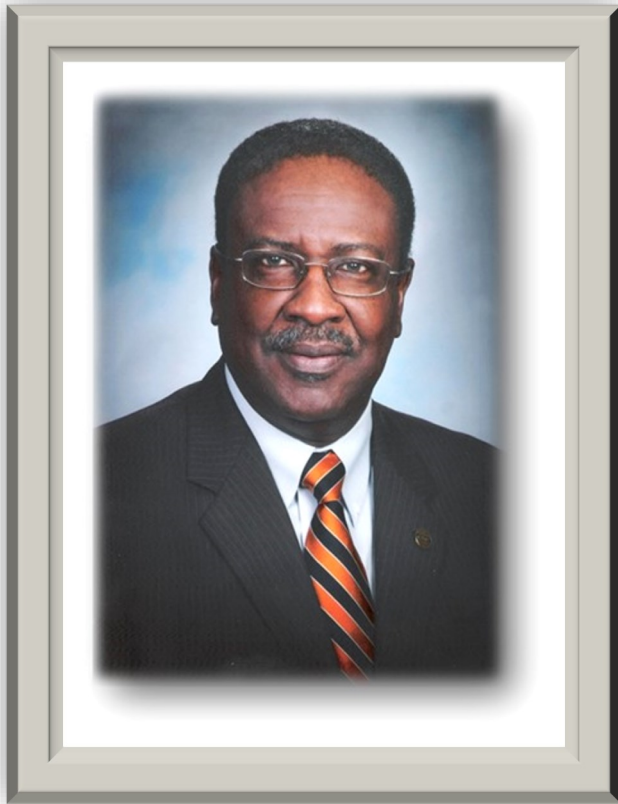






*2024 Induction Ceremony - Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.*



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

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

*"Thoughts from the President"*

As I ponder the years of celebrating the accomplishments of deserving teachers, songs come to mind from days gone by which exemplify our inductees. Songs such as *"I Had The Time of My Life"* by Bill Medley, *"What A Wonderful World"* by Louis Armstrong, *"Unforgettable"* by Nat King Cole, *"You've Got A Friend"* by James Taylor, and how can we forget roots of whence many of the songs came but through our spiritual ancestors such as *"Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen"* by Mahalia Jackson.

The esteemed educators recognized tonight epitomizes these songs and more. Their greatness is measured by those who were fortunate to have a shadow cast upon. Oklahoma's educational system flourished and will continue to, not because of any political agenda, but because of the character of the "unforgettable teachers" recognized tonight and in the future. Fredrick Douglas stated *"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground...power concedes nothing without a demand."*

Education is always the ingredient that provides opportunities for the masses, while stimulating the individual to press onward fulfilling their potential. The sacrifices of our inductees make it possible for generations to enjoy the conveniences, accommodations, and compensations they receive today.

The Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. Museum, in Clearview, Oklahoma, and is a tourist destination and a place of interest. The town is one of the original Thirteen All-Black towns centrally located between Tulsa and Oklahoma City and I encourage all to plan a trip to this site.

The motto of the OAAE HOF is *"Withhold not good from them whence it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it."* Proverbs 3: 27. Thus throughout life, lets be mindful of those who have helped us along the way and reciprocate accordingly.

On behalf of Board of Directors and Committee Members, we appreciate your presence and thoroughly hope you enjoy the occasion while we *"Celebrate"* as Kool and The Gang so masterly vocalizes. Enjoy the evening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.".

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

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



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## 2024 OAAE Hall of Fame, Inc. Program

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*Entertainment*

*Walter Taylor III/Taylor Made Jazz*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Welcome*

*Mr. Jimmie L. White*  
*Board of Directors: Langston*

*Invocation*

*Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander*  
*Board of Directors: Chickasha*

*Dinner*

*Grand Casino Catering*  
*Shawnee*

*OAAE HOF: Our Mission*

*Video Presentation: Ms. Claudette Goss*  
*Board of Director: Oklahoma City*

*Master of Ceremony*

*Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.*  
*OAAE Board President: Clearview*

*E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr.*  
*Scholarship Recipients*

*Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.*  
*Dr. John Hardgrave - OAAE BOD*  
*William "Bill" Ford - Shawnee Milling Co.*  
*Principal Founder E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr*

*2024 Induction Ceremony*

*Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.*  
*Board President: Clearview*

*2024 Induction Ceremony Closing Remarks*

*Sharon Hill-Wooten*  
*Board Vice-President: Idabel*

*Ceremonial Photos*

*Mike Hall Photography*  
*Idabel*

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## 2024 Inductees

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*Ms. Mildred Hemphill-Burkhalter*  
*Rentiesville, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Carle Lavon King Sr.*  
*Watonga, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Melba Lois Caddy Jackson*  
*Tulsa, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Harold G. Jones, M. Ed.*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson*  
*Langston, Oklahoma*

*Mr. Tracy McDaniel Sr.*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Prof. Danné L. Johnson, JD*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Terry E. Spigner*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Dr. Jason Johnson*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Mrs. Lucille Hooks Turner*  
*Colbert, Oklahoma*

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## 2024 E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship Awardees

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*Van D. L. Aienza*  
*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*Trase L. Reesing*  
*Idabel, Oklahoma*

*Ryan A. Coody*  
*Haskell, Oklahoma*

*Aiyana E. William*  
*Tulsa, Oklahoma*

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# 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, 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,*

*Oklahoma Historical Society Liaison:* *Dr. Michael Pearce; Oklahoma State Historian*



## **Life-Time 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. Carolyn Kornegay - Guthrie, OK  
Mr. Art Williams - Tulsa, 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  
Mr. Sherman Lewis - Edmond, OK  
Mrs. Adell Thomesene Withers Cudjoe - Oklahoma City, OK  
Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander - Chickasha, OK*

Become A  
**Life-Time Member Today**  
[www.oaaehof.org](http://www.oaaehof.org)

# Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.



