



A Message from the Center Peggy Robinson Wright

On the eve of the celebration of the 36th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, and 50 years since the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, I cannot help but ask the question, have we come close to the realization of the dream by Dr. King and in regards to education, are we going back or are we at a frozen stage? These are individual questions but ones that we must join together and answer if change is to come.

Underground Railroad South Seminar - April 16, 2004



The Underground Railroad refers to the efforts of enslaved people who sought freedom by escaping from bondage. The National underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program provides technical assistance to document, preserve and interpret sites and events associated with the Underground Railroad. On April 13, 1862, Major General David Hunter of the Union Army freed enslaved people at Fort Pulaski and Cockspur Island. The seminar will

explore how this declaration impacted freedom in Georgia during and after the Civil War. Speakers will share information about the National Underground Railroad Network To Freedom Program, and discuss African Americans who aided the quest for freedom at Fort Pulaski and in Savannah. The seminar will be held on Friday, April 16, 2004 at First Bryan Baptist Church, 575 West Bryan Street in Savannah, Georgia from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m.. First Bryan Baptist Church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. *Underground Railroad South* is sponsored by the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network. The seminar is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Jeanne Cyriaque at 404-656-4768 or jeanne_cyriaque@dnr.state.ga.us

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Peggy R. Wright keynote speaker at ASU's Brunch in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Peggy Robinson Wright served as the keynote speaker at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. brunch held at the ASU Fowler Center on January 16, 2004.

Mrs. Wright, the Coordinator of the Delta Studies Center, discussed the accomplishments of the slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. In her speech, she discussed the events that are so prominently remembered around Dr. King's birthday, sighting these events as a "closed loop of familiar footage" shown on TV every year at this time. Mrs. Wright shared with the audience the parts of his life

that so many Americans are familiar with, such as when Dr. King battled segregation in Birmingham in 1963, the reciting of his famous speech on racial harmony in Washington also in 1963, the march for voting rights in Selma, Alabama in 1965 and finally, his death "by an assassins bullet in 1968 on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee."

But according to Mrs. Wright, there is much more to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy

than just these Civil Rights accomplishments. Dr. King also maintained "that civil rights were empty without human rights, including economic rights." And through those last years of his life Dr. King focused on economic rights for poor people of all races.

This fight for the economic rights of poor people, according to Mrs. Wright, is something that most people do not connect with his legacy. Most Americans do not realize that before his death, Martin Luther King Jr. was working on assembling a "multi-racial army of the poor that would descend on Washington, engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience until Congress enacted a poor peoples bill of rights." This, of course, was cut short by death in 1968.

Mrs. Wright contends that even though there is still room for improvement in race relations, no one can deny that much progress has been made. If you believe, as Dr. King did, that civil rights are empty without economic rights, then there is still work to be done.

Wright ended her speech by issuing a challenge to the university community to confront the ongoing effects of poverty found in our Nation and specifically in Arkansas today.



Peggy R. Wright Keynote Speaker at the Martin Luther King Jr. Brunch Photo by: Christine Perry



Martin Luther King Jr. Brunch Attendance Photo by: Christine Perry

The Martin Luther King Jr. Brunch was sponsored by the Student Activities Board. For more information about upcoming events sponsored by the Activities Board, please contact Jerrod Lockhart at (870) 972-2024. Mrs. Peggy Robinson Wright's speech in it's entirety, can be found on the Delta Studies Center website at www.clt.astate.edu/dsc.

"King always maintained that civil rights were empty without human rights including economic rights."

Heritage Studies Sponsors "The Mary Gay Shipley Writing Fellowship" with Minnijean Brown-Trickey, 1st Visiting Writer

Dr. Clyde Milner, Director of the ASU Heritage Studies Program, recently announced "The Mary Gay Shipley Writing Fellowship" with Minnijean Brown-Trickey named as the first visiting writer. Brown-Trickey was one of the nine African-American students who, in 1957, braved angry crowds, the National Guard, and the Arkansas Governor to attend an all-white school in Little Rock. (credit: www.journeytolittlerock.com) For more information, please contact the Heritage Studies Ph.D. Program at (870) 910-8217, or visit their website at www.clt.astate.edu/heritagestudies.

Craighead County Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Representatives from the ASU Delta Studies Center and the Heritage Studies Ph.D. Program braved the cold weather and marched with hundreds of other members of the community to commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. day. The march began the day's events, which ended with an inspirational program held at St. John's Baptist Church in Jonesboro.

The program began with a welcome speech by Jonesboro Mayor Hubert Brodell welcoming marchers to the event. In his speech he noted the progress that has been made in race relations in Jonesboro.

KAIT Channel 8 anchors Diana Davis and Craig Richter who served as the parades Grand Marshals for the parade and presented the "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day" committee awards.

