

LET'S BUILD THE FUTURE TOGETHER

---

*Inspiring*  
**LEADERSHIP**  
**LEGACY**  
**LOVE**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Annual*  
**CITRUS COUNTY**

**MILK**

**LEADERSHIP GALA**

PRESENTED BY  
CL22 PRODUCTIONS

**SOUVENIR BOOKLET**

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**SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2026 | 5:00 PM**  
CITRUS SPRINGS COMMUNITY CENTER  
1570 W CITRUS SPRINGS BLVD | CITRUS SPRINGS, FL 34434

## DESIGN: Decor, Concept, Theme Development



- Design
- Concept
- Theme Development
- Mood Boards
- Visual Inspiration
- Light
- Florals
- Table Top Design
- Music
- Talent
- Audio Visual
- Stage Design

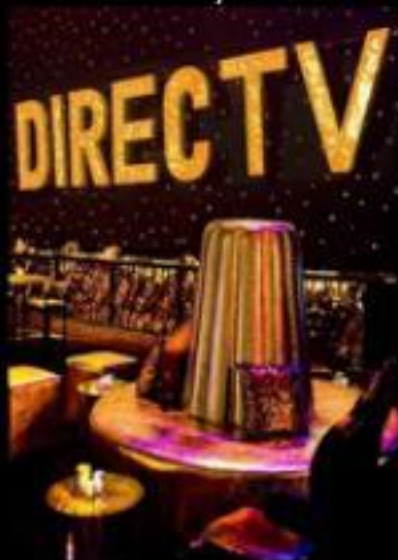
## EXECUTION: Planning, Management, Supervision

- Planning
- Sourcing
- Vendor Partners
- Rentals
- Caterers
- Menu Selections
- Timelines
- Budget Development
- Detailed Floor Plans
- Renderings (CAD)
- Entertainment
- Supervision



## PRODUCTION: Install, Run-of-Show, Break-Down

*WE ARE GRATEFUL TO  
CL22 PRODUCTIONS  
FOR THEIR COMMITMENT  
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CONTINUITY SPONSOR,  
BRINGING VISION AND  
BEAUTY TO OUR GALA  
THROUGH THEIR DÉCOR  
AND CREATIVE  
EXCELLENCE.*



- Manage Installation
- Detailed Logistics
- Event Floor
- Interface w/ Vendors
- Supervise Events
- Run of Show
- Breakdown
- From Start to Finish

# About Tonight

## FROM THE FRIENDS OF CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greetings Community Collective,

Welcome to our very special guests as we gather for the 3rd Annual Citrus County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Gala.

Tonight, we honor the men and women who made great sacrifices and endured hardships we may never fully understand—yet from which we all benefit.

We stand on their shoulders, carry their lessons onward, commit ourselves to action, and move forward with their love. This evening is a reminder that progress is never accidental. It is intentional. It is collective. And it is truly Generations in the Making.

The historic Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery traces its formal beginnings to 1884 with the organization of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, though its roots may reach even further back.

Today, this sacred ground faces real challenges—flooding due to a high water table, sinking areas caused by surrounding development, and the pressures of growth and modernization. Yet within these challenges lie powerful opportunities: to preserve history, restore dignity, protect sacred spaces, and educate future generations about the lives and legacies that shaped our community. Together, we celebrate history, honor legacy, and UNITE in purpose.

As we look ahead, let us Lead with Love and intention—committing not only to remember the past, but to actively Build the Future. Through stewardship, service, and shared leadership, we can ensure that Crystal Memorial Gardens remains a place of honor, reflection, and pride for generations to come. Your presence tonight matters. Your partnership matters. And your commitment helps turn remembrance into restoration—and vision into lasting impact.

Andrea K. McCray, President

Josh McCray, Vice President/Secretary

Monique C. Bunch, Treasurer

Vicki Sawyer-Lindo, Board Member

Dr. Danita Smith, Board Member

Sheila Snow, Board Member

Nicole Durante, Gala Planning Team Member



FRIENDS OF CRYSTAL  
MEMORIAL GARDENS  
CEMETERY

*With Gratitude,  
We Thank Our Sponsors*

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**Bronze Sponsors**

Connectively Yours by Nicole Durante  
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**Founding Family**

Robert & Claudia Brockett  
*In Loving Memory of Mildred Freeman*  
Bunch Lawn Care (Bunch Family)

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Hometown Citrus Magazine

## *With Gratitude, We Thank Our Donors*

- Dr. Hersell Lindo
- Dr. Jay Newcomer
- Seven Rivers Church
- Sheriff David and Angel Vincent

## *In Partnership With*

### **Community Partners**

- Braltonni's Bed & Breakfast / Event Venue
- Boy Scout Troop #457
- Connectively Yours by Nicole Durante
- Crystal River Fire Department
- Crystal River High School Students
- MWC Dumpsters & Landclearing
- Oysters Restaurant & Catering
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 10087, Beverly Hills, FL

### **Strategic Partners**

- Andrea K & Co
- Black Cemetery Network
- Citrus County Historical Society
- Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery Board of Directors
- Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN)
- Gulf Archeologic Research Institute (GARI)
- Howard Civil Engineering
- State of Florida, Division of Historic Resources

**"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."**

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



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THE HOSPITAL OR AFTER HOURS



"The ultimate measure of a man is not where  
he stands in moments of comfort and  
convenience, but where he stands at times of  
challenge and controversy."  
— Martin Luther King Jr.

