# THE 45TH ANNUAL FREEDOM FUND BANQUET

DIGITAL SOUVENIR BOOKLET



ARE YOU ALL IN?

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Greetings MKBNAACP Family and Friends,

On behalf of the entire executive committee and our branch membership, I want to THANK YOU for your continued support of our Freedom Fund Banquet and throughout the year. This marks our 45<sup>th</sup> year. I do not take your support or presence for granted and we are so pleased to see you again because you did not have to be here.

Well, another year has come and gone, and it has been a busy one! Our theme this year: "All In," is a statement in and of itself. To be "All In" is to be fully committed. And that is exactly what we must be in our fight for social justice, equality, and equity.

We must remain All In to collectively fight to protect our rights and freedoms, policies/laws that advance progress in areas of education, women rights, economic development, health care, police reform, environmental justice, employment for all who are disproportionately impacted.

This election year is one of the most crucial elections of our lifetime. Democracy is under attack! There are various issues impacting Black people and other communities of color in harmful ways. We cannot sit this one out people! We must vote like our lives depend on it, because it does, VOTE! "Take Your Soles to The Polls" and someone else with you!

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan." Proverbs 29:2 NKJV

And as always THANK YOU to my Executive Committee for your commitment, dedication, support and all the work you do! But most importantly for your sense of humor. This is challenging work, and laughter is needed and healing. God bless each of you!

Wendy Fields, President



October 28, 2024

Greetings,

It has been my distinct honor and pleasure to serve as chairperson of the 45th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, themed "Are You All In?" Our national theme this year provides us an invaluable opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of our votes and the power we possess as community members to initiate positive change for all.

Founded by our 10th Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP president, Dr. Romeo Phillips, our Freedom Fund Banquet continues to unite countless nonprofits, businesses and community members together toward a common goal — to celebrate one another, honor the achievements of our community leaders and reflect on the richness of our shared history in Kalamazoo.

Words cannot express enough my gratitude and sincere appreciation for everyone who not only supported our 45th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet but whose continued support over the years has helped grow this event into its present-day success. Thank you for your decisive leadership, generous investment of time and resources, and kind words of encouragement.

In closing, I would like to extend a special thank you to our president, Wendy Fields, for allowing me the opportunity to serve as chairperson. Additionally, to my fellow Freedom Fund Banquet Committee members, I extend my sincerest thanks for your unwavering dedication and commitment to making this year's event possible. I am grateful to have been able to serve alongside each of you as we worked together to further the great legacy of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP!

Erika R. Whitehead

Freedom Fund Banquet Chair

Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP



Yvonne M. White State President

Jordan D. Bell Youth & College Division President

Locations:

Albion

Albion College

Ann Arbor

Battle Creek

Bay City

Cass Technical High School

Central Michigan University

Eastern Michigan University

Ecorse High School

Everett High School, Lansing

Ferris State University

Flint

**Grand Rapids** 

Grand Valley State University

Grosse Pointes/Harper Woods

Hamtramck

Highland Park

**Iackson County** 

Lake & Newago Counties

Lansing

Lenawee County

Michigan State University

Monroe County

Muskegon

Niles/Buchanan

Northern Macomb County

Northern Oakland County

Oak Park High School

Olivet College

Port Huron

River Rouge/Ecorse

Romulus High School

Saginaw

Southwest Detroit

Southern Macomb County

Southern Oakland County

Southfield/Farmington

Three Rivers

Twin City Area

University of Michigan

Van Buren County

Wayne State University

Western Michigan University

Western Wayne County

Ypsilanti/Willow Run



Celebrating... "88 Years" of Ensuring Equal Rights for All

November 2, 2024

Dear NAACP Kalamazoo Freedom Fighters & Supporters:

On behalf of the adult and youth and college division state officers, and units of the NAACP Michigan State Conference, it is with great pleasure that I extend heartfelt greetings to you on the grand occasion of your 45th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has been on the front lines of change, progress and advocacy for 115 years and we're committed to dismantling racism and disrupting inequality to create a society where all people can truly be free. This means addressing issues most important to the Black community. The NAACP Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch has always led the charge in making a difference to the complex, ongoing work of advancing racial equity and social justice throughout your community.

