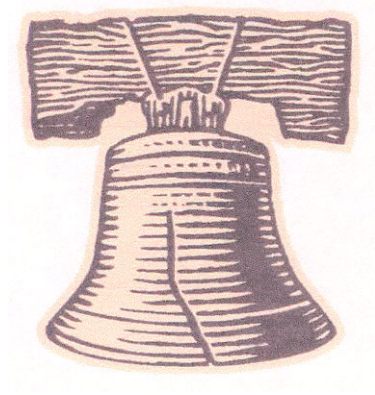


FROM WHENCE WE CAME



West Virginia Civil Rights Day

February 2003

Charleston, West Virginia

**The 2003 West Virginia Civil Rights Day
Honorees**



Louise Payne Anderson

Louise Payne Anderson has resided in Cannelton, West Virginia all of her life and during her 79 years has served as an advocate for the youth and her community. She is a graduate of Washington High School, Bluefield State College and Marshall University. She was the first African-American to serve as a department head at East Bank High School. Under her leadership, the Annual Mary L. Williams Human Relations Awards were established in the WVEA.

In her community in the Cannelton and Montgomery areas, she was worked tirelessly to address the economic and human rights conditions. She has served as branch president of the Montgomery Branch of the NAACP for the last twenty years, and has worked in the Montgomery Branch for over fifty years. Her efforts have included working with the police departments, the may, West Virginia University-Tech, and other community based organizations to ensure adequate educational and economic opportunities for minority citizens. At the 2002 Annual State Conference, Louise was awarded the T.G. Nutter Award that is presented to the West Virginian who has made significant contributions to the causes of equality and justice. Although her health has diminished her participation, she still regularly attends the NAACP State Conference and is active in her church, the Bethel Baptist Church of Cannelton, The Mt. Olivet District Association where she served as counselor for the youth, and the WV State Baptist Association. Another way that she serves the community is through her participation on the Board of Directors for the Washington High Community Education Center. Through her vision and perseverance, she approached the Kanawha County Board of Education in 1989 and was given the deed to the property in London, WV. The Association is still active today and provides services for the citizens of the Upper Kanawha Valley.



Joan Browning

Joan Browning was born as Shiloh, Wheeler County, in rural South Georgia. Her exposure to the Civil Rights Movement occurred while a student at Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville, Georgia when she attended the 1961 Paine College Student Christian Conference with her friend Faye Powell. Paine College students along with Reverend James M. Lawson and Dr. Louis Glover taught her how to behave as a nonviolent student Christian witness against racism. Immediately, she began participating in pickets and sit-ins. She worked side by side with Julian Bond at the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Council office in Atlanta Georgia. Later, she participated in the Albany Freedom Ride. She was the only white woman on the Albany Freedom Ride to be jailed for a week and a half. Ms. Browning was awarded the 2000 West Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commissions highest honor, the Governors Living the Dream award, as a person who best exemplifies all of the characteristics of justice, scholarship, sharing of self, human and civil rights, and advocacy of peace. Nominate by the Lewisburg Business and Professional Women, Browning was chosen as the first Business and Professions Women of West Virginias business Woman of the Year for making an impact to promote women in business. She is a member of the Visiting Committee for West Virginia University's Center for Women's Studies and is an organizer of the Coalition for West Virginia Women. She and Dr. Barbara J. Howe, Director of West Virginia University's Center for Women's Studies, co-chaired the West Virginia Advisory Committee to the Institute for Women's Policy Research report, Status of Women in West Virginia, released in November 2002. Ms. Browning is a West Virginia State College graduate with a Regents Bachelor of Arts and twelve hours toward a Masters Degree from Marshall University. She lectures on

topics in the history of the American south, civil rights, and women, and the motivational power of religion. In West Virginia, she had been a guest lecturer at West Virginia University, Fairmont State College, Glenville State Colleges Summersville campus, West Virginia State College and West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. She is the staff of Greenbrier Community College Foundation and a Concord College consultant.



Philip Carter, Jr.

