

From Whence We Came

Meet Our Honorees

West Virginia Civil Rights Day

Thursday, February 24, 2005

12 Noon

Charleston Job Corps Center

Charleston, West Virginia



PROCLAMATION
by
Governor Joe Manchin III

Whereas, the equality of all members of our society was recognized by our founding fathers and enshrined in our Declaration of Independence as a cornerstone upon whom to build our American Democracy; and,

Whereas, equal rights and opportunities for all citizens is fundamental in the State of West Virginia; denial of such rights strikes at the very foundation of our democracy; and,

Whereas, the struggle to attain the American ideal of equality has been maintained throughout our history and continues today; and,

Whereas, hate and tolerance must be battled in every sector of our society by citizens, institution, and government, with every person having an important role to play; and,

Whereas, key components to the removal of road blocks to equality are dialogue, collaboration and attentive listening to different perspectives; and,

Whereas, the West Virginia Human Rights Commission works cooperatively with government agencies, community and civic organizations and representatives of minority groups to promote programs and campaigns devoted to the achievement of tolerance, understanding and equal protection of the law;

Now, Therefore, be it resolved that I, Joe Manchin III, Governor of the State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim **February 24, 2005**, as:

Civil Rights Day

in West Virginia.

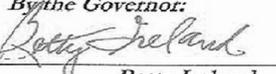
In Witness Whereof, I have here unto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the Twenty-eighth day of January, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Five and in the One Hundred Forty-second year of the State





Joe Manchin III
Governor

By the Governor:


Betty Ireland
Secretary of State



**Attorney
Willard L. Brown
(Posthumously)**

Willard Brown was born in Boston, Massachusetts and came to Charleston, West Virginia in 1913. He was a 1929 graduate of Garnet High School, held a bachelor of arts degree from West Virginia State College (now University), and earned a bachelor of law degree and a master of law degree from Boston University. He was a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Masonic and Elks Lodges, and the Charleston Business and Professional Men's Club. He was married to the former Juanita Jackson of Lewisburg, West Virginia for 41 years.

Mr. Brown was the first African American attorney to sit as a judge in a court of record in West Virginia. His sixteen years of service included many accomplishments with opportunities to influence decisions concerning African Americans in West Virginia. He was President of the Charleston Branch NAACP from 1950 to 1966, and served as legal advisor to that organization starting in 1942.

On August 24, 1944 at the NAACP's request, the Capitol Theatre opened its doors to Negroes. A Charleston Gazette editorial in January 1961, cited Mr. Brown for taking the lead in a series of conferences with the Charleston Restaurant Association which resulted in the opening of 41 downtown restaurants to the Black community. An injunction filed by A. H. Brown (Mr. Brown's father), and sponsored by the NAACP, resulted in a ruling by Federal Judge Moore that Negroes could eat in the local airport facilities operated by Sky Chef, Inc. and that refusing to serve them was unconstitutional.

Mr. Brown claimed among his friends, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. The two were speakers at a Mississippi Conference of NAACP branches in 1957. Mr. Roy Wilkins, National NAACP Executive Director, was a guest speaker, in 1967, at a testimonial banquet honoring Mr. Brown and Miss Mary L. Williams for their service to the local NAACP.

Mr. Brown was a founder of the Charleston Human Rights Commission, and served on the committee organizing the march for open housing in Charleston. He participated in obtaining the right for Blacks to attend Municipal Auditorium events. Mr. Brown served eight years on the Charleston City Council after winning election as a councilman in 1947. He was the only Black member of the mayor's Human Relations Committee and the Legal Redress Committee from 1957-61. Mr. Brown and Mr. T.G. Nutter served as attorneys in most civil rights cases filed in the State back to 1935. In 1961, Mr. Brown conducted an employment survey to obtain and extend employment opportunities for Negroes in the Charleston area. Mr. Brown was named a special judge in Intermediate Court in 1967 when 26 persons were charged with voter fraud.



The Honorable Herman G. Canady, Jr.

Born in Kanawha County, West Virginia, Judge Herman G. Canady is a lifelong resident. He is married to Barbara L. Canady, and they have three daughters.

At an early age, Judge Canady began paving the way for those who would follow. In 1954, he was the first African American student at Charleston High School when he attended the summer session during his eleventh grade year. He graduated from State High School in Institute, West Virginia. He later attended Northwestern University where he received a bachelor of arts degree. He then graduated from West Virginia University College of Law, where he earned his J. D. degree. Judge Canady was the only African American enrolled at the law school during his three years of study, and was the second African American to graduate.