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## *2011 Inaugural Induction*

*Mr. Curtis Brackeen - Muskogee  
Mrs. Willie Mae Etheridge - Warrior  
Dr. Henry Kirkland Jr. - Atoka  
Mr. Willie B. Parker - Spencer  
Mr. William Robert Patterson - Lawton*

*Dr. Meshack M. Sagini - Langston  
Mr. Eddie Walter Warrior - Muskogee  
Mrs. Jimmie Beatrice White Williams - Idabel  
Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly - Tulsa  
Mr. Tom Anthony Withers Jr. - Clearview*

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## *2012 Second Annual Induction*

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

*Mr. Willie Frank Hurte - Oklahoma City  
Dr. Mendell L. Simmons - Norman  
Mr. Albert Johnson Sr. - Lawton  
Mr. Herbert Clarence King - Lawton  
Dr. Frederick D. Moon - Oklahoma City*

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## *2013 Third Annual Induction*

*Mrs. Eva Gallimore Boyd - Chickasha  
Mrs. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris - Broken Bow  
Dr. Ada Sipuel Fisher - Oklahoma City  
Mr. Charles L. Henry - Lawton  
Mrs. Lettie Ruth Hunter - Oklahoma City*

*Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter - Oklahoma City  
Dr. Betty G. Mason - Oklahoma City  
Dr. Willard G. Parker - Muskogee  
Ms. Thelma Reece Parks - Oklahoma City  
Dr. Wanda Pollard-Johnson - Oklahoma City*

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## *2014 Fourth Annual Induction*

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

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

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## *2015 Fifth Annual Induction*

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

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

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## *2016 Sixth Annual Induction*

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

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

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## *2017 Seventh Annual Induction*

*Mrs. Olive Ruth James - Wewoka  
Mr. Calvin Rob Johns Sr. - Seminole  
Mrs. Helen Louise Franks Miner - El Reno  
Dr. Cecelia Nails-Palmer - Tulsa  
Dr. Henry Ponder - Wewoka*

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

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## *2018 Eighth Annual Induction*

*Mrs. Amelia Louise Swain Alford - Tulsa  
Dr. Ann Marie Allen - Oklahoma City  
Mrs. Marilyn Frances Duncan - Wilburton  
Mrs. Emma L. Jones Freeman - Oklahoma City  
Mr. James L. Furch - Tulsa*

*Mrs. Joyce Ann Henderson - Oklahoma City  
Mr. Benjamin Harrison Hill - Tulsa  
Mrs. Judith Ann Carter Horton - Guthrie  
Dr. Delois Ann McGee - Checotah  
Mr. James A. Senter - Oklahoma City*

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## *2019 Ninth Annual Induction*

*Mrs. Montecella Lucinda Driver - Tulsa  
Mr. Joe B. Gordon - Wagoner  
Mr. John Edward Haney - Guthrie  
Mrs. Gertrude Marie Lewis - Broken Bow  
Mr. Lee Virgil Patterson Sr. - Tulsa*

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

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

# Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.



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)

## 2023 Twelfth Annual Induction

Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker  
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma  
Mr. Jason Douglas Brown  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Mrs. Vernetta J. Dunford-DeMartra  
Midwest City, Oklahoma  
Mr. Lawrence E. "Train" Lane  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Mrs. Karen Knauls Pittman  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Dr. James Allan Simpson  
Langston, Oklahoma

Mr. William Sulcer  
Tulsa, Oklahoma (Posthumously)  
Dr. Melvin Todd  
Langston, Oklahoma (Posthumously)  
Mrs. Collene M. Venters  
Boley, Oklahoma  
Mr. Jimmie L. White Sr.  
Langston, Oklahoma (Posthumously)  
Dr. Art S. Williams Jr.  
Tulsa, Oklahoma



Looking Forward to Seeing You in 2025

**OAAE HOF Induction Ceremony  
September 26th**

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](http://www.oaaehof.org)

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## E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship

2024 Recipients

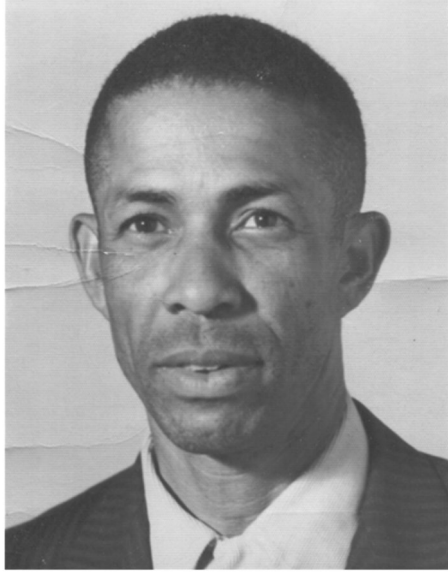
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### E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr.

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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 attend 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.

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### Van Dyke L. Atienza

Douglass High School - Oklahoma City

Van Dyke maintained a 4.7 GPA and scored a 24 on the ACT while being actively involved in his community and school. He served as a peer facilitator at Douglass, was a student council member, and a class officer. He relocated to Oklahoma City from the Philippines in 2022 and took advantage of all available opportunities in school. Some of his honors include Young Writer's Festival Award, October 2022 Student of the Month, and Anita Arnold Award recipient. He also earned multiple academic and departmental awards while attending school in the Philippines. In his letter of recommendation, Douglass High School Senior Counselor, Jaelah Rose stated, "Van Dyke has shown the kind of initiative that is necessary to be successful over the long term academically and I believe he will have an excellent future." Van Dyke will pursue a computer science degree at Langston University in

Langston, Oklahoma. Van Dyke is the son of Vyl-Cyril Atienza and Odilon Atienza of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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### Ryan Ashley Coody

Glenpool High School

Ryan maintained a 3.73 GPA while being a member of the Glenpool HS girls' golf team, serving as athletic trainer and team manager for the Glenpool High School Warriors, while simultaneously attending Tulsa Technology Center and Tulsa Community College as a dual credit student. Additionally, she was a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council, and Historian for HOSA-Future Health Care Professionals. Ryan was employed in a part time position at a local business and volunteered with the Bixby Fire Department and Glenpool Community Christmas Shoppe. In her letter of recommendation, Glenpool High School Senior Counselor, Judy Moulis stated, "Ryan is a very independent and spirited young lady, who I would also describe as motivated, dedicated, and ambitious. Ryan is one of the hardest working students I have ever known." Ryan plans to attend Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. Ryan is the daughter of Brian and Kim Coody of Haskell, Oklahoma.