*3rd Annual Citrus County  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Leadership Gala*

**PRESENTED BY CL22 PRODUCTIONS**

**PROGRAMME**

**MS. CHRISTINA WATKINS**

MISTRESS OF THE GALA

**WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

ANDREA MCCRAY, FCMGC PRESIDENT

**BLESSING OF FOOD** DEACON WILLIE JOYNER

**~ DINNER IS SERVED ~**

**RECOGNITION OF SPONSORS**

**TITLE SPONSOR REMARKS**

CYNTHIA LOPELL, CL22 PRODUCTIONS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DIGNITARIES**

VICKI SAWYER-LINDO, FCMG BOARD MEMBER

**SPOKEN WORD** WALTER JENNINGS

**SPIRIT OF CITRUS COUNTY AWARDS**

**MUSICAL SELECTIONS**

BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIV INSPIRATIONAL GOSPEL CHOIR

**— A NIGHT OF IMPACT —**

**GUEST SPEAKER**

**MR. GREG SAWYER**

1973 CRYSTAL RIVER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

1977 U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY GRADUATE

20 YEAR DECORATED NAVAL FLIGHT OFFICER

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**ANTOINETTE JACKSON, PHD**

FOUNDER, BLACK CEMETERY NETWORK

PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

DIRECTOR, USF LIVING HERITAGE INSTITUTE

**CALL TO ACTION / COMMITMENT PLEDGE**

**SILENT AUCTION CLOSSES AT 9:30 PM**

# Christina Watkins



**MISTRESS OF  
THE GALA**

CHRISTINA WATKINS IS AN AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST, CHILDREN'S AUTHOR, PUBLIC SPEAKER, AND COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT WITH OVER 12 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE. SHE LEADS WITH KINDNESS, CREATIVITY, AND ENTHUSIASM, SHARING IMPACTFUL STORIES ACROSS MULTIPLE STATES.

A DEDICATED MENTOR SKILLED IN MEDIA, DEADLINES, AND ENGAGEMENT, CHRISTINA PROUDLY HONORS HER GRANDPARENTS, WINZALO SR. AND MARY WATKINS, BELOVED CITRUS COUNTY LEADERS INTERRED AT HISTORIC CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY.

# Walter Jennings



**SPOKEN WORD  
ARTIST**

A 20+ YEAR LEADER IN CREATIVE ARTS, OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC EVENT COORDINATION. HE HAS EXCELLED IN MERGING THE "CORPORATE + CREATIVE" TO PROVIDE UNIQUE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS.

HE IS A PROVEN INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL COACH FOR BUSINESS LEADERS, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS. HE HOLDS A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN BUSINESS ECONOMICS.

# *Antoinette Jackson, Ph. D*



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

DR. ANTOINETTE JACKSON, PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA AND DIRECTOR OF THE USF LIVING HERITAGE INSTITUTE. SHE IS ALSO THE FOUNDER OF THE BLACK CEMETERY NETWORK, A NATIONAL PLATFORM DEDICATED TO RESEARCH, PRESERVATION, AND AWARENESS OF HISTORIC AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUNDS.

DR. JACKSON'S WORK BRIDGES SCHOLARSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE, ENSURING THAT HISTORY IS DOCUMENTED, HONORED, AND PROTECTED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

# *Gregory R. Sawyer*



**GUEST SPEAKER**

MR. SAWYER, FOURTH OF 11 CHILDREN, WAS CRYSTAL RIVER HIGH'S FIRST BLACK SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT AND 1973 SALUTATORIAN.

A 1977 U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY GRADUATE WITH A B.S. IN MATHEMATICS AND AN M.S. IN COMPUTER SCIENCE, HE SERVED 20 YEARS AS A DECORATED NAVAL FLIGHT OFFICER.

AFTER RETIRING AS COMMANDER, HE BECAME A SUCCESSFUL FEDERAL CONTRACTOR, BUSINESS OWNER, AND STEM MENTOR, CO-FOUNDING CSJ PARTNERS AND SUPPORTING YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.

# Andrene Samantha Brown

SPECIAL MUSICAL GUEST, SAXOPHONIST



We are honored to welcome the incredibly talented Andrene Samantha Brown, joining us all the way from Jamaica for an unforgettable evening of music, culture, and elegance.

With a sound that is soulful, sophisticated, and deeply expressive, Andrene Samantha Brown brings international artistry and island-rooted passion to the stage—creating an atmosphere that is both powerful and refined.

Her presence will elevate the evening and set the tone for a truly memorable night.

# Bethune-Cookman University Inspirational Gospel Choir

SPECIAL MUSICAL GUEST



The Inspirational Gospel Choir is a dedicated ensemble of young university students who minister through song, using music as a powerful expression of faith, leadership, and service.

As ambassadors for the University, the choir proudly carries forward the legacy of its founder, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, whose words—“Our whole school is for Christian service”—mirror the very principles championed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

At the MLK Leadership Gala, the Inspirational Gospel Choir’s participation embodies the spirit of servant leadership, collective responsibility, and hope in action. Through both their music and their commitment to community service, they reflect the values of legacy, unity, and purpose that define this evening of impact-strengthening bonds between the University and the broader community while inspiring the next generation of leaders.

# Terence Horne Jr.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE | JACKSONVILLE, FL



Terence Horne, Jr. is a dynamic creative and community leader from Jacksonville, Florida, whose work spans music, visual art, and mentorship. An Air Force veteran, devoted husband and father, he is a Hip Hop artist, podcast host, and visual artist known for using his platform to inspire, uplift, and engage across generations.

As a youth mentor and positive influence, Terence is deeply committed to empowering young people through creativity, authenticity, and purpose. His artistry reflects resilience, storytelling, and cultural expression, aligning powerfully with the values of leadership, legacy, and impact celebrated at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Gala.

As Artist in Residence, Terence Horne, Jr. brings vision, voice, and creative excellence that elevate this evening and embody the spirit of transformative leadership.



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Crystal River | 638 N. Citrus Ave | Crystal River, FL 34428  
Inverness | 210B Tompkins Street | Inverness, FL 34450  
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# Spirit of Citrus County Awards

The **Spirit of Citrus County Award** is presented to those who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to Community. Their efforts to lead, build, and collaborate, with an optimistic approach to work, while creating an inclusive and supportive environment have been instrumental in our efforts here in Citrus County, Crystal River, and our historic cemetery.

## Our Matriarchs



### **Albula Buckman**

Born in Williston, Florida, Albula Frazier (Sawyer) Buckman was the youngest of four children of Jessie Frazier and Estelle Huggins. A visionary business owner and qualified nurse for more than 60 years, she helped train and support generations of medical professionals throughout Citrus County. Dedicated to community service and care for the less fortunate, her greatest legacy remained her cherished role as a devoted wife and mother.



### **Betty J. McKinnon**

Born in Inverness, Florida, on December 19, 1933 Betty J. McKinnon was a devoted wife to Orbary McKinnon, Sr. for 66 years and a loving mother of six children. A faithful and lifelong member of the Ind House of God, she lives a life rooted in faith, family, and service. Her legacy reflects enduring love, commitment to family and community, and spiritual devotion.

