

Association of Negro Teachers Presidents



(Photo: Currie Ballard Collection—Oklahoma Historical Society)

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



*The Twelfth Annual
Ceremony and Banquet*

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

Friday

September 29, 2023

7:00 p.m.



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

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

"Thoughts from the President"

How many years does it take to recognize people for their contributions to mankind? We are in year twelve and have only touched the "hem of the garments." Great educators remain a priority within our state, thus for their dedication to the next generation, we say, "Thank you!"

The influences of educational institutions, such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Roscoe Dunjee, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Toussaint Louverture, Crispus Attucks, and others will forever remain the bedrock institutions. They created a pathway for those inducted this evening and in future years to come.

Many present tonight can recall while attending these great institutions: the textbooks were sometime old/torn BUT we still learned. The band uniforms were a little tight and faded BUT we still performed. The football equipment didn't always fit and coordinate BUT we still won. The teachers weren't given the best classroom materials/equipment BUT they still taught.

Thanks to those teachers, coaches, band directors, and janitors who saw something in us, others may not have!!

The educational system in Oklahoma has and continues to flourish because of the character of those recognized tonight. The sacrifices of our inductees make it possible for the new generation of educators to enjoy the conveniences, accommodations, and compensations they receive today. Please take time to acknowledge these inductees by saying, "Thank you."

Education has and always will be the ingredient which provides opportunities for the masses, while stimulating the individuals to press onward fulfilling their potential. The inductees this year have served in various capacities within the realm of Oklahoma education and their influence is evident by the successes attained by their fruit.

The Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. museum, located in Clearview, Oklahoma, has become a historical tourist destination, attraction, and place of interest for history enthusiasts. The town is one of the original Thirteen All-Black towns of Oklahoma and is centrally located between Tulsa and Oklahoma City in Okfuskee County, accessible from Interstate 40. This is a "must-see" museum.

May we all hold firm to the belief in all people and embrace the vision of the OAAE Hall of Fame, Inc., which remains: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." Proverbs 3:27.

This evening would not be possible without the dedicated OAAE Hall of Fame, Inc. Board of Directors and Committee Members. Please recognize their efforts throughout this event. I sincerely hope you enjoy the occasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.".

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

President: Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.



Board of Directors

President

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

Vice President

Sharon Hill-Wooten

Secretary

Shirley A. Nero

Treasurer

Jimmie L. White Jr.

Dr. Harold C. Aldridge Jr., Dr. R. P. Ashanti-Alexander, Dr. Gloria Anderson, Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker, Mrs. Eunice Edison, Dr. Deena K. Fisher, Ms. Claudette Goss, Dr. John Hargrave, Mr. Orlando E. Hazley, Mrs. Henrietta Hicks, Ms. Sharon Hill-Wooten, Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr., Mr. Clayton Nolen, Dr. Wanda Pollard Johnson, Mr. Jimmie White

Committee Members

Ms. Diane Anderson, Ms. Rita Cooksey, Mr. Bruce Fisher, Mr. Tom Fisher, Mrs. Marilyn Jackson, Mrs. Shirley Nero, Mr. Harold Roberts

Oklahoma Historical Society Liaison: *Larry O'Dell - State Historian*



Life Members

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

*Mrs. Hilma L. Barnes - Paterson, NJ (deceased)
Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr. - Clearview, OK
Mr. Albert Johnson Sr. - Lawton, OK (deceased)
Mrs. Eunice Edison - Lawton, OK
Mrs. Shirley A. Ballard Nero - Clearview, OK
Mr. Don Shaw, Esq. - Idabel, OK
Dr. Jack Paschall—Ada, OK
Mr. Orlando E. Hazley - Tulsa, OK
Mrs. Kay Hargrave - Ada, OK
Dr. John R. Hargrave - Ada, OK
Mr. Michael Carolina - Edmond, OK
Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Joy Hill - Idabel, OK
Citizen State Bank of Okemah, OK - Corporate Life
Dr. Wanda Pollard Johnson - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Colleen Venters - Boley, OK
Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly - Tulsa, OK
Dr. Gloria Anderson - Oklahoma City, OK
Mr. Eugene Earsom - Oklahoma City, OK
Ms. Claudett Goss - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Joyce Jackson - Midwest City, OK
Ms. Esther King - Warner, OK*

*Mrs. Gale Parker - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Ruby J. Peters - Lawton, OK
Mrs. Dorothy Bradley - Lawton, OK
Mr. Jimmie White - Warner, OK
Ms. Sharon Hill-Wooten - Idabel, OK
Mr. Samuel Combs III - Tulsa, OK
Mrs. Rita Combs - Tulsa, OK
Dr. Deena Fisher - Woodward, OK
Dr. Anquanita Kaigler-Love - Lawton, OK
Dr. Harold C. Aldridge Jr. - Tahlequah, OK
Ms. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris - Broken Bow, OK
Mr. Eugene DePriest Jones III - Oklahoma City, OK
Rep. Kevin Cox - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Helen Franks Miner - El Reno, OK
Mr. & Mrs. William & Nancy Ford - Shawnee, OK
Mrs. Delois McGee - Checotah, OK
Mrs. Marilyn Bernice Jackson - Clearview, OK
Mr. Ben Harris - Nichols Hill, OK
Dr. Regina DeLoach - Lawton, OK
Ms. Rita Cooksey - Oklahoma City, OK
Ms. Anita Arnold - Oklahoma City, OK*

*Become A
Life Member Today
www.oaaehof.org*

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.



2011 Inaugural Induction

Mr. Curtis Brackeen
Muskogee, Oklahoma
Mrs. Willie Mae Etheridge
Checotah/Warrior, Oklahoma
Dr. Henry Kirkland Jr.
Atoka, Oklahoma
Mr. Willie B. Parker
Spencer, Oklahoma
Mr. William Robert Patterson
Lawton, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

Dr. Meshack M. Sagini
Langston, Oklahoma
Mr. Eddie Walter Warrior
Muskogee, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Jimmie Beatrice White Williams
Idabel, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Mr. Tom Anthony Withers Jr.
Clearview, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

2012 Second Annual Induction

Mr. Harold C. Aldridge Sr.
Taft, Oklahoma
Dr. Chalon E. Anderson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dr. Loretta Brown Collier
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Gladys Marie Forshee
Sapulpa, Oklahoma
Mr. Sylvester "Prof" Franklin
Haskell, Oklahoma

Mr. Willie Frank Hurte
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dr. Mendell L. Simmons
Norman, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. Albert Johnson Sr.
Lawton, Oklahoma
Mr. Herbert Clarence King
Lawton, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. Frederick D. Moon
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

2013 Third Annual Induction

Mrs. Eva Gallimore Boyd
Chickasha, OK (Posthumously)
Mrs. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris
Broken Bow, Oklahoma
Dr. Ada Sipuel Fisher
Oklahoma City, OK (Posthumously)
Mr. Charles L. Henry
Lawton, OK (Posthumously)
Mrs. Lettie Ruth Hunter
Oklahoma City, OK (Posthumously)

Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dr. Betty G. Mason
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dr. Willard G. Parker
Muskogee, OK (Posthumously)
Ms. Thelma Reece Parks
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dr. Wanda J. Pollard-Johnson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

2014 Fourth Annual Induction

Dr. Charles E. Butler
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mrs. Valerie Inez Carolina
Wewoka, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Lola Parker Dean
Porter, Oklahoma
Mrs. Juanita Lewis-Hopkins
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Mr. Millard L. House
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mr. Jesse "J. D." Johnson
Altus, Oklahoma
Ms. Mary "The Fox" Johnson
Ardmore, Oklahoma
Mr. Charles B. McCauley
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Violet A. Patterson
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Dr. Willa Allegra Strong
McAlester, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

2015 Fifth Annual Induction

Mrs. Nancy Ola Randolph Davis
Spencer, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. Manyles B. Gaines, Jr.
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Dr. Ernest L. Holloway, Sr.
Boley, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Marilyn Ballard Jackson
Clearview, Oklahoma
Mr. James Roy (J.R.) Johnson
Muskogee, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

Mrs. Clara Mae Shepard Luper
Hoffman, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. Gloria Joan Pollard
Spencer, Oklahoma
Dr. Jimmy V. Scales, Sr.
Idabel, Oklahoma
Dr. Virginia L. Schoats
Muskogee, Oklahoma
Dr. Valree Fletcher Wynn
Lawton, Oklahoma

Induction Ceremonies - Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.