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*E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship*  
*2024 Recipients*

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**Trase L. Reesing**

Idabel High School

Trase participated in high school varsity football, varsity track and field, and powerlifting while maintaining a 3.82 GPA. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Key Club, and Leo Club. Trase was selected by his peers as IHS Warriors football captain during his senior year. His honors include American Legion Boys State and All-District Football First Team in his senior year. In his letter of recommendation, Idabel HS Coach Braxton Kincade said, "Trase is a well-rounded individual who excels academically and actively engages in various extracurricular activities. His ability to balance his commitments while maintaining high standards of performance is truly commendable." Trase plans to enroll at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma where he will pursue a degree in education. He plans to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather and parents and become a teacher and coach. He is the son of Brad and Lori Reesing of Idabel.

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**Aiyana Eylane Williams**

Tulsa Memorial High School

Aiyanna maintained a 4.0 GPA while participating in varsity soccer, softball, volunteering at the Food Bank of Tulsa, and serving as an ambassador for Tulsa Memorial High School. Additionally, she was a member of the National Honor Society, senior class secretary, and a passionate nature lover. Aiyana strives to help mankind comprehend the delicate balance between living organisms and their roles in the ecosystem. In his letter of recommendation, Athletic Director and Coach Mark Dover stated, "I have been able to witness her development in the classroom and on the playing field. She has been an outstanding student in all respects." Aiyana plans to attend Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma where she will major in Zoology while being a member of OSU Women's Soccer team. Aiyana is the daughter of Monica Davis of Tulsa.

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*Nominate a E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship Athletic Senior*

*Download the nomination form - January 2025*

*[www.oaaehof.org](http://www.oaaehof.org)*



## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### *Ms. Mildred Hemphill-Burkhalter*

*"Remarkable Exemplar"*

Rentiesville, Oklahoma

*Mildred Hemphill-Burkhalter* was born on December 21, 1954 in Pierce, Oklahoma to Alton "Jimbo" and Pauline Greenleaf Hemphill on. She attended Warrior Schools until the fourth grade when her family moved to Rentiesville, Oklahoma in 1965. She attended Rentiesville Schools until 1969, when the school closed and consolidated with Checotah Public Schools where she graduated in 1973 and married her high school sweetheart, Clyde

Burkhalter. They raised their family in Rentiesville.

Ms. Burkhalter was the first in her family to attend college, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Management with a minor in Accounting from Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She received two Master of Arts degrees, one in Educational Technology and one in Educational Leadership, from East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma.

In 1980, Mrs. Burkhalter began her career in education as the financial accounting and payroll manager for Checotah Public Schools. She was assigned to classroom responsibilities in 1995 to provide the instruction of academics to students thru Online Learning for fulfillment of high school graduation requirements and academic recovery and as Alternative Education Director. She retired after forty-one years of service in 2021; twenty-six years were devoted to the classroom and supervision.

During her tenure as a classroom teacher, more than fourteen hundred students passed through Mrs. Burkhalter's classroom doors. Her assignment was to teach students with varied personal issues, lack of credits for graduation, trust issues and lack of self-confidence. As a result of her creative and unique teaching strategies, students began to demonstrate academic progress. Students who were previously failing were becoming successful learners. She instilled in her students that education is the key to success; her goal was to make sure every student succeeded in some area and became productive citizens in society. She was voted by her colleagues as Teacher of the Year at Checotah High School in 2018-19.

Ms. Burkhalter professional affiliations include Checotah Education Association, Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association and the McIntosh County Retired Education Association.

With strong connections to her community, Mrs. Burkhalter has served as a board member for Heartland Heritage Museum, Oklahoma Alternative Education Advisory Committee, and member of Friends of Honey Springs Organization. She presently serves as Chairperson for the Checotah Creek Indian Community with over three hundred members. Under her leadership, it has grown to a million dollars in assets.

In 1991, the citizens of Rentiesville elected Mrs. Burkhalter as their first woman mayor. Since that historic election, the town has been awarded several grants for street work, street signs, park pavilion, playground equipment, basketball court, a senior nutrition program and construction of rental cottages for the town of Rentiesville, as well as a grant awarded for the installation of warning sirens.

Mrs. Burkhalter has served on numerous state and national boards including National Conference of Black Mayors, Oklahoma Conference of Black Mayors, Black Mayors Women Caucus, appointed by Governor Brad Henry to the Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Corridor Advisory Committee, Optimist Club, and Warrior Restoration Organizations. Additional accolades include LEGACYKEEPERSRUS Award of Recognitions and Accomplishments, Federated Women's Club - Leadership Award, Kansas Colored Infantry - Leadership/Recognition Award, Wal-Mart Hometown Leadership Award - \$5000, and Dr. Martin Luther King "Women of Distinction Award."

The Rentiesville First Baptist Church is at the heart of Mrs. Burkhalter's commitment. She serves as an Usher Board President, Church Clerk, Asst. Sunday school Superintendent, choir member and she has also served as 2nd Vice President for the Usher Board of the Collate District.

Mayor Mildred Burkhalter resides in Rentiesville, Oklahoma. She is the proud mother of Frederick and Franchelle, one granddaughter and five grandsons. She enjoys serving God and her church, spending time with family and friends, and providing dedicated service to her community. When time permits, she enjoys writing, flea marketing, gardening, garage sales, interior decorating, sewing/designing and crafting.

*Mrs. Mildred Hemphill-Burkhalter's* colleague said, "Her leadership, vision, and tireless commitment to fostering inclusivity and academic excellence have left a lasting mark on Checotah High School and the community."

## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### *Mrs. Melba Lois Caddy Jackson*

*"Student Advocate"*

Tulsa, Oklahoma

*Melba Lois Caddy* was the fourth of ten children born to Otha and Ellen Miller Caddy on January 27, 1941, in Allen, Texas. Her family returned to Grayson, Oklahoma when she was five years old. She attended Benjamin Banneker Elementary School, Okmulgee, Oklahoma and Phyllis Wheatley Junior and Senior High School in Beggs, Oklahoma. Ms. Caddy received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics and a minor in Art from Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma and Master of Education Degree from Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. After graduating from Langston University, she moved to Tulsa where she met and married the love of her life, Maurice Jackson, and they raised their family.