## Our Retired Educators



### **Lillie Robinson Biddle**

Born in Webster, Florida, Lillie Robinson Biddle was one of ten children and a devoted educator who served as a Crystal River Middle School teacher for 27 years before retiring. Known as a loving caretaker of her family, she dedicated her life to nurturing both students and loved ones.



### **Betty Jackson**

Betty Jean Jackson dedicated 41 years to educating children at George Washington Carver School and Crystal River Primary School, leaving a lasting impact on generations of students. A faithful member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, she lived a life rooted in service, education, and faith. Her legacy reflects commitment, compassion, and community uplift.

# Spirit of Citrus County Awards

## Raye Frances Joyner



A longtime and devoted member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church and a respected educator who dedicated 41 years of service to the Citrus County community. She taught at George Washington Carver School and Crystal River Primary School, shaping young lives through education, care, and commitment. Now retired, Raye Frances Joyner's legacy reflects a life of faith, service, and lasting impact on generations of students and families.

## Our Historical Resource

### Randolph Bellamy



Randolph Bellamy is a respected historical resource and member of a pioneer family of Citrus County, whose roots and contributions have helped shape the community across generations. His knowledge and stewardship of local history preserve the stories, traditions, and legacy of those who laid the foundation for the county's growth.

## Our Medical Community

### Dr. Haptu Adera and Dr. Jill Adera



Dr. Haptu Adera & Dr. Jill Adera are respected physicians and community leaders who have proudly served the Inverness community since 2004. Practicing from the historic Warnock House—the former home of Inverness's first physician—they are known for delivering personalized medical and cosmetic skin care grounded in excellence, education, and integrity. United by a shared commitment to service, family, and community impact, Dr. Haptu and Dr. Jill Adera exemplify the principles of leadership, compassion, and legacy celebrated at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Gala.

## Our Civic Service

### Sterling Harris



Crystal River Fire Department  
Station Mentor | 40 Years of Service | Firefighter of the Year  
Sterling Harris is a respected veteran of the Crystal River Fire Department with 40 years of dedicated service. A trusted Station Mentor, he has shaped and guided generations of firefighters through leadership, integrity, and commitment to excellence.

Honored as Firefighter of the Year, Sterling Harris exemplifies courage, service, and lasting impact.

*With Gratitude, We Thank Our  
Silent Auction Contributors*

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BAYMENS

BIG DAN'S CAR WASH

BIRD'S UNDERWATER

CATTLE DOG COFFEE ROASTERS

CHASSAHOWITZA RIVER CAMPGROUND

CHOPPING BLOCK

CITRUS EQUIPMENT

CITRUS MEMORIAL HEALTH FOUNDATION YMCA

COASTAL ART GALLERY

CONNECTIVELY YOURS BY NICOLE DURANTE

CONNECTIVELY YOURS BY ROBERT AYALA

CONNORS GIFT

COOPER'S HAWK WINERY & RESTAURANTS

COTTON CLUB

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ED'S TACKLE SHOP

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FLORIDA SAWMILL HERBERT "HURBY" CROSS JR.

FLORIDA SAWMILL HERBERT "HURBY" CROSS SR.

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TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

TEA HOUSE 650

WEST MARINE

WHALEN JEWELERS

WINE SHOP OF CRYSTAL RIVER

WORLD FUSION

# Chapter 3

**“Let’s Build a Future Together:  
Strengthening Our Foundation to  
Move Forward”**



*3rd Annual Citrus County  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Leadership Gala*

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## **Projects Timeline**



*3rd Annual Citrus County  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Leadership Gala*

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## **Key Challenges & Opportunities**

### **Challenges**

#### **Flood Plain Location**

The Historic Cemetery is located within a designated flood plain, which presents ongoing challenges related to water retention, drainage, and long-term preservation of our historic burial grounds.

#### **High Water Table & Ground Subsidence**

The lower southeast quadrant of the cemetery is experiencing ground sinking due to a consistently high water table. This condition has caused sunken graves, and threatens monuments, and overall site stability.

#### **Surrounding Development & Elevation Changes**

Continued development and increased elevation of surrounding properties have altered natural drainage patterns. These changes restrict water outflow from the cemetery, exacerbating standing water and retention issues within the historic grounds.



# Mitigating Opportunities

Despite existing environmental, infrastructure, and development challenges, several mitigating opportunities present pathways to long-term sustainability, preservation, and community benefit:

## 1. Strategic Drainage & Infrastructure Improvements

Targeted drainage enhancements, underdrain systems, and water-management solutions can significantly reduce flooding impacts while stabilizing vulnerable areas. These improvements protect historic grounds while strengthening resilience against future environmental pressures.

## 2. Proactive Planning with Transportation Expansion

The extension of Toll Road 589 to Citrus Avenue creates opportunities for early coordination with transportation authorities. Collaborative planning can ensure proper buffering, stormwater management, and access control—minimizing negative impacts while improving visibility and accessibility.

## 3. Preservation-Focused Engineering Solutions

Utilizing preservation-sensitive engineering methods allows for structural reinforcement without disturbing historic integrity. Elevation-appropriate grading, permeable surfaces, and non-invasive stabilization techniques help protect sacred spaces while addressing soil and water challenges.



SEVERE SLOPING ON SE QUADRANT



WATER RETENTION AREAS

*3rd Annual Citrus County  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Leadership Gala*

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**4. Public-Private Partnerships**

Partnerships with engineering firms, civic leaders, and community organizations can unlock funding, technical expertise, and long-term stewardship. These collaborations distribute responsibility while amplifying impact.

**5. Increased Visibility & Educational Engagement**

Infrastructure growth and increased traffic offer opportunities for enhanced signage, educational installations, and heritage tourism. Thoughtful interpretation can transform pass-through traffic into meaningful community engagement.

**6. Grant & Resilience Funding Alignment**

Environmental mitigation, historic preservation, and resilience planning align with multiple local, state, and federal funding streams. Positioning projects within these frameworks strengthens eligibility for grants and long-term investment.

**7. Community-Driven Stewardship**

Volunteer programs, service days, and educational partnerships encourage shared ownership and long-term care. Community involvement ensures sustainability beyond initial improvements.

**Conclusion**

By approaching existing challenges as opportunities for innovation and collaboration, this initiative establishes a forward-looking model for preservation, resilience, and community impact. Through thoughtful planning, strategic partnerships, and intentional investment, the site can be protected, enhanced, and positioned as a lasting asset for future generations.