2016 Sixth Annual Induction

Mr. Jerry Lee Belton, Sr.
Boynton, Oklahoma
Dr. Karen M. Clark
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. Leon Edd, Jr.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mrs. Jo Ann Goodwin Gilford
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Ms. Claudette Goss
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Mr. Cedric Johnson
Muskogee, Oklahoma
Dr. Anquanita Kaigler-Love
Lawton, Oklahoma
Mr. Wallace Owens, Jr.
Guthrie, Oklahoma
Mr. Herman Cornelius Robbins
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Lena Lowry Sawner
Chandler, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

2017 Seventh Annual Induction

Mrs. Olive Ruth James
Wewoka, Oklahoma
Mr. Calvin Rob Johns Sr.
Seminole, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Helen Louise Franks Miner
El Reno, Oklahoma
Dr. Cecelia Nails-Palmer
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. Henry Ponder
South Carolina - Wewoka, Oklahoma

Dr. Dennis L. Portis III
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. Nathaniel Quinn Sr.
Boley, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr.
Edmond, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Mildred Tilford
McAlester, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Charlotte J. Walker
Clearview, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

2018 Eighth Annual Induction

Mrs. Amelia Louise Swain Alford
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Dr. Ann Marie Allen
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mrs. Marilyn Frances Duncan
Wilburton, Oklahoma
Mrs. Emma Lee Jones Freeman
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. James L. Furch
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mrs. Joyce Ann Henderson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mr. Benjamin Harrison Hill
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Judith Ann Carter Horton
Guthrie, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. Delois Ann McGee
Checotah, Oklahoma
Mr. James A. Senter
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

2019 Ninth Annual Induction

Mrs. Montecella Lucinda Driver
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Mr. Joe B. Gordon
Wagoner, Oklahoma
Mr. John Edward Haney
Guthrie, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Gertrude Marie Lewis
Broken Bow, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. Lee Virgil Patterson Sr.
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

Mr. Leander "Lee" Roland
Spencer, Oklahoma
Mr. Louis Irving Ryan Jr.
Vinita, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Joyce Ann Stripling
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Dr. Goldie V. L. Thompson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mrs. Mildred Nadine Wallace
Wewoka, Oklahoma

2020 Annual Induction - COVID YEAR

2021 Tenth Annual Induction

Mrs. Captoria Wells Aldridge
Taft, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. Leroy H. Alfred
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander
Chickasha, Oklahoma
Mrs. Ycedra Daughty
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mr. Orlando Hazley
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Ms. Shirley Hurd
Idabel, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Marsha Akins Jordan
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mr. Jimmie L. White Jr.
Warner, Oklahoma
Mr. Marvin R. Williams
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Ardell E. Drake Withers
Clearview, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

2022 Eleventh Annual Induction

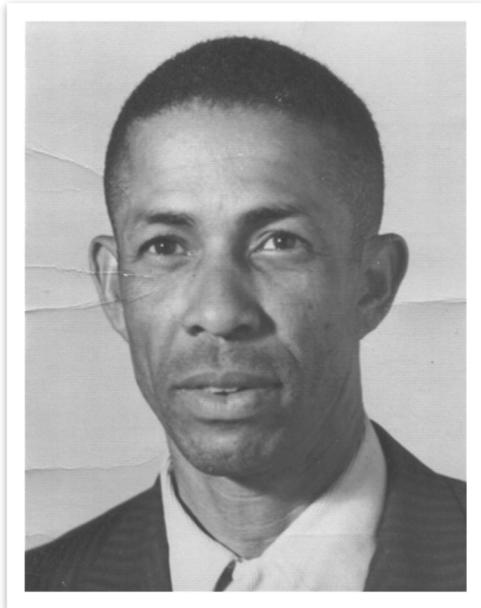
Mr. Samuel Harper
Eufaula, Oklahoma
Mr. Malcolm Hilburn
Chickasha, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Ms. Dolores Del Rio Jones
Seminole, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Dr. Mautra Staley Jones
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Mr. Opal Willard Lee
Idabel, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mr. Robert I. Mayes Sr.
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.
Clearview, Oklahoma
Mrs. Shirley Ann Ballard Nero
Clearview, Oklahoma
Mr. Clayton Eric Nolen
Enid, Oklahoma
Dr. Wessylne Alford Simpson
Langston, Oklahoma (Posthumously)
Mrs. Juanita Williams
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)

E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship

2023 Recipients

E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr.



Mr. William "Bill" Ford and friends of Shawnee, Oklahoma generously donated monies to jumpstart the E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship. Watson had been a teacher and coach at Dunbar, the segregated Black school in Shawnee. When the school closed, only his coaching position transferred to Shawnee High School. Bill Ford played on Coach Watson's football team. Ford described Watson as being genuine, caring, and a great leader for the team. He was so influential to the team that Ford initiated a scholarship to honor him.

When E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. was inducted into the 2017 OAAE HOF, Ford established this scholarship to express his gratitude and to continue the legacy of making a difference in the lives of young athletes as Coach Watson did for so many. The scholarship is awarded to outstanding athletics in Oklahoma.

This scholarship is open to male and female athletes who graduate from an Oklahoma Public school with plans to a college or university at an Oklahoma accredited institution. Preference is given to African American students. The amount given is contingent upon monies available each year and may vary. Recipients are honored at the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Ceremony each year, the last Friday in September.



Kaleah Barnett
Morris High School

Kaleah Barnett, Morris High School has been selected as a recipient of the 2023 E.M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship. She is the daughter of Kamilah and Robert Barnett of Morris, Oklahoma.

She maintained a 3.76 GPA while participating in varsity basketball, band, Oklahoma Mass Choir, and National Honor Society. She was selected to the All-Conference Basketball Team and OGBCA All-Region Team. Kaleah attends Lone Tree Baptist Church in Boynton, Oklahoma.

In his letter of recommendation, Coach Stephen Castlebury described her as a punctual and enthusiastic athlete who thrived during adversity. "Kaleah has an excellent work ethic and will do what is

asked or her and more."

Kaleah plans to attend Tulsa Community College where she will enroll in the dental hygienist program. Upon completing the course requirements at TCC, she plans to continue her education in dental school in order to pursue her goal of becoming a dentist.

Jordan Marie Blades
Glenpool High School

Jordan Marie Blades, a graduate of Glenpool High School is the daughter of Marvin and Tanya Blades of Glenpool, Oklahoma and granddaughter of Dr. and Mrs. Donnie Nero, Sr of Clearview, Oklahoma. She participated in varsity track and varsity basketball in high school and maintained a 3.3 GPA. She was a member of Student Council and FCCLA and volunteered with the food and clothing pantry at the Church of Christ and with the sock donation drive at Glenpool Nursing Home.

Her accomplishments include - Most athletic female at Glenpool HS (2020-2023), VYPE Magazine front cover (top 100 female/male basketball athletes of 2023), Metro Lakes Honorable Mention in basketball, 2021, and 2021 and 2022 state qualifier in track and field (4x100, 4x200, 100 meters, and 200 meters).

In his letter of recommendation, Glenpool HS Coach Ted Smith described her as an extremely dedicated and goal-oriented student athlete who has been successful both academically and athletically. Her ambition to succeed and high expectations have driven her to evaluate her own performances and improve every aspect of her technique. She plans to pursue a degree in business management at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma and will be a member of the track and field team.



E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship

2023 Recipients



Trevor Smith
Idabel High School

Trevor Smith, Idabel High School has been selected as a recipient of the 2023 E.M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship. He is the son of James and Johnna Smith of Idabel, Oklahoma.

In high school, Trevor participated in varsity track, varsity football, and power lifting and maintained a 3.45 GPA. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and F.I.S.H. During his junior year, he was selected "Mr. Warrior." He was a candidate for prom king his senior year.

In his letter of recommendation, Idabel HS Coach Trevor Matlock described him as an "invaluable member of the Idabel Warriors football and track teams who demonstrated exceptional skills, determination, and leadership and served as a positive role model for his peers." Trevor will be a member of the Tigers Powerlifting team at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma and plans to pursue a degree in Kinesiology. Upon graduation, he plans to become a high school science teacher and coach.

Zinari Reginald Waldrup
Frederick A. Douglass High School



Zinari Reginald Waldrup, Frederick A. Douglass High School is the grandson of David Ealy of Oklahoma City. He was a member of his school's wrestling team, offensive lineman and captain on the varsity football team, Family Awareness and Community Teamwork Police Youth Leadership Program, represented F.A. Douglass High School as a member of the Oklahoma City Public Schools Superintendent's Student Advisory Board, and mentor for Poetry & Chill. Additionally, he was a member of student council and a four-year percussionist in the marching band.

His accomplishments include – 2022-23 All-City Academic Conference Offensive Lineman, All-City Wrestling team, 1st place, and was honored for his outstanding community volunteerism by the South Park Estates Neighborhood Association.

In his letter of recommendation, Frederick A. Douglass Head Football Coach Derrick Adams described Zinari as being respectable, responsible, reliable, and adaptable. He demonstrated leadership in school and in the community.