The fundamental right to vote continues to be under attack, creating a threat to democracy as we know it. Efforts to make it harder for racial minorities to participate in the political process are proliferating all across the country, and we're fighting those efforts in court. However, from now until Election Day on November 5, we need your help to turnout as many voters as possible. From student debt cancellation to healthcare access and lead pipe removal, there is so much on the line for communities all across our state. Every single one of our votes will matter this election. Do not sit this one out! Do not allow misinformation to cripple our democracy.

So today, as you briefly step away from the front lines of the fight for freedom and justice to reflect on the great work you are doing, we want to express a world of gratitude to the entire NAACP Kalamazoo Branch team, under the awesome leadership of President Wendy Fields, officers and members of the Executive Committee, and the many grassroots members and volunteers who work daily to defend the principles and mission of this great Association.

A very special "Thank You!" for all that you have done to help advance our NAACP social justice agenda in Michigan. Congratulations on celebrating many years of championing civil and human rights issues in the greater Kalamazoo community and throughout Michigan. Best wishes for a successful event and be sure to "Take Your Soles to the Polls & VOTE, our lives depend on it!

#All In!

Yvonne M. White

President, NAACP Michigan State Conference

Assistant Treasurer, NAACP National Board of Directors

Stay Connected:











Office of the Mayor

241 West South Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007-4796 Phone: 269.337.8046

Fax: 269.337.8182 www.kalamazoocity.org

November 4, 2024

Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch - NAACP P.O. Box 51473 Kalamazoo, MI 49005

President Wendy Fields, Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP Members, and Friends:

It is truly an honor to join you and our community to celebrate the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Freedom Fund Banquet. For decades, this hugely important event and the funding it raises has helped shape the mission and vision of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP to move Kalamazoo forward.

More than ever, our community and our nation face major challenges. The efforts we have waged over the decades – securing voting rights, battling discrimination throughout society, the right to affordable housing and healthcare for all, to name a few – remain as hurdles to overcome. Yet, we shall overcome, and we shall continue the push to build a stronger and more inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

Dr. King said, "The time is always right to do what is right." The Kalamazoo City Commission and the City of Kalamazoo are proud to join the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP and its advocacy and commitment to doing what's right for Kalamazoo. We stand with you as a partner and supporter of your efforts, and we share your mission of justice, equity, and prosperity for everyone.

Sincerely,

David F. Anderson

Mayor, City of Kalamazoo



Dear Friends,

Congratulations to the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch(MKB) NAACP in celebrating the 45th annual Freedom Fund banquet. This year's theme, "Are You All In?" serves as both a call to action and a reminder of our shared commitment to supporting individuals and our community in the pursuit of justice and equality.

Western Michigan University is proud to contribute to these efforts by promoting academic excellence, producing high-quality research, and advancing diversity and inclusion in the Kalamazoo community as we equip our Broncos with a holistic, experience-driven education. We prepare students for meaningful careers and lives of service and success in a diverse society.

As President Barack Obama once said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." His words resonate deeply with this evening's theme, reminding us that progress depends on each of us fully committing to the work of justice, equality and inclusion.

Tonight, we also congratulate the recipients of the NAACP's Humanitarian Award, Distinguished Veteran Award and the Dr. Charles C. Warfield Youth Community Service Award. These honorees have improved the lives of others through their contributions in politics, education, civil rights, religion, or community and military service for the betterment of the greater Kalamazoo community. We appreciate their leadership, which will undoubtedly inspire others who come after them.

On behalf of Western Michigan University, we thank the MKB NAACP for decades of dedication to its mission, and we look forward to continued advocacy for future generations to come.

Sincerely,

Edward Montgomery, Ph.D.

Edward Montoney

President

Western Michigan University

1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5202 Phone: (269) 387-2351 • wmich.edu/president 3065 Seibert Administration Building



1200 Academy Street • Kalamazoo, Michigan 49006 • USA 269.337.7220 phone • 269.337.7219 fax kzoo.edu

October 2023

On behalf of Kalamazoo College, its students, faculty and staff, I congratulate the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP on its 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Freedom Fund Banquet. The NAACP has stood at the forefront in our city, state and nation in the fight for social justice, equity and inclusion, and we are proud to support its efforts.

Our institution's mission is to prepare our graduates "to better understand, live successfully within, and provide enlightened leadership to a richly diverse and increasingly complex world." We do this through a comprehensive liberal arts education that encourages students to think critically about complex issues, to participate in programs that emphasize civic engagement and social responsibility, and to engage deeply with the local community, so students feel empowered not only to understand the world, but to actively shape it.

