

# AAHM Sojourner

**Newsletter of the  
SPRINGFIELD AND CENTRAL ILLINOIS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM**

VOLUME 6, NO.1

WINTER-SPRING 2022

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## SPECIAL EDITION: 2021 Annual Meeting Report

The 2021 Wrap-up is being presented in this special edition of the Sojourner newsletter, in lieu of an in-person membership meeting. This format, also used for the 2020 annual report, was well-received by our members. We recognize it is not a replacement for the annual meetings of the

past that included dinner, live music, and PowerPoint presentations by Board Members. It did serve the purpose, however, of keeping our members informed, connected and safe! We plan to continue issuing our annual report in this manner throughout the pandemic.

### *This Issue is Dedicated to Our Friend, Liz*



We proudly dedicate "The 2021 Annual Report" to our dear friend, mentor and angel in heaven, Elizabeth Geraldine Tinsley Banks Alexander, 1940 - 2022.

As we worked to put together this special edition of the Sojourner, "The 2021 Annual Report" we were reminded with heavy hearts that just last year Elizabeth was on our team. Her flare for words, design, photography and organizing was an exceptional gift, which she generously shared.

We were so blessed to have known this lovely lady and miss her so much. We send our most heartfelt condolences to her husband, Steve and her family.

The Membership Committee  
*Kevia Maloney  
 Jenni Dahl  
 Sue Massie*



# Letter from the President

Dear Museum Supporters:

It is an honor to serve as President of the Board of Directors of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum (AAHM). Over the past 9 years the museum has grown and become a premiere organization in the community. The outstanding Board of Directors, museum members, and volunteers work tirelessly to inform and educate. We strive to address the mission of the museum, "To tell authentic stories about African American life in Springfield and Central Illinois through exhibitions, education, collections and programs to preserve, interpret and celebrate African American history and culture".



To address this mission, we have taken on many projects. During the year of COVID, the museum was closed to visitors but not to telling the stories of African American history and culture. The museum launched a 7 program webinar series starting in November 2020. All programs are available on the museum website, [www.spiaahm.org](http://www.spiaahm.org).

Services and programs are offered to schools such as the High School Black History Bowl, traveling exhibits and virtual tour of the museum exhibits. The Museum reopened in March 2021 with new exhibits on the "Oldest African American Churches in Springfield" and the complete story of the 1908 Race Riot in "Something So Horrible". To tell contemporary stories, a photographic exhibit by Ramona Boston on the 'Protest of 2020', tells Springfield's reaction to the George Floyd Murder opened in July. Throughout the summer many visitors came to the museum for the 'History Comes Alive' series offered in cooperation with Springfield Tourist and Convention Bureau.

Our flagship exhibit for 2021 was the Negro Leagues Baseball Exhibit: *Beisbol*, a traveling exhibit of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Kansas City, MO. The exhibit explores the Afro-American and Afro-Latino connection which was an important aspect of the Negro Leagues and is for today's Major League. Over 600 people toured this outstanding exhibit.

Besides the generous donations and memberships, the Museum received grants from the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, Illinois Humanities, and the IL Department of Economic Development.

Thank you to all our supporters. Please become a benefactor, a member and volunteer when and where you can. The AAHM can only continue to offer quality exhibits and programs with your support.

See you soon at the Museum!

*Carolyn Farrar, President*  
Board of Directors, AAHM

## OUR MISSION

\* We will tell authentic stories about African American life in Central Illinois, past and present, celebrating and sharing our history and culture while planning our future.

\* We will do this through scholarship, oral history, exhibits, partnerships, our board of directors, our supporters and our friends. We are and will continue to be community builders.