Appointed in March 1982 to the position of Circuit Court Judge of Kanawha County, by then Governor Jay Rockefeller, Judge Canady was the first African American to serve in this position. He was subsequently elected to this position in 1982, 1984, 1992, and 2000. During his tenure as a circuit court judge, he was appointed, more than once, to sit as a special justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. In 1989, he was elected Chief Judge by his peers, and served in that position again in 1998. He received the "Fairness Judge" award from the West Virginia Trial Lawyers Association for 1985-1986. In 2001, he was elected President of the West Virginia Judicial Association and previously, he had been elected Secretary/Treasurer. In 2002, he retired, but still remains active as a well respected mediator, and senior status judge.

Prior to his tenure on the Circuit Court of Kanawha County, Judge Canady first worked for The Legal Aid Society of Charleston representing low income clients. He was the Society's first African American lawyer. He then worked as an assistant prosecuting attorney in Kanawha County for about seven years. As a lawyer, Judge Canady practiced before the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and the United States Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit.

Judge Canady has served on the Board of Directors of Opportunities Industrialization Center (O. I. C.), Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Charleston, The West Virginia Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled. He is a lifelong member of the NAACP.

Judge Canady is known as a fair, principled jurist who treats all persons respectfully. He has served with grace and great distinction. He is, above all else, a gentleman, a man of strength and solid character, whose accomplishments have been exemplary, and whose "firsts" have paved the way for many generations to come.

**Attorney
Harry Jheopart Capehart
(Posthumously)**



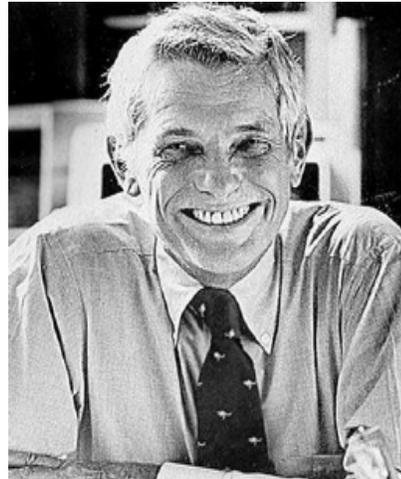
Mr. Capehart was born in Charleston, West Virginia, on May 2, 1881. His father, Joseph Capehart, was a merchant; his mother was Miss Maggie Woodyard. His parents were emancipated slaves from North Carolina, who were given farm land in what is now Logan County.

Mr. Capehart attended public schools in West Virginia and graduated from the School of Law at Howard University, located in Washington, D.C., where he received his LL.B Degree in 1913. He later became a member of the Board of Trustees at Howard. Mr. Capehart began practicing law in Keystone, West Virginia where he was elected to the city council, and also served as Assessor before moving to Welch. In 1918, he was elected to the West Virginia State Legislature and re-elected in 1920. He was an active working member of that body. He was appointed to various important committees, including: Taxation and Finance, Claims and Grievances, Humane Institutions/ Public Buildings, and Education.

He introduced, and steered through to its final passage what is popularly know as the “Capehart Anti-Lynch Law,” the most progressive piece of legislation that has been enacted on the racial issue. It defines “mob” or “riotous assemblage,” as a collection of individuals (five or more in number) assembled for the unlawful purpose of violence to a person or property in violation of the law, or for the purpose of exercising correctional or regulative powers over any person or persons by violence without lawful authority. The legislation clearly defines every term which might leave a loophole for the offender. It makes participation, in a mob or riotous assemblage, which results in the death of anyone, murder, punishable with a fine and imprisonment. In cases of lynching, where the person lynched was taken from the state or county, by municipal officer, the county shall be subject to forfeiture of money for the dependents or estate of the deceased and action may be brought in any state court. Another piece of racial legislation, for which Mr. Capehart was responsible, was a bill to prevent the exhibition of pictures which tend to humiliate or degrade the race. Approximately 75 years ago a group of Black Attorneys met in Southern West Virginia to create a legal association that became known as the Mountain State Bar Association. Included in the early membership was Harry J. Capehart of Welch.

On November 28, 1917, Mr. Capehart married Anna Livingstone Hurley, daughter of Warner and Marie Hurley of Washington D.C. they were the parents of two sons, Harry Capehart Jr. (attorney), and Arthur Froe Capehart (educator) (both deceased). Mrs. Capehart was a educator. Mr. Capehart died in 1954.