Zinari plans to attend Langston University where he will play football and major in education and counseling with a minor in business management. He plans to eventually own a counseling agency for young adults and youth.

2024 OAAEHOF Induction Ceremony - September 27th

Nominate an educator, administrator, or support personal

Must have taught or worked in the Oklahoma School system for at least five consecutive years

Download the nomination form

www.oaaehof.org

2023 OAAE Hall of Fame, Inc. Program

<i>Entertainment</i>	<i>Taylor/Made Jazz - Walter Taylor III</i> <i>Oklahoma City, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Welcome</i>	<i>Dr. Gloria Anderson</i> <i>Board of Directors: Oklahoma City,</i> <i>Oklahoma</i>
<i>Invocation</i>	<i>Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander</i> <i>Board of Directors: Chickasha, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Dinner</i>	<i>B & B Catering - Demetria Bailey</i> <i>Oklahoma City, Oklahoma</i>
<i>OAAE HOF: Our Mission</i>	<i>Video Presentation</i>
<i>Master of Ceremony</i>	<i>Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.</i> <i>Board President: Clearview, Oklahoma</i>
<i>E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr.</i> <i>Scholarship Recipients</i>	<i>Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.</i> <i>Dr. John Hardgrave - OAAE BOD</i> <i>William "Bill" Ford - Shawnee Milling Co.</i> <i>Principal Founder E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr</i>
<i>2023 Induction Ceremony</i>	<i>Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.</i> <i>Board President: Clearview, Oklahoma</i>
<i>2023 Induction Ceremony Closing Remarks</i>	<i>Sharon Hill-Wooten</i> <i>Board Vice-President: Idabel, Oklahoma</i>

2023 Inductees

<i>Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker</i> <i>Broken Arrow, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Mr. William Sulcer</i> <i>(Posthumously)</i> <i>Tulsa, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Mr. Jason Douglas Brown</i> <i>Oklahoma City, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Dr. Melvin Todd</i> <i>(Posthumously)</i> <i>Oklahoma City/Langston, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Mrs. Vernetta J. Dunford-De Martra</i> <i>Midwest City, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Mrs. Collene M. Venters</i> <i>Boley, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Mr. Lawrence E. "Train" Lane</i> <i>Tulsa/Checotah, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Mr. Jimmie L. White Sr.</i> <i>(Posthumously)</i> <i>Langston, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Mrs. Karen Knauls Pittman</i> <i>Tulsa, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Dr. Art S. Williams Jr.</i> <i>Tulsa, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Dr. James Allan Simpson</i> <i>Langston, Oklahoma</i>	

2023 E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship Awardees

<i>Kaleah Barnett</i> <i>Morris, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Trevor J. Smith</i> <i>Idabel, Oklahoma</i>
<i>Jordan M. Blades</i> <i>Glenpool, Oklahoma</i>	<i>Zinari R. Waldrup</i> <i>Oklahoma City, Oklahoma</i>

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker

"Laborer of Love"

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Bobbie Allen Booker was the fourth child born to Elmer and Cleopatra Atkinson Allen on April 29, 1944. Two other siblings followed making a total of six children in the family, three boys and three girls. She attended Dunbar Elementary, Carver Junior High and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1962. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree from Langston University and a master's degree in education from Northeastern State University.

Active in church, community and professional organizations, Mrs. Booker's first love is children. This native Tulsan devoted forty-four years to education. She spent her first year as a classroom teacher at Grayson Public School. She then accepted a position at Horace Mann Junior High School followed by Carver Middle School in Tulsa Public Schools. After eighteen years as a classroom teacher, she became an administrator when she became assistant principal at Byrd Middle School, and principal at Carver Middle School. Later, Mrs. Booker ascended from Executive Director of Middle Schools to Principal Leader, and Area Superintendent for Tulsa Public Schools.

As an administrator, Mrs. Booker was a driving force behind the successful implementation of the district's total conversion from the junior high school concept to the middle school concept. She strategically aligned core curriculum principles and implemented an academic framework, which addressed the emotional, psychological, social, physical, and intellectual needs of children.

Advocating for students and the community, Mrs. Booker volunteered in multiple educational, social, civic, and professional organizations. This included serving as president of the Tulsa Area Alliance of Black School Educators (TAABSE) for four years, coordinating the TAABSE's Saturday School, and serving as chair of the renowned Ron Edmonds Regional Seminar. She was highly sought after to share her expertise at both the Oklahoma and Middle level Education Conferences and the Magnet School Conferences. This involvement also resulted in her being honored as North Tulsa Business and Professional Woman's Club, Woman of the Year" in 1980, A Living Legend in Education Award, Booker T. Washington High School Distinguished Hall of Fame Award, and Parents as Teachers Award, to name a few.

Mrs. Booker's professional achievements, awards and honors include presenting at National, State, and local Magnet School, Middle School, and Volunteer Conferences, serving as president of the Tulsa Area Alliance of Black School Education and Oklahoma Federation of Business and Professional Women's Club. Professional organizations include National Association of Secondary Principals, National Middle Level School Association, National and Tulsa Area Alliance of Black School Educators and Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame.

She is a member and holds leadership positions in the North Tulsa Business and Professional Women's Club, Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women, Tulsa Teachers Credit Union Board of Directors, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and she serves on the Betty Bradstreet Foundation Committee with the Assistance League of Tulsa providing grants to schools. She has received numerous awards from community organizations including, North Tulsa Business and Professional Women's Club "Woman of the Year" and Sanctuary Evangelistic Church Cultural Awareness Education Award, and Governor Henry's Commendation Award.

After retiring from Tulsa Public Schools, Mrs. Booker continues to serve on several boards and divides her time between family events and her church. At First Baptist Church-North Tulsa, she serves as a Trustee and Chair of Christian Education. She especially enjoys mentoring high school girls focusing them on the right direction after high school whether its college, vocational school, or the armed services. Mrs. Booker is married to Ernest T. Booker Sr., the proud mother of Monique Patrice Johnson-Ludley and stepmom to Sheree Booker Saylor. Her grandchildren are Alan Patrick Ludley and London Saylor.

Bobbie A. Booker is noted by a colleague as being highly respected by students, colleagues, staff, and parents. She is a proven and distinguished leader with an impeccable resume highlighting the passion and dedication of her professional career.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mr. Jason Douglas Brown

"Student Advocate"

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Jason Douglas Brown was born to Arthur and Mildred Brown in Borger, Texas on February 15, 1972. His mother was an early childhood educator, and his father was employed with Phillips Petroleum. Brown and his younger sisters, Amy and Malana, enjoyed spending family time together.

According to his mother, he was passionate about education at an early age. He pleaded with her to permit him to attend a school that was located outside the district's boundary lines because he believed it to be more academically challenging. After careful consideration, she agreed, and he attended Crockett Elementary in Borger. Brown was recognized for his academic achievements while attending Borger Middle School. At Borger High School, he continued to excel academically. He graduated in 1990 and earned a scholarship to attend Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Brown's double major of psychology and history education placed significant demands on him, but he stepped up to the challenge and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1994. He earned his Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership from Southern Nazarene University in 2002. He is currently pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

His teaching career started at Midwest City High School where he taught Honors World History and A.P. Government. He also started a competitive academics class there. During this time, he founded Test Wizards, a consulting firm that specialized in preparing students for success on the ACT and other standardized exams required for college entrance.

Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) employed brown to guide students in the GEAR Up program to ensure they were ready for the challenges in college. He accepted a position as an administrator at Central Middle School in Edmond Public Schools. Next, he accepted employment as an administrator at Del Crest in Del City, Oklahoma. After two successful years of extraordinary gains on the Academic Performance Index, he returned to Edmond PS as principal of Santa Fe High School.

Under Brown's leadership, Santa Fe garnered the highest Academic Performance Index of any 6A secondary school in Oklahoma. The school was awarded the ACT College Readiness Award for significantly increasing ACT scores while also increasing the number of testers.

He became the Executive Director of Secondary Education for Edmond Public Schools in 2011. He was hired as Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services for Norman Public Schools in 2013. Presently, he is the OKCPS Deputy Superintendent.

Brown serves in multiple capacities on various boards and organizations. He is currently a member of the National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE), Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), Oklahoma Association of School Administrators (OASA), Oklahoma Educators Leadership Academy, Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA), and serves on the Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Club of Oklahoma County and the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association.