These awards are given out yearly to individuals who continue to promote Dr. King's dream in their local communities. This year's recipients were: Lifetime Achievement Award: Rev. Herman and Mrs. Mildred Lewellen; Outstanding Community Service Awards: Leanna Sullivan, Harriett Janice Hyatt, Robbie Lyle, Stevie Prunty, the late I.M. Stotts, Pamela Knowlton, Carolyn Sheppard, the Woodard Family, and E.T. Kendall.

The keynote speaker was Jonesboro Attorney Bobby McDaniel, who grew up in Jonesboro and discussed the changes that have occurred over the years in this area.

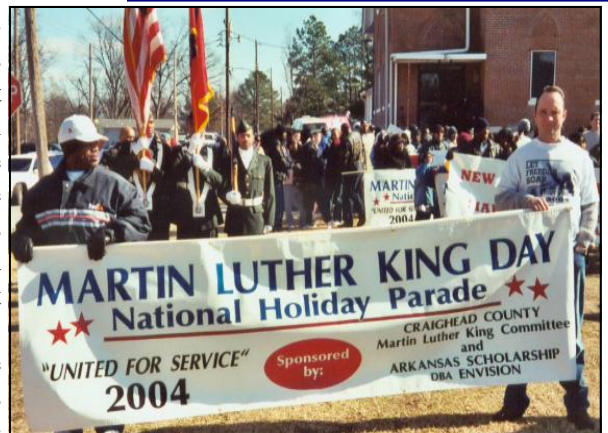
He reminded the audience of segregated schools and how in 1963, blacks drank out of separate water fountains, used separate

bathrooms, and while attending movie theaters blacks were forced to sit in the balcony separated from their white counterparts. But these weren't the only things that blacks had to contend with. They were also not given good paying jobs. They often had to settle for menial jobs such as janitorial positions at the local university.

But times have changed dramatically, McDaniel said. "A-State has thousands of black students, they have black professors and administrators. Our hospitals now have black physicians on their staff. McDaniel went on to note that Jonesboro has black lawyers and others in positions of importance.

Despite all this progress, there is still much that needs to be done. Many African-Americans still face substantial challenges. Many young black males are spending much of their life behind bars. For those who are not behind bars, they face the problem of low education and high drop out rates. There are absentee fathers and teenage mothers who are without a job, and without hope.

There are ways, according to McDaniel, to turn the tide of such harrowing statistics. We need more role models for young black males besides professional athletes. Those young men need more respect for themselves, the desire to



Martin Luther King Day National Holiday Parade, Marchers assembling in front of the Jonesboro, AR First Baptist Church
Photo by: Christine Perry



St. Johns Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Arkansas. Marchers attended an inspirational program that commemorated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. day.
Photo by: Christine Perry

be educated, and finally to give themselves a voice in the development of their own government, by registering to vote.

The two hour program ended with closing remarks by State Representative Chris Thyer of Jonesboro, who asked the group to remember the General Assembly as it deals with the issues of the education system.

Excerpts taken from "Kings Dream Recalled" article by Keith Inman.

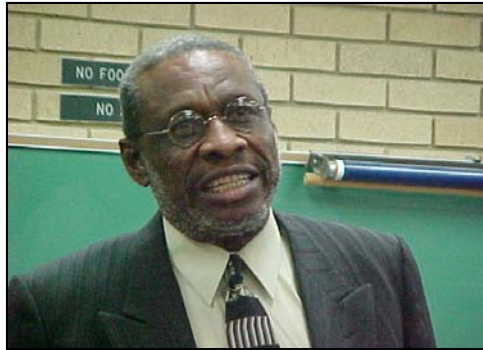
Jonesboro Sun

Tuesday, January 20, 2004.

ASU “Do You Remember” series on civil rights activists with Judge Olly Neal

Judge Olly Neal, a son of the Delta from Marianna, Lee County, Arkansas was the first speaker for the “Do You Remember” lecture series on Tuesday, February 10, 2004.

Judge Neal began his lecture with credit and honor to his mother for guiding his path in life. He began by telling the audience of the beginning of his struggle, when as a young boy, 5 years old, a white child pulled off his tie, called him a “nigger” and he fought back. This was just one of many incidents he experienced growing up. A proud moment in his life happened on March 19, 1960 at approximately 12:30 pm, same year as the Greensboro, NC incident, while he was a chemistry major at Lemoyne Owens College in Memphis, Tennessee. Participating in a sit-in at the technical library in Memphis with others because black students could not get books from the technical library unless a teacher obtained them, Judge Neal stated that, “this was an important event in his life because he knew he needed to do something to make folks



Judge Olly Neal presents at the “Do You Remember” Series on Civil Rights.

Photo by Stephen Carroll

treat him the same as the white boys.