Growing up in rural Oklahoma and Texas left Mrs. Jackson and her siblings with a hunger for adventure and discovery. As a parent, she felt a need to offer more to her children. So, she and her sisters formed the North Tulsa Travel Club. The aim was to be able to spend vacations with their children at a reasonable cost while also exposing them to different parts of the country and cultures. Each year, while the children were still in school, they would pick three (3) states, map out the historical, educational, and recreational places in the selected states, and chartered buses to those selected states. They also formed the core of an investment club and invested with the guidance of professionals in the stock market. They invested for several years, while also exposing the children to finance, investing, saving, and rate (%) of return on investments.

Colleagues and family members say that Mrs. Jackson was meant to be a teacher. Her career in education began before she graduated from college. She taught nursery school students at the Langston University Nursery School. Her first formal education experience was as a student teacher at the high school in Grayson, Oklahoma. She identified with the rural children because she came from a similar background. As a result, she developed her philosophy to teach her students as though they were her own.

Mrs. Jackson has devoted more than forty-three years to elementary education in the Tulsa Public Schools with assignments at John Burrough, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lincoln, Lynn Lane, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Graham Bell and Louisa May Alcott Elementary Schools. She continued to develop her skills as a teacher and lead teacher inside and outside the school classroom. She was often selected to mentor interns, teach in special after-school tutoring programs, and tutor children in need of extra assistance. Her expertise earned her the respect of parents, fellow teachers, and administrators.

In the early teaching years, when Mrs. Jackson needed a part-time job, she would seek teaching programs or tutoring so that more students were helped. In later years she volunteered to teach in a variety of ways. This ranged from vacation bible school to one-on-one tutoring for those in need. Currently at age 83, she still can't say no to a student who needs an additional hand to catch up to fellow students. At Pine Street Christian Church, she tutors students and assists with securing items for homeless bags issued to *Be Heard* (Mobile Shower and supplies for Tulsa, OK.), and mentors young family members on the art of sending Thank You Cards and Notes, and work ethic.

Mrs. Jackson was a charter member of the Black chapter of Tulsa North Sertoma Club, a non-profit international organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for those at risk or impacted by hearing loss through educating the public on the issues of hearing health. She is also a founding Board Member of Solid Foundation Preparatory Academy, a private Pre-K – 6<sup>th</sup> grade school, established to develop the learning skills of young Black children.

Other acknowledgements and awards include, coordinator, Moton Health Center Annual Santa Party, Tulsa Area Alliance of Black Educators, Lifetime Member; Friends of North Rudisill Regional Library, Centurion Award for Superior Performance in Serving Club and Community, Certificate of Appreciation for Actively Engaged Retiree, National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, and Community Service Award, Bethel Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Mrs. Jackson lives in Sperry, Oklahoma. She and Maurice Jackson were married for 54 years. Tony, Terry, Tonya, and Torrey are their children, and they were blessed with nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren who are her pride and joy. She continues to enjoy being an active member of Pine Street Christian Church and serving the community.

*Mrs. Melba Lois Caddy Jackson* – To quote a colleague, “she’s one of my 'Sheroes' who is serving and giving back to our children in the African American Community, who leads by example by 'standing in the gap' for family and friends when needed.”

## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson

*"Unwavering Commitment"*

Tulsa, Oklahoma

*Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson* was born June 9, 1971, in Houston, Texas to Robert I. Ray and Ruby Guidry Ray. Her father was an elementary school teacher and, later, an instructor at Texas Southern University. Her mother spent 44 years as a high school English teacher. Her brother was a public-school teacher, counselor, and administrator. So, it was befitting that Jackson would pursue a career in education. Upon the sudden death of her father, the family relocated to Jennings, Louisiana to be near her mother's parents. Jackson was a curious child who developed a love of learning at a young age. She recalls her grandmother (who had no formal education) teaching her how to count using fruits and vegetables from the garden. At her request, her grandfather read the same book to her again and again – all reinforcing her yearning for learning.

Dr. Jackson matriculated through the public schools of Jefferson Davis Parish in Louisiana and was a member of Jennings High School Class of 1989. However, she gained early admission to Southern University and A&M College and was able to forego her senior year and began college in Fall 1988. While completing her student teaching at Southern University Laboratory School, her student teaching supervisor informed her that a local district desperately needed an English teacher. Since she was the only English Education student teacher at either Southern University or LSU who had already completed all parts of the National Teacher Examination (NTE), she was released from her student teaching commitment and became a long-term substitute; a twenty-year-old teaching juniors and seniors. That semester, she received the Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education, English (1992).

Dr. Jackson officially began her career in education as an English teacher at North Iberville High School in Rosedale, Louisiana in August 1992. While teaching, Jackson earned a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision (1994). She was the English Department Chairperson in 1995 and from 1997-1999. In 1996, she served as Acting Assistant Principal at the same school. During this time, she began taking courses toward a doctoral degree. While on sabbatical, she completed a doctoral program at Colorado State University where she earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education and Human Resource Studies (2001). After the sabbatical, she returned to the district as an Assistant Principal at Plaquemine Senior High School followed by a promotion to Principal. At the time, Jackson was the youngest person, second woman, and the first African American to serve as principal of the school.

Dr. Jackson transitioned to higher education when she was hired as an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Louisiana State University in Shreveport (LSUS). Between 2002-2013 she served as the Master of Education Degree Program Director and Education Department Chair. She earned early tenure and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

In 2014, she relocated to Oklahoma to serve at Langston University when she was hired as a Professor and Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences. She went on to serve as the Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Vice President for Academic Affairs. As the chief academic officer, she was responsible for ensuring the academic quality of all departments, programs, and services within the academic affairs unit through the appropriation and allocation of necessary resources, through the oversight of hiring and evaluation activities, and through the establishment and coordination of policies and priorities. She methodically ascended through the ranks to being appointed as Interim President in 2023 and, in May 2024, the 17th President of Langston University.

Dr. Jackson's professional advocacy and service include membership on the USDA/1890 Task Force, an advisory body for partnership initiatives between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the nineteen 1890 land-grant universities. She is also a member of the Howard University Board of Visitors, a group which advises the dean on the goals, priorities, and strategic direction of the Graduate School.

Locally, Dr. Jackson serves on the Edmond Public Schools Foundation Board and Uncommon Light Church Board of Directors. She is a member of the Oklahoma City Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. where she has served as Chaplain and HBCU Committee Chair, and she is a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. In 2010, as Co-Chair of the Graduate Advisory Council for Delta Lambda Omega chapter, she was instrumental in chartering the Tau Epsilon chapter at LSUS where she served as their inaugural campus advisor.

