

27 counties, who work with him. And Price thanks Harry Crisp, Jr., age 88, for providing a great opportunity and career for Price.

While in high school, Price said he worked at City Market, a small grocery on Waldran Street owned by H.B. "Swat" Scarbrough, who was also the mayor of McKenzie. He worked with co-workers Dan Bradfield, Harry Anderson, Ed Williams, Jerry Stafford, and Tommy Gwaltney at the little store.

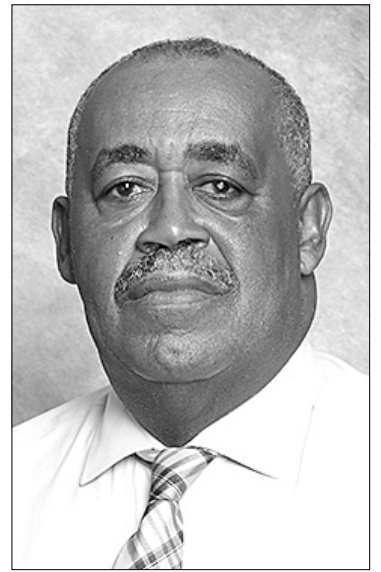
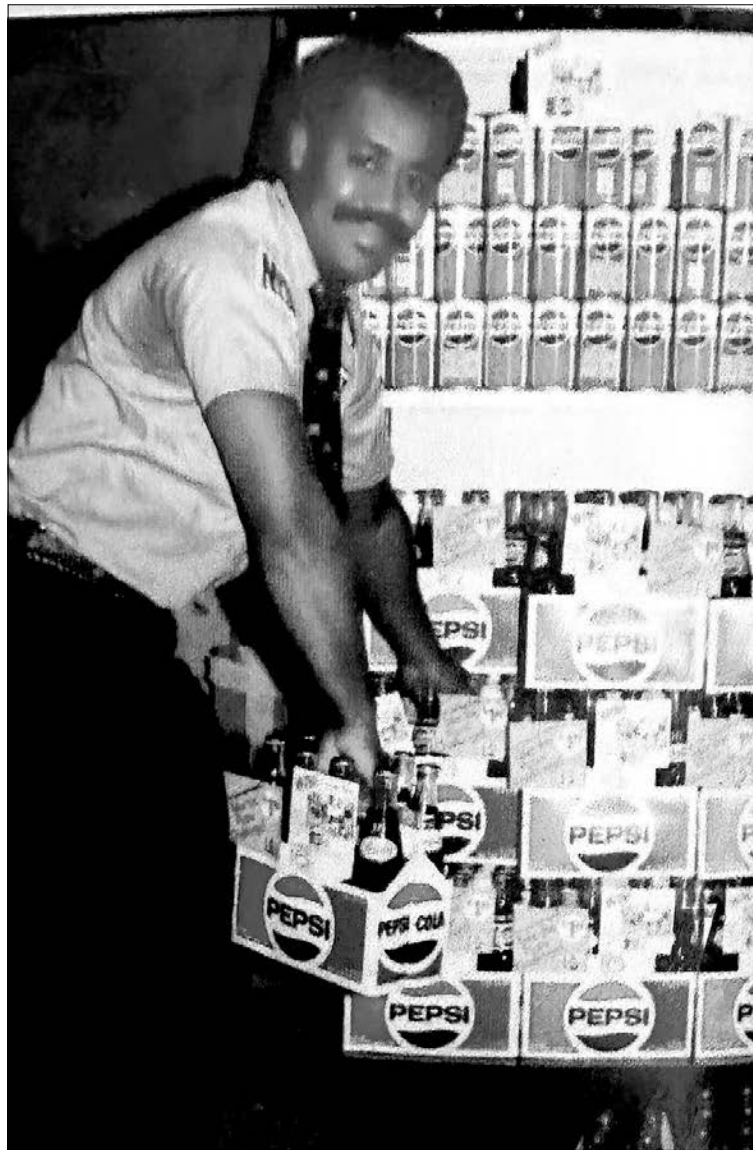
"Swat taught us to treat everyone the same and appreciate their business," said Price.

He also worked part-time as a helper on a local Pepsi delivery route when he was 16 years old.

His work with Pepsi was based at the Martin, Tennessee Pepsi location. He drove the truck and served customers, mainly in Huntingdon in the years 1974-1989. Many of the products were still in glass bottles in the early days and required Price to deliver new product and gather the empty glass bottles for return to the bottling company.

Price is featured in the company's history book, that tells of the story of the Crisp family and their Pepsi bottling and distribution centers.

In the Pepsi MidAmerica history book, it relates that Price was a respected employee and was one of the first African-American route salesman in a mostly white



Left, a photo from the Pepsi MidAmerica history book with the caption, "Route salesman Ricky Price." Above, present day.

"I enjoy people," said Price. He now calls his job "a hobby."

Price serves as vice-chairman of the McKenzie Industrial Board, and serves on the McKenzie Housing Authority Board, and was one of the founder of the new McKenzie High School Alumni Association, and serves in the Rotary Club of McKenzie.

His wife, Donna plans to retire soon from her healthcare job in Union City, said Price. He has one son, Ricky Price, Jr., who served in the military and now works in state corrections. He has one granddaughter, Autumn Price, who teaches school at Henry.

Price has three sisters and one (late) brother.

customers.

Nonreturnable packaging became a bigger part of the portfolio of Marion Pepsi in the 1970s. Customers liked the convenience of cans and 32-ounce and 64-ounce Pepsi bottles.

Regardless of his title and his hierarchy in the company, Price often is developing new customers, providing vinyl banners for non-profits or schools to advertise their events, or giving free product to a fund-raiser.