He is father to Kendale and Kaylyn and granddad to Jayda and Jase. He attends Northeast Missionary Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

Jason Douglas Brown believes that Rita Pearson's quote, "Every child needs a champion" encompasses his philosophy of education. He cares deeply for his students, colleagues, parents, and community. His commitment and dedication to students and education has changed the trajectory of many students' lives. He was their CHAMPION.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mrs. Vernetta J. Dunford-DeMartra

"A Servant's Heart"

Midwest City, Oklahoma

Mrs. Vernetta J. Dunford-DeMartra was born November 4, 1955, in Lawton, Oklahoma to Christine Dunford and Albert Fisher. She and her younger brother were reared by their mother in a single parent household. She was blessed with the ability to play music by ear. What she heard, she played. At six, her dad bought her a piano; she began piano and voice lessons. That led to her being the musician and soloist for not only her church, but other churches in the community.

She attended Dunbar Elementary, followed by Thomlinson Junior High School and Eisenhower High School, all in Lawton. She was a student scholar who received 10 scholarships upon graduating high school – 4 music and 6 academic. She matriculated to Cameron University where she majored in music. While attending college, she met and married Greg DeMartra. She earned a B.S. degree in Home Economics and Child Development in 1978. Later, she received her M.Ed. in Special Education and School Psychology from the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond in 1994.

Dunford-DeMartra and her husband adopted their daughter who was later diagnosed with autism. At that time, very little information was available about children with Autism. That changed the trajectory of her studies and guided her in the direction of Special Education. She researched local, state, and national resources, consulted with professionals, and enrolled in classes in order to learn how to appropriately teach her daughter.

She taught students in the self-contained classroom setting in MidDel Public Schools. She taught remedial math, science, history, and language arts. Additionally, therapeutic behavior management, self-control, anger management, and consulted with general education teachers.

In 1999, she started the Lighthouse Transitional Center, Inc., a day center for young adults with disabilities. Her goal was to improve the quality of lives for individuals attending the center. Her purpose, to ensure that no student was left behind. For 17 years, she and her staff continued to provide services for them. After devoting 27 years to educating children with special needs, she retired in 2020.

Her honors and recognitions: Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society (1990), Presidents Honor Roll (1990), Highland Park Elementary Teacher of the Year (2000), Del City Masonic Lodge Teacher of the Day (2000), Parkview Elementary Teacher of the Year (2007), and Excellence in Teaching Award (2013). She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Dunford-DeMartra holds many certifications including: Special Education-Severe/Profound, Autism, Early Childhood, Licensed Long-Term Care Administrator, Juvenile Case Manager, and Adoption Home Study Provider.

She is married to Gregory and is the mother of Nydia. They attend St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

Dunford-DeMartra is described as having “a servant’s heart.” Time after time, she stepped outside of her own comfort zone to help her students and families. Her high standards and tough love approach garnered positive changes in the students’ lives fulfilling her desire to be a difference maker.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mr. Lawrence E. "Train" Lane

"Man of Action"

Tulsa/Checotah, Oklahoma

Lawrence E. "Train" Lane was born in Tulsa to Matthew M. Lane and Estella Lane-Wright. He attended Charles S. Johnson Elementary, George Washington Carver Junior High and Tulsa Central High School, all in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He graduated from high school in 1966; then, matriculated to Northeastern State College in Tahlequah where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science. He minored in sociology and psychology. While at Northeastern, he became the first African-American elected to the student senate. Later, he continued graduate studies at Langston Urban Center, NKA, OSU-Tulsa.

In the initial stages of desegregating public schools, Lane made a challenging and life altering decision. He chose to attend the predominantly white high school, Tulsa Central High instead of the neighborhood school, Booker T. Washington. He said, "it was one of the landmark decisions in my life." While hanging out near the press box at Booker T. Washington one day, the opportunity to become the "Voice of the Hornets" dropped into his lap. With his distinctive voice and charisma, he continues to hold that distinguished honor (53 years).

His first teaching position was at Tulsa Union Junior High School where he taught geography in 1978. Lane accepted an offer to teach World History and Government at Checotah High School (CHS) in 2000. He continues to teach at CHS having added Financial Literacy to his rotation of classes. He also teaches a section of middle school geography. Lane has amassed 45 years in education.

Lane believes strongly in building relationships with his students. Those relationships are pivotal to their success. On their 18th birthday, he gifts each student a voter registration form. He stresses the importance of the vote and its impact locally and nationally and explains the role that each has as a United States citizen. He is a strong and articulate advocate for public education at the local, state, and national levels. He is a voice for the underrepresented and unrepresented. His legislative advocacy often leads him to the halls of the Oklahoma Capitol building where he meets with congressmen and congresswomen – building relationships.

On May 20, 2020, when calls to action over the deaths of African American citizens due to police brutality and at the wake of the coronavirus, Lane risked his own health by participating in public protests in Tulsa. He believed the cause was greater than his own health.

Lane is a member of the National Education Association, Oklahoma Education Association, Checotah Education Association, Okmulgee Basketball Officials Association, Oklahoma Education Association Board of Directors (5 terms), OEA and NEA Black Caucus committees, and former Western Region Black Caucus NEA Board of Director. He has served as past president of the Checotah Education Association (CEA) (2012-2014), past CEA chief negotiator (2016-2022), past chair of the OEA Legislative Committee, past chair of the Simon Estes Educational Foundation, past member of the OEA Internal Concerns Committee and NEA Resolutions Committee.

Community service and volunteerism include: The Rock Church's Feed the Homeless Initiative in Tulsa, voter registration, Tulsa County Democratic Party, Okmulgee Basketball Officials Association Mentorship Program, Dr. Martin Luther King's Annual parade in Tulsa, The Foodbank of Eastern Oklahoma, and the Tulsa Walk for Mankind.

Lane's accomplishments and honors are significant. In 2023, he was selected to receive the first OEA Clara Luper Activist Award, which was awarded by Mrs. Luper's daughter and family. In the same year, he was honored as the OEA Educator of the Game at the OU Spring football game. The Oklahoma Officials Association honored him for 55 years of service as an official. He was inducted into the Tulsa Public Schools' Athletic Hall of Fame in 2020. In 1994, he was awarded the Kate Frank Award by the OEA and was voted Teacher of the Year by his colleagues at Union Seventh Grade Center.

Lane is the proud father of Bronwyn and Blair, Pop Pops to Cameron, Callie, and Chandler, member of The Rock Church and avid fan of the Oklahoma University Sooners. He is a longtime season ticket holder and attends all home games and travels extensively to cheer on his "Beloved Sooners."

Lawrence E. "Train" Lane teaches, officiates, mentors, models, and builds relationships with students and colleagues. In his own words, "You can say a lot of things with your mouth, but if you don't back it up with your actions, it's nothing but hot air." He epitomizes the entirety of education.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mrs. Karen Knauls Pittman

"Difference Maker"

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Karen Knauls Pittman was born May 22, 1959, to Gilbert and Shirley Daniels in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She attended elementary school at John Burroughs, Robert Frost, and Walt Whitman schools in Tulsa. She attended Gilcrease Jr. High School, followed by Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, where she graduated in 1977. She enrolled at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma majoring in elementary education. In 1982, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree. Pittman received a master's degree in educational leadership from OSU-Tulsa in 2004.

Her career in education began when she accepted a position as a long-term substitute in 1982 at Burroughs Elementary in Tulsa. In 1984, she became a 1st grade teacher at Lindsey Elementary in Tulsa. She transitioned from the classroom and became an instructional specialist for Tulsa Public Schools in 2007. After a brief stint as vice-principal at Cooper Elementary in Tulsa, she was selected as principal at Academy Central Elementary School. In 2020, Pittman became the principal at Drexel Academy Elementary School in Tulsa; she continues in that capacity today. This private school in North Tulsa serves underserved students in grades Pre-K through 5th.

Pittman's mantra, "On my worst day on the job, I am still some child's best hope" has served as the driving force in her 37 years in education. Not only did she excel, but more importantly, her students excelled. The students at Academy Central demonstrated significant academic gains to the extent that a documentary entitled, "Tulsa's Best Kept Secret" was filmed by a New York film maker and has been used for professional development in all 50 states.

She built a strong rapport with parents. Often, she arrived early and remained in her classroom after hours to assist students who were struggling. She always made the effort to assure her students that they were capable and provided consistent and constant encouragement that they so needed at that stage in life.

Pittman was a consensus builder among peers and colleagues. She supported and encouraged them to continue to be lifelong learners as well as exceptional teachers and stressed the importance of modeling expectations in the classroom. She was instrumental in closing the achievement gap by utilizing tried and proven strategies and staying in the trenches for the children. It was vital that they witnessed their teachers teaching and advocating for them.

