

## Presidents of the Association of Negro Teachers



(Photo: Currie Ballard Collection—Oklahoma Historical Society)

# *Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.*



## *The Third Annual Hall of Fame Ceremony and Banquet*

*Oklahoma History Center  
800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Friday, September 27, 2013      6:30 p.m.*



*Oklahoma  
African American Educators  
Hall of Fame, Inc.*



**Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.**

*“Thoughts from the President”*

Looking back on my years of learning at Dunjee High School, the fondest memories are those shared at the feet of the dedicated teachers and administrators who imparted much more than any bestselling novel could reveal. If given another opportunity to let them know the impact they had on my life, it would be an honor to catalog the fruit of their labors. The wisdom and work ethic imparted on my behalf may have taken years to realized, but I am truly a better person because of their exhausting efforts in educating students such as me.

As we celebrate and recognize the contributions of our third class of inductees into the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, it becomes apparent; the teaching profession has been elevated to a position of honor because of the tireless service rendered by these astute educators. We cannot overshadow, duplicate or ignore the trodden pathways of our inductees. Their influence upon the lives of students, colleagues and dignitaries worldwide will resonate in perpetuity.

The compilations of years of service among the inductees are impeccable and punctuate the effect upon the lives of many through their guidance. I am confident, those privileged to sit at the feet of these pioneers, are fortunate to have been recipients of such wealth.

The Oklahoma African Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. extends congratulations to each honoree for their dedication to the State of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donnie L. Nero Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.



# Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.



## *Lifetime Members of the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.*

*Mrs. Hilma Ligons Barnes  
Patterson, New Jersey*

*Mr. Albert Johnson. Sr.  
Lawton, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Eunice Walker Edison  
Lawton, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.  
Clearview, Oklahoma*

*President John Hargrave  
Ada, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Shirley Ballard Nero  
Clearview, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Kay Hargrave  
Ada, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Don Shaw, Esq.  
Idabel, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Orlando Hazley  
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

## *2011 Inaugural Inductees*

*Mr. Curtis Brackeen  
Muskogee, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Meshack M. Sagini  
Langston, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Willie Mae Etheridge  
Checotah/Warrior, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Eddie Walter Warrior  
Muskogee, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Henry Kirkland Jr.  
Atoka, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Jimmie Beatrice White Williams  
Idabel, Oklahoma*

*Rev. Willie B. Parker  
Spencer, Oklahoma*

*Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly  
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

*Mr. William Robert Patterson  
Lawton, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Tom Anthony Withers Jr.  
Clearview, Oklahoma*

## *2012 Second Annual Inductees*

*Mr. Harold C. Aldridge Sr.  
Taft, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Willie Frank Hurte  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Chalon E. Anderson  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Albert Johnson Sr.  
Lawton, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Loretta Brown Collier  
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Herbert Clarence King  
Lawton, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Gladys Marie Foshee  
Sapulpa, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Frederick D. Moon  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Sylvester "Prof" Franklin  
Haskell, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Mendell L. Simmons  
Norman, Oklahoma*