Philip Carter, Jr., professor and chair, Social Work, School of Medicine at Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia is a social welfare policy advocate and community political planner. He has been recognized for his successful leadership for social justice by political, academic, labor and community organizations in Ohio; Pennsylvania; West Virginia; Miami, Florida; and Los Angeles, California.

He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Marshall University with a concentration in political science and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Carter was the first Division I African American basketball student/athlete at a white college in West Virginia arrested for attempting to eat a white-owned restaurant. He was one of the student leaders of the Civic Interest Progress student group, which led desegregation efforts against Baileys Cafeteria, the White Pantry and swimming pools. During August 1964, he protested the appearance of Governor Wallace at the Southern Governors Conference at the Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. This preceded that August 28, 1963 March on Washington. He and other African American leaders pressured the cities of Huntington and Clarksburg, West Virginia to form local human rights commissions. He led the SNCC affiliate in Huntington, West Virginia.

In addition, Mr. Carter was elected president of the Huntington Branch, NAACP 1988-1992 and 1996-2000. In 1980, he formed the only Black Political Action Committee (PAC) in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky.

His contributions to the community include service on the Urban Renewal Authority Board, the Ebenezer Medical Outreach, Inc. Board and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium.

Currently, he serves on the Marshall University Multicultural Affairs Committee. In 1999, he was recognized by the Herald Dispatch as one of the 50 most impactful leaders in the Huntington, West Virginia Tri-State area in the 20th Century.



George Earle Chamberlain, Jr.

George Earle Chamberlain, Jr. graduated from Garnet High School in Charleston, WV in 1938 and then earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education at Hampton University in 1943. From 1943-1946, he served in the United States Army, Quartermaster Corps, in New Guinea, the Philippine Islands and Japan. In 1946-1947, he attended the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Then from 1947-1964, he was engaged in several endeavors operating his own business, the Chamberlain Transfer Company, working for the United States Post Office, serving as Business Manager at Lakin State Hospital and then as In-take Officer for the WV Department of Employment Security.

In 1971, he was employed by the United States Department of Defense as an Equal Opportunity Specialist for areas in Virginia and West Virginia. Then in 1978, the Office of Federal Contracts and Compliance in the United States Department of Labor hired him as a Compliance officer, moved him to Pittsburgh and added Pennsylvania to his territory. Mr. Chamberlain retired from the Department of Labor in May 1992, and returned to Charleston, WV to live.

In the midst of the on-going Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s West Virginia like other states, as a result of pressure, passed legislation establishing a State Human Rights Commission to address the needs of people who suffered discrimination in practically every area of life. Hired by this Commission as Field Service Director in 1964, Chamberlain's job was to coordinate activities of the State Human Rights Commission with county commissions and with commissions in various cities including Fairmont, Charleston, Logan, Huntington,

Weirton, Clarksburg, Beckley, Morgantown, Parkersburg and Wheeling. He apprised them of federal and state laws that protected civil and human rights and helped them in their efforts to adopt and implement local civil rights policies and to define the breadth and depth of their leadership responsibilities.

Mr. Chamberlain was a conduit for information and a n effective speaker who was able to bring people together to share ideas on how conditions could be changed and how it act on those new ideas for the betterment of all. He used a combination of persuasion, diplomacy and coalitions to achieve good results at the time when the law did not give the WV Human Rights Commission real power or strength. It could persuade, promote, and encourage but what was needed was an enforceable law.

Government officials, state and local human rights commissions, churches, synagogues, labor union officials, organizations and individuals too numerous to name joined their efforts to influence the legislature to provide subpoena power for the WV Human Rights Commission. Chamberlain, who had been promoted to Assistant Director of the State Commission, was among that dedicated group of State Human Rights Commission on the very last day of the 1967 legislative session. Subpoena powers enabled the Commission in its investigations of complaints alleging discrimination to secure and examine essential records, to hold hearings and to determine what benefits to provide complainants if discrimination were proven.