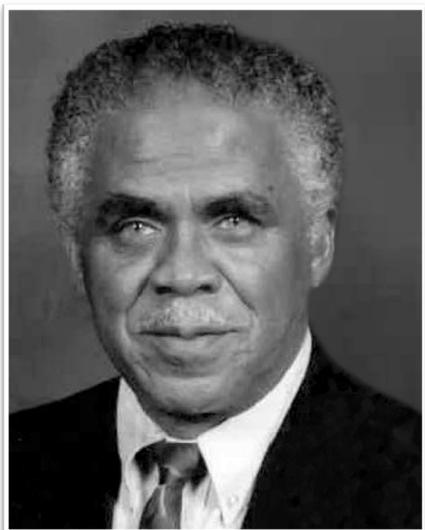
In 2019, she was facilitator of North Tulsa Community Education Task Force (NTCETF). She received its first NTCETF Trailblazer Award presented by TPS District 3 Board members. In February of 2020, Greater Mt. Olive Baptist Church honored her with the "High Heels in High Places" award for her commitment and leadership in education. In February 2023, Morning Star Baptist Church presented Pittman with the Robert Littlejohn Black History Award for leadership, compassion, and enduring service.

She is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. where she served as Basileus and State Director of Oklahoma 1992-96. She was voted Alpha Iota Zeta chapter "Zeta of the Year" in 1990. Phi Delta Kappa selected Pittman as "Outstanding Educator." She was voted Emerson Elementary "Teacher of the Year" in 2003-04 and was twice selected "Who's Who Among America's Teachers."

Pittman attends Morning Star Baptist Church in Tulsa where she is involved with WMU, Sunday School, and adult choir. She is First United Baptist District WMU President. She is wife to Kenneth L. Pittman and mother to Montelle, LeKia, and Eboni; and grandmother to 13.

Karen Knauls Pittman's philosophy of life, "If I can help somebody as I pass along, my living shall not be in vain" speaks to the core of this extraordinary educator. Her service, dedication, and unwavering commitment helped to enable many of her students to now be successful and productive adults in society.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Dr. James Allan Simpson

"Confidence Builder"

Langston, Oklahoma

Dr. James Allan Simpson was born during the Great Depression to Waldo and Mary Frances Simpson on September 24, 1931, in Zanesville, Ohio. Simpson was the oldest of 13 children. As the oldest, he felt the need to help provide for his younger siblings. As a little boy, he would do odd jobs to help provide for his younger brothers and sisters. By the age of 16, he was working three part-time jobs that added up to more than 64 hours a week, yet he continued with his high school education.

While attending public school in Zanesville, he was often the only Black student in class. When he graduated from Lash High School in 1949, college was not a consideration for his future, but one day, he arrived home to find his mother weeping happy tears. In her hands she held an official letter from Central State University, one of Ohio's two HBCUs, advising him he had been awarded a scholarship to attend. Still, he didn't think that college was really a part of his future. He said he would go for one week to check it out then return home. During his first week, he attended a freshman vesper service. While walking with his fellow classmates during that event, he was overcome with emotion and realized that an HBCU was where he was meant to be, not just for school, but for the rest of his life. With that realization, he stayed. It was there that he had his first Black teachers, and it was those teachers who inspired and encouraged him to pursue a degree in Chemistry. In 1953, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry with a minor in Mathematics. From there, he matriculated to yet another HBCU, Tuskegee University (then Tuskegee Institute) in Tuskegee, Alabama where he obtained a Master of Science degree in Chemistry.

Simpson was drafted for active duty in the United States Army and served in Korea from 1955-57. When he returned to the United States, he was employed by yet another HBCU, Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma and remained there for 36 years in various capacities. He started as Assistant Professor of the Chemistry Department, then was Dean of Development and University Relations and ascended to the position of Chairman of the Department of Physical Sciences.

He possessed the innate ability to connect students to Chemistry, even those who did not like the subject applauded his style of teaching and his ability to help students understand it. His curriculum provided a rigorous pace that challenged and motivated students. They became more involved in lab experiments and retained the scientific terms they learned. He stressed the importance of reading and encouraged them to improve their reading skills.

Simpson was a member of the American Chemical Society and Beta Kappa Chi Honorary Scientific Society. He is a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He has served the fraternity in various capacities: Undergraduate Advisor for Beta Kappa chapter, treasurer and president of Zeta Gamma Lambda chapter, Oklahoma State Director, and charter member of Delta Xi Chapter at Central State University. He is also a Deacon at New Hope Baptist Church in Langston, OK.

Simpson was married to his late wife, Dr. Wessylne Simpson for 62 years. He is the proud father of Michael, James (deceased), and Lynne. He has three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Dr. James Allan Simpson was a phenomenal educator and professor who poured his heart and soul into his work. His chosen career was his means to a legacy of positively impacting and changing the lives of many of his students. In her nomination of her dad, Dr. Lynne Simpson stated she was reminded of the quote by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, "A good teacher is like a candle, it consumes itself to light the path for others."

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mr. William Sulcer

"Visionary Pioneer"

(Posthumously)

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mr. William Sulcer was born Oct 20, 1869, to Josephine Jemison Sulcer and George Sulcer in the Gallatin, Tennessee area. He was one of eleven children born to this union and received his formal education in the Gallatin area schools. His love for teaching began at an early age while teaching Sunday school classes, and he was encouraged to seek a career in education. He began his schooling in Castilian Springs, Tennessee. Later, he was afforded the opportunity to attend Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee where unfortunately, he did not graduate. He took additional correspondence courses from universities in Scranton, Pennsylvania and Boston, Massachusetts and earned his teaching credentials. His teacher's training was accepted at schools in Oklahoma City and Guthrie.

Upon arriving in the Indian Territory of Oklahoma in 1890, Sulcer moved to Oklahoma City, and in 1891 he married Mary Jane Young at Calvary Baptist Church. To this union seven children were born: Charles, Frances, Alice, Otha, Clara, Robert, and Josephine. In 1892, he saw the need and opportunity to organize a school for Negro children from first grade to eighth grade in Choctaw, Oklahoma. This was fifteen years before Oklahoma became a state. (Many years later, the school became known as Dunjee School, named to honor Civil Rights leader, Roscoe Dunjee.) Sulcer was one of the first to serve as a teacher in the territorial separate schools, working in Edmond, Choctaw, Oklahoma City, Arcadia, New Zion, and Tecumseh during the 1890's. All of the schools were located in Oklahoma County.

He went on to teach philosophy and bookkeeping at Booker T. College, in Booker T., Oklahoma. He later became a politician as an active member of the Democratic Party and won a seat as the first Negro Democrat allowed to attend the Democrat convention. His purpose was to get state support for a Negro University written into the party's platform. As a member of the resolution committee his efforts resulted in him later being instrumental in the establishment of Langston University in 1898. He was also the chairman of the committee that selected Mr. Inman Page as Langston's first President. From there, he continued to plant seeds of education across the state by starting more elementary schools for Negro students.

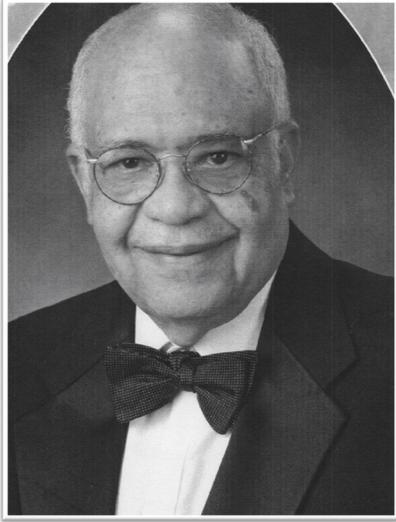
In 1906, he convinced the First Baptist (colored) Church in Kingfisher, Oklahoma to help start a second Negro college. They agreed and requested the permission from the state of Oklahoma. He went on to live a long life where his memory was sharp and swift. He continued to read the Bible and other material every day.

In 1960, ninety-one-year-old William Sulcer, a Tulsan, served as a valuable resource using his documented material on the history of education in Oklahoma Territory. He was able to accurately note that out of the training institutes held in Oklahoma City for teachers of Oklahoma City grew the Territorial Association of Negro teachers; the Institute in 1890 was mixed racially. In 1891, there were two institutes - one for the white teachers and one for the colored. A. R. Sullins was the first superintendent of the Oklahoma City schools and F. H. Umholtz was the second. J. A. J. Bauguess was the first county superintendent of Oklahoma County. Mr. Sulcer was a charter member of both the Oklahoma Territorial Teachers' Association of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers.

Mr. Sulcer added, the first separate schools were established in 1891 in Oklahoma City and Guthrie and in 1892 in Kingfisher. When he described the employment of early teachers in the territory, he stated: The first teachers were, in Oklahoma City, J. D. Randolph and L. S. Wilson; in Kingfisher, Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Johnson; and, in Guthrie, Judith Carter Horton, Dr. J. H. Granger, and W. A. Jackson and wife. Guthrie was the leading town; there were four teachers. In the interview Mr. Sulcer also described the early methods by which teachers were employed and criteria developed by the association for the levels of teacher certification in Oklahoma Territory.