Dr. Jackson is the wife of John W. Jackson, Jr. and mother of Leah. She is also the bonus mom to three adult sons and GiGi to five precious grandchildren. She strives daily to be a role model to her family, students, colleagues, and community. She embodies Maya Angelou's quote, "When you get, give. When you learn, teach."

*Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson* has a proven track record of leadership, accountability, and integrity in the field of education. In her letter of recommendation, Langston University Vice President for Operations Therea Powell said, "She leads our institution with wisdom and a genuine care for the people we serve. Despite the varying responsibilities and scope of her roles, one constant remains; President Jackson demonstrates an unwavering commitment to elevate others and inspire them to achieve their own success."

## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### *Prof. Danné L. Johnson, JD*

*"A Teacher Mentor"*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Prof. Danné L. Johnson, JD* was born on February 19, 1969, and raised in Detroit, Michigan by her mother, Rainelle Logan; she has two younger sisters. Her early influences included her great-grandmother, Gernelle (Edwards) Schackelford from Mississippi. Surrounded by a close-knit family that valued storytelling and the strength of influential women, she grew up in a community that nurtured her belief in her potential. Detroit, predominantly African American in the early '70s, provided a vibrant backdrop that fostered self-confidence and leadership in its youth.

Professor Johnson attended Burns Elementary, Ludington Magnet Middle Honor School and graduated from University Liggett High School in Detroit. She was a first-generation college student at the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Afro-American studies. She began her education in legal studies at Tulane University in New Orleans and completed her Juris Doctor at George Washington University's National Law Center in Washington, DC.

In New York City, she worked with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission on securities law violations, and later at MetLife, focusing on variable annuity insurance products and mutual funds. During her time in New York, Professor Johnson actively participated on several nonprofit boards and met her future husband, Reginald D. Johnson, a banker originally from Milwaukee, WI. The couple settled in Harlem, attending Abyssinian Baptist Church and later marrying at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit in 2000.

Professor Johnson and her family moved to Oklahoma City in 2003, where she began her career as a law professor. She holds the prestigious title of Constance Baker Motley Professor of Law at Oklahoma City University. Her responsibilities include teaching and mentoring students in law and cultural competency. She has mentored numerous students and has the distinct pleasure of contributing to the African American community in Oklahoma City. Professor Johnson has served as the only tenured African American Faculty member at not only Oklahoma City University School of Law but also at the University. Her scholarly research spans several interests including implicit bias, securities regulation, and the impact of race, class, and gender.

During the past 21 years at OCU, many former students credit their professional success and perspective on her style of teaching pertinent content to her students. She has been named a favorite Law Professor for numerous graduating classes. She is also a Certified Diversity Professional, a philanthropist, a Registered Parliamentarian, and the founder of the boutique consulting firm Our Work, LLC, specializing in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the only African American JD and RP in the State of Oklahoma.

An esteemed speaker, Johnson has delivered presentations on topics such as implicit bias and nonprofit management at various organizations. She has also taught internationally in locations including London, China, the Cayman Islands, and India.

Professor Johnson's community service and recognition include a position on the Board of Directors for Oklahoma State Association of Parliamentarians, KIPP Oklahoma Public Schools, Oklahoma Women's Alliance (aka Oklahoma Women's Coalition), Diversity Executive Leadership Academy (DELA) Advisory Board, and NTu, Oklahoma City. Additional community involvement includes World Council on Intercultural and Global Competence, and Good Wolf, Inc.

Professor Johnson's accolades include the Marian P. Opala Lifetime Achievement in Law Award and the Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Award for Diversity; twice featured as one of the "50 Women Making a Difference" by the Journal Record twice. Professor Johnson holds several leadership roles in community and national organizations, including Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., The Links Incorporated, Jack & Jill of America, and others.

Professor Johnson and her husband Reginald reside in Oklahoma City. They have been married for twenty-four years and are parents to Layla, 21, and Ahmad, 17. She attributes her motivation and dedication to her family, who inspire her daily efforts against societal challenges. Her leisure time is spent cooking, collecting recipes, spending time with family and friends and traveling, often to international destinations.

*Professor Danné L. Johnson's* life experiences were based on her mantra, "Do your part." Her dedication goes beyond the classroom as she mentors and guides students toward academic and personal growth. She takes great pride in watching her students become successful and productive members in society.

## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### Dr. Jason Johnson

*"Difference Maker"*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Dr. Jason Johnson* was born on July 19, 1979, to the late Lee Ola and James Chaffin in Sherman, Texas. He grew up in Honey Grove, Texas. Jason has always had a thirst for knowledge. He recalls as a child going with his mother to the home of a family friend. In her home were books – many, many books – including a set of encyclopedias. He told his mother he wanted his own set of encyclopedias. Eventually, she located an incomplete set at a garage sale. Missing were the letters, “C”, “T”, “U”, and “V”. Though his parents never graduated from high school, they were committed to ensuring that his desire for learning was fulfilled. He attended elementary and middle schools in Honey Grove and graduated from Honey Grove High School in 1997.

In 2002, Dr. Johnson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Education from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Then, he matriculated to Langston University in Langston where he obtained a Master of Education degree in Urban Education in 2006. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Social Foundations of Education from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 2017.

Mixing his passion for education and serving underrepresented populations, Dr. Johnson began his career in education working in the Trio-Educational Talents Search program at Langston University. In 2007, he accepted the position of Director of Upward Bound at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. In his job capacity, he was charged with ensuring that the program aligned with federal guidelines, managed project planning, and development of day-to-day operations, and coordinated and recruited participants to the program. Additionally, he coordinated outreach activities and followed up with assessment and evaluation.

Dr. Johnson wore many hats while employed at Langston University. While serving in the positions of Executive Director of Enrollment Management and Director of University College, he supervised, advised, and oversaw the retention of approximately 1,000 undergraduate students who were either first generation, socio-economically disadvantaged, or non-traditional. Being a first-generation college student himself, he understood the challenges and nuances and was more than capable of helping the students to navigate through college life. In July 2019, he became Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs. His responsibilities included providing leadership for the Department of Student Success, designed and integrated strategic best practices for increasing retention rates by 13% and decrease student withdrawals by 10%. Additionally, he secured a \$1.3 million-Five-year Department of Education Trio grant, implemented faculty social media and video conference training for post Covid-19 teaching and learning environments, and increased the honors program enrollment by 80%.