Carrie Chance

Mrs. Carrie Chance is a native West Virginian, who has spent her career in public service. During the 1960s she was active in sit-ins and efforts to integrate the restaurants and dining places in Charleston and Huntington, WV. She has held numerous positions in Charleston city government. For example, she has served as the staff assistant/ coordinator for federal and state programs, the federal and state program grants administrator, relocation officer for the Charleston Renewal Authority and assistant personnel director. She completed her high school education at Charleston High School and attended West Virginia State College and the University of Tokyo. Among her many community activities are the Charleston NAACP, D.A.R.E. Board of Directors, City of Charleston Credit Union Board of Directors, the Kanawha Charleston Neighborhood Congress, Business and Professional Women's Organization, Westside Uplift Project and the Riverview Baptist Church Usher Board. Her political affiliations include the City of Charleston's Republican Executive Committee. In addition, she served on Governor Underwood's 1996-1997 Transition Team.



Betty Jane Cleckley

Betty Jane Cleckley, a graduate of the former Douglass High School, Huntington, West Virginia, received her Bachelor of Science degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a Master of Social Science degree from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, a Ph.D. degree from Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and a post doctoral certificate in Higher Education Management from Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is active in civic and professional organizations, and has served on national and state boards such as the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services (DACOWITS) and the State of West Virginia Human Rights Commission. Currently, she serves on the Martin Luther King, Jr. State of West Virginia Holiday Commission, the Board of Directors of the Unlimited Future, Inc. (UFI), Cabell Huntington Hospital Foundation, and the Center for Aging and Health Care in West Virginia, Inc. (CAH). She was presented The Governors Living the Dream Award January, 1998 by Cecil Underwood, Governor of West Virginia; The W.E.B. DuBois Higher Education Award November, 2000 by the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE); she is a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and a long time dedicated member of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and The National Association of Social Workers (NASW); The Betty Jane Cleckley Minority Research Award, established by the American Public Health Association, recognizes research on minority health issues particularly among the elderly.



The Reverend Homer H. Davis

The Reverend Homer H. Davis is a native West Virginian educated in Kanawha County public schools and was graduated from West Virginia State College. In 1964 he completed the requirements for full membership in the Washington Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and was ordained Elder on June 14 of the same year. Rev. Davis was instrumental in integrating the former Rock Lake Pool as well as other public accommodations in Charleston. From 1971 through 1979 he was under Special Appointment beyond the church with the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. During his tenure with E.D.A. in Huntington, WV; Atlanta GA and Washington, D.C., he held managerial positions in Administration and Civil Rights. In 1974, he was promoted to the position of Deputy Director, Office of Civil Rights in the national office. He is a charter member of the National Center for Human Relations Board of Directors at West Virginia State College. He is the recipient of the Governors 1998 Martin Luther King, Jr. LIVING THE DREAM AWARD for Human and Civil Rights. From 1994 through 2002, he has served as President of Charleston Branch 3226 of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Thirty-three years of organizational leadership have included: President, Kanawha Valley Council of Human Relations; President Charleston, WV Branch NAACP; Grand Master, MWPH Grand Lodge of West Virginia F&AM; President, Conference of Grand Masters of the World, Prince Hall affiliation; Chairperson, Cabell-Huntington Human Relations Council; Martin Luther King, Jr. WV Holiday Commission; Chairperson/Director, Ohio County Community Services and Mayors Blue Ribbon Panes on Diversity, City of Charleston.



Elizabeth Harden Gilmore

Civil rights leader Elizabeth Harden Gilmore lived and worked in this house from 1947 until her death in 1986. She pioneered efforts to integrate her state's schools, housing, and public accommodations and to pass civil rights legislation enforcing such integration. Her home, constructed by 1900, is a handsome, two-and-a-half story, brick Classical Revival style residence, with a columned portico. In the early 1950s before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision mandating school desegregation, Gilmore formed a women's club which opened Charleston's first integrated day care center. At about the same time, she succeeded in getting her black Girl Scout troop admitted to Camp Anne Bailey near the mountain town of Lewisburg. After co-founding the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1958, she led CORE in a successful 1 -year-long sit-in campaign at a local department store called The Diamond. In the 1960s Gilmore served on the Kanawha Valley Council of Human Relations, where she participated in forums on racial differences and where she helped black renters, displaced by a new interstate highway, find housing. Her successful push to amend the 1961 state civil rights law won her a seat on the powerful higher-education Board of Regents. Gilmore was the first African American to receive such an honor. She stayed on the Board from 1969 to the late 1970s serving one term as vice-president and one term as president. Gilmore's tireless commitment to civil and human rights didn't end there. She was also involved with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and community education and welfare committees. "She was always there," says her friend Betty Hamilton. "Her commitment was ongoing and steadfast."



