



ALAMANCE NAACP

STATE OF THE BRANCH

Presented on January 15, 2022 by President Barrett Brown

The Alamance Branch of the NAACP is approaching 2022 with a bold strategic plan to advocate for social justice in multiple ways. The plan includes influencing laws and policies, maintaining an ongoing prominent presence at school board, Board of Elections, city council, county commissioner and other community meetings; providing direct community meetings; providing direct community support through legal redress and economic development initiatives and direct action through press conferences and, when necessary, lawful protests.

We envision the Alamance Branch of the NAACP to be a vigilant and proactive organization of engaged members that is a credible resource for racial justice change. We are unwavering in our determination to seek the advancement, equity, and equality of all people in the community.

In 2021 we successfully advocated for an early voting location in a majority minority precinct. We continued our community feeding program throughout Covid without interruption on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays in partnership with the Burlington Masjid, The Bynum Center, Children's Chapel and the NC Association of Educators. We had several branch members on the Alamance Burlington School Superintendent's Equity and Diversity Committee. We advocated for teacher assistance and resisted the outsourcing of those jobs. We have had a celebrated list of speakers at our general meetings that have included Erika Richmond from the UNC Center for Civil Rights, Teresa Cunningham-Brown, Executive Director of Human Resources for ABSS, Crystal Cavalier addressing the Native American experience and the role of intersectionality in the social justice movement. We secured an Adopt-A-Jurisdiction Mini Grant from the Southern Coalition for Social Justice. We hosted a nonpartisan candidate forum in October.

The Environmental justice Committee has recommended a formal federal complaint against the owners of the Western Electric Plant in East Burlington. It is the consensus of the branch that we do not want this building turned into a low-income housing project and that any contaminants and contaminated materials removed from the site be disposed of and located in a manner that won't harm low income communities in the surrounding area. We have stood in opposition to NC General Assembly Bills including House Bill 324, House Bill 755 and House Bill 247. We measure our success last year by our sustained vigilance and a steady course of action that addresses community concern and educates advocates about how to affect change at the grassroots level.

One of the major challenges is overcoming the idea that the civil rights movement is just history and not an ongoing struggle. While the upcoming Martin Luther King Holiday is a time to reflect on the past, we should not mistake commemoration for action. It can become easy to honor past struggles one weekend a year from the ease and comfort of a church pew, or over a hot breakfast in a rented banquet hall. But we can not forget that struggle by definition is not easy. And social change is rarely achieved in one event no matter how grand or emotional. We can not forget that over fifty years later we are still fighting for the right to vote, fair housing, against brutality at the hands of law enforcement, for fully funded public education and an array of unfair circumstances that stem from systematic racism. We as a branch are challenged to inspire every single person to engage in transformative action on a daily basis that will help make America a more perfect union.

Another challenge is the intentional engagement of honest dialog. People who are living an idealistic American experience must be willing to talk with those who are not with transparency and truth. We lost Bishop Desmond Tutu recently, and we would do well to take a lesson from his life's work dedicated to truth and reconciliation. In America we have all too often wanted reconciliation without acknowledging the truth. We see examples of that in the rewriting of history in the defense of Confederate monuments.

We are optimistic about 2022. There is an interest in developing a Youth and College Division of the Alamance NAACP. We are excited about expanding our voter education initiatives. We look forward to increasing branch membership. We expect to populate new committees with energetic citizen advocates while sustaining the momentum of existing committees. We are going to work in partnership more closely with other branches and the NC State Conference of Branches. We hope to continue to embrace a regional and state-wide approach to nonviolent social change. We anticipate living up to the memory of Martin Luther King, the legacy of this, the oldest civil rights organization in the country, and the example set by past and present leaders of this branch with all the time, talent and resources at our disposal.