During his brief stint at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, where he was the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Engagement, he was instrumental in securing \$4.2 million in federal funding from a Department of Education Trio grant. In 2022, Dr. Johnson was hired as Vice President for Student Affairs at Oklahoma City Community College. He is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Division of Student Affairs, developing a comprehensive strategic enrollment plan, and providing leadership to the departments of student life, recruitment, student success, financial aid, admissions, and records.

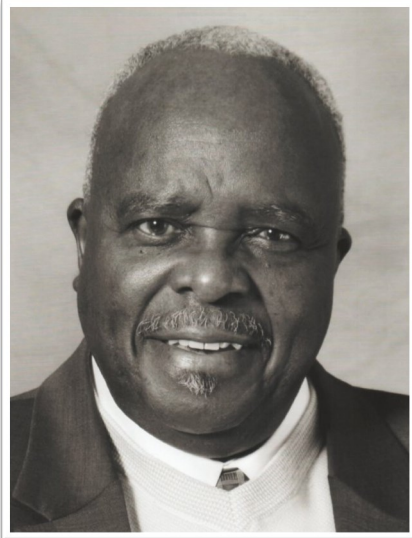
Dr. Johnson volunteers with OKCPD’s Man Up retreat, FACT program, and Hip-Hop for the Homeless initiative. He was published in the Journal of Educational Studies where he challenged educators to become more socially involved in issues facing students of color on college campuses and public spaces. He is currently developing a study abroad program that will explore post-colonial effects on marginalized populations in the global South.

Dr. Johnson was a fellow for Harvard University’s Institute for Leadership and Management, member of 2019 Rutgers University Minority Serving Institutions Aspiring Leaders program, member of American Educational Research Association and American Educational Studies Association. He is a life member Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. where he has served as Oklahoma District Director. Some honors include Journal Record’s 40 under 40, Oklahoma State University’s Advisor of the Year, and University of Oklahoma Staff Person of the Year.

Dr. Johnson is married to wife, Courtney, and is the father of Aiden, Ashlyn, and Austin. He enjoys spending time with family and friends, travel, and barbeque because he feels “food is love”.

*Dr. Jason Johnson* has championed the plight of marginalized and underrepresented learners for many years. His former students often seek him out to thank him for his help and guidance in college as well as to share details about their lives post college.

## *Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee*



### *Mr. Harold G. Jones, M. Ed.*

*"Confidence Builder"*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Mr. Harold G. Jones, M. Ed.* was born on December 11, 1941, to Mr. Johnny and Mrs. Mabel Jones, in Rocky Mount, North Carolina and grew up in Portsmouth, Virginia. He attended Keroe and Douglas Park Elementary Schools, Weaver Junior High and graduated in 1961 from I. C. Norcom High School and enrolled at Norfolk State University in the fall. All were segregated schools; students did not have the same resources as their white counterparts.

However, he recalled that teachers and administrators were always professional and instilled in them that although their books may be tattered and used; they were not less than. They knew they had to work harder and rise higher. Upon realizing that he was not prepared for college, he joined the United States Air Force and was stationed at Clinton Sherman AFB in Burns Flat, Oklahoma.

After an honorable discharge from USAF, he returned to college to earn an associate degree in Engineering in Technology from Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City campus. Mr. Jones later received a Bachelor of Science degree from and Master's in Adult Education, both from the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. He became a certified teacher and school administrator in post-secondary education in the Oklahoma State Career Technology System.

In 1986, Oklahoma developed its own HVAC/R test for state contractors and Jones was asked to assist with writing the test. For several years thereafter, Mr. Jones was asked to help with upgrading the test. He and his students were featured on the cover of HVAC/R Electric Controls manual. It was used by technical schools throughout the nation.

In 1989, Mr. Jones became the first African American Heating-Ventilation Air Conditioning & Refrigeration teacher in Oklahoma when he was hired at Metro Technology/South Bryan Campus, Oklahoma City. He had the innate ability to teach tedious and technical skills to students. His students were competitive; they maintained a long winning streak in the district US Skills contest where they won first place 17 out of 18 years of competing. His main goal was to produce job HVAC/R contractors. They represented the state of Oklahoma in the national US Skills contest 3 out of the 18 years he taught them. During his tenure at Metro Tech, he was often requested to serve on new hire interview teams and mentor new teachers. He created an Excellent Advisory Committee that consisted of the top HVAC/R business owners and business representatives. He also helped to write curriculum for Oklahoma State Career Technology Department in Stillwater.

Mr. Jones often took students into various communities in northeast and southwest Oklahoma City where they worked on senior citizen's HVAC units free of charge. This provided the opportunity for students to gain practical, hands-on learning by applying the skills learned in the classroom. In 2004, he was nominated and recognized with an award for "Who's Who in Teaching".

Upon retiring, Mr. Jones was asked to select his successor; he did. He also retired from Oklahoma University Medical Center after working for 18 years in the engineering facilities-HVAC/R department (1973-1989).

Mr. Jones stays busy during retirement by volunteering at Quayle United Methodist Church where was president of Quayle Men. He was the men's choir arranger and director. In 2001, he volunteered for "Volunteers in Missions" traveling to South Africa to help build churches, and New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.. He volunteers with BLAC and NTu ARTS and has served as chairman of the Charlie Christian Jazz Festival. In 1991, he was presented the Deep Deuce Award and the Charlie Christian Jazz Music Award in 2019. Jones is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Mr. Jones resides in Oklahoma City. He was married to his late wife, Charlene R. Jones for fifty-three years and raised four children: Wade, Vonda, Travis, and Harold.

*Mr. Harold G. Jones* believes Booker T. Washington's quote, "Success is to be measured by the obstacles one has overcome, not by their position" is a metaphor for his career choice and life. He imparted this in his students while also teaching them necessary skills to succeed in life.

## *Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee*



### *Mr. Carl Lavon King Sr.*

*"Academic Advisor"*

Watonga, Oklahoma

Mr. *Carle Lavon King, Sr.*, was born December 10, 1939, the second of three children, to Mathew and Gussie King, in Muskogee, Oklahoma. It was in Boley, Oklahoma where his journey truly began, graduating from Boley High School in 1958.