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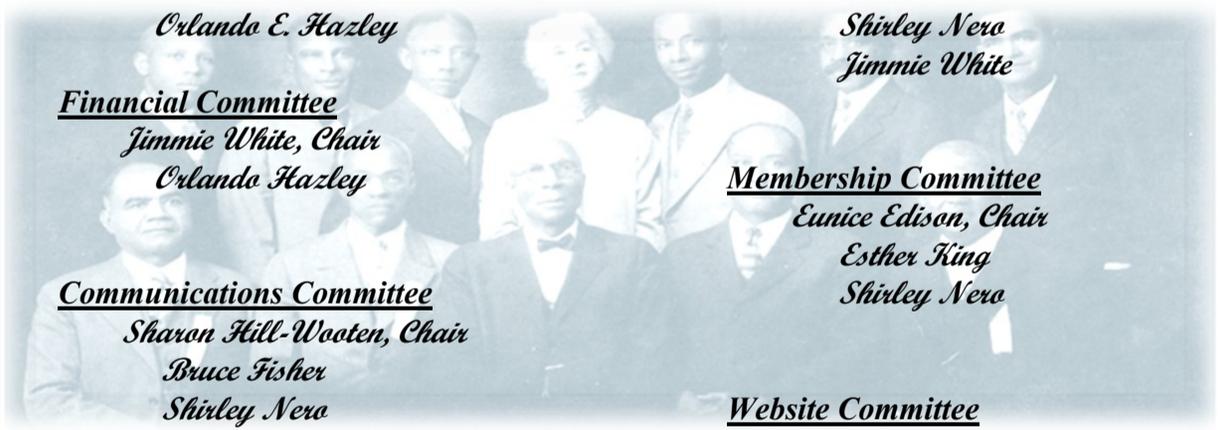
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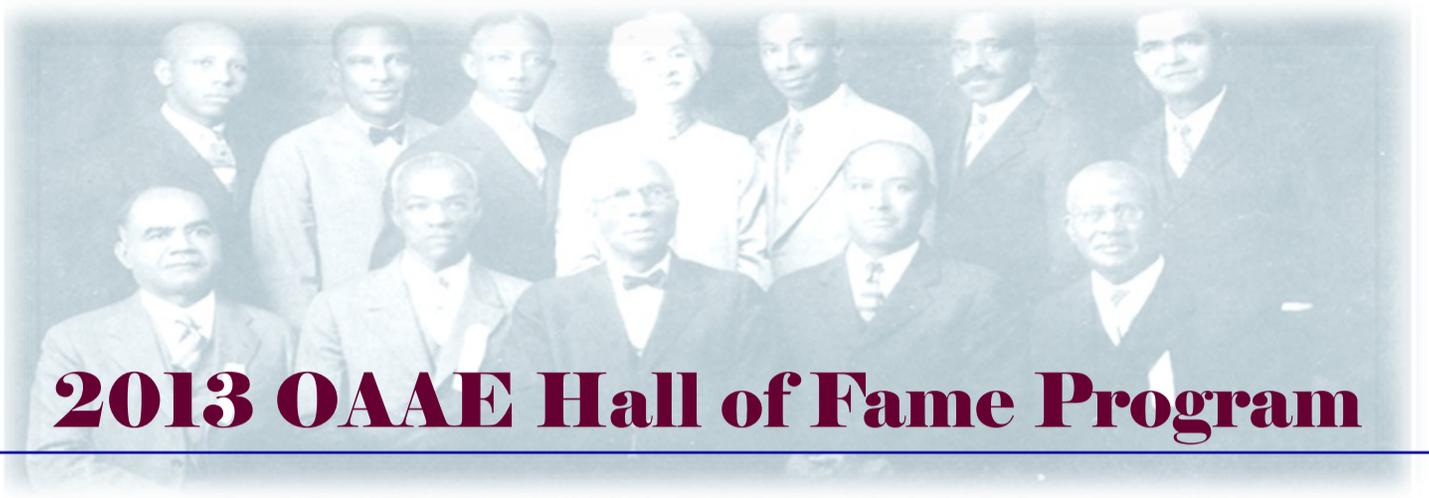
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# 2013 OAAE Hall of Fame Program

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Welcome

Mrs. Joyce Henderson  
Nomination Committee Chair,  
Board of Directors, Oklahoma City, OK

Invocation

Mr. Jimmie White, Warner, OK  
OAAE HOF Treasurer  
OAAE HOF Board of Directors

Dinner

Opening Remarks

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr., Clearview, OK  
President: OAAE Hall of Fame  
Board of Directors

2013 Induction Ceremony

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

## *2013 Inductees:*

*Mrs. Eva Gallimore Boyd*  
Chickasha Oklahoma

*Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter*  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Mrs. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris*  
Broken Bow, Oklahoma

*Dr. Wanda J. Pollard-Johnson*  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Dr. Ada Sipuel Fisher*  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Dr. Betty G. Mason*  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Mr. Charles L. Henry*  
Lawton, Oklahoma

*Mr. Willard G. Parker*  
Muskogee, Oklahoma

*Mrs. Lettie Ruth Hunter*  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Ms. Thelma Reece Parks*  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Closing Remarks

Mr. Bruce Fisher  
Administrative Program Officer  
Oklahoma History Center

# Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductees



## **Mrs. Eva Louise Gallimore Boyd (Posthumously)** **“Transformer of Education”**

Eva Gallimore, born to Dallas and Hattie Gallimore on November 28, 1904 in Dublin, Georgia, moved to Okmulgee, Oklahoma in 1907. After graduating from Dunbar High School in Okmulgee, she enrolled at the Detroit Conservatory of Music in Michigan where she obtained her Bachelor of Music degree. While there, she served as a pianist for noted composer, Edward H. Boatner. Later, she completed graduate studies at the University of Kansas in Kansas City, Kansas and Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

In 1929, she began her career as a music teacher at Lincoln School in Chickasha, Oklahoma where she created a music program for students in grades one through twelve. She created and expanded the music program at the district level and at the state level. On August 23, 1934, she married Charles L. Boyd.