# Community Clean Ups



*With Gratitude,  
We Thank Our Sponsors & Partners*



**Andrea K & Co**  
Founder & Chief Experience Curator



**Bunch Lawn Care**  
**Robert & Claudia Brockett**



FRIENDS OF CRYSTAL  
MEMORIAL GARDENS  
CEMETERY



**SENATOR  
RALPH  
MASSULLO**



**STATE REP  
JJ GROW**



# **Chapter 2**

## **“Laying a Foundation for the Future”**

**Current Leaders**

**Black Owned Businesses**

**Medical Professionals:  
Healing the Community**



## **Military Heroes**

**Veterans & Active Duty**

**Veterans Interred in  
Crystal Memorial  
Gardens Cemetery**

## **Historically Black Churches**

# LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

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KATCH 22

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PARTY WITH LOVE LLC

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PEDIM HEALTHCARE

RICHARDSON'S MOBILE DETAILING

ROYALTY AESTHETICS

SISTER'S HARMONY

TONY'S MOBILE DETAILING & CERAMIC COATINGS LLC

TWISTED STRANDS

WATERFRONT SOCIAL

# LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

## HEALING THE COMMUNITY

### COMMUNITY DOCTORS & NURSES

HABTU M. ADERA MD  
JILL P. ADERA, DO  
MONIQUE BELIN, DMD  
CATHERINE DELVA, MD  
DACELIN ST. MARTIN, MD  
DR. GLORIMAR NAZARIO-VIDAL  
TIMOTHY PETERSON, MD  
JAIME L. TORRES, MD  
CARLENE WILSON, MD

SAVANNAH BOSTIC, LPN  
ASHLEY BROWN, RN  
PATRICIA BROOKS-CAMPBELL, RN  
LAKESHA HARRISON, RN  
SAMANTHA JACKSON, APRN  
KATRYNA SMITH-GASKIN, RN  
SAMANTHA LAUTHER, LPN  
CAPRICORN NEAL, RN  
NECOL RICHBURGH, RN  
QUANDRA WHALEY, ARNP-C

*Thank You*

ELEGANT DECOR BY CL22 PRODUCTIONS  
DINNER BY OYSTERS RESTAURANT & CATERING  
COUTURE CAKES BY ANDREA K & CO  
SAXOPHONE BY ANDRENE SAMANTHA BROWN  
GOSPEL CHOIR BY BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MPATE PHOTO  
PHOTO BOOTH BY LOVESTREAM



**VILLAGE CADILLAC TOYOTA**

**2431 S SUNCOAST BLVD**

**HOMOSASSA, FL 34448**

**SALES (352)503-0565**

## **2025 GUEST SPEAKER WILLIAM Y. BUNCH, SR.**



Born in Crystal River, Florida, William Y. Bunch, Sr. learned the value of hard work at an early age, beginning his career at just 13 years old as a dishwasher at the hotel then known as the Plantation Inn. Those early lessons in discipline and perseverance laid the foundation for a lifelong commitment to excellence in hospitality and culinary arts.

Today, he is the owner and master chef of Oysters Restaurant and Catering, where his passion for food, service, and community continues to leave a lasting impression.



# MILITARY HEROES ACTIVE DUTY & RETIRED

PASTOR DOUG ALEXADER, ARMY (RET.)

FELICIA BELLAMY (RET.)

CLAUDE BROOKS, AIR FORCE (RET.)

CARLOS CLEVELAND, ARMY (RET.)

VALERIE COOK-SMITH, NAVY (RET.)

ANGELA FAGIN, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD (RET.)

JOSHUA GREEN, ARMY (RET.)

CARLOS HOLLIS, NAVY (RET.)

MASON HOLLY, US MARINES

AL HOPKINS, SR., NAVY (RET.)

COLBY HOPKINS, US MARINES

EPHESUS HOPKINS, NAVY (RET.)

MARLOW JENKINS, NAVY (RET.)

PAIGE JENKINS, US MARINES

ERNEST JONES III, NAVY

AMELIA MANER, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

BRANDON NATTEAL, NAVY, (RET.)

JAMES REGISTER, NAVY (RET.)

GREG SAWYER, NAVY (RET.)

TONY THOMAS, NAVY (RET.)

SANDY WEAVER, NAVY, (RET.)

VIVIAN WEAVER, (RET)



# REMEMBER & HONOR

## VETERANS INTERRED IN CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY



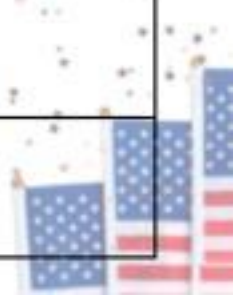
#	Last Name	First Name	Birth - Death Date	Notes
1	BELL	Elisha Jr.	19 Nov 1934 - 2 Mar 2006	US Army
2	BROOKS	Claude	15 Apr 1917 - 25 Nov 1987	CPL US Army WW 2
3	BROOKS	Clarence	9 Aug 1916 - 27 Jan 2002	Army WW2
4	BROOKS	Richard	27 Jun 1944 - 6 Jun 1971	FL AIC US Air Force Vietnam
5	BROOKS	Thaddeus O.	5 May 1965 - 3 Oct 1994	US Air Force
6	BROTH	Eward	15 April 1890 - 11 Jan 1972	Georgia PVT US Army WW 1
7	BROWN	Jesse	22 Oct 1928 - Unknown	Fl Pvt 510 Engrs
8	BROWN	Joe	5 Jun 1893 - 10 Sep 1959	Florida Cook 5 Co. 157 Depo Brg. WW 1
9	BUNCH	Elijah	29 Dec 1919 - 9 Aug 1973	FL PFC Army Air Force WW 2
10	CAMPBELL	Joseph	16 Nov 1919 - 6 Feb 1970	FL PFC COM 368 Inf. WW 2
11	CANLEY	Junior	09 Sep 1933 - 4 Jul 2001	
12	COOKS	Leon Parker	21 Dec 1948 - 19 Jun 2009	US Army
13	COOPER	Johnny	1899-1978	
14	CUSBERT	Reuben	18 Mar 1910 - 24 Apr 1998	US Navy WW2
15	DEVAUGHN	George Jr.	12 Sep 1947 - 09 Feb 2020	