Leaving Memphis because of the disappointment he felt that blacks were not fighting enough for change, Judge Neal says he understands it better now but still doesn’t accept why they don’t fight for change. As the former director of the Lee County Cooperative Clinic in Marianna, Arkansas, he continued to fight for poor folk, folk who had no voice. Appointed by Governor Tucker in 1995 to the Arkansas Supreme Court of Appeals, Judge Neal has continued to make a

difference in the lives of so many.

Lessons he has learned: “it takes a commitment to participate in the movement; you have to learn to control your temper and take abuse; you have to be resolved without reacting and you have to be able to have someone spit on you and not fight back. All require discipline and hard work.”

In concluding remarks, Neal offered some good and sound advice to the young people in attendance.

- Speak up, don’t say what you think folk want to hear; and
- Read one newspaper a day and a news magazine a week.

These are the things that you have to do to make you whole.

We must find a way to communicate, to join hands and form a team. We will not go anywhere until we work together. We can’t take a day off; you have to deal with the issues.

ASU “Do You Remember” series on civil rights activists with Mrs. Gertrude Jackson By: Stephen Carroll



Mrs. Gertrude Jackson presents at the “Do You Remember” Series on Civil Rights.

Photo by Stephen Carroll

On February 17, 2004, Mrs. Gertrude Jackson gave a presentation at Arkansas State University, as a speaker

in the “Do You Remember” lecture series on civil rights activists.

Mrs. Jackson is a civil rights leader in Phillips County, Arkansas. She once helped organize a two month boycott of the Turner school to protest the school building’s inadequate plumbing problem. Eventually, the problems were corrected. In the 60s, when the Marvell school district refused to integrate, despite being told to do so years earlier, she and several others filed a suit against the school district to force them to integrate. Part of the reason she pushed so hard for improvements in the school district is because she is the mother of ten children. She

encountered many hardships during her efforts to improve civil rights, including a cross being burned in her front yard. On another occasion, her family’s brand new cotton picker was destroyed. Another time someone fired a rifle splitting a power line and causing her house to lose electricity. Those things were done in an effort to scare and discourage her, but, as she said several times throughout the evening, “when your mind’s made up, it’s just made up.”

Remarkably, she said not only was she not afraid, she was somewhat excited, and that she enjoyed it. This a response was met with laughter by the audience.

Mr. Jim Jones Presents at the “Do You Remember” series on civil rights activists

By: Stephen Carroll



Mr. Jim Jones presenting his lecture during “Do You Remember” Series on Civil Rights.

Photo by Stephen Carroll

Civil Rights activist Jim Jones spoke at Arkansas State University on February 3, 2004.

Mr. Jones’ primary work was as a voter education/registration activist in Arkansas. He was expelled from Arkansas AM&N College (now known as University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) for participating in a “sit-in”. He was jailed for his civil rights work approximately 12 times. He also worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He

currently works for the Texas Department of Agriculture, in Austin, as Director for Produce & Institutional Marketing.

In addition to Pine Bluff, he also helped organize civil rights protests in areas and cities such as Helena, Marianna, Forrest City, Little Rock, and West Memphis. He has watched the black community change and become more active, including holding voter registrations and running for office. Other changes he saw changes included desegregation of local businesses and restaurants. He said that one of his biggest disappointments during that time was when his wife wasn’t allowed to have their child in the hospital where her doctor worked, even though he was the only black gynecologist in Pine Bluff and the head of the gynecology department at the hospital, the hospital still didn’t admit black patients. While they weren’t able to have their own child

“He said that over the years he saw the black community change and start getting active, including voter registration and running for office.”

there their protests changed the hospital’s rule and they did start admitting black patrons.

Mr. Jones admitted that there were both good times and bad times. He believed that part of the problem was fear and preconceived notions about the activists, including that they were communists and socialists. When asked what kept him going through all the hard times, he said that people would secretly come up to him and encourage him to keep going, because they couldn’t publicly support him or his efforts. Also, he said that his parents were very supportive of him, and even though there were numerous threats made on his life and he would get scared sometimes, he encouraged himself by repeating that, in the end, they were going to win the fight. “And then I guess we were a little crazy, too,” he added.

Dr. Richard Burns Participates in KNPR Panel Discussion

By: Terry Johnson

Dr. Richard Burns, ASU Associate Professor of English & Folklore, participated via telephone in a National Public Radio talk show in Las Vegas, Nevada on Tuesday, January 27, 2004. The interview took place from 11a.m. to 12 noon central time. Marc Breindel, Producer, “KNPR’s State of Nevada”,

personally invited Dr. Burns to join the panel on African-American storytelling, in anticipation of a series of storytelling events at local libraries. The series is inspired by African-American History Month. Several local storytellers joined Dr. Burns, as he provided context as a local folklorist. One of the participants of interest told the story of how her great-grandfather came to

Nevada as a pioneer from Fordyce, Arkansas.