"Are You All In?" is the theme of the evening. John F. Kennedy said that education is both the foundation and the unifying force in our democratic way of life, and that "every young person should have an equal opportunity to obtain a higher education, regardless of his or her station in life or financial means." We agree, which is why Kalamazoo College is a proud partner of the Kalamazoo Promise and is working to expand access to a K education to talented students across the country and around the globe, creating more opportunities for all.

By expanding access, nurturing our strong community partnerships and creating more experiential learning opportunities—together we will help create a brighter future for all. We look forward to continuing our work with you in these endeavors.

Saludos,

Jorge G. Gonzalez

President



Nov. 2, 2024

### Greetings!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, staff, faculty and students at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, I salute the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP for its tireless service to our community. We highly value our association with the NAACP and share its commitment to working toward a more inclusive community where all people are valued and respected.

We admire the NAACP's mission to serve the community with compassion and justice. In a world deeply impacted by economic challenges and social injustice, we need our partnerships now more than ever. We are committed to strengthening our existing relationships across the community and welcome new collaborations in our united effort to make sure that all people in our region are thriving.

Our mission at Kalamazoo Valley is to create innovative and equitable opportunities that empower all to learn, grow and thrive. We look forward to partnering with the NAACP – and with all of you – as we move toward a more equitable future full of opportunities for all.

Sincerely,

L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D.

L. Marshell Wastight

President



### SEAN McCANN

19TH DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 30036

LANSING, MI 48909-7536
PHONE: (517) 373-5100
sensmccann@senate.michigan.gov

# THE SENATE STATE OF MICHIGAN

### COMMITTEES:

(C) ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
(VC) APPROPRIATIONS
FINANCE, INSURANCE, & CONSUMER PROTECTION
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### SUBCOMMITTEES:

(C) UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES
LEO/MEDC
TRANSPORTATION
JOINT CAPITAL OUTLAY

November 2, 2024

Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP P. O. Box 51473 Kalamazoo, MI. 49005-1473

Dear Friends,

I am happy to extend my best wishes and congratulations to you as we come together to celebrate the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on November 2, 2024. This annual event brings you and so many people of the greater Kalamazoo community together to reaffirm and celebrate the mission, unity and future of your extraordinary organization which has positively impacted so many residents of Kalamazoo.

For over 70 years, the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP has remained dedicated to the mission of ensuring civil rights for all and an end to discrimination in any form. This remarkable organization is a constant force in an unstable world, and it is a beacon of hope through these tumultuous times. With such a rich history of community involvement, truly, the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP is a treasure of the Kalamazoo community.

As a proud member of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP, and State Senator for Kalamazoo County, I am well aware of the many contributions of your exceptional organization. I extend my sincerest thanks to your members for all they have done and continue to do to make Kalamazoo a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,

Sean McCann State Senator 19<sup>th</sup> District





BILL HUIZENGA 4TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS, CHAIRMAN

CAPITAL MARKETS

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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# Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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5228 LOVERS LANE

www.huizenga.house.gov

### Dear Friends,

I am honored to welcome residents of the Greater Kalamazoo Community to the NAACP's 45th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet. For more than 75 years, the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP has served as a leading voice on issues impacting our community as well as our country. In the days ahead, I am hopeful that we can continue to work together to move our community forward and foster a spirit of collaboration and empowerment.

As we celebrate and reflect upon the diligent work of the NAACP, I wanted to share with you how I am working to tear down financial barriers facing residents of Kalamazoo and the 4th Congressional District.

Because too many minority-owned small businesses lack access to the capital necessary to create jobs, increase opportunity, and engage in community-building activities, I introduced H.R. 1579, the Accredited Investor Definition Review Act, during this Congress. This bipartisan legislation is specifically designed to help small business entrepreneurs access capital in communities across Southwest Michigan such as Kalamazoo, Portage, and Battle Creek.

As I worked to build bipartisan support for H.R. 1579, one of the people I met was Omi Bell, the founder of Black Girl Ventures. This organization focuses on providing women of color with access to community networks, capital, and capacity building to develop and grow their own businesses. Omi shared with me that her mother invested \$10,000 of her own retirement to support Omi's first business venture. However, despite the desire to support her daughter's ambitions, Omi's mother was not considered an accredited investor. This doesn't make sense.