Mr. William E. "Ned" Chilton
(Posthumously)



Mr. Chilton was born in Kingston, New York and moved to Charleston, West Virginia at an early age where he attended public schools. He later served in the United States Army and Army Air Corps and was a 1950 graduate of Yale University. Mr. Chilton had a life-long interest in newspaper and politics and was the publisher of the Charleston Gazette from 1961 until the time of his death in 1987. In 1953, he won a seat in the West Virginia House of Delegates, where he served until 1960. Mr. Chilton was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1960 and again in 1964.

Mr. Chilton was known as a publisher's publisher. He was once quoted as saying, "The hallmark of crusading journalism is sustained outrage." During the Civil Rights Movement, he demanded equality through the use of the Gazette's editorial page. Mr. Chilton was an advocate of racial integration of schools, hotels, restaurants, theatres, clubs, pools, and all other facilities. In the early 1950's, before the Supreme Court ruling, Mr. Chilton enabled black high school athletes to compete in the Gazette Relays for the first time. Five years before his death, Mr. Chilton was selected for the Colby's Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award for courage and integrity in journalism in 1982. He received an honorary Doctorate of Humanities Degree from West Virginia State College (now University) in 1966 in recognition of his desegregation work.

He was married to Elizabeth Chilton and had one daughter.



Mrs. Elizabeth E. Chilton

Mrs. Elizabeth Chilton was born in Williamson, West Virginia and attended Hollins College in Virginia, and Marjorie Webster College in Washington, D.C. She married Mr. William “Ned” Chilton in 1952 and joined the Gazette’s public relations staff. Mrs. Chilton became Vice President of the newspaper after her husband’s death in 1987, and President in 1991. She is an active member of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, the International Press Institute, and the Newspaper Association of America.

Mrs. Chilton serves on many local boards, including the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, the West Virginia Humanities Council, and the Faculty Merit Scholarship Foundation. In 1997, she was given the John Marshall Medal for Civil Responsibility by Marshall University. She received an honorary Doctorate of Laws Degree from West Virginia State University in May 2004.

Mrs. Chilton and her husband spearheaded efforts to bring about probate reform through the abolition of the old commissioner of accounts systems, resisting subpoenas to reporters, and countersuing lawyers who represent clients who present frivolous liable petitions.



Mr. Gustavus Werber Cleckley (Posthumously)

Gustavus Werber Cleckley grew up in Huntington, West Virginia and was intent on combating racism, advancing social justice, and being a contributing member of his community. A graduate of Huntington's Frederick Douglas High School, following the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education landmark decision, he then decided to attend Marshall University and looked for opportunities to make his vision a reality. Mr. Cleckley served as President of the Huntington Chapter/NAACP, and as a member of the Civic Interest Progressive (CIP) organization, which focused on breaking down racial barriers in the Tri-State area. Mr. Cleckley also played a leading role in the founding of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity at Marshall University, and also participated in the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington.

Mr. Cleckley was at the center of launching non-violent protests, during the turbulent years of social change in the 1960's, to desegregate places of public accommodation in Huntington, such as the Keith Albee Theatre, Bailey's Cafeteria, the White Pantry, and McCrory's lunch counter, among others.

Mr. Cleckley went on to serve his country during the Vietnam War era. While serving as a United States Army Medical Corpsman, he was wounded, and recognized for his heroism receiving the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. The Cleckley Memorial Scholarship Fund, created at Marshall University by Franklin D. Cleckley and Betty Jane Cleckley, to help support high achieving undergraduate and graduate students of lower socio-economic backgrounds, is a tribute to the late Gustavus Werber Cleckley and his parents. He died in 1981. Today, many young people continue to be driven by his visionary spirit.

Mrs. Savannah R. Evans



Born in Charleston, West Virginia on September 24, 1927, Mrs. Evans, mother of three, devoted many years toward advancements in the Correctional System. Her dedication to the organizations she was involved in, was well known.

Mrs. Evans graduated from Garnet High School in 1949; she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from West Virginia State College (now University) in 1961. She attended graduate school at Marshall University in Huntington, from 1966-1968.

Best known for her work at the West Virginia Department of Corrections in Charleston from 1968-1988, Mrs. Evans was a pioneer for the civil rights of the Department's African American employees as well as the African American youth she supervised as a probation officer. She sought to build relationships and eliminate racial barriers among the various groups she worked with. She served as a probation and parole officer in the Juvenile Division, Work-Release Center Supervisor, and Supervisor of Kanawha County Probation and Parole. Mrs. Evans truly made a difference in the West Virginia Correctional System that will extend for generations to come.