\* We recognize that our stories are unique but connected to those of other communities and we will support those interconnections. We will be integral to the cultural life of our area. We will partner with like-minded organizations. We will be proactive in our community. We will study and apply best practices in business, scholarship and communication.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022

- Carolyn Farrar, President*
- Joan Joyner, Vice President*
- Brady Odom, Recording Secretary*
- Aaron Pearl-Cropp, Treasurer*
- Dr. Sheila Caldwell**
- Vincent "June" Chappelle**
- Kathryn Harris**
- Tom Hutchinson**
- Ann Joseph, PhD**
- Lazell Logan**
- Gail Simpson**
- Lamar Walls**
- James Lewis,**  
*Board Member Emeritus*
- Kevia Maloney,**  
*Museum Coordinator*

**AAHM website:** [spiaahm.org](http://spiaahm.org)  
**Email:** [siaahf@yahoo.com](mailto:siaahf@yahoo.com)  
**Address:** 1440 Monument Ave.,  
 Springfield, IL 62702  
**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 301,  
 Springfield, IL 62705  
**Telephone:** 217-391-6323  
**Follow us on Facebook**



is the newsletter of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield, Illinois. Sue Massie, editor

# 2021, Repleat with Exhibits and Programs

Great news! After months of being closed due to the pandemic the Museum cautiously reopened on March 4, 2021, on Tuesdays through Saturdays from noon until 4 PM. During 2021 we continued to closely monitor the everchanging COVID-19 federal, state, and local guidelines to keep our staff, volunteers, and visitors safe. We posted information about social distancing and mask requirements on our front door. We asked all visitors to wear a mask while in the Museum. Here is a glimpse of the 2021 events.

## March: Black History Bowl Finals



"We are pleased to announce that we had another very successful Black History Bowl this year. The 'Rudy Davenport Traveling Trophy' is now in the hands of 2022's winner, Lanphier High School. Congratulations!"

*Gail Simpson, AAHM Board Member  
and Black History Bowl Coordinator*

## March: The Big Read

AAHM took part in a city-wide Big Read, contributing numerous interviews with African-American science leaders in Central Illinois, available at <https://spiaahm.org/bigread>

## April: The Four Oldest African American Churches in Springfield, IL



Zion Missionary Baptist Church, founded in 1838



St. Paul's AME, established in 1843



St. John AME, established in 1876



Union Baptist Church, established in 1871

## May: Something So Horrible . . . The 1908 Springfield Race Riot

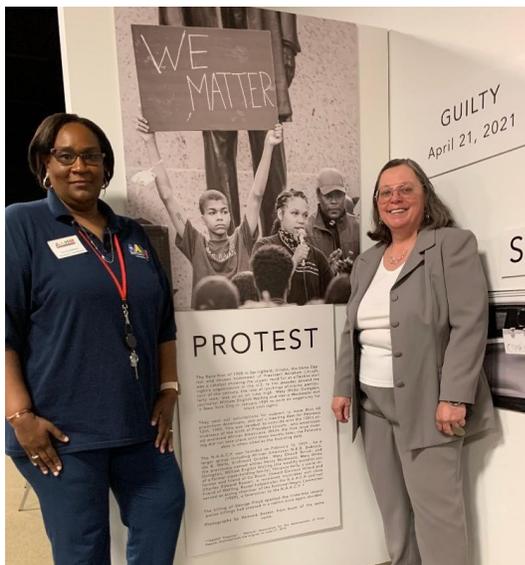


Beverly Peters discusses the 1908 Springfield Race Riot

## June: The Juneteenth Experience

“News of the Emancipation Proclamation arrived in Galveston, TX on June 19th, 1865 nearly two years after its 1863 enactment.” The day is more than a day of parades, BBQ’s, and family gatherings, but rather it is a day to reflect on our achievements and accomplishments in this nation. This event included an exhibit and handouts about Juneteenth.

## July: Protest, A Photographic Exhibit



AAHM Coordinator Kevia Maloney and Ramona Boston

## *A Book of Black and White Photographs Becomes a Powerful Exhibit*

When local photographer, Ramona Boston walked into the Museum holding a large book, I was more than curious to see what it contained. They were photographs she was gifting to the Museum from various protests that occurred that summer right here in Springfield.