My legislation solves this problem by leveling the playing field and supporting greater investment in minority-owned small businesses throughout Kalamazoo County and across Southwest Michigan. Simply put, the federal government should not be an impediment to building stronger families and helping communities thrive. I am happy to share that my legislation passed the House with unanimous bipartisan support and currently awaits consideration in the Senate.

In Southwest Michigan, we are blessed with a diverse array of communities, cultures, and beliefs. Thank you to the NAACP for allowing me the privilege of welcoming you today and sharing how I am working to foster opportunity and advance our common goals. As your Representative, I will continue to strive to make our community an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

I hope the 45th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet provides a platform for inspiring dialogue and meaningful connections.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bill Huizenga Member of Congress



55TH DISTRICT STATE CAPITOL P.O. BOX 30014 LANSING, MI 48909-7514

### MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PHONE: (517) 373-0478 FAX: (517) 373-5884 JalmeChurches@house,ml.gov

# JAIME CHURCHES STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch – NAACP PO Box 51473 Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt best wishes as you come together to celebrate the 2024 Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet. This annual gathering of community and business leaders reaffirms the commitment from the Kalamazoo community and the MKB NAACP to a more equitable future for Southwest Michigan.

78 years ago, a diverse group of Kalamazoo residents identified the need for equal access, better representation, and improved opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups in our community. 33 years later, in 1979, the MKB NAACP held their first annual Freedom Fund Banquet to celebrate those who have dedicated their lives to helping the underserved and underrepresented in Kalamazoo.

This year's theme, 'Are You All In?' is a question we must all answer when working toward a more equitable America. Are we willing to do the hard work for a better, fairer future, or will we take the path of stagnation and least resistance? As the Chair of the House of Representatives Health Policy Committee, I am working on a maternal and infant health package to provide more equitable access to care for mothers. Together, we can work toward an equitable future for our state.

As a proud lifetime member of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP, I deeply appreciate your organization's significant contributions in the pursuit of social justice. Thank you for all you do. Together, let us continue to fight for a future of equity for all.

Sincerely,

Julie M. Rogers

State Representative, Health Policy Committee Chair

m Roja

House District - 41







40TH DISTRICT STATE CAPITOL P.O. BOX 30014 LANSING, MI 48909-7514

### MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# CHRISTINE MORSE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PHONE: (517) 373-8670 FAX: (517) 373-5868 ChristineMorse@house.mi.gov

Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP 1000 West Paterson Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Dear Friends,

I am deeply honored to extend my support to the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP for this year's Annual Freedom Fund Event. The vital work you do continues to shape our community into a more just and equitable place for all. Events like this not only celebrate your achievements but also empower you to drive meaningful change in the years ahead.

This year's theme, "Are you all in?" is evident at this event and with the mission of the NAACP. It underscores the importance of solidarity in our shared pursuit of equality. Together, you and your fellow members exemplify the strength that comes from unity, advocating for the rights and dignity of every individual. In a world where challenges continue to arise, your collective voice is vital in demanding accountability and driving progress within our community.

I would like to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation to all the members of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP. Thank you for all the work you do and thank you for your continued embodiment of this year's theme. I am excited to witness the incredible impact you will continue to have on our community.

Congratulations on another successful Annual Freedom Fund Event. Let us remain united in our mission to create a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Sincerely,

Christine Morse

State Representative, 40<sup>th</sup> District

### IT'S GOOD TO FOLLOW A GOOD EXAMPLE, BUT IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS.

**Rev. Thomas H. Smith** (1946-unkown) Pastor

Fred Lilly (1957-1958) Brick Mason

**Arthur Washington** (1958-1962) First Black Kalamazoo City Commisionioner

**Amerriel Overton** (1962-1965) Licensed Psychiatric Nurse

**Duane L. Roberts** (1965-1966 & 1973-1976)

**Clemuel Dobbin**s (1966-1967) Public School Educator

**Albert Hearn** (1968-1969) Community Activist

**Joseph W. Whitten** (1970-1972) Public School Educator

**Dr. Otha Gilyard** (1977-1979) Pastor

**Dr. Romeo Phillips** (1980-1987) Professor

Rev. Asa Dawson (1987-1989)

**Dr. Tilman C. Cothran** (1989-1990) (Professor)

Malcolm Earhart (1990-1992) Attorney

**Viola Gains McMillon** (1993-1997) Company Executive

Honorable Alexander Lipsey (1998-2001) Judge

**Rev. Jerry McNeely** (2004-2006) Pastor

**Lola Clark Atkinson** (2006) Entrepreneur

**Dr. Zawdie Abiabe** (2007) Pastor

Michael O. Wilson (2007-2008) Executive Director

**Dr. Charles C. Warfield** (2008-2016) Executive Director

**Dr. Carla Campbell-Jackson** (2016) Executive Director

**Dr. Stick Strickland** (2016 -2018) Pastor

Wendy Y. Fields (2018-Present) Community Advocate

### Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP HISTORY

Since the inception of the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch in 1946, the Branch has been at the forefront of the fight against discrimination in the workplace, education, and housing while laying the foundation for building a congenial relationship between the police and the Black community.