Mrs. Evans is responsible for the creation of West Virginia's first work release program. She was the first African American woman, and only female, supervisor of an all-male prisoner facility, in the United States, known as the West Virginia Division of Corrections Work-Release Center. The concept of a work-release program is the same as that of a half-way house where prisoners, nearing parole, can undergo gradual adjustment before returning to society completely on their own. Mrs. Evans attended correctional conferences in Montreal, Canada regarding Half-way housing, and Work-Release programs, as well as, a five day transactional analysis class at a federal prison in Marion, Illinois. Mrs. Evans taught a class on work-release programs at the West Virginia State Police Academy, and also received instruction on Self Protection.

Mrs. Evans was part of many associations, including: Southern States Correctional Association, International Half-way House Association, and the West Virginia Probation and Parole Association. She is a member of the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, in St. Albans, and a member of the College Alumnae Club of Kanawha County, West Virginia, Inc.



Ms. Faith Holsaert

Faith S. Holsaert was born during WWII, to liberal Jewish parents, in New York City's Greenwich Village. She was raised in a two-mother family with her Jewish mother by birth, Eunice Holsaert and Charity Bailey, her mother by affection; who was African American. During high school, she worked on organizing the community's social and economic concerns through the National Council of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) in Harlem and the Lower East Side.

Through NCCJ, Ms. Holsaert met leaders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) which led her to sit-in at a lunch counter and go to jail on the Eastern Shore of Maryland on Christmas Eve 1961. This sit-in set the stage for the sweeping Cambridge, Maryland Movement. This resulted in occupation of that region by federal troops for 18 months because of the violent resistance from white residents. This was followed by the burning of four black Southwest Georgia church sites of voter registration mass meetings. In the autumn of 1962, at the age of 19, Ms. Holsaert joined SNCC as a Field Secretary in Albany, Georgia.

In the first mass jailing of the 1960's Movement, hundreds of Albany residents had been imprisoned in the previous winter during demonstrations. In addition to registering voters, joining mass meetings held in tents on the charred grounds of the burned churches, documenting rights violations, and filing complaints with state and federal authorities, Ms. Holsaert was an active participant in SNCC policy discussions. Toward the end of that year, she participated in the preparations of the March on Washington of 1963. Ms. Holsaert then joined a mass march early that summer and spent a week in the Albany City Jail.

Following her return to Barnard College, Ms. Holsaert worked in the New York City SNCC office, providing support during the summer of 1964. Hundreds of northern students went south that year to Atlantic City, where the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party openly challenged credentials of the all-white Mississippi Democratic Party in a dispute which had long-term implications for the National Democratic Party.

It was in the context of the Southern Freedom Movement that Ms. Holsaert learned about equality, dignity, and respect. She has carried out those ideals in everything she involves herself in, including opposing military interventions, supporting welfare rights and the rights of children to be healthy and safe, teaching public school, and writing fiction with social justice themes. She is working, with other women from the SNCC, on an anthology of women's experiences in the Civil Rights Movement.



Reverend Dr. Idus Jones, Jr.

Reverend Jones was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 18, 1927. In 1972, he received his B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology with a minor in Philosophy from Indiana University. While attending Indiana University, he was the proud recipient of the Apheus Bell Clark Award in 1971, and the M. Vashti Memorial Award in 1972. Reverend Jones received his Masters of Divinity at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1975. In 1991, he received his Doctor of Ministry Degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH. He authored his autobiography entitled, [A Mighty Long Journey](#).

Reverend Jones is a retired United Methodist Minister from the West Virginia Annual Conference. Currently, he serves on the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency, and Corrections and Sub-Committee on Juvenile Justice and the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition Team, West Virginia Division of Juvenile Services. He has spent many years working in youth prison ministries and is well known for his untiring commitment to incarcerated youth in West Virginia.



**Mrs. Cora Francis Coleman Jones
(Posthumously)**

Cora Francis Coleman began her life experiences on October 13, 1925, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as the daughter of the late George and Eugenia Coleman.

Mrs. Jones, along with her husband Reverend Idus Jones, Jr., established mission projects abroad and in the United States. One such mission project, in 1984, was the establishment of a quarter million dollar facility, Ebenezer Community Outreach Center, in Huntington, West Virginia. The center meets the needs of the Fairfield West community through the provisions of a daycare program and free medical clinic.