# Willie Huffman

## Hard Work is the Key to Success

Burlap bags may not be at the top of most children's Christmas list for shiny new toys, but these "grass sacks" provided fun play for young Willie Huffman, who rode along as his mother dragged him across a field on the bag she filled with cotton, picked by hand. As Huffman grew a little older, he would also find himself picking cotton from the fields, in addition to mowing lawns and hauling hay at only 12 years old.

"Young people need to work," Huffman said. "It will help them decide what they want to do, or don't want to do."

Huffman worked outside of school through most of his early education. He began the first grade in an all-black school before integration at Henry Elementary School, and was a graduate of Henry County High School.

"I loved it. I don't know if it was because it was a small school, but I had no issues, in terms of race in the transition," said Huffman, who lived with his parents, right across the street from the school. Huffman's parents

were born during the Great Depression, when there was little choice in the type of work they would be able to do, and they encouraged him to excel.

As the only person in his immediate family to go to college, Huffman attended Bethel College in McKenzie, now Bethel University, graduating with a B.S. in Business Administration, and eventually earning a masters degree at Austin Peay State University, never underestimating the value of the work he had to put in to get there.

Decades later, Huffman is getting ready to retire as the President for the McKenzie and Paris campuses of Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT).

While hard work is his first mantra for success, Huffman does not underestimate the value of the people who helped him succeed in his career.

"You are in an interview every day of your life, and you never know who is watching or who they might be connected with," Huffman said, fondly remembering a businessman by the nickname of "Scooter" who took notice of Huffman early on, encouraging him to go to college and even

giving him some books to prepare and a job while he worked his way through school.

There weren't any available jobs right after graduation from Bethel, so Huffman took a factory production job working for Atlantic Homes in his hometown of Henry, Tennessee, where he worked for the next 5 years. Again, it was a connection he made while attending Bethel College as a student that got him his first career position as a recruiter for Bethel.

"You can't do it on your own, no matter how smart or talented you are. It takes a lot of people's help," said Huffman.

After a little over two years as a student recruiter for Bethel College, Huffman went to work at TCAT, working in several positions between the Paris and McKenzie campuses, from Financial Aid to Student Services Coordinator, and later Vice President of the Paris campus.

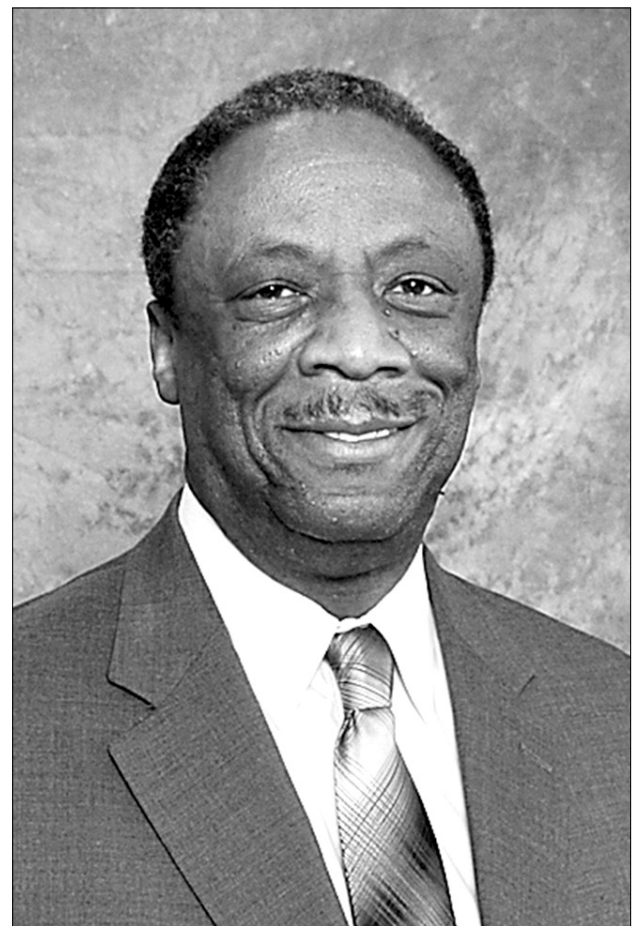
Working in education was never a goal for Huffman, but he enjoyed working with the students and found opportunities to make a difference there. Huffman explained that when he was growing up, the four year

university path was the only one presented to him that would allow him to excel in a career.

"In the black community, the push was to go to a traditional college," he said. "The mindset back then was, technical schools, or vocational schools, were only considered if you weren't capable of attending a four year university." Today, Huffman explained, there has been a transition in that perspective based on a shortage of skilled trade employees in the workforce.

"I wish more minority kids would get interested and be more informed about the opportunities available with a technical education," Huffman said. "Plumbers, electricians, and welders are all needed, and are good paying careers. There are more options [for students] than ever."

Looking back on his career, Huffman acknowledges that he was the first in many categories. He was the first one in his family to graduate from college, the first black president at TCAT, and the first black county commissioner in Carroll County. Additionally, he has served on the board of directors for both the Carroll County and



Henry County Chambers of Commerce. Huffman is also a graduate of WestStar Leadership and a former McKenzie City Councilman.

However, he said he really doesn't want recognition for his firsts or his career accolades.

Huffman said he wants future generations to understand, "He is proof that it is possible, if you work hard."

Regarding his career accomplishments, Huffman said, "I like to think that I obtained these career posi-

tions based on my values, the way I carried myself and what I represent that people relate to."

His best advice to students today is, "Don't be on the defense. Present yourself positively and hopefully people will be willing to judge your character rather than your looks," and that "Nothing is given, you must earn it."

Huffman is married to Gloria. They have two grown children, Bryan and Heather, and two grandchildren.