Mr. William Sulcer will be remembered as a pioneer who was instrumental in establishing an educational system in Oklahoma Territory. Not only was he a visionary who started schools for Black students, he was also charged with hiring administrators and staffs, training teachers, and providing instruction and leadership in government and education. He spent twenty years in education and is credited as being a driving force in education in our state.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Dr. Melvin R. Todd

"A Guiding Force"

(Posthumously)

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dr. Melvin R. Todd was born on April 24, 1933, to Elmyra Richardson Todd Davis and Cornish Todd in segregated Oklahoma City. He was born in the basement of Children's Hospital, the only hospital that allowed black women to give birth. His parents separated when he was relatively young, and he grew up in the care of his mother and his two grandmothers, Lucy Royall Richardson, and Mattie Whitaker Todd. As a child, Dr. Todd had very influential experiences that shaped him into the historic leader that he became. As a ten-year-old, he met the prolific author W.E.B. Dubois, and Ralph Ellison was his parents' classmate. When he was a ninth grader, his mother attended the University of Illinois at Evansville for her master's degree, and he attended University High School where he was one of two black students. He attended Douglass High School and later the Palmer Memorial Institute in North Carolina under the leadership of Charlotte Hawkins Brown.

While attending Langston, he developed a lifelong relationship with Dr. Melvin Tolson. He graduated from Langston University with a Bachelor of Arts in History and received his master's and Doctorate Degrees in Education from the University of Oklahoma. After graduating from Langston, he joined the Army in the Signal Corps in Korea, where his first teaching experience was teaching English to orphans as a volunteer. Upon his return home, he married Mendoza Anderson, the love of his life and started raising a family.

Dr. Todd began his 50-plus years in education at Lawton Douglass High School, in 1957. He returned to Oklahoma City to become the Assistant Principal at Kennedy Jr. High, later as a counselor, Vice Principal, and Principal at Douglas High School. In 1968 he became Vice Principal at Northeast High School and Principal, 1969-71, during the court-ordered desegregation in the Oklahoma City Public School System. This position came with many hardships, including death threats, bomb threats and angry parents. He conquered this challenge and led Northeast to success in the early days of desegregation. He set an example for integration work, later teaching courses on the subject at the University of Oklahoma to future teachers.

When Dr. Todd left Northeast, he joined the Consultative Center for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) at University of Oklahoma. He later accepted a position in the Oklahoma City Public School System as Assistant Superintendent, losing in a final vote to become the first black superintendent of the school system. In 1975, Dr. Todd went to work in the Chancellor's Office of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, eventually becoming vice chancellor for academic affairs. He retired from this post after 16 years of service. Dr. Todd was a trustee for the American College Testing (ACT) Program and in 1990, he was elected vice chair of the national board of the ACT Program. Later, he served as special assistant to the president of Langston University.

Serving the community was a vital part of Dr. Todd's involvement including the NAACP, YMCA, Oklahoma City Urban League, Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation, Friends of Metropolitan libraries, State of Oklahoma Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (Chairman) and as a mentor for Alternative Middle Schools, Oklahoma City. In 2014 former Douglas High School students presented Dr. Todd with an awarded- "Four Years of Guidance Counseling and 50 Years of After School Support." Other honors include Oklahoma Education Association Outstanding Educators Award, Langston University's Distinguished Alumnus Award, Presidential Citation from the National Association of Equal Education Opportunity in Higher Education, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Recognition Award for Contributions to Education, Oklahoma City Urban League Recognition Award, Cameron University's Distinguished Service Award, State of Oklahoma Lifetime Achievement Award and inducted into Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in 2002.

As an author, his publications include, "Report of a Study to Determine the Effectiveness of the Entry-Year Teacher Assistance Program," "African Americans in Oklahoma Higher Education; "The Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers;" The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, and he co-authored several other publications that include, "The Education of Blacks in Oklahoma: Past, Present and Future", "Study of Medical Education in Oklahoma," and a series of newspaper articles on Roscoe Dunjee.

Dr. Todd enjoyed many hobbies: traveling, flower gardening, fishing at Lake Texoma, reading, learning, storytelling, public speaking and collecting guitars. He was good at all of them. He is the father of Sharon Todd, Myra Todd-Hill, and David R. Todd and grandfather of Gregory and Kyle Hill and Christian and Kristina Todd.

Dr. Melvin R. Todd was a pioneer in civil rights education. He was a role model and mentor to many. He inspired legions of educators and public servants through almost five decades of service.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mrs. Colleen M. Venters

"Courage Exemplified"

Boley, Oklahoma

Mrs. Colleen Venters was born January 5, 1948, was the first of four children born to Hulin and Genolia Mixon, in Boley, Oklahoma. As a child, she enjoyed learning English and German. In high school, her German teacher asked her to lead the lesson whenever she had administrative office duties. This activity ignited her passion for languages and a love for teaching. She graduated from Boley High Schools, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Language Arts from Langston University and a Master of Arts Degree in Secondary Administration from the University of Oklahoma.

In 1971, Venters began her thirty-one-year career in education at her alma mater, Boley High School as a language arts teacher, with assignments to teach speech, German and the Gifted and Talented program. Encouraging her students to work hard and be the best, she initiated a program to prepare students for college composition classes. Serving also as Director of Federal Program, she wrote grants to secure additional education funding for the district.

Venters accepted a Correctional Teacher position at the John Lilly Oklahoma Department of Corrections facility in Boley in 1984. This position included instructing Correctional Offenders on GED (General Education Diploma) test preparation, including pre-testing and post-testing. While teaching GED classes at this facility, she became the test coordinator and the first African American promoted to principal in the Correctional System in 1990. This assignment included mentoring inmates and faculty members, preparing budgets, hiring personnel, supervising onsite college programs and the GED Testing program for seventeen schools. She was honored as Employee of the Year in 1987 and Principal of the Year in 1988.

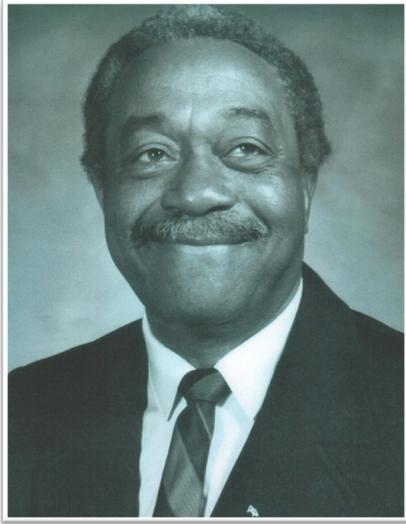
When Venters accepted a position at the Oklahoma Department of Education in 2000, testing encompassed a broader format. Evaluator of the Private Prison Education Program was her assignment. This job description included evaluating education programs in Oklahoma's private prisons to ensure that they met the Standards of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Education Programs.

Strategic Training and Resource Specialist, for the American Council on Education/ GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C., was Venters' last assignment before retirement. She provided training to GED Examiners on the New 2002 GED Test throughout the United States and Canada. She also conducted investigations of GED Tests loss throughout the United States, Canada and in the Federal Prisons. She was instrumental in developing the New 2002 GED Testing Manual and assisted in writing training programs for other Strategic Training and Resource specialists.

A dedicated and committed role model also describes Colleen Venters' footprints in the community. At Antioch Baptist Church, she serves as a Sunday School teacher, Bible school director and choir member. She is a board member for the Day Treatment Center for Mental Health in Boley, Oklahoma, and she has worked with Boley Chamber of Commerce.

Mrs. Colleen M. Venters' philosophy, "I saw a need to serve the youth through education in my community, and I had the courage to fill that need, whether youngsters or adults; I have treated them with care, concern, respect, and dignity.

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Mr. Jimmie L. White Sr.

*"Taught by Example"
[Posthumously]
Langston, Oklahoma*

Jimmie L. White, Sr. was born December 13, 1920, to William White and Georgia Hawkins White, in Texarkana, Arkansas. He attended Orr Primary School in Texarkana, Arkansas. He later served as Senior Class President and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, Texarkana, Arkansas, in 1940, and remained an active member of the school's alumni association.

While attending the Agricultural Mechanical and Normal College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, White lettered in football and later became a life member of the letter "A" Club of A.M. & N. College. To earn much needed money, from 1942-1943 he worked as a Junior Chemist, Chemical Warfare Service, Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Mr. White graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture and Biology, in 1943, but his degree had to be awarded in absentia since he had been inducted into the armed service during World War II.