I was eager to open it up and have a look. The Black and White photos were quite captivating. Although they only existed as a result of countless events of racism and injustice, they showed White people and Black people peacefully working for a common cause...together. These Black and White photographs depicted what the relationship between Blacks and Whites *could* be. They radiated hope. It was then that I knew I had to try to get those photos turned into an exhibit at the AAHM to share with the community. After speaking with the Museum President, the Board, and of course, Ramona, the “Protest” exhibit was developed and erected to give hope to all who were blessed enough to see it.

*Kevia Maloney  
AAHM Coordinator*

As we all witnessed the public killing of George Floyd, a contemporary lynching, over and over in the media from a phone video of the event created by a young bystander, the heartbreak and outrage were overwhelming and many of us took to the streets in protest. I vaguely knew the history of racism in this country and in particular here in Lincoln’s home town that had also experienced a “race riot” and felt strongly the ties to that history. Only this time white people were coming out in protest of the grotesque mistreatment of this man by police, openly, brazenly, much like the public lynchings of before.

I have been a photographer most of my life so I had a camera with me at that first protest and began taking photographs as event after event the crowds grew through the month of June. When I had the time to look back over those photographs, I saw the collection that had formed and felt strongly of the history in the making. I bundled them together, had them printed in a book and offered it to Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum for their collection. They were pleased with the book and offered me the opportunity to exhibit some of the images from the book. That became the Protest exhibit.

*Ramona Boston,  
Photographer of the exhibit, “Protest”*

## September-October: Negro Leagues Baseball Exhibit

On loan from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, MO, this exhibit honored and explored “**the connections of African American Baseball history to Hispanic cultures, communities, and countries**”. Included were “**profiles of players and a timeline of baseball history**”.

The exhibit proved to be one of our most popular ever. Throughout the nearly 2 months it was on display, the Museum experienced a constant flow of visitors from near and far. All the efforts of the Museum Board, staff and volunteers to publicize the event, including a billboard, an interview by Mark McDonald, host of the **PBS** series “Illinois Stories,” Facebook posts, **SJ-R** and **Illinois Times** articles, eblasts and more truly paid off.

In addition to the display of jerseys and panels with the information about the most beloved baseball players of the time, there were captivating videos shown on our newly acquired monitor and a DVD player. We also had a raffle of jerseys as a grand finale!



## 2021 Gala Honorees



Joshua West,  
Pastor, Zion  
Missionary  
Baptist Church



John Crisp,  
Founder of the  
Garvey-Tubman  
Cultural Arts  
and Research  
Center



Martha Jordan,  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.,  
Kappa Sigma Zeta Chapter



Teresa Haley,  
President of the  
Springfield  
Branch of the  
NAACP

## End of the Year: 2021 Financial Report

### Income

Direct Public Support	\$ 30,365.15
Other Grants	20,000.10
Program Income	21,577.71
Sales	5,814.38

**Total Income** \$ 77,757.34

### Expenses

Business Expenses	\$ (3,165.77)
Facilities and Equipment	(18,387.66)
Program Event Expenses	(6,984.15)
Payroll Expense	(14,259.03)
Fundraising Expenses	(6,914.20)
Reconciliation Discrepancies	(2.00)

**Total Expenses** \$ (49,712.81)

**Net Operating Income** \$ 28,044.53

## Kwanzaa: Downtown Window

Sonya Perkins decorated this downtown window for the AAHM as part of the Downtown Festival of Trees.





# Free-ish

By Shatriya Smith  
June 2021

Shatriya was the winner of the 2021 poetry contest.  
She recited this poem at the 2021 Annual (virtual) Gala.

## Free-ish

Free-ish means a white man's discomfort can censor your rights and your words. A petty rendition of objective and descriptive verbs.

I may not speak the message in my spirit.

'Cuz that ole boss man don't want you to hear it.

Making authoritative declarations with Fire, Noose and stone .

Ascertaining an assumption like he is the throne.

My, my how my chains don't feel the same.

Still you don't put respect on the narration of my name.