During Black History Month,  
We recognize the myriad contributions and achievements of African Americans past and present whose hard work, vision and talent have made our country and the world a better place.

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Far left, Wilma Rudolph was the first female to win three Olympic gold medals. Photo Courtesy Associate Press Left, Tennessee State University track coach, Ed Temple, center, had six Tigerbelles, Wilma Rudolph, left, Isabelle Daniels, Willie B. White, Lucinda Williams, Mae Faggs, and Margaret Matthews, compete in the 1956 Olympic Games. Photo Courtesy Jack Corn/The Tennessean. Below, Wilma Rudolph (right) winning her semifinal of the women's 200-metre race at the Summer Olympic Games in Rome, September 5, 1960. Photo Courtesy Associate Press

**THE MCKENZIE BANNER**  
**Weekly 150**  
 E: jmartin@mckenziebanner.com By Jason R. Martin  
 Celebrating McKenzie's oldest business and historical record

# Wilma Rudolph

## The Black Gazelle

**W**ilma Glo-dean Rudolph was one of the most impressive athletes to call Tennessee home. She was born to Eddie Boyd Rudolph (1887-1961) and Blanche Pettus Rudolph (1909-1994) on June 23, 1940, in the Saint Bethlehem community just outside of Clarksville. Wilma was the twentieth of 22 children from her father Ed Rudolph's two marriages. Her father, Ed, worked as a railway porter and did odd jobs in Clarksville until his death, and her mother, Blanche, worked as a maid in Clarksville homes.

Born premature, Wilma's weight was 4.5 pounds. She was a sickly child, spending much of her early years in bed. Some of her ailments included double pneumonia, scarlet fever and polio. At five years old, she contracted infantile paralysis through the poliovirus. She recovered from polio but lost strength in her left leg and foot.

The repercussions of the virus forced Wilma to

wear a leg brace until she was twelve years old. With little medical care available to African Americans in Clarksville in the 1940s, Rudolph's parents sought treatment for her at the historically black Meharry Medical College in Nashville. For two years, Wilma and Blanche made weekly trips to Nashville for treatments to regain the use of her weakened leg.

As part of her therapy, she received at-home massages four times a day from her brothers and sisters. She wore an orthopedic shoe for support of her foot for another two years. Despite further attacks of whooping cough, measles and chickenpox, Wilma was out of her leg braces by age 9.

Initially homeschooled, she began attending second grade at Cobb Elementary School in Clarksville in 1947, when she was seven years old. She attended Clarksville's all-black Burt High School, where she excelled in basketball and track. In her sophomore year, Rudolph scored 803 points, setting a record for high school girls' basketball.

Rudolph had already gained some track experience on Burt High School's track team. She was spotted by Ed Temple, Tennessee State's track and field coach, who invited the fourteen-year-old Rudolph to join his summer training program at Tennessee State University (TSU). After attending the track camp, Rudolph won all nine events she entered at an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) track meet in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Under Temple's guidance, she continued to train regularly at TSU while still a high school student. Wilma raced at amateur athletic events with TSU's women's track team for two more years before enrolling at TSU as a student in 1958.

When Rudolph was sixteen and a junior in high school, she attended the 1956 U.S. Olympic track and field team trials in Seattle, Washington, and qualified to compete in the 200-meter individual event at the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. She was the youngest member of the U.S. Olympic team and was one of five TSU runners to qualify for the 1956 Olympics.

Rudolph was defeated in a preliminary heat of the 200-meter race but ran the third leg of the 4 x 100 m relay. The American team consisted of Wilma Rudolph, Isabelle Daniels, Mae Faggs and Margaret Matthews, all of whom were from TSU. They won the bronze medal, matching the world-record time of 44.9 seconds.



During her senior year of high school, Rudolph became pregnant with her first child, Yolanda, who was born in 1958, a few weeks before her enrollment at Tennessee State University. In 1959, at the Pan American Games in Chicago, Illinois, Rudolph won a silver medal in the 100-meter individual event, as well as a gold medal in the 4 x 100-meter relay. She also won the AAU 200-meter title in 1959 and defended it for four consecutive years.

In 1960, Wilma qualified for the summer Olympics and set her mind to winning gold medals. She won three gold medals and broke three world records. After tying a world record with her time of 11.3 seconds in the 100-meter semifinals, she won the event with her wind-aided mark of 11.0 seconds in the final. Similarly, Rudolph broke the Olympic record in the 200-meter dash (23.2 seconds) in the heats before claiming another gold medal with her time of 24.0 seconds. She was also part of the U.S. team that established the world record in the 400-meter relay (44.4 seconds) before going on to win gold with a time of 44.5 seconds.

She became the first American woman to win three gold medals in track and field at the same Olympic game. Her performance also earned her the title of "the fastest woman in the world." Her performance in Rome cemented her as one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century.

Wilma returned home to Clarksville after completing a post-games European tour. Returning home an Olympic champion Rudolph refused to attend her homecoming parade if it was not integrated. She

won the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year award in 1961. The following year, Rudolph retired from track and field.

As Wilma explained it, she retired at the peak of her athletic career because she wanted to leave the sport while still at her best. She went on to finish her degree at Tennessee State University and began working in education. In 1961 Rudolph married William War; they divorced two years later in 1963. Later that year, she married Robert Eldridge, the father of Yolanda. Wilma and Eldridge had four children together; Yolanda (1958), Djuanna (1964), Robert Jr., (1965) and Xurry (1971). They divorced after seventeen years of marriage.

Along with teaching, she continued her involvement in sports, working at several community centers throughout the United States. She was inducted into the US Olympic Hall of Fame and started an organization to help amateur track and field stars. In 1990, Rudolph became the first woman to receive the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Silver Anniversary Award.