Because of her involvement with the Negro Music Teachers Association and Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers, she established and shaped the standards for the quality of excellence in music in the state. In 1954, Mrs. Boyd served as president of the Oklahoma State Choral Festival Program. She promptly used her position to seize the opportunity to recruit the festival to Chickasha. Although Langston University normally served as the site of the festival, they moved it to Chickasha and over 500 students attended the festival.

She continued to teach music; often using it as a platform to raise the awareness of injustice of racism and segregation. In 1966, she relocated to Chickasha Junior High School. She taught for 43 years in Chickasha Public Schools until her retirement in 1972.

Mrs. Boyd held offices in several professional organizations and clubs. She was President of the Southwest District Festival, Chickasha Classroom Teachers' Association, Grady County Retired Teachers' Association, and the MacDowell Music Club of Chickasha. She was secretary of the Chickasha Negro Chamber of Commerce and a member of Chickasha Branch of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

She often hosted musical events which included the Prairie View University's Music Department, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune and attorney Thurgood Marshall.

Eva Gallimore Boyd genuinely believed that music could transform lives and transcend across racial lines. During her career in education and beyond, she made a daily effort to encourage, enrich, and empower people through music education and cultural awareness.



## **Mrs. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris** **“Educator of Special Needs”**

Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris, born to Jimmie and Helen Goodlow in Harris, Oklahoma on April 9, 1937, attended elementary school at Oak Grove in rural Idabel and junior high at Booker T. Washington, Idabel, Oklahoma. She graduated 1954 and enrolled at Langston University that summer. While attending Langston, she was a majorette and cheerleader for the Langston Lions. In July 1958, she received her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education. In 1969, she earned her Master's degree from Oklahoma State University. In 1961, Lou Eddie wed A. W. Burris and together they raised two sons, A. W. “Chuck” Jr. and Mike.

Mrs. Burris began teaching at Dunbar School in Broken Bow. The following year, she accepted a position at St. Mark Elementary School in Idabel teaching fifth through eighth graders in the same classroom. In addition, she served as the custodian, cook, basketball coach and 4-H Club sponsor. She transported many of her students to and from school in the (homemade) bed of her 1955 green pick-up. In 1963, she became a second grade teacher at Booker T. Washington Elementary in Idabel.

Prior to the start of the 1964 school year, Superintendent Woodrow Holman began plans to implement a new program. He asked Mrs. Burris to become the first special education teacher in Idabel Public Schools. She taught in that capacity at various schools in the district: Central Elementary, George Elementary, Idabel Junior High, and Idabel High School for a total of 45 years retiring in 1999. Due to an increase in the number of students requiring service at the high school level, she returned to the classroom in 2003. She retired again in 2010.

Mrs. Burris earned many awards and recognitions in her career and made significant professional accomplishments. In 1974, she organized the 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the American Federation of the Kiamichi Council of Exceptional Children in McCurtain County and they elected her the first President of the chapter. In 1979, she served as President of the Southeast District 5 Oklahoma Education Association.

Mrs. Burris' awards include the 1980 Special Education Resource Teacher of the Year of Oklahoma and the 1995, Council of Exceptional Children's Eva Robinson Award. She also served on the State Executive Board of the Council of Exceptional Children and served as Vice-President of the Elementary Mathematics Association of Southeast Oklahoma. On the local level, she served as Secretary of the Idabel Education Association, state delegate to the 45<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Annual International Convention for the Council of Exceptional Children in 1967 & 1973, and received three Oklahoma State Department of Education Traineeship grants. She also spearheaded coordination of the first OFCEC state convention. She is a life member of the Oklahoma Retired Educators Association and Langston University Alumni Association.

In her career, Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris taught children with varying degrees of exceptionalities. She took the time to identify each child's strengths and weaknesses and strongly believed in empowering children with disabilities to be self sufficient and productive members in society.

In 1978, she received a Christmas card from the parents of a former student. On the card, they wrote, “We still have doctors tell us that his progress is contributed greatly to your efforts when he was younger. I have thought of the many children that have missed the training that Dean received, and we thank God that he had a teacher that cared.”