# REMEMBER & HONOR

## VETERANS INTERRED IN CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY



#	Last Name	First Name	Birth - Death Date	Notes
16	DOCK	W	1848 - 1928	ACE 80
17	EDWARDS	Ronnie	19 Oct 1949 – 19 Dec 2018	
18	ELLIOTT	Frank	1915 – 1974	SGT US Army
19	ELLIS	Joseph	13 Dec 1928 – 28 May 1993	
20	FALANA	George Peter	1895 – 1978	PVT US Army WW1
21	FLOYD	Amos	30 Nov 1924 - 25 Jul 2002	STM 2 US Navy WW2
22	FLOYD	Julius	22 Jul 1927 - 3 Jun 2002	SR US Navy Korea
23	GAULMAN	Johnnie	14 Feb 1890 – 22 Feb 1966	FL PVT Co WW1
24	HALL	Horace E.	1929 – 1982	US Army WW 2
25	HALL	Moody	15 Jul 1926 – 16 Jul 1991	CPL USA Korea
26	JENKINS	Alvin	05 Sep 1947 – 05 Mar 1999	
27	JENKINS	Daniel	27 Jun 1913 – 23 Feb 1994	SC3 US Navy WW2
28	JENKINS	James Yancey Sr.	8 Apr 1947 - 10 Jan 1998	
29	JENKINS	Nehemiah	27 Dec 1934 – 6 Oct 1987	Sgt.
30	JENKINS	Oather	21 Jan 1939 – 12 Nov 1991	



# REMEMBER & HONOR



## VETERANS INTERRED IN CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY

#	Last Name	First Name	Birth - Death Date	Notes
31	JONES	Nathaniel	20 May 1942 - 29 Oct 1992	CPL US Marine Corps Vietnam
32	JOYNER	Carl H.	13 Jan 1943 - 24 Mar 1966	Fl Sgt. CO A 26 1st Inf Div. Vietnam
33	JOYNER	Fred	1894 - 1956	FL PVT USA WW1
34	JOYNER	Henry Jr.	19 May 1916 - 6 Apr 1952	FL CPL 3684 QM Truck Co. WW2
35	KIRBY	Buster	14 Sep 1915 - 13 Sep 1976	Pvt US Army WW2
36	LEWIS	Joseph	30 Jan 1904 - 25 Jan 1959	WW2
37	LOCKLEY	Robert Lee	7 May 1923 - 13 Sep 1994	US Army WW2
38	MC COY	Rogers	24 Mar 1890 - 2 Apr 1967	Florida PVT US Army WW1
39	MC KINNON	Obrary Sr.	11 Dec 1931 - 18 Oct 2015	
40	MC KINNON	Orbary Jr.	29 Apr 1957 - 28 Apr 2008	PVT US Army
41	MIZELL	James C.	17 May 1896 - 20 Jan 1994	PVT US Army WW1
42	MOORE	Richard	23 Jan 1939	
43	NATTEAL	Dewayne Antonio	15 Mar 1969 - 2 Apr 1992	HM2 US Navy Persian Gulf
44	NATTEAL	Richard	27 July 1946 - 27 Jan 2000	US Army
45	NATTEAL	Strother J. Jr.	1913 - 1994	PVT US Army WW2

# REMEMBER & HONOR

## VETERANS INTERRED IN CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY



#	Last Name	First Name	Birth - Death Date	Notes
46	NIXON	Willie	8 Sep 1911 – 15 Mar 1964	
47	OLIPHANT	Devosia	22 Apr 1919 – 11 Mar 1970	FL SGT 3123 Engrs
48	PARKER	Stephon	16 Feb 1967 – 6 Oct 2023	US Navy
49	RAYSOR	Shep	1 Mar 1888 – 25 Jan 1965	PVT US Army WW1 South Carolina
50	RICHARDSON	Louie	1920 – 1987	CPL US Army WW2
51	RICHBURG	Lemach	31 Dec 1949 – 16 Mar 1993	US Army
52	SCRIVEN	Louis	1917 – 1988	USA WW2
53	SKYLARK	William	10 Jun 1912 - 13 July 1999	WW2
54	SMITH	Emanuel	28 Jul 1932 – 10 Nov 1990	SP3 USA Korea
55	SMITH	Eugene	4 Dec 1920 - 3 Mar 1962	Florida PFC 364 Infantry WW2
56	STANFORD	Smith	3 Oct 1930 - 19 Feb 2008	
57	TYSON	Ed L.	1910 – 1986	US Navy WW2
58	WASHINGTON	Carlton	1911 – 1978	CPL US Army WW2
59	WATKINS	William Jr.	26 Jun 1914 – 17 Nov 1971	FL PVT 3179 Ord. AMMO Co WW2
60	WATKINS	Winzalo Sr.	17 Nov 1931 – 9 May 2015	

# REMEMBER & HONOR

## VETERANS INTERRED IN CRYSTAL MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY



#	Last Name	First Name	Birth - Death Date	Notes
61	WAYSE	Charles	1836 -1921	Abbie
62	WHALEY	Willard	11 Aug 1949 – 1 Jul 2008	
63	WILSON	Ellie H.	28 Mar 1913 – 25 Dec 1946	GA PVT COC 5 BN 1 Regt WW 2
64	WILSON	Elijah	28 Nov 1925 - 31 Mar 2000	SGT US Army WW2
65	WILSON-NEAL	Patricia	21 Aug 1959 - 15 Mar 2017	US Army
66	WILSON	Wade	22 June 1922 - 26 Jan 19__	Georgia PFC US Army WWII
67	WOODROW	Dennis	2 Nov 1943 – 15 Aug 1986	SP4 US Army Vietnam



# Historically Black Churches

**Bailey's Temple Church of God In Christ**

*(No Longer Exists)*

Crystal River FL

**Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church**

*(No Longer Exists)*

Crystal River FL

**Church of Christ**

Crystal River FL

**Church of the Living, Pillar Ground of Truth**

Crystal River FL

**Citadel of Life Cathedral**

Inverness, FL

**Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church**

Inverness, FL

**Independent House of God, Church of the Living God**

Crystal River, FL

**Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church**

Crystal River, FL

**Mt. Zion AME Church**

Hernando, FL

**Outreach Church of Christ Written in Heaven**

Dunnellon, FL

**The Redemption Center**

Crystal River, FL

**Unity Church of Christ Written in Heaven**

Crystal River, FL

# **Chapter 1**

## **Crystal River**

### **Historical Pioneers**

**Founding Black Families**  
**of Crystal River**

**Education**

**Community**

**Business**

**Healthcare**

**Government**



**Oysters Restaurant**  
**(352)795-2633**

# Founding Black Families of Crystal River, Florida

Balloon	Harris	Parker
Brock	Hayward	Patterson
Brooks	Hopkins	Richardson
Bunch	Jackson	Sawyer
Campbell	Jenkins	Scriven
Canley	Joyner	Simmons
Coleman	Kirby	Smith
Copeland	Knight	Summerlin
DeVaughn	Lemon	Tyson
Ellis	Lockley	Ward
Elliot	Long	Washington
Faison	Mizell	Watkins
Ferguson	McKinnon	Whaley
Floyd	Natteal	Wims
Hall	Nelson	Wilson
		Wooden

Note: This listing is a work in progress and based on information provided from obituaries, vital statistics, and family updates.