In 1981, she established and led the Wilma Rudolph Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Indianapolis, Indiana, that trains youth athletes. In 1987, she was named director of the women's track program at DePauw University and served as a consultant on minority affairs to the university's president. In 1992, Wilma became a vice president at Nashville's Baptist Hospital.

In July 1994, Rudolph was diagnosed with brain and throat cancer. Her health rapidly declined. On November 12, 1994, she died at the age of fifty-four, at

her home in Brentwood, Tennessee.

Following her death, her life and legacy continued to be honored. In 1994, a portion of U.S. Route 79 was named Wilma Rudolph Boulevard. A year later, the Wilma Rudolph Memorial Commission placed a black marble marker at her grave site in Edgefield Missionary Baptist Church. In April 1996, a life-size bronze statue of Rudolph was erected "at the southern end of the Cumberland River Walk at the base of the Pedestrian Overpass" at College Street and Riverside Drive in Clarksville.

On August 11, 1995, Tennessee State University dedicated a new, six-story dormitory as the Wilma G. Rudolph Residence Center. The building houses upper-class and graduate women. In 1997, Governor Don Sundquist proclaimed that June 23 be known as "Wilma Rudolph Day" in Tennessee. The December 29, 1999, issue of Sports Illustrated ranked Rudolph first on its list of the top fifty greatest sports figures of the twentieth century from Tennessee.

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*Jason R. Martin*  
**Jason R. Martin**  
 B.S. • M.A.Ed • M.L.S.  
 Carroll County Commissioner  
 Former McKenzie Councilman  
 President McKenzie Rotary Club  
 WestStar Class of 2019  
 E: jmartin@mckenziebanner.com  
 P: 731.352.3323 f@

*Jason Martin is a life-long resident of McKenzie. He graduated from McKenzie High School in 2000; earned a Bachelor of Science in History from Bethel College in 2004; a Masters in Education from Bethel University in 2009 and a Masters in History and Humanities from Fort Hays State University in 2011.*

**Celebrating**  
 the achievements of yesterday's African American leaders, athletes, entertainers, writers, artists and intellectuals. It's also a time to focus on the achievements of today's great African Americans.

**Thank You!**

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—Dr. Mae Jemison  
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BETHEL UNIVERSITY'S

# MICHAEL JASPER

Champions Representation in Leadership Roles in Football, Beyond

BY DR. JOSH GREER [banner@mckenziebanner.com](mailto:banner@mckenziebanner.com)

In an exclusive interview with Coach Michael Jasper, Bethel University's head football coach, I gained invaluable insight into his journey and the profound significance of representation in leadership roles within the football industry. Coach Jasper shared his experiences, challenges, and vision for a more inclusive future.

Jasper started playing football at four years old, laying the foundation for a remarkable journey that surpassed the typical trajectory. His tenure in the sport extended far beyond the norm, culminating in a groundbreaking moment when he was drafted into the prestigious National Football League (NFL) by the Buffalo Bills in the spring of 2011. This pivotal juncture marked a personal triumph as Jasper also made history as the first-ever Bethel Wildcat drafted by the NFL.

Following the conclusion of his playing career, Jasper's enduring love for the sport naturally steered him toward coaching. As an assistant coach for Bethel from 2016 to 2018, Jasper honed his coaching acumen, eagerly awaiting the chance to serve as head coach. In an unexpected turn of events, the opportunity came in 2019.

Reflecting on his journey, Coach Jasper acknowledged his challenges as an African American in football coaching. He emphasized the crucial role of representation in leadership, highlighting its pivotal contribution to societal progress.

I asked Coach Jasper if he could share his journey and experiences as a head football coach and how it has shaped his perspective on the importance of representation in leadership roles.

"My journey has been an incredibly blessed one. Not many get the opportunity that I have, and I am grateful; that being said, it is dif-



ficult in this field, especially for an African American. I think representation in leadership is extremely important to push us all, as a society".

Jasper firmly believes that his presence as a black leader in football is a source of inspiration for aspiring African American athletes, instilling a sense of visibility and belief in achieving success. As a mentor, he aims to be an accessible example for aspiring coaches, regardless of race, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and mentorship in shaping future leaders.

Emphasizing the importance of diversity in coaching staffs, Coach Jasper

underlined its role in team success. He stressed the significance of recruiting and retaining individuals from various backgrounds to foster a culture of trust and unity within the team, ultimately contributing to individual and collective growth.

Beyond the football field, Coach Jasper highlighted the broader significance of representation in leadership roles across industries. He advocated for African Americans to have a voice and influence in diverse sectors, challenging stereotypes, and prejudices through positive representation.

Jasper's coaching philosophy is rooted in creating

an environment conducive to success, prioritizing his players' and coaches' growth and development. His initiatives, such as "Manhood Mondays" and "High Five Fridays," transcend the football field, instilling values that empower his players in life beyond the game. He prepares his players to be leaders on the field and in the community.

Coach Jasper's unwavering commitment to fostering diversity, inclusion, mentorship, and holistic development has earned him prestigious accolades, including the 2023 Mid-South Conference Male Coach for Significance award. This esteemed recognition cele-

brates coaches who exemplify outstanding teaching, serve as exemplary role models, and exhibit dynamic leadership qualities.

Jasper's enduring legacy was solidified with his induction into the 2023 Class of the Bethel Athletics Hall of Fame, a testament to his lasting influence and impact on the Bethel community. Despite his numerous achievements, Coach Jasper remains dedicated to personal and professional growth, exemplifying an unwavering commitment to excellence and inclusivity that continues to inspire and uplift both within the football industry and beyond.

## GET TO KNOW

### 7 Influential Black Americans

The number of Black Americans who have made contributions to the country and the world are innumerable. Here is just a brief cross-section of some of the trailblazing individuals worthy of recognition.