The Reverend Dr. Paul J. Gilmer, Sr

Charleston native, Re. Dr. Paul J. Gilmer, Sr., involved himself in non-violent Civil Rights work beginning in the late 1940s. At that time he and Marvin Mills directed by their pastor, the late Rev. James Austin, of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Charleston, tried to secure tickets to Holiday on Ice at the Charleston Municipal Auditorium. Each time they were denied tickets, they returned to the end of the line and tried again. Finally they asked a fair skinned African American, Skip Courtney, to buy several tickets for them. At the next City Council meeting, following a secret debate, the auditorium doors were opened to all citizens. When Lawyer William Lonesome was recruiting individuals for State Police positions, Rev. Gilmer applied but was rejected because of an eye problem. A loyal member of the NAACP, Rev. Gilmer became an executive board member of the local branch in 1966 and served until his illness in 1991. Rev. Gilmer was active in the branch activities under Attorney Willard Brown. When the branch called a meeting to organize a march to integrate Barlow Skating Rink on Virginia Street, West; Gilmer responded and participated in the march. As president of the Charleston Ministerial Association (1966-67 and 1970-75) Rev. Gilmer along with Attorney Willard Brown and others, organized a march from the Donnally Street playground to City Hall to petition City Council for an Open Housing Law. During Rev. Ronald English's first year with the Charleston Black Ministerial Alliance, founder/president Rev. Gilmer asked the Alliance to show support for the predominantly Black garbage workers who had been fired for wanting to become unionized. After negotiations failed, Gilmer called on the Charleston Black Ministerial Alliance, the

Charleston Business and Professional Mens Club, and the NAACP to show the injustice of the situation by planning a march.

Rev. Gilmer cooperated with NAACP President Bernard Hawkins to form a coalition of the NAACP, the Business and Professional Men's Club, the Black Ministerial Alliance and the Triangle Improvement Council to protest the exclusion of Blacks from swimming in the Rock Lake Pool. In support of the Triangle Improvement Council, led by Bill Preston, Henry Haynes and Johnnie Mae Cash; Rev. Gilmer called a meeting at Shiloh Baptist Church and invited federal, state and city officials. The meeting was concerned with seeking representation on the committees and commissions for a master plan for redevelopment of the triangle area because there was no plan for relocation of the persons to be displaced by Urban Renewal. Rev. Paul J. Gilmer is pastor of First Baptist Church of Vandalia, Charleston, former pastor of the historic African Zion Baptist Church, Malden, retired Executive Director of OIC of Charleston and retired Assistant Fire Chief, Charleston Fire Department.



Henry Hale

Henry Hale is a native of McDowell County, West Virginia and educated in the public schools there. He attended Anawalt Junior High School and Gary High School. He is retired from public service having worked for the United States Postal Service and OSHA. For many years he was instrumental in sit-ins and demonstrations in Charleston, WV during the 1960s. His untiring efforts resulted in the integration of public facilities in Charleston, WV. He was active in the Charleston NAACP and continues to maintain his membership in this organization. In addition, he supports the Covenant House through volunteer services and his church, First Baptist on Shrewsbury Street.