From 1943 until 1945, this soldier served in the Army's 583 ORD Ammunition Company as a Clerk General in the Battles and Campaigns of Normandy, Northern France, Central Europe, and Rhineland. During his overseas duty, this soldier was stationed in England, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland and was awarded four (4) Bronze Stars and the Good Conduct Medal for his service.

At the end of the war, White took advantage of the G.I. Bill to earn his Master of Science Degree in Animal Husbandry and Dairy Manufacturing, from Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science College, East Lansing, Michigan in 1947. He would later do post graduate work at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, Pine Manor College and Sacred Heart College of Boston, Massachusetts.

In 1947, he began his thirty-nine-year career in education with the appointment as an instructor, then head of the Dairy Department, Southern University, Scottlandville, Louisiana. He returned to Oklahoma, accepting an instructor post in the Department of Agriculture in Animal Science as head of the Dairy at Langston University.

In 1948, White became a member of Beta Iota Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After moving to Langston, he became a founding member of Zeta Gamma Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Langston, Oklahoma in 1954, and was a Life Member.

He married Vanilla Ruth Potter in 1949 in the home of her parents, Harrison and Claricy Potter of Manchester, Kentucky. This wedding ceremony was historic since it was the first Catholic Mass performed in the town of Manchester. Five children were born to this couple, Jimmie L White Jr., Robert M. White, Clarice G. White Wiggins, Mary Ann White Phifer, and Paul H. White.

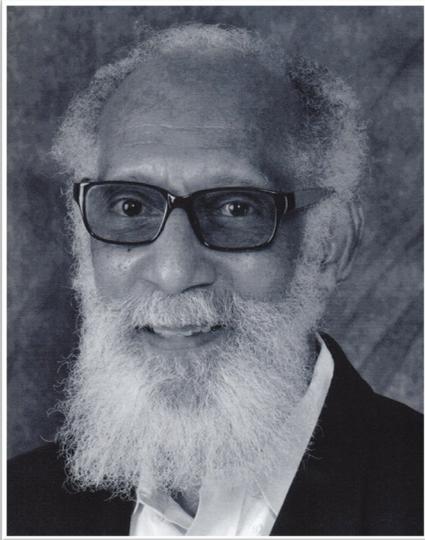
While at Langston University, he served on many faculty committees, but he was most proud of his service on the Athletic Council. He received a "30 Years of Service Award" by Langston University. White retired in 1986, as an Associate Professor after serving Langston University for 38 years. During his career his publications included "Nature of Physical Science", Teacher's Curriculum Guide for the Thirteen-College Curriculum Program: Institute for Services to Education, Washington, D.C., and "Pasture Program for Southwest Arkansas," The Southwestern Journal, Vol. V., No. 2.

As a man of faith, White was a member of Holy Family Catholic Church of Langston. Later, he moved his family's membership to St. Mary's Catholic Church of Guthrie, Oklahoma. He became the first Black man to serve on the Parish Council of St. Mary's and joined the Knights of Columbus of the Catholic Church.

Mr. White was a community man who was determined to uplift all people. His affiliations included the American Legion, and Secretary of the Langston Federal Credit Union. He was also a member of the Logan County, Oklahoma Planning Commission, and the Langston Board of Education D-6. In addition, he served as Scoutmaster for Langston Boy Scouts of America, and as Clerk then Treasurer of the town of Langston, as well as the Director of the Langston Housing Authority.

Mr. Jimmie L. White, Sr. is remembered by a student as, "demanding excellence from his students not only academically but also spiritually. He was what the old timers called a "Race Man" who uplifted our people by teaching our future leaders to be the best that they could possibly be."

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



Dr. Art S. Williams Jr.

"Transformer of Minds"

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dr. Art S. Williams, Jr. was born September 11, 1947, to Art S. Williams Sr., and Della Gray Williams. He, along with his two sisters, Sammye Williams Hitchye and Cheryl W. Carter-Henderson, was raised in Tulsa.

Since Jim Crow practices did not allow husband and wife educators to teach in Tulsa Public Schools, Williams and his sister, Sammye began their education at Lincoln School in Nowata, Oklahoma, where their mother taught. Their mother transitioned to the social services profession and returned to Tulsa to work, enabling him to graduate in 1965 from Booker T. Washington High School.

In 1965, Williams began college at Central State University in Ohio. After completing one year there, he transferred to Langston University in Oklahoma. His studies at Langston University were interrupted when he was drafted into the U. S. Army for the Vietnam War. He completed his military duty in 1972 and returned to Langston University to complete a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology with a minor in History in 1973. He received his Master of Social Work degree in Clinical Psychiatric Social Work from the University of Kansas in 1974. His internship at the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Topeka, Kansas focused on Vietnam veterans to address the mental health needs of this underserved populace. In 1999, he earned a Ph.D. in Mental Health and Substance Abuse from Walden University, Minneapolis, MN.

Williams began his forty-six-year professional career developing clinical outreach services for the underserved African Americans at Eastern State Hospital in Tulsa, as Director of Aftercare Services for Tulsa County, later as Director of Substance Abuse with responsibilities with the State Department of Mental Health, coordinating Substance Abuse services in the community, providing education and the coordination of DUI schools. Dr. Williams also became the director of Human Resources & Substance Abuse Services at Morton Comprehensive Health Services during the Crack Cocaine Epidemic. Dr. Williams left Morton to assist in developing an outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment Clinic for high-risk clients for Tulsa Metropolitan Counseling, Inc. He served as Executive Director for fifteen years, bringing a Drug Court Program to Tulsa that served as an alternative to prison. He was also instrumental in bringing the first HIV Outreach and Testing Program to Tulsa County.

Since his parents were educators, serving and educating others was at the forefront of his decisions. Throughout his professional career, Dr. Williams provided numerous seminars, on-site workshops and conferences related to drug and alcohol prevention, counseling, crisis interventions and areas related to mental and physical wellness. Subsequently, in 1980, he transitioned to higher education when he accepted a position as Adjunct instructor at the Langston University Urban Center in Tulsa, focusing on the Social Sciences and Black/African American History. In 2001, he became a full-time professor and was promoted to Chairman of the Sociology Department. Next, he became the Associate Vice-President of Community Outreach. Later, Dr. Williams transitioned his focus more towards teaching and acting as Chairman of the Tulsa Langston Arts & Sciences Department and retired from this position in 2016.

Williams has received numerous community and education acknowledgments and awards that include Induction into the Booker T. Washington High School Distinguished Hall of Fame for Outstanding Service in Humanitarianism, Outstanding Professor Award for Dedicated Service and Quality of Teaching Oklahoma State University / Langston University Tulsa; John Hope Franklin Center For Reconciliation-From Tragedy To Triumph Leadership & Service Award; Greenwood Cultural Center's Excellence in Education Spirit Award; Dr. Ernest L. Holloway Service Award (three times); National Association for Blacks in Criminal Justice Award; the NAACP's Health and Human Service Award and North Tulsa Jaycee's Outstanding Jaycees' Award.

Community leadership is still evident in his service to others. After retirement from Langston University, in 2018, Dr. Williams took the helm of the Historic Black Wall Street "Greenwood Chamber of Commerce as Director and Board Chairman, board member of the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation; Metropolitan Tulsa, Urban League; Greenwood Cultural Center and other advisory boards.

Dr. Art S. Williams, Jr.'s educational endeavors and influential contributions to higher learning and to the Tulsa community, along with the many acknowledgements of service attest to his remarkable educational accomplishments.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF NEGRO TEACHERS

In Oklahoma Territory, the first separate schools (schools specifically designated for African Americans only) opened in Oklahoma City and Guthrie in 1891 and in Kingfisher in 1892. Annual training institutes, conducted in Oklahoma City for Oklahoma County teachers and aspiring candidates who were preparing for teaching examinations, were at first racially mixed. Among the black group were professionals with powerful intellect, broad social commitment, and common interests, including their small, primitive, isolated schools, an avid interest in reading, and an intense racial pride.

The institutes led to the organization of the Ida M. Wells Teachers' Association in 1893. It included black teachers in fourteen counties and twenty-six communities of Oklahoma Territory. By 1900, these teachers had enrolled a total of 3,929 children in the territory's separate schools. The association struggled to secure improved in school facilities and to promote professional advancement for black teachers. Jefferson Davis Randolph served as the first president. The group later expanded into the Territorial Association of Negro Teachers. By 1907 statehood, Indian Territory had a similar association, and the two provided a nucleus for the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers (OANT).

In December 1907, one month after statehood, sixty-seven black teachers of the former Twin Territories met at Colored Agricultural and Normal University in Langston to reorganize their associations into the statewide Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers. Inman E. Page, then in his ninth year as university president, hosted the meeting. According to Evelyn Strong, OANT historian, both environmental and professional challenges contributed to the nature of the group's early leadership and to the development of its mission. Presidents between 1907 and 1924, with one exception, were school principals. J. H. Brazelton served as OANT's first president, elected in 1907. In 1908, Inman E. Page succeeded him.