### ***Dr. Ada Sipuel Fisher (Posthumously)*** ***“Advocate for Excellence”***

Ada Lois Sipuel was born on February 6, 1924, in Chickasha, Oklahoma to Reverend and Mrs. Travis Sipuel. After graduating as class Valedictorian from Lincoln High School in Chickasha, she enrolled at Langston University from which she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1945. In 1948, she attempted to enroll as a law student at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Her denied admittance led her to become the plaintiff in the landmark case, *Sipuel v. Oklahoma Board of Regents*. For three and one-half years, while attending the University of Oklahoma, she was often under the spotlight as the only African-American student at the law school until she won the case. In 1951, she earned her Juris Doctor. Later, the University recognized her for this feat when they named her as an inaugural member of the honorary Order of the Owl Hall of Fame.

After a successful career as an attorney, Dr. Fisher made a career change and moved into the halls of academia. In 1956, she began her tenure at Langston University as an Instructor in American History and Political Science. Concurrently she served as the university’s Director of Public Relations.

In 1967, Dr. Fisher ascended to the rank of Professor and Chair of the Social Science Department at Langston. After 30 years, Dr. Fisher retired from the university in 1987. She remained committed to the university post retirement. When faced with the possibility of closing its doors, Langston University sought out Dr. Fisher whose steadfast determination and tenacity were primary factors in the continued existence of the only Historically Black University in Oklahoma.

In 1955, she served as Counsel for two Oklahoma desegregation cases *Troullier v. Oklahoma College for Women Board of Regents* and *Grant et al. v. Taylor, Supt.* The Smithsonian Institute named her as one of “150 Black Women who have had the most impact on the Course of American History in 1981. In 1984, Langston University awarded Dr. Fisher the Black Heritage Award. She received the Oklahoma City Retrospective Civil Rights Award in 1985. The documentary, *In Search of Justice*, featured her in a nationwide showing during the 1987 Bicentennial celebration of the United States Constitution. In 1988, the Oklahoma Black Legislative Caucus presented to her the A.C. Handlin Award.

In 1991, the University of Oklahoma awarded Dr. Fisher an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree. In 1992, the Oklahoma Regents appointed her to their Board and in 1996, inducted her posthumously into the Oklahoma Women’s Hall of Fame and into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in 2002.

Throughout her career, she maintained membership in professional organizations at the local, state and national level. She was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Oklahoma Bar Association, Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association, Oklahoma Higher Education Alumni Council, Eta Phi Beta National Professional Women’s Sorority, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher was far more than a name of a landmark case in Oklahoma History. The ruling in her case effectively led to the desegregation of graduate programs at Oklahoma University and Oklahoma State University. She knocked down barriers that had previously blocked the path of African American students in higher education. Her legacy is entrenched in Oklahoma History. Dr. Fisher died in October 1995.



### ***Mr. Charles L. Henry (Posthumously)*** ***“Mentor and Teacher”***

Charles L. Henry was born in Hope, Arkansas on May 14, 1917 to Robert and Nannie Henry. He attended elementary, junior high and high school in Hope; graduating from Yerger High in 1934. He attended college at Texas College in Tyler and graduated magna cum laude in 1938 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts.

He went on to attain a Master’s Degree in Romance Language in 1941 from Atlanta University in Georgia. He was fluent in French, Spanish, and Italian. In 1962, he earned another master’s degree, this time in Chemistry from the University of Oklahoma followed by post-graduate studies in Chemistry at Colorado State College.

In 1938, he began his career in education at Boyd High School in Fredrick, Oklahoma where he taught Science. Later, he became Assistant Principal at that school. In 1943, he accepted a teaching position at Douglass High School in Lawton, Oklahoma. A brief stint in the military during World War II interrupted his career in education. He accepted a position at the Bureau of Standards in Washington, D.C. While there, he took advantage of the opportunity to further his education. He enrolled at Howard University.

Henry returned to Lawton where he resumed teaching at Douglass. With the implementation of integration, Douglass closed and he accepted a position as a science teacher at the predominantly white Eisenhower High School. He retired from that school in 1981 having amassed 43 years cumulative in the field of education.