Mr. King earned his associate degree at Langston University, then enlisted in the United States Army and was stationed in Germany for a significant portion of his service. Upon his return to Oklahoma, Mr. King continued his service in the Oklahoma Army National Guard while completing his coursework to earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Special Education from Langston University and two Master of Art Degrees in Education with emphasis in Language Arts from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma.

In 1977, Mr. King and Betty settled in Watonga, Oklahoma, where they raised their family. His forty-year career in education began as an intern for student development from Langston University, then as an academic advisor at Guthrie Job Corp, an English teacher at Guthrie High School, and later as a Special Education teacher at Watonga High School. He was called from his first retirement to the Watonga Eagle Academy Alternative School, where his instruction touched the lives of countless students, instilling in them a love for learning and a sense of purpose.

Most notably, Mr. King demonstrated a deep commitment to ensuring that every student had the opportunity to thrive academically and personally. As the proud owner of Eagle Valley Express, Mr. King transformed a simple after-school hangout into a revolutionary educational hub. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, students flocked to Eagle Valley Express to receive tutoring assistance with their homework, turning mundane study sessions into dynamic learning experiences. After completing homework assignments, students were invited to dance to the latest hits on the jukebox, creating an atmosphere of celebration and camaraderie. Mr. King remains dedicated to the noble pursuit of education, serving as a substitute teacher at Watonga High School and continuing to inspire future generations. In addition, the one vital element that stands above it all is Mr. King's walk with God. He has served as Associate Minister at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church for thirty-two years, providing spiritual guidance and leadership, serving as Sunday School Superintendent and actively participating in the Watonga Ministerial Alliance.

Mr. King has served the community of Watonga in various capacities, including President of the Watonga Youth Coalition, member of the Board of the Watonga Housing Authority, and Blaine County Teen Court alongside Judge Mark Moore. His dedication to mediation and community enrichment has been recognized with awards such as the Early Settlement Northwest Oklahoma Program 2000/2001, Volunteer Mediator of the Year and the John R. McCune Volunteer Mediator of the Year in 2001. In 2021, he was honored as Watonga's Citizen of the Year.

The Watonga City Manager, Karrie Little and the Vice Mayor, Travis Brad declared April 6, 2024, as Carle King Sr. Day, recognizing Mr. King's five decades of service to the city and his trailblazing contributions to education. Mr. King was honored by former students, community leaders, and members with the Pioneering Excellence Award, an award acknowledging and recognizing his profound impact as an educator, mentor, community leader, and minister. Mr. King was officially recognized by the Secretary of Education, Nellie Tayloe Sanders, on behalf of the Governor of Oklahoma, Kevin Stitt, and presented with a Governor's Commendation acknowledging his impact and influence in education, as the Oklahoma standard.

Mr. King and his wife Betty, reside in Watonga, Oklahoma. They have been married for 47 years, and their children, Carl Jr. and Tameko Jo, have blessed them with six wonderful grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Mr. King remains a steadfast pillar of support and inspiration in the Watonga Community. In leisure time, the Kings enjoy spending time with their family and friends, taking cruises, and traveling internationally.

*Mr. Carle Lavon King Sr.* believes true fulfillment comes not from accolades, but from the simple joys of volunteering, fostering community connections, and promoting physical fitness. A colleague says, "Whether he's lending a helping hand, sharing a fishing adventure, or encouraging others to prioritize their health, Mr. King remains a steadfast pillar of support and inspiration in the Watonga Community."



## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### *Mr. Tracy McDaniel Sr.*

*"A Change Agent"*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Mr. Tracy McDaniel Sr.*, was born the third of four children, to Matthew and Melba Royal McDaniel on August 24, 1956 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. His educational journey began at Thomas A. Edison Elementary School. McDaniel's parents, recognizing the importance of education and equality, enrolled him and his siblings for a minority to majority transfer under the local case that reached the Supreme Court, *Dowell v. Board of Education*, 396 US 269 (1969).

Mr. McDaniel and his classmates bravely integrated Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School, in 1971. McDaniel attended Frederick A. Douglass High School during the last year of selected integration as a proud sophomore of the school of his lineage. McDaniel was bused to Northwest Classen High School in his junior year. He later received a transfer for his senior year to attend Classen High School, where he experienced a stark contrast. The environment was very diverse and positive, allowing him to fully participate in sports and graduate with honors.

Mr. McDaniel initially attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Central State University in Edmond, Oklahoma, Bachelor of Arts and Science in Elementary Education from Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma and a Master of School Administration from the University of Central Oklahoma. McDaniel proudly states that he and his siblings all graduated from Langston University, the school of his parents. They have also received master's degrees in the educational field, which was a dream come true for their parents.

In 1991, Mr. McDaniel began his 32-year career in education in Oklahoma City as a teacher at Creston Hills Elementary School. Later, he served as an assistant principal at Western Heights Middle School, then as principal at F.D. Moon Academy of Mass Media, Oklahoma City.

In 2001, Mr. McDaniel received a Fisher Fellowship for the Fisher School Leadership Program from the KIPP Foundation. In 2002 he became the founder and executive director of KIPP Reach OKC College Preparatory Academy, a charter school educating students grades 4-8. Mr. McDaniel's leadership and dedication have been recognized through numerous awards and accolades, including the prestigious Blue-Ribbon Award from the United States Department of Education for high performance and The U.S. Department of Education's 2012 Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding Leadership (U.S. Department of Education National Principal of the Year).

Under the guidance of Mr. McDaniel, KIPP, from 2006 - 2019, 99% of KIPP Reach 8th graders scored proficient or advanced in writing, and 98% of KIPP Reach 8th graders scored proficient or advanced in reading and math. These scores propelled KIPP students into some of the nation's top universities. Nationally, the students have been accepted to Princeton University, Columbia University, Union College, and Wesleyan University and others.

Mr. McDaniel's professional and civic awards and acknowledgements include Juneteenth Festival Rita Washington Soul Awakening Lifetime Achievement Award; KIPP Six Award Excellence Award (\$10,000) Recipient; Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City Making A Difference Award; Task Force on Creating Administrative Efficiencies serving at the pleasure of the Governor of Oklahoma; Oklahoma Magazine 2009 Oklahoman of the Year; Langston University, Department of Education 1996 (Hall of Fame); University of Central Oklahoma, Department of Education 1995 (Excellence in Education Award); Founding board member of the Oklahoma Public School Resource Center; appointment to the board of commissions for the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Library System; and Nannie Helen Burroughs Service Award, Oklahoma Progressive Baptist State Convention.