In the early period leaders focused on expanding membership, developing leadership, acquiring knowledge of the state school system and of the educational environment in black communities, and improving professional competence through in-service training. Toward the end of its life, the organization primarily pursued legislation to relieve problems of separate school finance. This evolved because most black educators were acutely aware of the unfair, inequitable funding for separate schools. Children endured poor quality instruction, dilapidated buildings, and inadequate books and supplies. Smaller black communities had little or no representation in the decision-making at local or state levels.

By the 1920s, many of Oklahoma's 1,170 black teachers expressed a need for opportunities in leadership and self-expression, although older leaders desired to retain professional power. The membership compromised on a new constitution in 1924. Under it, the association improved its organizational and administrative procedures. It initiated new media of communication, new district and departmental divisions, a broader statewide educational program for black teachers, students, and communities, new leadership destined to impact OANT's future programs, and renewed interest in legislation to improve facilities. The 1920s shaped the association's educational and legislative activities for the next two decades.

OANT pursued a variety of activities in the 1930s. Cooperative ventures with the Langston University Alumni Association were led by Frederick D. Moon. A 1935 project resulted in legislation that provided tuition to send black teachers and others to out-of-state colleges and universities (blacks then could not attend any college or university in Oklahoma other than Langston, by state law). This measure operated until 1948, when Oklahoma schools began to provide graduate and professional training, and 1954, when public schools were desegregated. Another development was the reestablishment in 1935 of OANT's official organ, *The Journal*, edited by W. E. Anderson of Okmulgee.

The 1940s were OANT's most productive era. During World War II, the association directed an intensive effort toward revising the Oklahoma Constitution and statutes to broaden public education's financial base and provide equitable funding to separate schools. As a consequence, in special referendum elections, Oklahoma voters approved constitutional amendments on July 2, 1946, and July 6, 1948. Between 1946 and 1953, these two measures brought about more than \$18 million in appropriations for separate schools.

On November 5, 1946, the people approved four constitutional amendments for "Better Schools." These resulted from an initiative petition jointly sponsored by the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) and OANT. One amendment brought additional financial support to separate schools through county levies of the "Moon mill," named by some blacks in honor of Moon, who had marshaled the drives to achieve voters' signatures for the initiative petitions that secured its inclusion as one of the four.

U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 1954 and 1955 augmented the social changes of the 1940s. In response, OANT organized a program to prepare for transition to school desegregation and to protect black teachers' welfare. OEA also geared various activities to those purposes. Most notable were the development of research studies and communications designed to retain black teachers in desegregated school systems. On October 28, 1955, OANT decided to merge with OEA. Even as it disbanded, OANT worked untiringly to retain employment for black teachers after 1955. Nevertheless, as many as four hundred of them, many holding graduate degrees, were replaced by inexperienced white teachers who were recent college graduates.

OANT members had earlier begun to join OEA, and OANT was entirely dissolved by 1958. During its half-century of existence, OANT had commanded unswerving support. Records reflect that in 1955, 1,500 of Oklahoma's 1,622 black educators were members. Historically, the association's primary mission had been to raise the standards of education for black children. OANT achieved that purpose, while making a major contribution to civil rights.

Author: Dr. Melvin Todd (Oklahoma Historical Society)

Memberships

OKLAHOMA AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATORS HALL OF FAME, INC

Life Membership Options

Life Membership in the OAAE Hall of Fame consists of three options in becoming a life member of our hall of fame. Please read the options below and return to the address below. Thank you for your support for a great cause in recognizing our great educators throughout this state.

OPTION 1: \$250.00 for two (2) years

\$50.00 of five (5) payments for two years

\$25.00 of twenty (20) payments for two (2) years

Two years limited payments (any means)

If payment plan is not completed in two (2) years, money is forfeited

OPTION 2: \$500.00 for one (1) year

\$50.00 for ten (10) months

One year payment, any means possible for one year

If payment plan is not completed in one year, money is forfeited

OPTION 3: \$500.00 one-time payment

Individuals must select option plan and sign off on said plan before signing life membership proposal.

AGREEMENT:

I _____, agree to option _____ to fulfill my obligation to become a life member of the OKLAHOMA AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATORS HALL OF FAME LIFE MEMBER.

NAME _____ DATE _____

TREASURER/PRESIDENT _____ DATE _____

Annual Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone number _____ Email _____

\$35.00 Individual Membership

\$35.00 Associate Membership

\$10.00 Student Associate Membership

\$500.00 Individual Life Regular Membership

\$500.00 Individual Life Associate Member

\$250.00 Corporate Annual Membership

Article 1.0 – Members and Membership

1.1 Regular voting members in good standing shall be anyone who is a current employee or retiree of the Oklahoma public or private educational system.

1.2 Associate Non-voting members shall be anyone who is a supporter of the Oklahoma public or private educational system.

Oklahoma African American
Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.
MEMBERSHIP
110126 N 3830 Rd
Clearview, Oklahoma 74880

Shirley Ann Ballard Nero Endowment Fund Focuses on All-Black Towns

The Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) is proud to provide support for research, programming, exhibits, and events related to the thirteen original All-Black towns of Oklahoma. These historic towns are vital parts of the history of our state and tell unique stories of the men and women who settled here. With your help, the OHS hopes to further its impact on preserving and sharing the legacy of these communities.

The Shirley Ann Ballard Nero endowment was established to directly support the ongoing preservation efforts of the thirteen original All-Black towns. Shirley Nero, a native of the All-Black town of Clearview, Oklahoma, taught at Sapulpa and then Porum Public Schools for thirty years. She received Teacher of the Year honors on four occasions. In 1994, the Sapulpa School Board presented Shirley with the Distinguished Service Award. She serves on several boards, including the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Committee, the Friends of the Oklahoma Historical Society Multi-cultural Office Board, and the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame. In 2016 she was the recipient of the Pinnacle Award, which honors outstanding women for their work as role models to women and children in the Tulsa community. She has been a passionate advocate for Oklahoma history and especially the state's unique story of the All-Black towns.

Your gift to the Shirley Ann Ballard Nero Endowment creates a lasting impact. By donating to the endowment, your gift provides support in perpetuity and allows the OHS to continue its efforts to preserve, protect, and share the story of these historically significant towns. Donations to the endowment are tax-deductible and donors are listed in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* and recognized on the OHS donor board at the Oklahoma History Center.

Donations can be made out to the Shirley Ann Ballard Nero Endowment Fund and sent to:

Brittney Berling
Development Officer
Oklahoma Historical Society
800 Nazih Zuhdi Dr.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-522-0317

Sincerely,

Brittney Berling



Gone But Not Forgotten

We Need Your Help Today!!!!!!

Remember those “good ‘ole’ teachers” we had back in the day? Those who are responsible for us being who and where we are today.

You can help keep their legacies alive by providing their names, the name(s) of a relative or a contact person to procure information to be included into our archival database.

This information will be evaluated and considered for future inductions into the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. Those who taught during the segregation era will be given priority consideration.

As we age and depart from this earth, it is imperative that we capture these contributions, averting further loss of past generations.

Please email your information to: Shirley Nero, annnero@aol.com or Donnie Nero, dr.donnielee@aol.com.

OAAE Hall of Fame, Inc.

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.

Sponsors:

The Oklahoma Historical Society Black Heritage Committee

Shirley Ann Ballard Nero, Chairperson

is a cosponsor of

The Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

CEO - Bill Ford
201 S. Broadway
Shawnee, OK 74801



Town of Clearview
302 West Main Street
Clearview, Oklahoma 74880
Mayor Marilyn Jackson

The
View

JUSTICE
FOR GREENWOOD

Oklahoma Historical Society

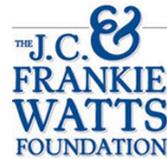
800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
okhistory.org



Oklahoma
Historical
Society

J.C. & Frankie Watts Foundation

300 New Jersey Ave.
Suite 650, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001



OAK PROPERTIES, LLC

Duane Philips
203 East Main
Jenks, Oklahoma 74037



Oklahoma State University
Division of Institutional Diversity
Jason F. Kirksey, Ph. D.
Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer
405 744-9154



East Central University
Development Foundation
1100 East 14th Street
Ada, Oklahoma 74820



Thank you for your support!

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

President Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

Clearview, Oklahoma 74880





Program design: Shirley Ann Ballard Nero

Biographies & editing: Claudette Goss, & Sharon Hill-Wooten

Program production assistance: Elizabeth Bass

Printing of this publication courtesy of Oak Properties, Jenks, Oklahoma

September 2023

2023 Induction Ceremony - Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.