Bernard Francis Hawkins

Bernard Francis Hawkins, a trailblazer and pacesetter in civil rights in the state of West Virginia, has resided most of his life in South Charleston, WV where through his persistence and courage he worked to eradicate segregation, racism and discrimination. During the 1960s he led protests against the segregated Rock Lake Pool and worked to integrate Sunset Memorial Park in the 1970s. He was born in Sewell, Fayette County, West Virginia. He was educated in Fayette County Schools where he attended Simmons High School for two years and graduated from DuBois High School in Mt. Hope, WV. He also attended West Virginia State College. He was hired at Union Carbide where he worked more than thirty years as supervisor of the carpenters at the Institute Plant. He was known for his outstanding work in the area of civil and human rights as evidenced by his work for equality and freedom from discrimination. He helped countless persons to acquire jobs at Union Carbide and at other businesses in the Kanawha Valley. In the education arena, He also worked tirelessly through his work in resolving employment concerns and student concerns with the Kanawha County Board of Education. Upon his retirement, Mr. Hawkins became a lobbyist through the Political Action Committee of the WV Conference of Branches of the NAACP and worked for the passage of the multicultural education bill, the Martin Luther King State Holiday Bill, and other bills that benefited minorities, the underprivileged, and the under-represented citizens in the state of West Virginia. He served as president of the board of the O.I.C. of Charleston for five years and was awarded the National Path Finders Award, which was presented by

the O.I.C.s of America for this distinguished term of leadership. The citation spoke of his effectiveness as board president and recognition as an astute fundraiser. Through the years, Mr. Hawkins has received many awards which include the Living the Dream Award for Sharing of Self which was presented on January 19, 1987 by the WV Charleston Neighborhood Congress; Charleston Branch award for service and dedication in 1993; the City of South Charleston Service Award in May, 1997; and the Martin Luther King Jr. Courage Award presented on January 18, 1998 by Ebenezer Baptist Church.



Attorney Herbert H. Henderson

Herbert Henderson aptly has been referred to as Mr. Civil Rights of West Virginia. During the twenty years that he served as President of the West Virginia Conferences of the NAACP, he was instrumental in supervising school desegregation and public accommodation civil rights cases in southern West Virginia. One of his important accomplishments was the NAACP lawsuits against the West Virginia Department of Public Safety that facilitated the hiring of minorities and women as state troopers. In addition, Mr. Henderson has served as lead counsel in several landmark civil rights cases including West Virginia Human Rights Commission v. United Transportation Union, 167 W.Va. 282, 280 S.E. 2d 653 (1981). He has a B.S. degree in Business Administration from West Virginia State College and a Juris Doctor degree from George Washington University School of Law. Attorney Henderson is the Senior partner with the law firm of Henderson, Henderson and Staples. Attorney Henderson served a State President of NAACP from 1966 to 1986. Further, he served as interim General Counsel for the NAACP National Headquarters in 1984 and again in 1989 and 1990. He is the recipient of the Robert Ming Award (By NAACP Board of Directors in 1985); Justitia Officium Award (Highest Honor of the WV University College of Law) May, 1989; T.G. Nutter award by the WV Conference of Branches of the NAACP; Living Dream Award for Civil Rights from WV Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission; National Bar Association 1998 Hall of Fame and a WV Bar Foundation Fellow



Paul J. Kaufman

Paul J. and Rose Jean Kaufman, husband and wife, human rights collaborators, were born and raised in Charleston, West Virginia.

Paul Kaufman (b: 1920) was a lawyer, State Senator, defender of the environment, teacher, author and pioneer in the fields of labor, civil rights and tax reform. As a State Senator he was the author of the bill establishing the West Virginia Human Rights Commission and the bill successfully repealing West Virginia's death penalty. Paul Kaufman was a member of the Advisory Committee of the U. S. Commission Civil Rights at the time of his death.



Rose Jean Kaufman

Rose Jean Kaufman (b: 1928) was a social worker, former Board Member of the Womens Health Center, the Mattie V. Lee Home and one of the earliest organizers of the hospice program in the Kanawha Valley. She was a labor organizer in higher education for the West Virginia Education Association and a committed integrationist. Civil Rights was her passion and she was in the forefront of West Virginias civil rights movement for twenty-five years. Paul, Rose Jean and son, Steven, were killed by a drunk driver on December 28, 1980. Surviving were two sons, (now two sons, two daughters-in-law and three granddaughters).



