



Volume 12
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UNITY: NAACP News

Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County NAACP (Branch 7092)

NAACP Branch Officers, 2017-2018

Rita Irvin, President
James C. Klagge, 1st VP
Raymond Bishop, 2nd VP
Deborah H. Travis, Secretary
Terry Goodson, Asst. Secretary
Allen W. Palmer, Treasurer
Executive Board At-Large:
Phyllis Albritton
Lynn Brammer
Irene Peterson
Alvin Humes

Area 10 Chair: Alvin Humes

Newsletter Editor: Jim Klagge

NAACP Youth Council Officers:

Zamora White, President
Alison Foster, VP
Samaya White, Secretary
Tyler Graves, Treasurer
Jazmyn White & Melvin Palmer,
Historians
Co-Advisors: Deborah Travis &
Angela Sills; *Adult Leaders:*
Amelia Foster, Nancy Nowlin,
Lidia Palmer & Cheryl Burrell-
Graves.

Fall Freedom Fund Banquets



Roxie Palmer receives 2017 Nannie B. Hairston Community Service Award from Mrs. Hairston's daughter, Dy-Anne Penn. Photo courtesy of Larry Middleton

The Fall Freedom Fund Banquet is an opportunity for the community to gather for food and fellowship, and to show its support for the activities of the local NAACP. It is also an opportunity for the branch to honor its heroes, review its work in the last year, and highlight its plans for the coming year.

Last year at the 2017 Banquet we honored Mrs. Roxie Palmer for her tireless work on the Youth and the Membership Committees. At our 2016 Banquet we honored local sculptor Larry Bechtel.

The 2017 Banquet keynote speaker was Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, Vice President for Strategic Affairs and Vice Provost for Inclusion & Diversity at VT. Pratt-Clarke spoke on the topic of "Meeting the Challenges." By drawing on the story of her mother's life, she reminded the audience that our challenges are not new. The 2016 Banquet keynote speaker was Dr. Basil Gooden.

Branch President Rita Irvin gave concluding remarks in which she emphasized the work of the branch with the acronym C-A-U-S-E. As community leaders we will be deliberate in the way we Communicate, Advocate, Unify, Strategize, and Evaluate our work.

For the coming year the president wants to emphasize that our branch focuses on civil rights advocacy through education and activism. ***Please join us in our work!***

Thanks to our 2016 & 2017 Freedom Fund Sponsors!

During 2016 & 2017 our Gold Sponsor, at the level of \$2500, was VT-Office of the President. Silver Sponsors, at the level of \$1000, were Carilion Clinic of the NRV; Food Lion, Inc; LewisGale Hospital-Montgomery; First Team Nissan; VT Office for Inclusion & Diversity; Jefferson College of Health Sciences-Office of the President; and Radford University-Office of the President. Bronze Sponsors, at the \$800 level, were Asbury United Methodist Church; Moog, Inc, Components Group; UAW Local 2069; New River Community College; Huntington, Huntington, Huntington, PLLC; Alpha Kappa Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc; and Virginia Tech Office for Inclusion and Diversity. Community Sponsors, at the \$600 level, were Corning, Inc; Christiansburg Institute & CI Alumni Association; Christiansburg High School; Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church; The Community Foundation; Wades/Deli Mart, Inc; Freedom First Credit Union; Montgomery County Democratic Committee; Montgomery County Public Schools-Superintendent's Office; Montgomery County Education Association; Nannie B. Hairston; Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the NRV; Blacksburg Presbyterian Church; 1st Baptist Church of Blacksburg; Town of Blacksburg; NRV Indivisible; League of Women Voters-Montgomery County; Habitat NRV & Blacksburg Museum & Cultural Foundation; M-R-F NAACP Youth Council; and Warm Hearth. ***Thanks for your support!!!***

NAACP—Youth at Work

Our Youth Council helps youth grow in their knowledge of Black History, develop leadership and organizational skills, and broaden their awareness of cultural diversity. At our annual Juneteenth Celebration, the youth share their knowledge of Black history—especially the story behind Juneteenth, they show off their dancing and singing skills, and they raise money by selling food and refreshments. During other parts of the year they sponsor a luncheon open to the public where they serve food from cultures around the world. At our Veterans’ Day Celebration, they have shared poetry about service and patriotism. At our Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration they have performed songs, spiritual dances, and recited poetry. At our Freedom Fund Banquets they have brought greetings and led a candle-lighting memorial tribute for members who have passed away. And each year they have a service project—this year they bought Christmas gifts for two “Angel Tree” children.



Studying Black History. Photo by Debbie Travis



Youth Council swears in Officers (l-r):

Debbie Travis, co-advisor
Melvin Palmer, historian
Jazmyn White, historian
Samaya White, secretary
Alison Foster, vice president
Zamora White, president

Photo courtesy of Debbie Travis

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the Samuel H. Clark Memorial Scholarships, high school graduates who were Youth Council members, or who live in this area and whose parents or grandparents are NAACP members, can receive a grant for post-secondary education. Over the years this scholarship has been increased from \$300 to \$500, and now it is \$1000! Money is raised from the offering at our annual MLK event, freewill offerings at our General Body meetings, plus donations. Please contribute to this worthy cause!

The 2017 recipient was Sterling Sims (BHS/Lincoln University), and the 2018 recipients are Nylan Childress (CHS/New River CC) and Jaylin Nowlin (CHS/planning to attend Wytheville CC in the spring). Congratulations! Applications are due by April 1, 2019. Encourage your HS senior to apply! Contact Debbie Travis dhtravis@yahoo.com for more information.