Over the years, the leadership of the Branch heeded the call and rallied the community in the fight for justice in Kalamazoo as the fight for justice on the national scene grew. In June 1963, the first woman to lead the Branch, Amerrial Overton (1966-67), organized the city's first protest for equal employment and picketed Van Avery's Drug Store in response to its unfair hiring practices of Black residents. As a result of the protest, the Branch was able to work with the store to create a plan that would include giving Black residents a chance at mainstream jobs in Kalamazoo.

Although many more opportunities were available to Black residents in Kalamazoo after the civil rights era, the struggle for adequate housing and access to equitable education was still a major concern for Branch leaders. In response, Joseph Whitten (1970-72) led the Branch and supported the plaintiff in the case that would desegregate the city's public schools. Subsequently, the Board of Education rescinded the proposed desegregation plan. As a result, the Branch reorganized in 1971 and worked with the community for the next two years to finalize a desegregation plan that would give all children an opportunity at the same education.

In the years to come, the Branch would increase its focus on poor people and the homeless in Kalamazoo. Reverend Dr. Otha Gilyard (1977-79) galvanized the membership around these very important issues and spearheaded the creation of many programs that tackled the issue of homelessness in Kalamazoo alongside other social issues, including teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, and drug addiction. Many of the programs, like the Safe House, still exist and continue to impact people's lives today.

Strengthening the organization and its impact on the community became the Branch's focus over the next couple of decades. The Branch ensured the execution of the public school desegregation order (Dr. Tilman Cothran – 1989-90), reestablished the youth chapter (Malcolm Earhart – 1990-92), established a Jobs and Training and Business Plan (Viola Gains McMillian – 1993-97) and strengthened the legal redress and inter-community cooperation (Honorable Alexander Lipsey – 1998-2001).

As a lifelong educator and the State's Education Coordinator, Dr. Charles C. Warfield (2008-2016) charged our delegation to be more actively engaged in the education and encouragement of our children and youth. Dr. Warfield was quite active in the community and continued to infuse his commitment to education with similar organizations in the greater Kalamazoo area. This strategy was essential to ensuring that children of color in Michigan were challenged to be the best and the brightest!

# **2024 FREEDOM FUND BANQUET**

### **PROGRAM**

MC - Demetrias Wolverton
Chief Strategy & Communications Officer
Kalamazoo Community Foundation

Invocation - Elder Carl Page Religious Affairs Chairperson

Black National Anthem/Lift Every Voice and Sing - JoAnne Freeman

National Anthem Video - Tammy Lockett-Johnson

Welcome - Susan Springgate
Treasurer

Greetings Video - Governor Gretchen Whitmer Message From the President - Wendy Y. Fields

Presentation of New Life Members - Dr. Harvey Myers
Membership Chairperson

### PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Dr. Charles C. Warfield Community Service Award - Alecia Freeman, Chairperson Michael T. Scott II and Makiyah Williams, Awardees

Humanitarian Award - Philippa "Jo" Brown, Chairperson Stacey R. Ledbetter, Awardee

Distinguished Veteran Award - Anthony Bradley, Chairperson Rashidi Shobowale-Benson II, Awardee

Vanguard Award - Wendy Y. Fields, President Family Health Center, Denise Crawford, CEO, Awardee

### DINNER

Acknowledgements - Erika R. Whitehead Freedom Fund Banquet Chairperson

Benediction - Elder Carl Page Religious Affairs Chairperson

AFTERGLOW



### Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch

### **Executive Team**

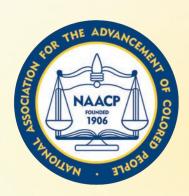
Wendy Y. Fields Branch President
Larry Tolbert 1st Vice President
Lola Clark Atkinson 2nd Vice President
Cory King 3rd Vice President
Raven Britt Secretary
Alecia Freeman Assistant Secretary
Sue Springgate Treasurer
Shirley Gordon Assistant Treasurer