Shirley N. Paige

Shirley N. Paige retired in 1999 after providing the Ormet Corporation of Hannibal, Ohio with 20 years of dedicated service. Prior to her work with Ormet, she was employed in a variety of positions including: Executive Director of the Call A Teen Program; Driver for the Florence Critton Home for Unwed Mothers; Machine Operator with the Wonder Bakery in Wheeling, West Virginia; Ward Clerk in the Ohio Valley General Hospital of Wheeling, West Virginia; Day Care Supervisor and Social Worker with the Headstart program wider the Northern West Virginia Community Action Agency; and as a Beautician with the Shirley Beauty Shop in Wheeling, West Virginia. In 1987, she earned an Associates Degree in Social Sciences from West Virginia Northern College. She also holds a professional cosmetology license.

Emerson Reed

(Picture not available)

Emerson Reed is a native of Cabin Creek, Kanawha County, West Virginia. Mr. Reed was educated in Kanawha County schools having graduated from Charleston High School and later attended West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia, Alameda College in Alameda California and Heald College in San Francisco, CA. Mr. Reed was a forerunner in the Tent City protest in 1969, led by MOTOBU (Mobilization for Total Black Unity) for which Mr. Reed was the director. With numerous rallies, protests and marches to stop urban renewal from replacing the Triangle District, the Tent City movement lasted approximately two years. MOTOBU was not going to allow the city to take property by eminent domain and in protest put up tents in the area where the urban renewal was to begin. Other than leading this powerful group, Mr. Reed was also involved in community activities such Pride, Inc. and AMCM, Inc., as an IT consultant and All-Aid International, Inc., as a member of its Board of Directors. Mr. Reed is retired from E.I. DuPont.



Helaine Rotgin

Helaine Rotgin, a devoted family matriarch, a friend, a mentor, a community activist in both human and civil rights, and one, who possesses a sincere and peaceful spirit that attracts no strangers, remains an action oriented member of the Charleston Community.

Ms. Rotgin has participated in a number of Civil Rights activities and has obtained numerous awards. She actively served as a member of the House of Delegates from 1977-78 and became affectionately referred to as the Mother of Recycling.

Ms. Rotgin has so many significant stories to share, which she does so eloquently. Recently, Reverend Homer Davis mentioned that to celebrate the success of Civil Rights in West Virginia, and not include Helaine would be a travesty.

Ms. Rotgin is a member and served as a member of various clubs and organizations including, the Kanawha Valley Council for Human Relations, which later turned out to be the forerunner of the Inner Faith Council, Quota Club, American Association of University Women, Coalition for Clean Elections, and a host of other organizations. She is presently a member of the Charleston Job Corps Community Relations Council, West Virginia Inner Faith Center for Public Policy, West Virginia Climate Change Campaign, Kanawha Scholars, National Council of Jewish Women and Light of the People.



Reverend Dr. Dean K. Thompson

Dean K. Thompson is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, West Virginia. His previous ministerial experiences have included pastorates in Pasadena, California, Austin, Texas, and Montgomery, West Virginia, and an internship with the East Harlem Protestant Parish, New York. Thompson was reared in Huntington, West Virginia, and he served as Governor of Boys State and Senator to Boys Nation in 1960. He graduated from Marshall University, 1965. He received three degrees from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, including a Ph.D. in church history in 1974. He has served as an adjunct teacher for seminaries in San Francisco, Austin and Richmond; and he is the author of books and articles on history, ministry and leadership. His book in progress is his Chautauqua Lectures on the prophetic pilgrimages of Mohandas Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Pearl S. Buck, Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Luther King Jr. Since 1965 Thompson has spoken, written, taught, worked and demonstrated against the local, national and international scourges of poverty, racism, discrimination, violence and war. His biblical/theological argument against the death penalty has appeared in news publications across the United States. In both of his West Virginia pastorates, Thompsons human and civil rights commitments have focused especially on housing and on bridge-building among different races, faith communities, and advocacy groups.