#### RICHARD ALLEN

Allen was a minister, educator and writer based in Philadelphia. Allen founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which was the first independent Black denomination in the U.S. Allen was born into slavery, but bought his freedom in the 1780s. Because of restrictions dictating where Blacks could sit at church, Allen left to form his own.

#### BAYARD RUSTIN

Although Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is often credited with the 1963 March on Washington, it actually was Rustin who organized and strategized the event. Rustin had controversial ties to Communism and was a gay man, so he wasn't always publicly on the front lines of the Civil Rights movement. Nonetheless, his brilliant mind and innovative ideas helped serve his community.

#### MEDGAR EVERS

Many people tirelessly contributed to the Civil Rights movement, and Evers is one of them. Evers was a World War II veteran and later a civil rights leader in Mississippi. He became the NAACP's first field officer in that state and helped lead protests against segregation at schools, public parks and more.

#### DOROTHY HEIGHT

Height is known as the "godmother of the women's movement." She used her experience in social work and education to advance women's rights, becoming a strong leader in the Young Women's Christian Association and the president of the National Council of Negro Women.

#### ARTHUR ASHE

Ashe was the first Black player selected to the United States Davis Cup tennis team and the only Black man ever to win the singles title at Wimbledon, the U.S. Open and the Australian Open. Ashe suffered a heart attack during a tennis clinic, so he became a spokesperson for hereditary heart

disease. Later, when he contracted HIV from a blood transfusion used during a heart surgery, he founded the Arthur Ashe Foundation for the Defeat of AIDS. Ashe was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton.

#### KOBE BRYANT

The basketball world mourned in 2020 when Bryant and his daughter, Gigi, tragically perished in a helicopter crash. An NBA star who won five championships and a member of the gold-winning U.S. men's Olympic basketball teams in 2008 and 2012, Bryant also was an advocate for the homeless. His Kobe and Vanessa Bryant Family Foundation sought to reduce the homeless population in Los Angeles.

#### MAE JEMISON

Jemison holds the honor of being the first Black woman to orbit space. She was on the shuttle Endeavour, and also is a physician and teacher. After leaving NASA, Jemison founded the Jemison Group, which develops technological advancements.

(January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968)

## His Legacy Still Lives On

### DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, GA on January 15th, 1929. He was one of the most important and influential Civil Rights leaders in the 1950s and 1960s. The cornerstones of his activism were based on non-violence and civil disobedience, both of which were inspired by his Christian faith and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

He rose to prominence as a leader in 1955 during the Montgomery bus boycott when he was selected to take charge to desegregate the bus services. Afterwards he was elected the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). From this position, he helped organize many Civil Rights movement actions. The most famous being the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It was then, on the stairs of the Lincoln Memorial, that Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He also won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and in 1965 helped organize the Selma to Montgomery marches to advocate for Black voting rights.

His influence and importance came with a heavy price. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counter Intel-

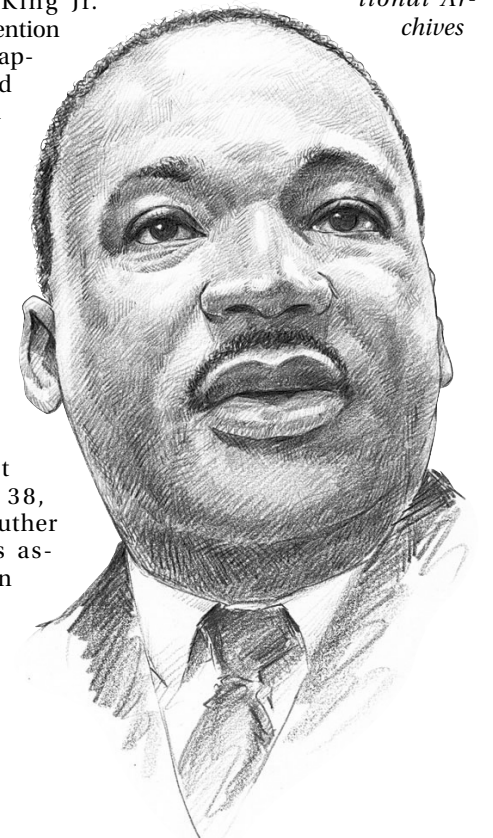
ligence Program (COINTELPRO) began surveillance of Dr. King as FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover believed him to be a threat to the nation. Part of the investigation was trying to tie Dr. King to communism. The FBI even went so far as to write him a threatening letter, anonymous at the time. Dr. King believed the letter had implied for him to commit suicide.


In the later 1960s, Martin Luther King Jr. turned his attention to poverty, capitalism, and the war in Vietnam. Dr. King wanted to occupy Washington, D.C. for his Poor People's Campaign but he unfortunately never got the chance. On April 4th, 1968, at the age of 38, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

He was posthumously awarded the Presidential

Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. In 1986 President Ronald Reagan signed legislation enacting Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, which created a national holiday on the third Monday in January to remember Dr. King on his birthday. His legacy for nonviolent action and civil disobedience still lives on.