She died on August 5, 2001.



**The Honorable
A. James Manchin
(Posthumously)**

Mr. A. James Manchin was born April 7, 1927, in Farmington, West Virginia, and was the son of Joseph, Sr., and Kathleen Roscoe Manchin. He received an A.B degree in political science and sociology, a M.A. degree in education from West Virginia University. He was a citizenship teacher and athletic coach in West Virginia and he proudly served in the United States Navy. He married Stephanie Machel, and had 3 children: Patricia Lee, Mark Anthony, and Rosanna.

Mr. Manchin was elected to the House of Delegates in 1948, 1998, 2000, and 2002. During his tenure in the West Virginia Legislature, he was a member of several committees such as: Government Organization, Roads and Transportation, and Veteran Affairs (Vice Chair). He supported and sponsored progressive legislation designed to promote equal rights and opportunities for all West Virginians. For example, on February 9, 1949, he introduced House Bill 205, which provided equal rights in places of public accommodation and amusement and prescribed damages and penalties for violations. This bill was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, however, the bill was never reported out of Committee.

Mr. Manchin worked for the Farmers Home Administration from 1961 to 1972 and was the State Director for REAP from 1973 to 1976. Mr. Manchin also worked for the TEDDI Program. He was elected Secretary of State and served from 1977 to 1985. Then, he was elected State Treasurer and served from 1985 to 1989.

Among the many organizations he was a member of, some are: LOOM, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, Keep America Beautiful, and Go-Cats, Inc. He was a senate member of the Silver Haired Legislature for four years and was a member of the Knights of Columbus (4th degree).

Mr. A. James Manchin died November 3, 2003.

Dr. Virgil E. Matthews



Virgil E. Matthews, the son of Virgil and Izetta Ware Matthews, was born in LaFayette, Alabama on October 5, 1928. He attended the segregated school in LaFayette, Chambers County, Alabama. He graduated from DuSable High School in Chicago in June, 1947 as class valedictorian. Dr. Matthews earned a B.S. in Chemistry with honors, in June 1951, from the University of Illinois, Champaign Urbana and the S.M. degree in Chemistry from the University of Chicago in August, 1952. He was awarded a Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Company fellowship for 1952-1953, and a National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis fellowship for 1953-1955. He received a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Chicago in June, 1955.

Mr. Matthews accepted employment with the Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Company, a division of Union Carbide Corporation as a research chemist and moved to Charleston in November, 1954. He was the first African American chemist to be employed by Carbide at South Charleston and worked there for 32 years, retiring as a Development Scientist on December 30, 1986. He taught night Chemistry classes part-time at West Virginia State College (now University) from 1955-1963 and 1964-1970. After he retired from Union Carbide, he was appointed a full-time Professor of Chemistry at West Virginia State College (now University), served as chair of the Department of Chemistry and retired on June 30, 1994.

While Vice-President of the Charleston Branch of the NAACP, Dr. Matthews worked with the late E. L. James Sr., the late Atty. Willard Brown, the late State Senator Paul Kaufman, and Democratic Governor Hulett Smith for the passage of House Bill No. 821 on March 1, 1967 prohibiting discrimination in employment and public accommodations and giving enforcement powers to the West Virginia Human Rights Commission. With the assistance of the late Attorney Paul Kaufman, he and his wife became the first Negro family to purchase a house on Carroll Road, Highland Hills section of South Hills in 1965 and be accepted as members of the private, all-white South Hills Swim Club in 1970. He was involved in the efforts by C.O.R.E., the NAACP and the Triangle Improvement Council and others to fight to keep the residents' homes, most of which were owner-occupied single family houses in what became known as the Triangle District.

He became the first African American elected to a Council-at-Large seat in Charleston being re-elected 1971, 1975, and 1979. He married Shirley Elizabeth McFtridge. They are the parents of three children.



Attorney Thomas G. Nutter (Posthumously)

Thomas Gillis Nutter, attorney at law, legislator, and business man, is a native of the state of Maryland, having been born at Princess Anne, Somerset County on June 15, 1876. His paternal grandparents were Virginia & Caleb Nutter, and his maternal grandparents were Peter & Julia Henry.

