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# St. Petersburg to form a branch of ASALH

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*L-R, Reginald and Mendee Ligon, Jacqueline Hubbard and Irene Pridgen.*

**ST. PETERSBURG –** Perceptive members gathered last Sat., May 10 for an introductory meeting to discuss the formation of a local branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

ASALH was founded in 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Their mission is to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about black life, history and culture to the global community.

In 1915, few could have imagined the future contributions of African Americans in every aspect of American life. No rational person can deny the fact that African Americans and people of African descent have played a tremendous role in the development of the United States.

Black historians, writers, public figures, scholars, artists, musicians, athletes, veterans and politicians have worked tirelessly to show the world their achievements throughout the making of this great nation.

Attorney Jacqueline Williams Hubbard welcomed the attendees to Sylvia's Queen of Soul Food Restaurant and gave a brief history of ASALH and Dr. Woodson while Tyna Middleton, president of the Tampa Bay branch, gave an overview of the organization.

Chair of the Woodson Museum, Terri Lipsey Scott, was on hand to speak about the museum. Dr. Nancy Bryant described what it was like to be the first African-American female Ophthalmological Surgeon in private practice in St. Pete, and paid homage to her mentor Dr. Angela Ayer.

Imam Muhammed Aquil talked of the historical contributions of black veterans while Gwendolyn Reese spoke of the impending historical marker project on 22nd Street and the involvement of the African American Heritage Association in which she chairs.

**Mozzell Davis spoke about little known facts of black history in St. Petersburg, and Irene Pridgen gave a short oral history quiz. There were also brief discussions of black genealogy, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement and the history of black medical schools.**

**The group intends to officially organize by January 2015 just in time for the centennial year of ASALH.**

**Other involved citizens in attendance were Dr. Ron Sheehy, Franca Sheehy, Professor Cynthia Hawkins-DeBose, Dr. Kenneth Bryant, Linda Bradley Aquil, Virginia Jones Scott, Rev. Pierre Loomis Williams, Eileen Boozy, Colleen Priester-Vieux and Jennifer Gamble.**

**Several other interested persons expressed their regrets at being unable to attend but indicated strong support for a local branch. Among them were Dr. Mendee Ligon, Dr. Reginald Ligon and Dr. Paul McRae and Mrs. Donna McRae.**

**There will be monthly meetings until the branch is officially incorporated. In addition to the Tampa Bay branch, there is also a large Sarasota-Manatee branch and approximately 30 more throughout the United States.**