Source: The National Archives





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# Portia ZELLARS

**BETHEL UNIVERSITY 2023 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**

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**P**ortia Morgan Zellers is a dedicated family member, educator, and church and community volunteer who has spent her entire adult life pouring into generations of students in the public schools in Charleston, Missouri. She was a 16 year-old high school valedictorian in 1965 when she entered then-Bethel College, one of two African American female students to enroll. Portia was an education major and dedicated student. While in college she made a number of lifelong friends, including her future husband, Clarence "Sam" Zellers. She was nearing graduation and had received a Peace Corps assignment to work in Africa when she attended a career fair on campus and met a Bethel alum/school superinten-

dent who was recruiting teachers. The 20 year old changed her career plans, and in the summer of 1969 she moved to Charleston, Missouri, as a new wife and High School Math Teacher. Portia initially taught both math and English at Charleston High School, but she later was appointed Chairperson of the Math Department. She ultimately taught 44 years before retiring in 2005. She returned to the district in part-time roles for several more years to serve as a mentor for other teachers and as a Middle School Math Teacher. In her off time, she also worked as a Math Instructor at Shawnee (Illinois) Community College. Portia is as much a community servant as she is an educator. She joined Perry Chapel A.M.E. Church soon after her arrival in Charleston. She has been

Church Secretary for more than 40 years, and also serves on the Steward and Stewardess boards, sings in the choir, participates in the Lay Organization, and teaches the adult Sunday School class. Over the years, she has participated in the NAACP, volunteered with Meals on Wheels food delivery, and worked as a Summer Enrichment Leader and Afterschool Tutor to help students gain and maintain academic skills. She is currently completing her second term as a member of the Charleston Board of Education. Portia and Sam have two daughters, Tamara (Patrick) Buck and Clarissa (Brian) Stith. Both followed their mom into careers in education. They also have two grandsons, Jerry (Genevive) Buck and Patrick Buck Jr., and two great-granddaughters, Charlie and Morgan Buck.

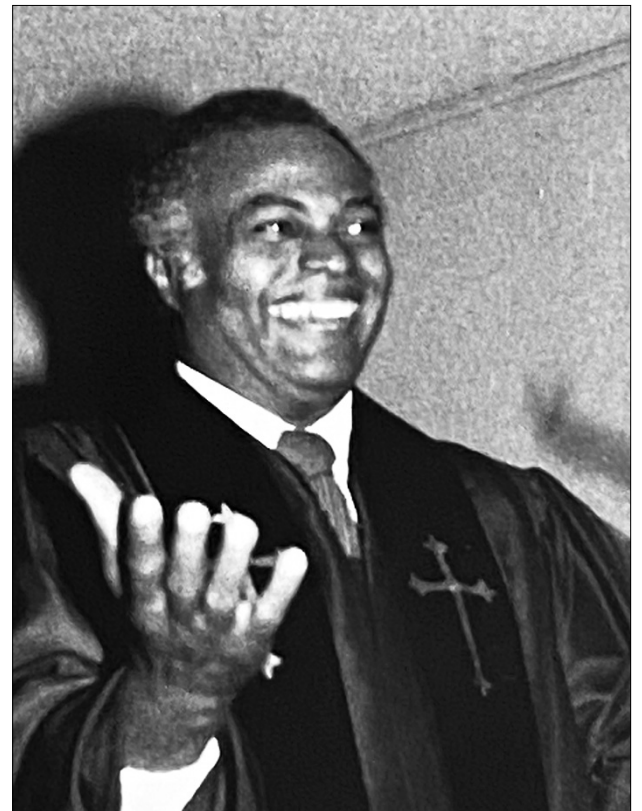
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# JOEL RICE

**BETHEL UNIVERSITY 2023 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**

COURTESY BETHEL UNIVERSITY

**T**oday, Bethel University is a strong, vibrant, and diversified campus because of Reverend Joel Rice's decision to break barriers and attend Bethel College. In the fall of 1961, Rice entered Bethel College as its first African American student. While his admission was not without controversy, Joel Rice arrived in McKenzie, Tennessee from Muskogee, Oklahoma without the fanfare that usually accompanied the integration process in the 1960s. He quickly led morning devotionals during "Spiritual Awareness Week," and in 1962 was joined on campus by the second and third African American students. In 1964, the Cumberland Presbyterian General Assembly asked Bethel College to broaden the scope of "its ministry by becoming open to all qualified people, and that the Seminary be opened to persons of all races and denominations." Integration of the institutions was at that point both possible and legal within the policy of the denomination. On June 10th, 1965, Rice graduated from Bethel College with a Bachelor of the Arts in English and enrolled in the Memphis Theological Seminary. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Ministry in 2022. Rice worked his entire life in service to others. He pastored his first church at



the age of 18 and served churches in Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas-all Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (C.P.C.A.). He served as Executive Secretary of the General Assembly, Vice Moderator of the General Assembly, and Moderator of the General Assembly for the C.P.C.A. denomination. He gave counsel and advice, showed kindness, was a strong leader, and thoroughly knew his Bible and how to open its passages to those he served. He always taught self-re-


spect, inclusion, unity, and racial harmony. "In 1961, Reverend Joel Rice joined our family and became the first African American to attend Bethel. Thankfully, he opened doors in 1961 that changed Bethel's legacy to one we can all be proud of. We are forever grateful for his role in making Bethel University the University it is today. He touched so many lives in his life and left us an example of a life we should all strive to model after." -quote from Dr. Walter Butler, President Emeritus of Bethel University

*"Life is not a spectator sport. If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion, you're wasting your life."*

—Jackie Robinson

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# Lula Mae Hall Bounds

## RETIRED TEACHER, WEBB GRADUATE

**L**ula Mae Hall, the eldest of ten children, was born on November 10, 1928, to the late David and Luella (Bell) Hall, in the small, mighty town of McLemoresville, Tennessee. She stems from a large family of ten: Joe David, Ruby Nell, L. C., Mary Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, Madeline, Richard Lynn, Linda Ann, and Pamela D. Later, Lula's siblings increased with the addition of four girls – one of whom was her niece, Evangeline, and three first cousins, Deatrice, Charlotte, and Lisa. Jesus Christ blessed their parents to raise them as their children, too. Their family count included fourteen, but one brother died at birth.