This interview was heard on News 88.9, KNPR, Nevada Public Radio and via computer. For more information you can check out KNPR website, www.knpr.org or contact Dr. Richard Burns at the ASU English department, 870-972-3043.

Dr. Adena Williams Loston First Female African American Faculty Member Spoke During Black History Month

Dr. Adena Williams Loston the first female African-American faculty member at ASU who taught at the university for two years during the mid-1970s recently spoke at ASU. She is currently serving as the associate administrator for education at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) headquarters in Washington, D.C. since October 2002.

Loston, who was brought to this campus by Dr. Bob Ferralasco, taught at ASU from 1974 to 1976. She explained that ASU was the "Genesis of her education background and career." Teaching at this university was the first in several positions where she was "the first and the only" African American woman in her field.

Dr. Ferralasco, who sensed her loneliness, reached out to the churches for help in making her feel at home. Through these contacts in the Jonesboro community, she was able to make it through.

In her lecture, Dr. Loston, focused on the future goals of the



(L to R) Dr. Adena Williams Loston and Dr. Bob Ferralasco

Photo by Peggy R. Wright

NASA space program and how the agency plans to educate students and recruit those interested in NASA careers.

According to Loston some of the long-term goals proposed by President Bush include lunar missions that are manned and unmanned, an expanded Mars program that is moving towards a manned landing on the Red Planet, a project by the name of Prometheus which will look for new power sources for spacecrafts, and more focus on science programs.

Another extension of her job as associate administrator for education is

to "share NASA's resources with students." One way NASA is accomplishing this is through the NASA Explorer schools - a program designed to teach math and science to students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Fifty schools are selected to participate for three years. After their three years are up they are dropped so that another 50 schools can be picked up. This program which began last June gives grants and stipends to participating schools. She stressed the need for more minority students to look at the program.

Dr. Adena Loston is a graduate of Alcorn State University where she received her master's degree in education and a doctorate in educational administration and supervision from Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

Prior to her speech, she was also presented with a pioneer award for outstanding leadership and accomplishments from the ASU Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter.

Delta C.L.A.S.S. Health Professions Partnership Initiative By: Jackie Gilbert

Delta C.L.A.S.S. HPPI has been very busy this past fall. We have had two wonderful opportunities for students to visit the ASU campus and two opportunities to expose students to excellence in academics. A collaborative effort with KASU in October enabled 10 students from Turrell High School to attend the conductor's luncheon. These students were asked to participate in an essay contest open to 11th and 12th graders from six school

districts. Two winners were from the Turrell school district.

The essay was based on "What an Education Means to Me". The participants have been a part of Delta C.L.A.S.S. HPPI since 2000.

Members of Earle High School attended the Fowler Center Lecture Series with former President Bill Clinton on October 28, 2003. 20 students from Earle High School, along with Ms. Linda Maples, were able to acquire reserve seating for

this endeavor.

This spring 4 schools participated in Health Camps, which were held in February. 20 students will participate in test taking strategies, college life preparation, chemistry laboratory, and math endeavors. This summer also provides the students with opportunities to visit two other HPPI sites, the University of Alabama Birmingham and the University of Oklahoma.

Upcoming Delta Events

Arkansas Humanities Council PRESERVING AND DOCUMENTING AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERIES IN ARKANSAS

REGIONAL MEETING WILL BE HELD

Saturday, April 24, 2004

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Arkansas State University
Museum Room 157
Jonesboro, Arkansas

Join experts from around the state as we discuss resources for the preservation and documentation of African American cemeteries in Arkansas.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Cemetery Preservation Efforts by Local Organizations
- Arkansas Archeological Survey and How They Can Help With Cemetery Documentation and Preservation
- Funding Opportunities
- Legislative Perspectives

This meeting is free and open to the public. Lunch will be provided. To register or get more information, contact Lavona Wilson, Arkansas Humanities Council, 10800 Financial Centre Parkway, Suite 465, Little Rock, Arkansas 72211 or call (501) 221-0091 or email lavonawilson@sbcglobal.net.

THE SUMMIT: "WHERE VOLUNTEER; PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT LEADERS MEET"

Little Rock Holiday Inn Airport
April 29-30, 2004

For more information contact
Karen Potts
(501) 372-1116
or email

Arthurine.A.Harrison@mail.state.ar.us

ARKANSAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION Sixty-Third Annual Conference

Fort Smith, Arkansas
April 15-17, 2004

NONPROFIT NAVIGATION: THE ESSENTIAL TRAINING

Snowflake Mountain Resort
Stowe, Virginia
May 7-8, 2004

For more information contact
Shane Hager
shaneh@gillfoundation.org

RECLAIMING ROSENWALD SCHOOLS: 2-DAY CONFERENCE

Fisk University
Nashville, Tennessee
May 21-22, 2004

For more information visit their
website at
www.rosenwaldschool.com

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