Please contact the Friends of Crystal Memorial Gardens Inc via email at [friendsofcmgcmemetery@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcmgcmemetery@gmail.com) with any questions, concerns, and/or updates.

# EDUCATION

## ANNA COPELAND RUSSELL (MAY 1, 1877 - MARCH 4, 1970)

She was the eighth child born of slave parents and began her teaching career at the age of thirteen (13) in Marion County. Her descendants are the long time and deeply rooted Copelands of Crystal River. Her son, Frederick W. Copeland (deceased) has a Crystal River public park named in his honor. Mr. Copeland's wife, Marjorie, was the first black city council woman in the City of Crystal River. Her lineage is the McKinnon family of Crystal River.

She was committed to her community and education with a 3.5 mile horse and buggy ride to Crystal River and a six (6) mile walk, one way, almost daily to Rock Crusher to teach the children in her care.

## ANNIE M. JACKSON MCCRAY (JANUARY 20, 1922 - JANUARY 31, 2010)



She graduated high school from Howard Academy in Ocala, FL. At the time, there was no black high school in Citrus County. Her mother washed laundry for one dollar per basket to send her there. After high school, she worked as a domestic to the Fermans of Ferman Chevrolet. The Fermans had a home in Michigantown (an area near Hunter Springs) in Crystal River, before she was awarded a

scholarship to the now Florida A&M University, at the age of 22. Prior to that, she as a single woman, had her home built at the age of 18, which was unheard of at the time. She also earned a Master's degree from Stetson University.

After graduation, she returned back to Citrus County to teach at George Washington Carver School, the local school for Black Americans during times of segregation. She was also one of the first teachers to integrate public schools for Citrus County. She taught First Grade for majority of the balance of her teaching career, until her retirement in 1995. She taught for 44 consecutive years. It is said that by the time she retired, she had taught 1/3 of the children on the west side of the county.

# EDUCATION

## WILLIAM LEVY ROBINSON, JR. (MARCH 4, 1933 - JANUARY 1, 2022)



Born March 4, 1933 in Webster, Sumter County, FL and was the firstborn child in a family of ten (10) in the union of the Late William Levy Robinson and Mary Lee Howard Robinson. W. L. or Junior as he was affectionately called attended the All-Black Mills High School in Webster, graduating salutatorian of his class in 1951. After high school, W. L. left the family farm to study agriculture at the then All-Black Florida A and M College (FAMU) in Tallahassee. His college education was interrupted by a two-year tour duty in the U S Army -1954 - 1956. Upon his return from the armed service, W.L. continued his college education and received his Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) in 1956. It was during this time, he met the Love of His life, Euna Mable McKinnon and married on July 29, 1956. He pursued graduate studies at both FAMU and the University of Florida, receiving his Master of Education Degree in Administration and Supervision at FAMU. W. L. held numerous teaching and administrative positions in education throughout his career. He was Principal of the Florida School for Boys, Okeechobee, Fl., 1958 - 1960; County Extension Agent for Jackson County, Marianna, Fl, 1960 -1964; Principal of George Washington Carver Junior High School, Crystal River, Fl, 1964-1969; County Extension Agent for Leon County, Tallahassee, Fla, 1969-1970, teacher of Science and Vocational Agriculture at Citrus High School, Inverness, Fl 1970 - 1971; Supervisor of Instruction for Citrus County School Board, Inverness, Fl, 1971 - 1985 and Director of Personnel for the Citrus County School Board, 1985 - 1995. He retired on June 30, 1995.

## HAZEL LEE BALLOON SANDERS (DECEMBER 9, 1933 - AUGUST 1, 1989)



Mrs. Hazel Balloon Sanders was a school teacher at Inverness Primary School. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Miles Balloon. This is the Balloon Family of the Balloon Street off of Turkey Oak. Their homestead was a part of "The Backwoods". She had three (3) sons: Captain LV Sanders, Captain BC Sanders, and Mr. BC Sanders; and one daughter, Mrs. Artenia Jones.

# EDUCATION

## EUNA MABLE MCKINNON ROBINSON (NOVEMBER 16, 1933 - JUNE 29, 2007)



Euna Mable McKinnon was born November 16, 1933 and was the sixth of eleven siblings born to Fred Douglas McKinnon, Sr. (Deceased) and Ada Mable Elliott McKinnon (Deceased). She received her Public School Education in the Citrus County School System. Upon completion of High School in 1951, she attended Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College in Tallahassee and then transferred to Florida Normal College in Saint Augustine where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. She later received her Master of Education degree from what had then become Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.

Her professional career began in Marianna, Florida where she worked as an Adult Education Teacher for the 1963-1964 school term. She returned to Crystal River, FL in August of 1964 and was employed by the Citrus County School Board where she served as an Elementary School Teacher and Primary School Specialist. After 31 years of service, she retired from the Citrus County School System on June 20, 1995. Countless students and adults lives have been positively impacted by her dedication and hard work in the field of education.