Henry was a highly respected and integral member of the Lawton Douglass community. His image is included on a mural of important leaders on the exterior wall of Patterson Community Center in Lawton. Respect for Henry did not diminish with his move to Eisenhower. He had the inapt ability to connect with his students and that was a guiding force in his ability to teach them. He distinguished himself professionally as an educator who influenced a broad sector of students of all ethnicities.

He served in leadership positions in the Professional Education Association of Lawton, delegate to the Oklahoma Education Association convention, and President of the ACT Executive Committee. He was a member of the Lawton branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

After marriages to Inola Frances Hinchey and Almeda Lewis, Henry was widowed two times. His last marriage was to another 2013 posthumous inductee, Lettie Ruth Hunter. In May of 1999, Mr. Henry passed away in Lawton.



***Mrs. Lettie Ruth Hunter (Posthumously)***  
***“A Driving Force In Education”***

In 1918, Lettie Ruth was born on a farm in Stroud, Oklahoma to Joseph and Luzella Cooper. Her years of living on the farm established in her a strong work ethic. She attended Dunbar School in Stroud, Oklahoma. Upon completion, she moved on to Douglass High School in Chandler, Oklahoma where she obtained her diploma in 1936.

Mrs. Hunter attended Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma where she was a Vocational Home Economics major. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1940. She then relocated to Fort Collins, Colorado to obtain her Master of Science degree in Vocational Home Economics from Colorado A & M University in 1941.

She later completed post-graduate studies in that field at Wayne University in Detroit, Michigan.

In 1941, she began teaching at Douglass High School in Chandler where she taught for three years then she accepted a job at Lawton, Oklahoma where she stayed for 21 years.

In 1967, Mrs. Hunter moved to Oklahoma City to teach at Douglass High School. She taught there for 14 years interrupted only by a brief stint at U.S. Grant High School. She retired in 1984.

Although she taught Home Economics, Mrs. Hunter managed to incorporate other subject into the framework of her instruction. She modeled public speaking skills and the use of correct grammar in informal and formal settings. She taught math when she required students to alter measurements in both cooking and sewing classes. She taught leadership skills in team projects and the value of teamwork.

Mrs. Hunter was a driving force in the state conventions of the predominantly black organization of the New Homemakers of America and later the Future Homemakers of America. She received statewide recognition for her home economics programs and award-winning students. She was instrumental in the founding of the Langston University Home Economics Alumni Association.

She was very involved in her community. She worked closely with the Oklahoma City chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She met regularly with the youth at the Oklahoma City Freedom Center to prepare them for their annual Fiesta Days. The Miss Black Oklahoma Pageant was one of her major projects. She was a member of Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association, Oklahoma City Retired Teachers Association (life member), Vocational Home Economics Association (life member), Eastern Star, Red Cross Society, YWCA, and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. Mrs. Hunter was also a charter trustee and treasurer of the Wyatt F. and Mattie M. Jeltz Scholarship Foundation.

Lettie Ruth Hunter was by all account a model teacher for 43 years. She always strived to ensure that she prepared her students for life as adults. She used everyday situations as teachable moments for students. She was the wife of another inductee, Charles L. Henry.



***Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter***  
***“A Teacher of Fishermen”***

In 1954, Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter was born in Ada, Oklahoma to J.T. and Murphie Stokes. She attended schools in Pawhuska, graduating in 1972. In December 1976, Dr. Jones-Porter received her B.S. degree in Education from the University of Oklahoma. She continued with her education and in 1983 earned her Master of Education degree with emphasis in Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance from Central State University (UCO) in Edmond. She earned her Doctorate in August 1997.

In 1977, Dr. Porter began her career as a Physical Education and Science Teacher at Little Axe in Norman. In 1981, she became a Physical Education teacher at Fairview Elementary in Moore while working concurrently as an Adjunct Faculty member at both Rose State College in Midwest City and Oklahoma City Community College.

In 1985, she became a Comprehensive Health Education Specialist with the Oklahoma State Department. She continued in that capacity until 1988 when she accepted the job as Instructor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Central Oklahoma. She became the first African-American promoted to the rank of Professor in the KHS Department. In June 2012, she assumed the title of Retired Professor Emeriti. Dr. Jones-Porter accumulated 35 years in education.

Dr. Jones-Porter holds multiple certifications. She is a certified Red Cross Water Safety and Life Guard Instructor in Oklahoma County. She holds an Oklahoma teaching certificate in Physical Education (K-12), Anatomy/Physiology (7-12), Biology (7-12) and Zoology (7-12).