Beginning this year our branch has also been honored by having a scholarship at VT established—the William S. Alderson Memorial Scholarship. It is open to currently enrolled VT undergraduate or graduate students who are members of the VT college chapter of the NAACP. It is awarded each spring after application through the Diversity Office for \$2500. This year’s recipient is senior and chapter president Camryn Taylor.



Sterling Sims. Photo courtesy of James Klagge.

Work with our NAACP Committees



The **Health Committee** focuses on the health and wellness needs of minority communities. The challenges are well-known, but the community is not always aware of them. Shirley Brown chairs this committee. In the photo at left she is seen representing the NAACP at a table at the AARP Health & Wellness Fair on September 19th at the Christiansburg Recreation Center. Members of the committee educate themselves about health challenges in the community, and then they go out and spread the word. In addition to attending this event, Shirley has also presented to our General Body meeting on the health conditions of African-Americans. To join in, contact Shirley at bro5shirley@aol.com.



The **Political Action Committee** has been very active in recent years. The national NAACP establishes legislative priorities and our local branch, with its limited resources, focuses on some of them. One priority is to enact “Safe, Sane and Sensible Laws to Curb Gun Violence.” In support of this the branch was represented at the national March for Our Lives gathering in DC on March 24th, and was a co-sponsor of the local March for Our Lives event in Blacksburg on August 2nd, which filled the Lyric Theatre and later spilled into the streets. The branch was represented at the counter-protest to the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville on August 11th, 2017. After a report back on this event, the branch sent a letter to our state legislators seeking their public opposition to white supremacist rallies. Another national legislative priority is to increase voter registration and voting among under-represented groups. The committee has sponsored or co-sponsored numerous meetings with legislators or candidates, including a meeting March 26th, 2017 with state representatives Rush, Habeeb and Yost; a town hall meeting with Representative Morgan Griffith on August 18th, 2018; and a town hall with candidate Anthony Flaccavento on September 29th, 2018. To join this committee, contact chair Karen Jones at karen@karenejones.co.



Phyllis Albritton (right) talks with gun advocate Bryan Melchior.

The branch is starting a new **Environmental and Climate Justice Committee**. This is your chance to get involved at the start. NAACP is interested in improving stewardship of the environment. At our April meeting we heard a presentation from pipeline opponents and how it impacts minority communities. To join this committee, contact chair Terry Goodson at zarabeth@vt.edu. *These are just a few of our committees—please join our work!*

How to get involved with NAACP

We meet on the 4th Sunday of the month at 3:30pm—usually at the newly renovated Old Hill School Community Center, 570 High St. in Christiansburg. To get on our e-mailing list, send your e-mail address to jklagge@vt.edu. We will let you know about upcoming meetings and events.

“Like” our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/mrfnaacp.org/, where you can find announcements, photos and write-ups of events, as well as civil rights news and history. Visit us on-line at: www.mrfnaacp.org/. Or follow us on Twitter @mrf_naacp.

You can join NAACP for \$30/year on-line through our website. Please be sure to indicate you are joining Branch 7092.

We need you to get involved!



Renovated meeting room at Old Hill School



In Memoriam

Nannie B. Hairston

8/7/1921 – 7/14/2017

Cora Pack

6/29/1924 – 1/8/2018

Lindsay West

7/28/1934 – 2/2/2018

Elaine Carter

1/24/34 – 3/17/2018

Erica L. White

2/16/1976 – 9/21/2018

We remember and honor these NAACP members who passed away in the last two years.

YOUR NAACP focuses on EDUCATION



A bus load of NAACP members and friends. Photo courtesy of James C. Klagge.

Our branch begins almost every General Body meeting with a CREDO presentation. CREDO stands for **C**ivil **R**ights **E**ducational **D**evelopment **O**pportunities. These give our members a chance to learn more about a wide variety of issues facing our community, and it allows experts on those issues to learn more about us and our priorities. Over the last two years we have had presentations on: “The Importance of Diversity in the Media,” by Robert Jeffery, Jr., CEO and Founder of ColorsVA Magazine; “Educational Issues & Diversity” by Naila Holmes, Director of the Virginia Education Association Office of Human and Civil Rights; “DACA and Immigration,” by immigration attorney Rachel Thompson; “Impact of Pipelines on Minority Communities,” by members of Preserve NRV; “Issues of Aging in Minority Communities,” by Shannon Hammonds of New River Agency on Aging; “Mental Health Challenges in Minority Communities,” by Mike Wade of NRV Community Services; and “Non-partisan Re-districting,” by Brian Cannon of OneVirginia2021. An upcoming CREDO presentation is planned by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. If you have suggestions for other topics, share them with Karen Jones at karen@karenejones.co.

On Saturday, April 29th, 2017, our branch sent a busload of members and friends to Washington, D.C., to tour the newly-opened National Museum of African-American History and Culture. The trip, titled “Our Life, Our History, Our Culture,” was organized by Michael Thom and Karen Jones. Reservations were made far in advance, and the trip gave local folks their first chance to view this monument to our history. Folks commented on the moving experience of beginning in the basement of the museum in Africa where the slave trade began, and gradually moving upward to higher floors through history and progressive liberation. Other exhibits featured the contributions of African-Americans to culture in the United States. Folks returned from the trip with a renewed enthusiasm for history and culture, and renewed enthusiasm for the work of ensuring progress for future generations.



Brian Cannon of OneVA2021 explains gerrymandering. Photo courtesy of James C. Klagge.



Juneteenth: Pres. Rita Irvin (left) with Mrs. Palmer, who donated her 50-50 raffle winnings to the Youth Council.



God's Little Princesses from 1st Baptist Church in Radford performing for Juneteenth 2018