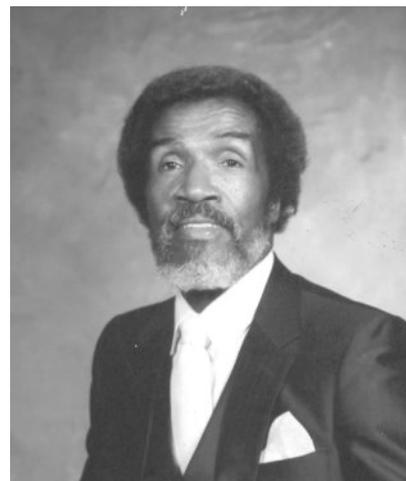
Mr. Nutter entered the law department of Howard University, Washington, D. C., for his law course, earning the LL. B degree in 1899. He taught for two years after completion of his course and was principal of the school at Fairmont, Maryland. He was admitted to the bar in 1903 and relocated to Charleston, West Virginia, and was, for six years, Assistant Land Clerk in the office of the State Auditor of West Virginia. Mr. Nutter practiced in state and federal courts. He was attorney for the Midland Brick and Cement Company, the S. W. Starks Improvement Company, and also handled the legal business of the Peoples Exchange Bank. The moving spirit in organizing the Mutual Savings and Loan Company of Charleston, which, at the time, was owned and operated by African American people, Mr. Nutter served as the Secretary Treasurer. Mr. Nutter was a member of the State Colored Bar Association of which he was, at one time, Secretary. He served in the West Virginia Legislature and was assigned to the judiciary committee. He is author of a number of important measures of a general nature as well as several bills affecting African Americans; among them are the Industrial School for Colored Boys and an Industrial Home for Colored Girls.

Mr. Nutter was also recognized as an authority on taxation and had a rather conspicuous part in helping to frame tax measures. Endorsed by labor organizations, Mr. Nutter had the support of many Democrats. A prominent figure in the Republican Party of the State, Mr. Nutter attended the National Republican Convention which nominated William Howard Taft as it's nominee, who subsequently was elected as the 27th President of The United States.

He was a President of the Charleston Branch of the NAACP and was Chairman of the Legal Committee. He raised \$22,000.00 for the Mattie V. Lee Industrial Home for Colored Girls. He also did a great amount of work in the interest of the Y.M.C.A.

On December 18, 1920, Mr. Nutter married Miss Sadie M. Meriwether of Washington, D.C. Mrs. Nutter was educated at Howard University and was, before her marriage, an accomplished teacher.

Reverend Dr. David Louis Smith
(Posthumously)



Reverend David Louis Smith was born on June 9, 1925, in Raleigh County, West Virginia. He was the son of Charles W. and Eva A. Calloway Smith. He attended public school at East Park Elementary, and Stratton High School in Beckley, West Virginia. After serving three years in the United States Marine Corps, he was honorably discharged, and was awarded the President's Unit Citation. While working in the coal mines of Cranberry, West Virginia, the call and purpose of his life was made clear, and there was no doubt, that God had called him to preach the Gospel. He made the necessary adjustments, with a growing family, to attend Bible College. He attended Zion Bible College in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Reverend Smith served as President of the McDowell and Raleigh County Branch of the NAACP guiding the organization through crucial civil rights struggles. He was instrumental in the desegregation of Raleigh County Schools, and the Beckley Telephone Company. His sense of justice led him to many protests and sit-ins in West Virginia, and other areas of the country. He participated in the March on Washington - "The Tent City" bearing witness to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Speech - "I Have A Dream".

Reverend Smith's accomplishments extend even further as he served as President for the McDowell County Federal Credit Union, Board Member of the Council of the Southern Mountains, a member of the Keystone City Council, and many other civic and christian organizations. For 26 years, he conducted the Spiritual Hour Broadcast on the WELC Radio Station in Welch.

Reverend Smith served as an itinerant minister in Raleigh and Tams, West Virginia for seven years. He was called to pastor at Mt. Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Keystone, in 1966, and was serving his 27th year as pastor, at the time of his death. He served as Moderator of the Flat Top Baptist Association and Recording Secretary for the West Virginia Baptist State Convention. He served as Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, and on the State Team for the West Virginia Baptist State Convention at Hill Top.

Mrs. Blanche Wade



Mrs. Blanche Wade, was born on April 24, 1901, and has lived more than a century, nearly all in West Virginia. Mrs. Wade spent her youth in a coal camp in London, West Virginia where schools were racially segregated. She experienced racial harassment, in the form of violent acts, from white children within the community.

Mrs. Wade dropped out of school in the eighth grade and became a live-in domestic servant in Charleston. She was forced to ride in the rear of the segregated street cars while traveling downtown.