In 2010, the Oklahoma Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance awarded Dr. Jones-Porter the OAHPERD Honor Award, the highest honor given in her field. Her other awards include: Outstanding Faculty Woman Achievement Award from the Central State University Association of Women Students in 1989, United States Water Fitness Association C. Carson Conrad Award for Outstanding World Fitness Leader in 1996, McNair Scholars Program Faculty Mentor in 2001, 2003, 2004. She also received the Dr. Virginia Peters Physical Education in Higher Education Teacher of the Year Award from OAHPERD in 2008.

Dr. Porter has presented at a variety of state and national conferences including the Oklahoma Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; AAHPERD National Conference; and the Oklahoma Women in Higher Education sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Dr. Jones-Porter bases her philosophy of teaching on the age-old Chinese proverb, “Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; but teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.” I try to teach my students to fish. I realize and embrace the idea that life’s journey contains mountains and valleys, how you handle situations is an attitudinal choice. You can choose to be better or bitter, but you can’t be both. I hope my service has been a blessing to my many students and colleagues, as much as they have been a blessing in my life. She is the wife of John Porter and parent of Deirdra Roberts, both of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



***Dr. Betty G. Mason***  
***“Educator and Administrator”***

Born Betty Gwendolyn Hopkins to Stacy and Carrie Hopkins on March 3, 1928 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Dr. Mason amassed a total of 59 years in education. Upon graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, she went on to attain a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Bishop College in Marshall, Texas. In 1949, she began her teaching career in the Kansas City School District in Kansas. She married and in 1950 moved to Dallas where she applied for a job in the Dallas Independent School District. They denied her a position because she was not a Texan.

In 1959, she returned to Kansas City and taught in both Kansas and Missouri City Districts. In 1969, she and her daughter located to Oakland, California where she accepted a position with Berkeley Public Schools. Over a ten-year period, Dr. Mason steadily climbed the ladder in administration. She earned a MA degree at the University of California, Hayward. During her tenure with Berkeley, she was a Reading Specialist, Assistant Director of Title One Schools, Assistant Principal, Principal, Assistant Director of Personnel, and Director of Pre-Kindergarten and Elementary Education.

Upon moving to Oklahoma City in May of 1979, she revived and revamped a program for the Adult Education Center for Unwed Mothers. The program, Skills and Academics Grant Education (SAGE), she linked with the Vocational Education program, which provided the students with the opportunity to graduate high school equipped with viable skills needed to attain employment. She also introduced ROTC to Oklahoma City Public Schools. In 1983, she earned her Doctorate of Education at the University of Oklahoma.

In 1988, Dr. Mason moved to Gary, Indiana to become Superintendent of the School District for three years. She returned to Oklahoma City in 1991. In 1992, she took the position as Superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools.

She retired in 1995; however, her services were still in demand post retirement. The Boley School District hired her as Superintendent for the 2001-2001 year; nine students graduated. She has also served as the Superintendent of the private Christian school, St. John Christian Heritage Academy for 17 years from 1996-2013.

Dr. Mason received many awards and honors including induction into the Oklahoma Educators Hall of Fame. She was awarded the Boy Scouts Silver Beaver Award, Girl Scouts Woman of the Year, Oklahoma Commission for Human Relations Award, and Outstanding Soror by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Her professional affiliations past and present include Urban League of Oklahoma City Board of Directors, Black Liberated Arts Board of Directors, Kirkpatrick Foundation Board of Directors, Human Rights Board of Directors, American Association of School Administrators, National Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Dr. Mason had a passion for education and children. She was committed to ensuring that students were equipped with the necessary tools for them to be successful learners, which accounts for her long tenure in education.



***Dr. Wanda Jacob Pollard-Johnson***  
***“Influential and Dedicated Leader”***

Dr. Wanda Jacob Pollard-Johnson was born in 1948 in Minden, Louisiana to Clyde and Helen Jacob. She attended J. L. Elementary. Her family relocated to Oklahoma City, and she began her next school year at Moon Junior High and graduated from Douglass High School in 1966.

In 1966, she enrolled at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) in Edmond and graduated in 1970 with a Bachelor of Music in Education with emphasis in music education and psychology. She completed her Master in Education course work in 1975 at the same university. In 1989, Dr. Johnson earned her Ph.D. in Applied Behavioral Studies from Oklahoma State University.