As Pamela voiced, "Our parents loved, nurtured, and raised all of us in the 'discipline, admonition, and instruction of God' King James Version of the Holy Bible (Ephesians 6:4); and they emphasized the extreme importance of education to us all."

Lula joined the Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church in McLemoresville as a young child, and she remained a faithful member until after graduating from college, teaching for several years, marrying, and moving to Kansas. She joined Saint Paul Presbyterian Church and provided dedicated service to Christ there for over fifty years. Subsequently, she served as an ordained deacon and an ordained elder for many of those years, and president of the Presbyterian Women's Organization, and a member of the Presby-Ads, a group of young adults.

Later, she worked in many church service areas.

Lula completed her elementary education at Dunbar Elementary School (grades 1-8) in McLemoresville. She walked to school daily, and many of her parents' white neighbors often stopped and welcomed Lula to come inside their homes and warm her hands and feet before continuing her stride to school. Too, she exhibited extraordinary educational knowledge and skills during her elementary years, Lula accomplished two grades – second and third – in one year.

Pamela, a retired teacher herself who resides in Trezevant, said, "As a family, we greatly admired this accomplishment, and had we known the term 'child prodigy' as it is spoken today, that would have been our characterization of our Lula. We admired then and now how she always voices her strong opinions, stands firmly on those convictions,

and refuses to be shaken by anyone – especially on political matters. "Lula commands respect!"

Next, she graduated in 1946 from Webb High School of McKenzie and she acquired her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from A & I State University – now called Tennessee State University of Nashville. In 1970, she earned a master's degree of Health and Physical Education from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

As Lula reminisces about her favorite teachers, she names Mrs. Mabel E. Nesbitt, Miss Ethel Seets, and Miss Selita Hyder at Webb. Further, recalling her post-secondary years, she acknowledges and thanks Mrs. Mattie and Mr. Walter Flowers, who were instructors at the then-A & I State University in Nashville. They assisted her financially by providing work in their home for her to do to aid in the payment of her tuition and expenses through college.

Pamela said, "I even recollect viewing and reading her problem paper, which was bound in a red hardback book and was required before she could take the thesis exam, pass, and graduate from Kansas State University with a master's degree. Moreover, I first noticed it at my parents' home after I had graduated from college, and perhaps, only then, because Lula had given it to our parents for their safekeeping and as a thank you for their love and many sacrifices of making it possible for her to achieve this great triumph."

At the onset, Lula's employment in Kansas City transpired with the Kaw View Detention Center as a supervisor. In 1951, she began her teaching career as a physical education teacher and a girls' basketball coach at Phelix High School in Marion, Arkansas. Later, she taught grades 9-12 Physical Education and served as a girls' basketball coach at Lincoln High School in Forrest City, Arkansas. Next, she taught 5th & 6th grades for two years at her high school alma mater, Webb School.

In 1955, she married Herman Bounds, Sr., and they moved to Kansas City, Kansas; her husband was a good family provider, working first at Swift Meat Manufacturing Company and later as a security guard at Southeast Middle School in Kansas City, Missouri, and as a security guard during the summer months at the swimming pool at Kansas City, Kansas, Board of Public Utilities. They have one son, Herman Bounds, Jr. (Robin), who has retired from the United States Army, has



earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Oklahoma State University and Southeastern Oklahoma University, respectively; and has achieved his Ed. S degree from Walden University of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has taught on the college level as an Adjunct Professor at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in aviation and as Deputy Director at Metro Technology Center – Oklahoma Aviation Campus of Technology. He currently works for the United States Department of Education in Washington, D.C., as the director of the Accreditation Group, where he has worked for twelve years. Lula's husband, Herman Sr., transitioned in 1980. Lula has five beautiful grandchildren: Kimberly, Desiree (Aaron), Danielle, Damon (Jacki), and Gregory; and she has five precious great-grandchildren.

In 1960, she taught Physical Education in grades 7-9 for eight years at Central Junior High School in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1968, Lula was asked to fill a position

at Southeast High School (grades 9-12) to assist with integrating the school. There, she coached high school volleyball, basketball, and track; and she sponsored the Pep Club. Her track team always placed in the local and state competitions. With a big smile, she recalled the clippings and pictures from the newspaper in Kansas City, Missouri, and her home newspaper – The McKenzie Banner – with an article about a hometown girl, Lula Hall Bounds of McLemoresville, and her girls' track team being Interscholastic League Champions. Lula was the first woman ever to win that award. For the 1974-75 school year, Lula was named Track Coach of the Year.

She retired in 1994 from the Kansas City, Missouri, School System, rendering thirty-four years of teaching service. Additionally, she worked as a substitute teacher for the USD 500 Kansas City, Kansas School System from 1994 – 2011 (seventeen years). Her son stated, "Mom's philosophy has been that every child can learn if



Left, Lula Mae Hall Bounds in the year 2024. Above, Lula Mae Hall when she was in high school.

he/she works."

Her family esteemed Lula for her ability to travel the world – particularly at a time when it was deemed a rarity for African Americans. Her family could hardly wait for Lula to arrive home at McLemoresville, during July, August, or Labor Day weekend to share with them her family travels. Pamela vocalized, "She not only told stories, but this teacher always made her adventures come to life with pictures and special media equipment for us to view and imagine ourselves traveling alongside her."

Lula has vacationed in all the states in the United States except Maine, Delaware, New Hampshire, and Vermont. She has traversed to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Italy, Egypt, Prague, Germany, London, Paris, France, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, England, Switzerland, Jamaica, Belgium, the Virgin Islands, and the Holy Land. What places our family were able to travel while merely sitting in our living room!"

On March 3, 1962, Lula joined the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., where she is a charter member of Gamma Beta Chapter, a Fifty-Year Member, and a Life Member.