## LIVING COMMUNITY EDUCATORS



**BETTY JEAN JACKSON, TEACHER (RET.)**  
GW CARVER & CRYSTAL RIVER PRIMARY  
41 YEARS



**RAYE FRANCIS JOYNER, TEACHER (RET.)**  
GW CARVER & CRYSTAL RIVER PRIMARY  
41 YEARS



**BERTHA DEVAUGHN BROOKS, TEACHER (RET.)**  
CRYSTAL RIVER MIDDLE & CITRUS SPRINGS MIDDLE  
37 YEARS



**LILLIE MAE BIDDLE, TEACHER (RET.)**  
CRYSTAL RIVER MIDDLE  
27 YEARS



**ANNIE BROOKS, TEACHER (RET.)**  
CRYSTAL RIVER MIDDLE  
35 YEARS

# COMMUNITY

## MARY GRAY BUNCH

(MAY 5, 1886 - OCTOBER 5, 1987)



She was either "Grandma Bunch" or "Mamma" to everyone in the community. She is the Original Cake Lady of Crystal River. She baked (and cooked) right up until the time she died. If she knew your birthday was coming, she would bake you a cake. She lived in a community called "The Backwoods". Its the area behind Crystal River Primary School, off Turkey Oak, where the Buffalo now roam.

She was born in South Carolina to Mr. and Mrs. Dan White. Later, she moved to Crystal River, Fl. On May 1, 1910, she married James Bunch, and to this union 11 children were born. She left a rich legacy of 61 Grandchildren, 157 Great-Grandchildren, 53 Great-Great Grandchildren, and 3 Great-Great-Great Grandchildren.

## BEULAH BROCK LOCKLEY

(MARCH 17, 1895 - MARCH 19, 1991)

Beulah Brock Lockley was affectionately known as "Ma Chank" and was the neighborhood babysitter for our working mothers. She was born in Valdosta, GA and one of eight children born to John and Mary Brock. In 1912, she was united in wedlock to Mr. Will Lockley, and from this union sixteen children were born. Ten children, as well as Mr. Lockley preceded her in death, later on she united in marriage with Mr. Handy Jackson. She left a rich legacy of one son, five daughters, thirty-nine Grandchildren, fifty-six Great-Grandchildren, and three Great Great Grandchildren.

## MARY AND JACK WIMS (OCTOBER 11, 1911 - JUNE 26, 1986)



Mary and Jack Wims came to Crystal River from Red Level in 1943. Mary Wims worked shucking oysters and cleaning houses while Jack Wims worked many jobs including being a turpentine worker, an oyster gatherer and a cedar mill worker. He also learned construction and in 1950, built his first home, which

still sits on the corner of NE Sixth Terrace and NE Eighth Ave. He began working for Florida Rock in Brooksville, and he would haul rock from Brooksville to Crystal River to build Eighth Avenue, which at the time was just a dirt path, into a road. Once he left Florida Rock, he started to work in construction, building more homes near his first one. Jack Wims brought about 10 units to the city before dying suddenly on June 26, 1986. Mary continued to manage the homes until 1984.

# COMMUNITY

## MARY FRANCES FAISON WATKINS

(NOVEMBER 7, 1934 - MARCH 23, 2023)



Mrs. Mary Frances Watkins was born on November 7, 1934 in Crystal River, Florida to Wilbur and Henrietta Faison. She married Mr. Winzalo (Don) T. Watkins, Sr., who preceeded her in death. They have three sons and three daughters. She played the piano and organ for more than 50 years and

served until she was no longer able to do so. She became the first Minister of Music in the State of Florida for The Church of the Living God. She also taught music lessons to many students for only 50 cents. She was loving, kind, compassionate and was affectionately known for her term, "Kissy, Kissy!" or "Kissy, Kiss!", which she said while she hugged and kissed you.

## WINZALO THOMAS "DON" WATKINS SR.

(NOVEMBER 17, 1931 - MAY 9, 2015)



Mr. Winzalo Thomas "Don" Watkins, Sr. was born in Crystal River, Florida on November 17, 1931. He was one of fifteen children born to the union of the late William and Ida Watkins. Everyone called him Mr. Don or Deacon Watkins. His wife was Mrs. Mary Frances Faison Watkins, and they were married for 63 years until his passing.

He was employed by the Citrus County Board of Public Instruction during his junior year in High School and got his start in 1949 as a School Bus Driver, in which he completed more than 18 years; and Master Mechanic. Deacon Watkins was a pillar in the community. He served in the church, community, as a deputy sheriff, and a consultant to a university and in politics.

"Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will."



# BUSINESS

## SYLVESTER WOODEN

(APRIL 25, 1891 - DECEMBER 20, 1975)

Mr. Sylvester Wooden was born on April 25, 1891 in Georgia to Wash and Alice Watson Wooden. He was one of five children. The family moved to Florida when he was a young and established residence in the Fairmount settlement.

From the website Ghosttowns.com: Settled in 1885. By 1886 the population was 75. There was a post office, church, steam sawmill, blacksmith shop, tinsmith, hotel, and general store. It was mostly orange groves and was wiped out in the big freeze of 1894-95.

**Comments:** At the intersection of SR44 and 488 under the present site of the Meadowcrest Industrial Park.

He was married twice. Once to Mrs. Josephine Floyd, "until their union was broken by the passing of Josephine". They had six children. He then married Jessie Lee Ruth Wooden (June 24, 1905 - December 24, 1991). They had one daughter, Willie Bea.

He was a pioneer citizen of Crystal River, Florida. "He was a loyal father and husband. He shared the gifts of the labor of his hands with neighbors and friends and honored God by living at peace with his fellowman."

Sylvester and Jesse also owned and ran a Boarding house during segregation, so that working men had a place to stay while they worked in town. Their properties were in Crystal River, located across the highway where the Quality Inn sits. A man purchased the properties and now a wooden fence hides the homes. They lived in one home and the boarding house was next door.

## JESSIE LEE RUTH WOODEN

(JUNE 24, 1905 - DECEMBER 24, 1991)



### FACTS TO KNOW

- She was the lunchroom cook at GW Carver School for 16 years.
- She drove a powder blue 1940s Studebaker
- Her parting saying, with a smile, every time she was leaving, "Don't let anyone give you a wooden nickel"

# BUSINESS

## OSCAR HOPKINS

(MARCH 11, 1921 - APRIL 23, 2004)



Oscar ("OH") Hopkins was born in Crystal River, FL to Oscar Hopkins, Sr and Pinkey Mack Hopkins. He married Hazel L. Williams and served with the 827th Tank Destroyer Unit in Camp Hood, TX. He received an honorable discharge from the US Army after serving in World War II. Upon returning home from the service, Oscar was self employed in many business ventures. Among those were operating a restaurant & operating a Gulf gas station on Highway 19 North; a logging contractor who cleared timber for various urban developments throughout Citrus County, the site for Seven Rivers Community Hospital, Florida Power Nuclear Plant, and the Crystal River Mall; and he discovered the now Historical Indian Mounds at Crystal River Archaeological State Park.