Currently, Mr. McDaniel serves as Minister of Education at the Church of the Living God in Oklahoma City. Mr. McDaniel has been married to his wife Norma of Okmulgee for 44 years. They have three beautiful children and seven adorable grandchildren, which are the highlights of their life.

*Mr. Tracy McDaniel's* life experiences are based on his mantra: "This life is not about what people can do for you, but what you can do for others." A colleague says, "Tracy represents what we all aspire to be: a person making a positive difference in the lives of others. Inspiring one student to do great things is a recognition to be proud of. Inspiring hundreds makes you a Hall of Famer."

## Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee



### *Dr. Terry E. Spigner*

*"Mentor to Educate"*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*Dr. Terry E. Spigner* was born on August 04, 1955, to Roscoe and Nadine (Burkhalter) Spigner in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He matriculated through the Oklahoma City public school system and is a proud 1973 graduate of Douglass High School in Oklahoma City. In the fall of 1973, he enrolled at the University of Oklahoma in Norman where he obtained a Bachelor of Art degree in Speech and Hearing in 1977. He earned a Master of Science degree in Clinical Audiology from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in 1980. Spigner completed the coursework and earned his second Master of Science degree in 1986, this one in Special Education from the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. He attained his Ph.D. in Communications Sciences and Disorders with an emphasis in Neurological Disorders in Adults and Children in 1992 from the H.B.C.U., Howard University in Washington, D.C.

In 1987, Dr. Spigner accepted a position as a special education teacher at Northeast High School in Oklahoma City. He continued in that position until he became employed as a Doctoral Intern and Research Assistant at Howard University in Washington D.C. He was a special education teacher at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia (1989-1992) followed by Coordinator of Special Education at the Oklahoma State Department of Education (1993-1994). He was also employed at Langston University (1994-1998) in the Department of Education. In 1998, he began employment with the University of Central Oklahoma where he ascended to Professor in the College of Education. Upon retiring in July 2024, Dr. Spigner is now distinguished as Faculty Emeritus having amassed 44 years in education.

Dr. Spigner has presented at local, state, and national conferences regarding a broad range of topics related to special education. He has co-authored study guides as counterparts to textbooks, served as a reviewer for grants, and participated in teacher certification test development. Additionally, Dr. Spigner has served concurrently special education coordinator at the Donna Nigh Department of Advanced and special Services.

Dr. Spigner has a prolific history of volunteerism and service in the community. He has served as a national grant reviewer for multiple agencies including AmeriCorps, the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with mental illness (PAMI), and the Agency for Missing and Runaway Children. He was previously a member of the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Disability Law Center. Dr. Spigner is a charter member, Assistant director, and member of the Board of Directors for the internationally acclaimed Ambassadors Concert Choir. Since 1968, he has been a member and currently serves as Minister of Fine Arts at St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

Other memberships include National Black Speech Language Hearing Association, American Federation of Teachers, Oklahoma Council for Exceptional Children, National Council for Exceptional Children, National Association for the Mentally Ill, founding member, UCO African American Faculty Staff Association, and Oklahoma Governors Special Education Advisory Council. Dr. Spigner has completed extensive research in the field of special education and has written a plethora of scholarly articles that were published as well as educational presentations and trainings for future educators.

*Dr. Terry E. Spigner* has demonstrated a passion of education and educating. In her nomination letter, his former colleague, Dr. Wanda Johnson lauded him for his ability to mentor and educate. Specifically, she said, "Dr. Terry Spigner's long term commitment to the field of education, University of Central Oklahoma, and to the many students he has mentored throughout the years, propels him to be one of the best educators I have had the privilege to work with."

## *Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Inductee*



### *Mrs. Lucille Hooks Turner*

*"Taught by Example"*

Colbert, Oklahoma

*Mrs. Lucille Hooks Turner* was born March 25, 1930, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Gervis Hooks and Violet Kenner Hooks. In 1936, her family relocated to one of the historically Black towns in Oklahoma; Tatums. As an only child, she had many fond memories of growing up. One of her favorite childhood memories; helping to care for the 400 chickens owned by her family; which won her a 4-H Award. The work was hard, yet unique and rewarding.

She attended elementary through high School in Tatums. Upon graduating from high school in 1947 and receiving the Pepsi Cola Scholarship, she matriculated to Langston University where she earned a Bachelor of Art degree in 1951. She continued her higher education at Southeastern State College in Durant, Oklahoma where she received a Master of Art degree in 1961.

In 1951, Turner was hired to teach at Shoemake School (1951-1960), followed by Eastward School (1962-2000), and lastly, Colbert Primary School (2001-2017). Early on in her career, she realized the importance of incorporating hands-on learning and favored using this method in the classroom. She brought in water turtles, snakes, spiders, seashells and other creatures to peak their interest and challenge them to step outside of their comfort zone. She was a proponent of using creative strategies in her classroom. "An idea is the most important thing in the world."

In 1956, she was instrumental in the all-black school's basketball team traveling to participate in the state basketball tournament at Douglass High School in Oklahoma City. She was the pianist for churches in her community and was always willing to be of service to others when possible.

She was selected as Colbert Public Schools Teacher of the Year in 1994 and 1995. She's a lifelong member of Center Union Baptist Church in Colbert where she serves as pianist and treasurer. While attending Langston University, she became a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Mrs. Turner retired from teaching in 2000; however, she returned to the classroom in 2001. Again, in 2004 she stepped away from teaching but continued to attend educational workshops at Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma. After a stint at teaching part-time and after a 64-year career, she retired for the final time in 2017.

She was married to the late Bernard Turner (1932 - 2018). They have two daughters, Bonita and Bettina; and one son, Gervis, who passed away in 1990. She also has five grandchildren.

*Mrs. Lucille Hooks Turner* possessed the innate ability to incorporate creativity and kinesthetic learning into aspects of her teaching style providing opportunities for her students to thrive in the classroom. Many of those students went on to become successful and productive citizens in society.

## **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](mailto:annnero@aol.com) or Donnie Nero, [dr.donnielee@aol.com](mailto: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*

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



**Oklahoma Historical Society**

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



Oklahoma Historical Society

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**Thank you for your support!**

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

President Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.  
Clearview, Oklahoma 74880





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