Lula was a beautiful sister in her young years, and she is still beautiful at this seasoned year of ninety-five. Ronnie, a brother-in-law, seeing a picture of Lula in her younger days, said that she looked like a movie star. No one can believe that she is ninety-five years young!


Pamela communicated, "When Lula came home in the summer, she always modeled her latest exercises and dances from her years of teaching physical education. Of course, our family had to be active participants! I can still remember all of us doing that Hawaiian dance with our hips, arms, and hands swaying from left to right! She made exercising so much fun. Moreover, she still exercises at the Kansas City Kansas (KCK) Community College Wellness Center. She did stop driving to Tennessee when she reached the age of 89.

Lastly, Education continues to be vitally important to Lula, and she wants all her family to treasure and embrace the learning. She has always brought the youngsters in her family things relevant to teaching – educational posters, books, handouts, pencils, pens, erasers, student achievement certificates, grade books, lesson plan books, teacher sweatshirts, etc., and to this day, she continues that tradition. A writer has said, "Wisdom is knowing what to do next; skill is knowing how to do it; and virtue is doing it." Her family postulates that Lula holds mastery of all three.

Pamela concludes, "Congratulations on being ninety-five years young and now our family's matriarch. We salute and applaud you during Black History Month!"

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# Paul Robeson

ATHLETE, LAWYER, SINGER, ACTOR, POLITICAL ACTIVIST

(April 9, 1898 - January 29, 1976)

**P**aul Leroy Robeson was born in Princeton, NJ, on April 9, 1898. His mother was a schoolteacher, and his father was a runaway slave who became a Presbyterian minister. Robeson graduated from Rutgers University, where he excelled in athletics and held a Phi Beta Kappa key. Afterwards, he played professional football and graduated from Columbia University School of Law.

Although he worked briefly as a lawyer, Robeson turned his back on a legal career due to issues of racism. Instead, he turned his attention toward acting and singing. During the Harlem Renaissance, he starred in the Broadway productions of *The Emperor Jones* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. He performed renditions of African American folk songs and spirituals alongside musician Lawrence Brown at Provincetown Playhouse in Manhattan. Later, his popularity rose when he starred in a production of *Show Boat* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in London. He became increasingly well-known for his rendition of the song "Ol' Man River." His most notable film roles were in *Body and Soul* (1925) and *Show Boat* (1936).

Robeson was also involved in politics, receiving the 1953 Stalin Peace Prize for openly supporting the Soviet Union. He gained a reputation as an outspoken Black Nationalist who criticized the U.S.



government's perpetuation of racism and imperialist activities. This stance earned him scrutiny from Senator Joseph McCarthy in the days of the Red Scare. In 1950, his passport was revoked as

a result of being deemed a threat to national security, but his travel ban ended in 1958. He continued to perform concerts in Europe until he became ill and returned to the U.S. In 1976, he died of ce-

rebral vascular disorder at the age of 77 in Philadelphia. To this day, he remains a symbol of pride and consciousness to many African Americans.

Source: The National Archives

# Muhammad Ali

FIGHTING AGAINST RACIAL ADVERSITY

(January 17, 1942-June 6, 2016)

**B**orn Cassius Clay in Louisville, Kentucky, Muhammad Ali is consistently ranked as one of the greatest boxers of all time. At the age of 18, Ali traveled to Rome, Italy to participate in the 1960 Olympics. He won the gold medal in light heavyweight boxing and returned to the United States to pursue his professional boxing career shortly thereafter. It was also around this time that Clay became a member of the Nation of Islam, announcing his name as Cassius X, then Muhammad Ali in 1964.

In 1967, Ali had been reigning world heavyweight champion for three years when he publicly refused to be inducted into the American military during the Vietnam War. As a result of his actions, boxing officials decided to punish Ali by stripping him of his titles and suspending him from the game of boxing. During his suspension from 1967-1970, Ali became an activist and toured around the world speaking to civil rights organizations and anti-war groups.

After 1970, Ali regained the title of heavyweight champion after defeating George Foreman in a match known as "The Rumble in the Jungle." He continued fighting until 1981, ending his career with a 56-5 professional record.

Source: The National Archives

# Lifting As We Climb

(September 23, 1863 - July 24, 1954)

# Mary Church Terrell

**M**ary Church Terrell was a civil rights and women's rights activist. She was born on September 23, 1863 in Memphis, Tennessee. She was one of the first African American women to attend Oberlin College in Ohio, earning an undergraduate degree in Classics in 1884, and a graduate degree in Education in 1888. Terrell taught at Wilberforce College in Xenia, Ohio, and then relocated to Washington, DC in 1887 to teach at the M Street High

School. Terrell was heavily involved in the Black Women's Club Movement. She served as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), an organization that fought for voting rights and equal rights with the motto "lifting as we climb." Terrell was also instrumental in the founding and advancement of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Association of College Women and Delta Sigma Theta

Sorority, Incorporated. Throughout her club involvement, Terrell continued educating pupils at the now renamed Dunbar High School, and was appointed superintendent of the school in 1895.

Terrell was a notable Black leader in the suffragettes movement, as well as the civil rights movement during the first part of the twentieth century. She advocated and wrote many articles and poems in major publications and newspapers on the topics of race, gender, and promoting the Club Movement, often using the pen name Euphemia Kirk. Her

most influential works include *A Colored Woman in a White World* and "What it means to be Colored in the Capital of the United States." In 1950, Mary Church Terrell was involved in a successful lawsuit that led to the desegregation of DC area restaurants. She also succeeded in pushing her local chapter of American Association of University Women (AAUW) to allow African Americans to join its association.

Mary Church Terrell died in 1954 at the age of 90, in Highland Beach, Maryland.

Source: The National Archives



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