## 2024 GUEST SPEAKER JEFFREY B. CAMPBELL



Jeffrey is a State Farm Insurance Agent for the greater Orlando area including, Oviedo and Winter Springs. He is a lifelong Floridian, a native of Crystal River and graduated from the University of Central Florida. He has been married since 1986 and is the father of two. We're celebrating 34 years of providing excellent professional Insurance and Financial Services to the greater Orlando area that includes Oviedo, Chuluota, Winter Springs, Winter Park, Casselberry and Longwood.

Community Involvements are: Rotary Club of Oviedo (Member), Oviedo/Winter Springs Chamber (Member), Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Member), Oviedo Medical Center (Member BOT).

**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."**  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



# HEALTHCARE

## **ANNIE L. SELLERS SMITH** (AUGUST 4, 1889 - MARCH 5, 1973)



She was born in 1889 in Jasper, FL and was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Mose Sellers. She married to Mr. Chamble Smith in 1903 at Six Mile Still, near Dunnellon. They had thirteen (13) children and moved to Crystal River. She served as a mid-wife for sixty (60) years and the latter ten, she registered with the Florida State Board of Health.

She left a rich legacy with 46 grandchildren, 76 great grandchildren, and 12 great-great grandchildren.

## **GLADYS HENRY NIXON** (APRIL 6, 1913 - APRIL 1, 1988)



She was born in 1913 to George F. Henry and Agnes Taylor Henry in Tampa, FL and she was one of four children. She attended Hillsborough Public Schools and Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach, FL. She later moved to Crystal River and established her residence. Here she met and married Willie on April 24, 1941. After working several years as a domestic, she

trained for practical nursing and received her Nursing Assistant Certificate in Dade City, FL. She was employed by the Citrus County Health Department and retired in 1984. According to her obituary, "She will long be remembered for her humanitarian efforts throughout the community."



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**Photo**

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# GOVERNMENT POLITICS & LAW ENFORCEMENT

## CLAUDE BROOKS, SR.

(APRIL 15, 1917 - NOVEMBER 25, 1987)



Claude was the first Black elected to the City Council of Crystal River, FL, where he gave 16 years of credible service. Claude Brooks, Sr. was one of several children born to the union of John Marshall Brooks and Isabella Joyner Brooks. He was born in Citronelle, FL.

Shortly after enlisting in the Army of World War II, Brooks was dispatched overseas, promoted to Corporal and engaged in active combat for 37 months in Africa and Europe. After his tour of duty, he returned to Crystal River and married Eva Mae Floyd on December 1, 1945 and established a home. Ten children were added to the family. He was employed by the Citrus County School Board as a Maintenance Engineer for 16 years.

## WILLIAM WESLEY SKYLARK

(JUNE 10, 1912 - JULY 13, 1999)



William Skylark was the first black policeman in the city of Crystal River, FL. He was born in Wilcox, FL. He was one of four children born to the union of Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Skylark. William was thirteen when his mother, Mrs. Delia Adams established residence, along with her other children, here in Crystal River, FL. After serving in World War II, he returned to Crystal River to reside.

His stalwartness was recognized throughout his contact with people in the community. It was noted when he was appointed as the first Black policeman of Crystal River, where he served for several years. He was also President of the NAACP for several years. On March 27, 1968, Deacon Skylark married Ms. Irene McKinnon.

## LIVING RETIRED PUBLIC SERVANTS



### MARJORIE COPELAND

FIRST BLACK ELECTED TO OFFICE OF PRESIDENT  
CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER CITY COUNCIL

### ARTHUR HAYES

FORMER FIREMAN  
CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER

### JAMES WIMS

FORMER MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER

# Upcoming Events

## **FCMG Cemetery Quarterly Clean Up** **Saturday, February 28 | Saturday 8am-12 noon**

Historic Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery

9640 W Garden St, Crystal River, FL

[www.friendsofcmgcmemetery.com](http://www.friendsofcmgcmemetery.com)

Join us for a day of community and historical preservation as we come together to clean and care for our historic cemetery.

Bottled water and lunch will be provided.

## **Floral City Strawberry Festival**

**Saturday & Sunday, March 7 & 8, 2026**

Saturday 9 am - 5 pm • Sunday 9 am - 4 pm

[www.gostrawberryfest.com](http://www.gostrawberryfest.com)

The Floral City Strawberry Festival celebrates its tasty namesake with a full weekend of fun that has been a local tradition for generations.

## **Memorial Day Veterans' Remembrance Ceremony**

**Saturday, May 23, 2026 at 11:00 am**

Historic Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery

9640 W Garden St, Crystal River, FL

[www.friendsofcmgcmemetery.com](http://www.friendsofcmgcmemetery.com)

Join us for this community event held near Memorial Day to honor and remember U.S. military veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

**"We must learn to live together as  
brothers or perish together as fools."**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



*3rd Annual Citrus County  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Leadership Gala*

**PRESENTED BY CL22 PRODUCTIONS**

**FRIENDS OF CRYSTAL MEMORIAL  
GARDENS INC**

**MISSION**

To preserve, beautify, and advocate for the historic Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery, located in Crystal River, Florida. We also work to restore dignity and honor to those interred there who were forgotten and ensure a peaceful resting place that memorializes the departed and honors their families in our community for generations to come.

**Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery**

Crystal Memorial Gardens is a historic cemetery and was formerly known as Crystal River African-American Memorial Gardens. Because of the practice of segregation, the act of separating people on the basis of race, cemeteries were also divided racially.

Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery originally belonged to Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, which was founded on October 4, 1884. Mt. Olive MBC is the oldest black church and the second oldest church in Citrus County, Florida.

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church deeded the Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery to the "Community" in 1976. A community based Board of Directors was created to operate the cemetery that is still in place today.

Friends of Crystal Memorial Gardens is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to solicit funding from charitable foundations and community groups and we are registered with the State of Florida.

**Contact Us**

PO Box 194, Crystal River, FL 34423

Website: [www.friendsofcmgcmemetery.com](http://www.friendsofcmgcmemetery.com)

Email: [friendsofcmgcmemetery@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcmgcmemetery@gmail.com)

Phone: (352) 464-3393