Clayborn Tillman

Clayborn Tillman was born in Victoria, Texas and moved to West Virginia when he married native West Virginian Alberta Brown. He is retired from the United States Postal Service after 28 years of service as a mail carrier. He also served in the United States Army for five years. During his many years of service to the NAACP Charleston Branch, he was instrumental in providing leadership that resulted in an increase in membership. He also participated in numerous district conferences. As a result, the NAACP in Charleston continues to have a thriving membership. He is also active in his Mason Lodge Washington NO. 4, A&FM. He has been a member of First Baptist Church of Charleston for 50 years.

Mr. Tillman is a native of Bloomington, Victoria County, Texas. While stationed in the U S Army during WWII he met and married a Charleston native. After attaining the rank of Sergeant First Class he was honorably discharged. Since then he has made his home in Charleston, WV. Shortly after moving to Charleston, he joined First Baptist Church. He was an Usher and was elected president of the Usher Board. Under his leadership the Usher Board has raised and contributed substantially to the building fund, many building improvements and many church activities. One of the many activities of the Usher board was the installation of the handicap ramp, which made the building accessible to persons with handicaps and also brought the church into compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. The Usher Board raised over \$15,000 to fund this project. Initially the Usher Board raised funds by catering dinners at the church. Eventually the demand for his home made bread out-paced

the demand for dinners and a roll ministry evolved. Hundred of thousands of rolls have been baked in the First Baptist Church kitchen, sold throughout the state and shipped to many areas of this country. Through this project, the Board has also furnished the church kitchen with top-quality cooking and baking facilities. For more than 50 years he has served on the Board of Deacons. He has been instrumental in maintaining the Sunday School Breakfast Program for youth. He serves as the chef and often spends his own money to purchase needed food. He has always taken a keen interest in his community. As President of his neighborhood improvement association he petitioned City Council for funds for sewers, recreational needs and paved streets in the Wertz Avenue community. Through his efforts an overpass was constructed which prevented the entrance to Wertz Avenue from being blocked by the interstate highway and railroad. During the early seventies he chaired the Inter City Council of Neighborhoods, an organization that sought improvements in minority and low-income neighborhoods throughout the city. Working with a now defunct civil rights organization, UNION, he helped to establish the Charleston Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) that was founded by the late Dr. Leon Sullivan. He served on the Board of Directors for over twenty years. He has been an active member and served on the executive board of the NAACP. He has sponsored and assisted a variety of youth activities including the NAACP ACT-SO. As a member of the Charleston Planning Commission, he helped to develop the Downtown Renaissance Plan and the Charleston Town Center. He has also been a member of the Charleston Human Rights Commission, an organization that ensures that citizens of Charleston are treated fairly with out regard to r ace color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability and familial status in housing, employment and public accommodations. He is a member of Prince Hall Masons, Salaam Temple #83 and served as Potentate of that organization. Mr. Tillman was employed by the US Postal Service for over 30 years. Through the postal unions he worked for improved rights and working conditions for postal employees. He has been married to Alberta Brown Tillman for 58 years. He and his wife have two daughters, Joyce Whitley of Detroit Michigan, and Carolyn El Amin of Charleston, three grand daughters, and two great grand daughters.

In his leisure he enjoys, treating friends and families to his homemade culinary delicacies, growing roses, and taking pictures.



James A. Tolbert, Jr.