Dr. Johnson began her teaching in Oklahoma City at John Marshall High School in 1970. In 1972, she accepted a position as Vocal Music and Choral Director at Millwood School District. She continued in that position until she became the Human Relations Specialist at Star Spencer High School in 1977.

In 1979, Rogers Middle School in Oklahoma City hired her as Counselor where her duties included coordinating the counseling services for special needs and gifted learners. In 1985, she accepted a position with Oklahoma State University as a Minority Lecturer in the Department of Applied Behavioral Studies in Education. Dr. Johnson became an Associate Professor in the Guidance and Counseling Department at UCO in 1988. She continued in that capacity for 14 years. Then, she relocated to Prairie View A & M University in Texas. In her role as Associate Professor, she taught and advised graduate students in the Guidance and Counseling program. She was the first educator to establish and teach “Play Therapy” curriculum at the Universities of Central Oklahoma and Prairie View A & M. At Prairie View, she designed a curriculum for online courses for guidance and counseling majors in order for them to stay abreast of changing technology in their field. She became one of the first professors in the counseling field to instruct online classes

Dr. Johnson has garnered many awards and honors during her illustrious career including Who’s Who in Education, McNair Scholarship Award at UCO (2004), and Prairie View A & M President’s Outstanding Faculty Award (2009). She was a past president for the Oklahoma Association of Counselor Supervisors, established a Military Family Support Group, Consultant for the Mid-Del Youth and Family Center, and is the President and CEO for Northeast Child Guidance Center, a private practice.

Dr. Johnson presented her paper, Play Therapy and the African American Child at the HBCU Annual Symposium in 2010 in Washington, D.C. She also authored Retention and Recruitment of Minority Students in Higher Education in 1989 and co-wrote a chapter in the book, The Educational Procedures for the Mentally Retarded, in 1998.

During her career that has spanned 41 years, Dr. Wanda Jacob Pollard-Johnson was able to fuse her passion for music with psychology in order to influence and affect the lives of her many students. She demanded nothing less than the best from her students.



**Mr. Willard G. Parker (Posthumously)**  
***“A Trailblazer for African American Education”***

In 1914, Willard G. Parker was born to Wheeler and Alberta Parker on a farm a few miles east of Porter, Oklahoma. He and his siblings, John, Odessa, Norene, and Wheeler Mae enjoyed life in the country. At an early age, he learned the value of hard work - feeding chickens and milking cows.

In 1929, at the age of 15, he began traveling to Langston to attend high school. After graduating high school, he immediately enrolled in Langston University. He majored in Agriculture and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1937. While completing his student teaching practicum at Cushing, the New Farmers of America (NFA) became an intraoral part of his life. It had a profound impact in his life and career.

In 1937, Perry High School in Perry, Oklahoma hired Mr. Parker to teach vocational agriculture earning a salary of \$90 per month. He also assumed the responsibility for coordinating community service projects for the youth. To promote diversity within the group, he began to coach football and basketball.

In 1944, he moved on to Boynton High School to teach vocational agriculture. The next year, Manual Training High School in Muskogee, Oklahoma hired him to teach vocational agriculture and implement the Pilot Agriculture Program for Large Cities in public schools in Oklahoma. He was instrumental in helping to develop and utilize a specialized curriculum that included 1100 acres of farm plots for beef cattle and hog production, soybean and range land grass production, farm machinery operation and repair, soil and plant culture, and food and meat processing and canning. Under the leadership of Mr. Parker, he soon established The Muskogee Chapter of New Farmers of America. The chapter, “Parker Boys,” became a state, regional, and national award-winning chapter in the areas of judging, debate, parliamentary procedures, and management and leadership skills. During his tenure, Mr. Parker organized Manual Training High School’s first student council. He also served as state student council advisor for teachers.

In 1970, Muskogee High School hired Parker as a Vo-Ag teacher. He was the only African-American Vo-Ag teacher retained after integration. Parker retired in 1977 after 40 years. Mr. Parker was a founding member of Retired Educators for Youth In Agricultural Programs (REYAP) in Oklahoma in 1994. He was also one of 30 agriculture advisors Oklahoma State University (OSU) selected to assist with the development of programs in Vo-Tech schools in Oklahoma.