My ancestors are very proud this day

Because we have come such a long way

Free-ish Means: say what you are told to say

Free-ish Means: Accept a plaque now go away

Free-ish Means: separation with red lines

Free-ish Means: Concentration of negative media time

Free-ish Means: Stand in line and don't ask questions

Free-ish Means: We are listening but we don't want your suggestions Free-ish Means: take what you can get and say yes suh

Free-ish Means: Black bullets for black bodies that happenstancelly occur Free-ish Means: Your black attitude will get you fired

Free-ish Means: You probably won't even get hired

Free-ish Means: There are still consequences of being black

Free-ish Means: you are on trial under hatreds attack.

My, my how my chains don't feel the same.

Still you don't put respect on the narration of my name.

My ancestors are very proud this day.

Because we have come such a long way

Let us recognize Others who have walked this road

As we tortured understand the toll

Lucy Hicks Anderson Imprisoned and stripped of her humanity. Fannie Lou Hammer Imprisoned and beaten due to her dignity. James Baldwin censored and ostracized Malcom X Assassinated and demonized

Eartha Kitt Black Balled and Agitated

Martin Luther King Jr. Assassinated so as not to be replicated Huey Newton

Assassinated with Murderous hate

Martha P. Johnson Assassinated and deemed unworthy to investigate.

My, my how my chains don't feel the same. Still you don't put respect on the narration of my ancestors name. My ancestors are very proud this day

Because we have come such a long way. They were fighting for their lives to matter. We stand together for our lives to matter

The mission has never changed

We are still free-ish one and the same.

My, my we have come such a mighty long way.

# Thank you Museum Volunteers



# Upcoming Events

**MUSEUM HOURS: TUESDAY THRU SATURDAY, NOON TO 4 P.M.;  
MASK WEARING SUGGESTED**

**January 15** - Grand opening of School District #186 Art Exhibit and  
"Follow the Recipe" Cookbook Exhibit

**February 1 at 10 am** - High School Black History Bowl, Preliminary Round

**February 27 at 1 pm** - High School Black History Bowl, Final Round at SHS

**March** - Celebrating National Women's History Month

**April** - National Poetry Month - Celebrating Creative Writings of Local Poets

**May** - Music at the Museum: Exploring African American Genres

**June** - History Summer Camp

**June – August** - "History Comes Alive" presentations, Saturdays, 1:30 PM

**July** - Opening of Colored Section of Oak Ridge Cemetery Exhibit

**September** - Opening of US Colored Troops IL 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Exhibit

**October** - AAHM Annual Fundraising Gala

**December** - Kwanzaa Celebration

NOTE: Some dates are pending, visit [www.spiaahm.org](http://www.spiaahm.org) for updated info.

## **AAHM Past Webinars Still Available for Viewing**

"Eva Monroe and the Colored Children's Home", a film based on Mary Francis's book

Patricia James Davis Portrays Sojourner Truth

Robert Davis Portrays Frederick Douglass

[Driving the Green Book](#), authors Alvin Hall and Janee Woods-Weber discuss their book

[The Woman's Fight](#), author Dr. Thavolia Glymph discusses her book

[U.G.L.Y.](#), several of the authors discuss their book

"African American Science Leaders Serving Central Illinois", a program

*To view past Webinars, go to [WWW.spiaahm.org](http://WWW.spiaahm.org)*

**Newsflash:** The AAHM has received a \$662,545 grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The funds will be used to expand the exhibit space including two galleries for digitized exhibits, a community meeting room, climatized storage space and overall improvements. The City of Springfield owns the building and is the museum's fiscal partner in this project.

African American History Museum  
Springfield and Central Illinois  
P.O. Box 301  
Springfield, IL 62705-0301



## MEMBERSHIP

Members receive membership cards, the *Sojourner* newsletter and museum communications. Members at the Sustaining level and above also receive invitations to previews, grand openings and special VIP events.

### Membership Categories

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$ 25   | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$ 100-\$ 199 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$ 50       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$ 200-\$ 499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth/student \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing \$ 500-\$ 999  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$20        | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1,000      |
- Business Member \$500-\$999 (includes business listing at museum events)
- I would like to pay now for three years of membership . AMOUNT enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Your check should be made payable and sent to the African American History Museum of Springfield and Central Illinois (AAHM) , P.O. Box 301, Springfield, IL 62705-0301