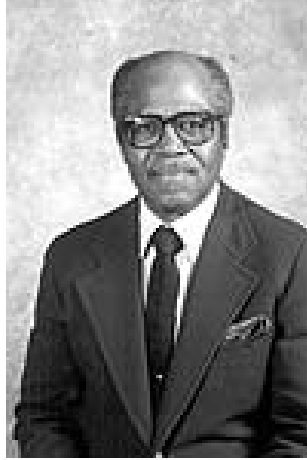
Mr. James Tolbert is a native of Charles Town, West Virginia. After graduating from Page Jackson High School in 1950, Mr. Tolbert earned a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from West Virginia State College. Mr. Tolbert was active in many civil rights activities and has received numerous awards for his contribution to the Civil Rights Movement. In 1963, Mr. Tolbert participated in the famous March on Washington. Since 1986, he has served as state president of the West Virginia Chapter of the NAACP. He presided over the Jefferson County Branch from 1968-1974. Among his notable affiliations and awards, Mr. Tolbert is active in both the community and fraternal arenas. He was Past Grand Master, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of West Virginia, Free and Accepted Masons, Inc. 1983-84; Past Master, Star Lodge #1, F & AM, Charles Town, WV; Past Recorder, Nile Temple #27 (Shriners), Martinsburg, WV; Grand Inspector General, (33rd Degree), United Supreme Council, Prince Hall Affiliation, Washington, D.C.; Member, Deborah Chapter #38, Order of the Eastern Star, Charles Town, WV and an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. His community, Mr. Tolbert organized the Charles Town Recreation League in 1964. He has also held positions on the Harpers Ferry Job Corps Community Relations Committee, the Jefferson Memorial Hospital Board of Directors, Marshall-Holly-Mason American Legion Post #102, Martinsburg, WV and was chairperson, Board of Directors, G.W. Carver Institute AIDS Education Project. Mr. Tolbert has also been the recipient of several service awards such as The T.G. Nutter Award, WV NAACP, 1976; The Living the Dream Award, WV Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Commission for Human and Civil Rights, 1988; Outstanding Career Award-Office of Personnel and Labor Relations, Veterans Administration, VA Central Office, Washington, D.C., 1998 and two time recipient of the Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks Award, NAACP Midwest Region III State President of the Year, 1991 and 2002.



Nellie Walker

Ms. Nellie Walker's career has spanned nearly four decades of service to West Virginia State College, its alumni and students as Assistant Registrar. She was born in Red Sulphur Springs, WV, and attended Garnet High School in Charleston, WV. Throughout her service to West Virginia State College, Ms. Walker actively participated in numerous sit-ins and demonstrations designed to integrate the department stores and public recreational facilities in the Kanawha Valley. From 1973 through 1983, she was instrumental in helping more than fifty law enforcement officers in Charleston receive degrees in criminal justice from the college. Walker has been a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority since 1963 and past advisor for Alpha Delta Chapter, member of College Alumni Club, Community Relations Board, Charleston Job Corps, Selective Service Board, WV Registrars Association, American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers, Kanawha Alumni Chapter and Alpha Kappa Mu Honorary Society. The special bond between Ms. Walker and West Virginia State College can best be summed up from an interview with a member of the college newspaper, for forty years Ms. Nellie Walker's presence at West Virginia State College has been dedicated to service, and she is an inspiration to many. It does not take one long to realize how much Ms. Walker cares for individuals and to feel the love she has for her Alma Mater, She is truly a Yellow Jacket.



Ellis Ray Williams

Ellis Ray Williams was educated in McDowell County. He graduated from Bluefield State College (cume laude) in 1946 and attended West Virginia University and Virginia Polytechnic University. He worked in secondary education for 41 years, 20 as a classroom teacher and 21 as a secondary principal. He served as an adjunct instructor in Bluefield State College for 10 years. Attorney Herbert Henderson has said that Ellis Ray Williams was the catalyst for civil rights in Southern West Virginia.

During his many years of service to the NAACP, Mr. Williams served as a member of the West Virginia State Conference of Branches of NAACP Finance Committee and Education Committee.

In 1987, he was recognized as providing outstanding leadership as president of the McDowell Branch of the NAACP. In 1990, he received the T.G. Nutter Award for Outstanding Achievements and Christian Service to Humanity in the field of Human Rights. During his tenure with the State Conference, he has chaired the Education Committee. A president emeritus of the McDowell County Branch of the NAACP, he is a life member and golden heritage life member of the organization. In 1997, he received the McDowell County Branch of NAACP Appreciation Award for Dedicated Service to the National, State and Local Bodies of NAACP and the West Virginia Conference Branches Award for Outstanding Dedication and Unrelenting Contribution to the Cause of Freedom.

His community service includes a gubernatorial appointment to the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission, a Board Member of the Tug Valley Health Clinic, a member of the Kimball Memorial Building Restoration Committee and a member of the Welch area Chamber of Commerce. He is a deacon at St. James Missionary Baptist Church where he is a certified Christian educator.



© West Virginia Human Rights Commission 2003