In spite of racial segregation, Mrs. Wade successfully co-owned and operated a beauty salon located in “The Block” where St. Mark’s United Methodist Church now stands. She specialized in “Marcel Waves,” for black and white customers. She went in the back door of a white beauty salon, after hours, to learn how to do “Marcel Waves.”

During the 1960’s, Mrs. Wade, who was in her 60’s at the time, joined in the boycotts of “ten cents stores” and the Diamond Department Store. She marched, picketed, and participated in sit-ins with others in protest of racial discrimination. In a Charleston Gazette article, Mrs. Wade stated, “I would buy something at The Diamond, and then they would not let us eat. I would turn in what I’d bought and make them give my money back. I froze my account. We would sit on the stools and they wouldn’t give us food, but we would sit there so other people couldn’t come and sit.”

For her sacrificial protest during the Civil Rights Movement, Governor Bob Wise presented Mrs. Blanche Wade with the Distinguished West Virginian Award.



Mr. Richard G. Walker

Mr. Richard G. Walker was born in 1934 in Red Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, to the late Charles W. and Ernestine L. Walker. The oldest of four children, he graduated from Garnet High School and attended West Virginia State College (now University). While attending the College, Mr. Walker obtained employment with the Kroger Warehouse Distribution Center, where he remained for forty-one years.

An advocate for civil rights for many years, Mr. Walker participated in marches, to protest segregation and other forms of discrimination, with his mother and younger sisters. He became immersed in the Civil Rights Movement and began studying the life and writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Walker is well-known in the Charleston community for his powerful rendition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches, which he delivers at churches and multiple public events, including Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Holiday Celebration. Mr. Walker ignited the legacy of these renditions in many young people, including his granddaughter who has recited at some of the same places that her grandfather has spoken.

Mr. Walker recalls the days at Kroger, when he ate lunch shortly after arriving at work, because African Americans were not privileged to the regularly scheduled lunch period. Mr. Walker maintained a profound, but humble, spirit gaining the respect of his managers and co-workers. Eventually the lunch hour was readjusted to include all employees.

For the past thirty-eight years, Mr Walker has been an active member of the Washington Lodge #4 F&AM, Inc., where he has held the esteemed positions of Worshipful Master and served as Grand Master of the State of West Virginia. Mr. Walker is married to Adrian Farris, formerly of Huntington, and is the father of two children and five grandchildren.



Dr. John Warner, Jr.

A department chair and professor of sociology and anthropology at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, Dr. John Warner, Jr.'s commitment to the Civil Rights Movement, equity and equality is known throughout the campus, state, and nation.

Dr. Warner's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement began soon after his enrollment in the School of Theology at Boston University in 1958. He joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, America's oldest interfaith peace group, in 1959. Then, the following years of 1962-1964, he served as the Boston Field Worker for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). The Boston FOR sent Dr. Warner, as their representative, to the March on Washington in August of 1963, the day Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his, "I have a dream" speech. While serving a Methodist church in Livermore Falls, Maine, in 1964, Dr. Warner received an invitation from the National Council of Churches to serve the Mississippi Summer Project as a chaplain. He served as a chaplain and civil rights worker to the young Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee workers in Laurel, Mississippi.

Dr. Warner completed his Ph.D. at Boston University in 1967, and began teaching at the College of Emporia in Kansas in 1967. In the Spring of 1970, he interviewed with West Virginia Wesleyan College (WVWC) and was hired, moving back to Buckhannon, West Virginia that summer. During his tenure at the college, Dr. Warner has taught the courses; American Minorities for 35 years, and Global Minorities for the past 8 years. He challenged a sorority's national chapter because that campus' sorority prevented an African American woman from pledging. Later he fought with the campus Kappa Alpha Order to prevent members from wearing the confederate uniform, and displaying the confederate flag. In 1985, Dr. Warner, and campus chaplain, Jerry Wood, took a group of students to Washington D. C. to protest in front of the South African embassy. The group was arrested for trespassing in an act of civil disobedience.

Dr. Warner's impact extends beyond his work on campus through his essays in the Charleston Gazette, which addresses racial and ethnic problems in both, America, and globally. Several of Dr. Warner's columns have addressed Brown v. Board of Education and his work is widely recognized. This recognition has led to his election as a member of the National Council of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. West Virginia is fortunate to have Dr. John Warner for his unwavering stands for justice, equality, peace, understanding, and his dedication to educate on these issues.