Mr. Parker’s awards include the Black Heritage Distinguished Award of Excellence from Oklahoma Secretary of Education in 1995; the Future Farmers of America H. O. Sargent Award in 1998; REYAP Certificate of Appreciation in 2000; and induction into the New Farmers of America Advisors Hall of Fame at Langston University in 2011. His affiliations included the Eastern Oklahoma Development District, Farmers Co-Op of Oklahoma, Future Farmers of America, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Negro Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Education Association, Oklahoma Livestock Association, and Oklahoma Retired Education Association.

Willard G. Parker continued to reside in his home in Muskogee until his death on October 8, 2012.



**Ms. Thelma Reece Parks**  
***“Dedicated Professional”***

Thelma R. Parks was born to Tom and Estella (Smith) Reese in Muskogee, Oklahoma, a family of eleven and a home that was the center of the social exchange and fellowship in the community. After graduating from Manual Training High School at age 15, she was too young to enroll in college. Because of a financial burden on the family, she worked at a local theater until she earned enough money to pay her college tuition and expenses. She enrolled at Langston University and in 1945; she graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. in elementary education. In 1955, Ms. Parks earned her M.A. in Counseling and Guidance Education from Oklahoma University. In 1963, she acquired a professional certificate from Central State University.

She began her career in 1946 before relocating in 1951 to Oklahoma City where she obtained a job at Dunbar Elementary School. Many consider Ms. Parks a “trailblazer” in Oklahoma education. In 1971, she accepted an assignment at predominate white U.S. Grant High, becoming the first African-American counselor in Oklahoma City School District. Two years later, they appointed her coordinator of the school’s counseling and guidance department, a position she held until her retirement in 1987.

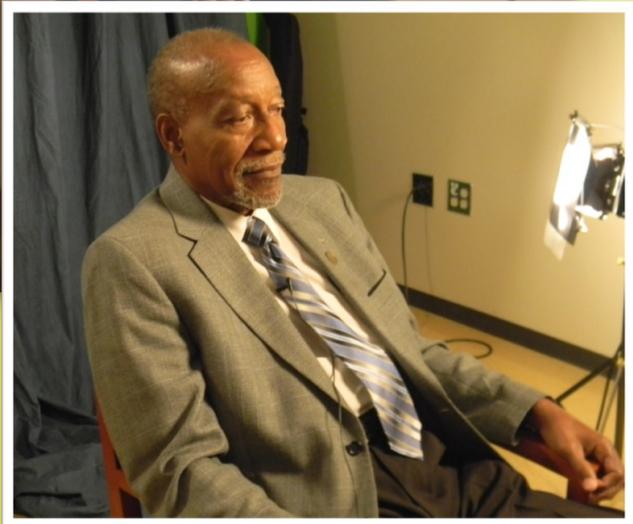
Retirement did not end her career in education. She went on to become a member of the Oklahoma City Board of Education. In 1990, she served as board president. In that capacity, she spearheaded the successful vote of an 89 million dollar school bond initiative. The bond included the construction of an elementary school named in her honor, Thelma R. Parks Elementary School. During her 22 years of service and leadership on the Board, she instituted major renovations in several schools and was relentless in her effort to improve the quality of education for Oklahoma students. Ms. Parks established a \$1000 scholarship for students pursuing a degree in education at Langston University.

Ms. Parks achieved a number of “first” in her career. She challenged and was successful in overturning discriminatory hiring practices, becoming the first African-American teacher hired in the Muskogee School District. Thelma R. Parks Elementary School was the first school built in honor an African American female.

Ms. Parks numerous awards and honors include the Urban League of Oklahoma City “Volunteer of the Year” in 1987, YWCA “Woman of the Year” in 1989, Distinguished member of the Oklahoma State School Board Association Board of Directors, Langston University Distinguished Alumnus Award, Oklahoma Human Rights Award, A.C. Hamlin & All-State Academy Awards from Will Rogers World Airport Authority, and NAACP Lifetime Achievement Award.

Thelma R. Parks served on the front lines in the early days of desegregation in Oklahoma City Public Schools. She challenged subtle and blatant acts of racial disparity in hiring practices and resource allocation. She had a major impact on students in her role as teacher, counselor, mentor, and community leader.

*“Let The Show Begin”*





# OAAE Hall of Fame, Inc.

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*In 2010, The Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. was constituted and incorporated as a nonprofit organization to recognize and to honor those professional Oklahoma African Americans, who have taught at least five years in the State of Oklahoma, who have exemplified a commitment while demonstrating exceptional abilities in realizing ideals, service or leadership in the teaching and guidance of their students.*

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