Mr. William L. Williams, Jr.



William L. Williams, Jr., was born in Bessemer, Alabama on January 2, 1927. He was the first son, and second child, in a family of seven (7) born to his parents, William L. and Maud Williams. When he was nine months old his family moved to Omar, West Virginia, where his father worked in the coal mines. He attended Bluefield State College, on an athletic scholarship where he played football (hence the name “Tank”). After taking time off to serve in the United States Army Air Corps, during World War II, he returned to Bluefield State College and earned a Bachelor Degree, and was the first African American to earn a Masters Degree in Guidance & Counseling at West Virginia University in 1951.

Mr. Williams began teaching at Aracoma High School in 1951, and in 1959 he was transferred to Logan High School as an instructor and guidance counselor. When African American students were moved from all-black Aracoma High School to an all-white Logan County High School, Mr. Williams was there to help ease their transition. In 1966, he was named Director of the Logan County Schools Guidance Department. In 1972, he became the Assistant Superintendent of Logan County Schools.

Mr. Williams was a member of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s committee on Employment of the Handicapped, in 1966. In 1974, he became President of the Logan Kiwanis Club. He was the only African American member of a historically white civic club in Southern West Virginia. In 2000 he was honored by the Kiwanis International Foundation as a George F. Hixson Fellow, one of the Foundation’s highest honors.

In 1991, Mr. Williams was appointed, by then Governor Caperton, to serve on the West Virginia Human Rights Commission. He has since been reappointed by former Governors Underwood and Wise. He has served with distinction for 13 years where he currently sits as Vice Chair.

Mr. Williams was enshrined in the Aracoma High School Hall of Fame, for his outstanding contributions to the athletic program. In 2004, the NAACP Chapter #3231 (Logan-Boone Branch) recognized Mr. Williams for extraordinary service and dedication to the principles and ideas of this organization, through leadership, community and church service, and setting a shining example of what can happen through education and determination. He is also a Director of Bank One, in Logan, and was inducted into the West Virginia University Emeritus Club in 2004.

Mr. Williams retired from the Logan County school system in 1987, and has been a small business owner, as well as an entrepreneur. He resides in Omar with his wife Edith, and remains active in his church and community. He and his wife have two daughters, Judy and Michelle, and one grandson, Alex.

The Reverend Dr. F. Emerson Wood



Reverend F. Emerson Wood, was born in Herndon, West Virginia on May 6, 1928. He received his degree in theology & counseling from Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, and was awarded a Doctorate of Divinity Degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College, in Buckhannon. Reverend Wood served 43 years as an ordained clergy in the United Methodist Church. The last 18 years of active ministry were served as Senior Pastor at Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church, Huntington, West Virginia, where he retired in June 1996.

His ministry in the United Methodist Church gave him the opportunity to serve faith communities across West Virginia. He marched with civil rights advocates in Selma, Alabama in 1965. He organized and served as the President of the Human Rights Commission in Wheeling. Nationally, he served on the General Commission of Religion and Race of the United Methodist Church and, as a member of that Commission, chaired the Annual Conference Review Committee on racial inclusiveness.

Reverend Wood was a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. West Virginia Holiday Commission for four years, serving on the “Living the Dream” Awards Committee and the Ecumenical Service of Commemoration and Celebration. A highlight of Reverend Wood’s professional career occurred, January 2003, when he was presented the Governor’s Martin Luther King, Jr. “Living The Dream” Advocate of Peace Award.

In January of 1997, Reverend Wood was appointed Executive Director of Mission West Virginia, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation whose purpose is to serve West Virginian’s in need. By forming partnerships with governmental agencies, corporations, foundations, faith communities, and community organizations, priority initiatives were established in Welfare to Work, Computer Literacy, Adoption, and Foster Care Programs. Reverend Wood retired from this position on January 1, 2002 and serves as Consultant to the Corporation. Reverend Wood served on the Governor’s Council on Literacy, Health West Virginia Coalition, Nutrition Partnership for the Millennium, West Virginia Caring Foundation for Children, Family Connection, West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service, West Virginia Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition, Colin Powell’s America’s Promise, and as co- chair of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Foster Parent Campaign.

Reverend Wood has been a member of the Huntington, West Virginia Rotary Club since 1978, serving as president 1983-84, and honored as a Paul Harris Fellow in 1990. He served in the United States Navy during World War II and the Korean Conflict. He and his wife, BJ, are the parents of four children, and have five grandchildren.

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