### **At-Large Executive Committee**

Philippa "Jo" Brown Bobby Boyd Andrew Chaponda Dr. Henry Cohen Kari Hamann Kenneth Johnson Franklin McCarroll Dr. Harvey Myers J. Vicki Richard Meri Watkins-Tolbert Dr. Martha B. Warfield Erika R. Whitehead

### Freedom Fund Committee

Erika Whitehead, Chairperson Anthony Bradley Raven Britt Philippa "Jo" Brown Alecia Freeman Kari Hamann Alfrelynn Roberts Sue Springgate





### Committee Chairpersons

Erika R. Whitehead Communications Chairperson Kenneth Johnson Criminal Justice Chairperson Philippa "Jo" Brown Education Chairperson Bobby Boyd Environmental Justice Chairperson Sue Springgate Finance Chairperson Erika R. Whitehead

Freedom Fund Banquet Chairperson
Andrew Chaponda Housing Chairperson
Dr. Henry Cohen Labor & Industry Chairperson
Dr. Harvey Myers Membership Chairperson Committee
Cory King Political Action Chairperson
Elder Carl Page Religious Affairs Chairperson
Anthony Bradley Veteran Affairs Chairperson

### Special Thanks

Video Recording
Freedom Fund E-Book
Music
Awardee Video
Freedom Fund Photographer
Freedom Fund Videographer

**Printed Materials** 

Nicci Fields Tom "Tony" Hamann DJ Playhouse, Adam Baylis Alfrelynn Roberts Toni Woolfork-Barnes EyesOpen Photogtaphy Remius Jones RJ's Printing, LLC

### Dr. Charles C. Warfield Youth Community Service Award Selection Committee

Alecia Freeman, **Chairperson**Aaliyah Garel
Whitney Freeman
Terry Moore
Caleb Clopton

# Distinguished Veteran Award Selection Committee

Anthony Bradley, **Chairperson** Robert Reynolds Antonia Kennedy

# Humanitarian Award Selection Committee

Philippa "Jo" Brown, **Chairperson** Celia Banuelos J. Vicki Richard Sue Kovats-Bell Brenda Carter

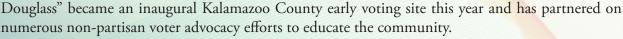
# HUMANITARIAN AWARD STACEY R. LEDBETTER

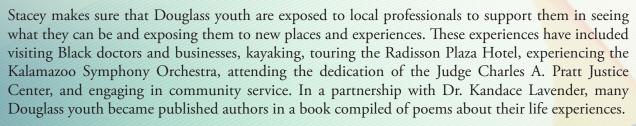
### Blessed. Visionary. Servant Leader.

Stacey R. Ledbetter is the visionary leader of the historic 105-year-old (Frederick) Douglass Community Association (DCA). She is committed to the mission "To create a culture of equity and inclusion that transforms the lives of Northside residents and beyond through effective, efficient, and quality opportunities." She began her tenure as the 23rd leader (5th woman) and interim Executive Director in May of 2022 and became permanent in July of 2024.

Stacey has led the effort to enhance not only upgrades to the building and grounds but also establish and expand over 100 partnerships and progressive relationships with funders, programming, safety and security, support of other local nonprofits, and positive experiences for youth and adults.

With a deep dedication to civil and human rights, she champions voter advocacy and civic engagement. "The





This Detroit native, who is dedicated to facilitating diverse groups to overcome their differences and discover their common humanity, is a Racial Healing Practitioner/Trainer trained by Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) and a practitioner with the Michigan Transformation Collective (MTC). She is also a member of the following: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., The Galilee Baptist Church, ISAAC, the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), among other organizations. She is a facilitator, strategic thought partner consultant, and the founder and CEO of Black & Blue Networking & Consulting, LLC. She retired as a Captain after serving a more than 25-year career in law enforcement.



- Frederick Douglass



# **HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS**

2024	Stacey R. Ledbetter, Executive Director Douglass Community Association
2023	L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D., President Kalamazoo Valley Community College
2022	Alisa L. Parker-LaGrone, District Court Judge in Kalamazoo County's 8th District Court
2021	Dr. Charlae M. Davis, Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community
2020	Vernon Payne, Associate VP Western Michigan University, Mentor, Community Activist
2019	Elder Douglas King, ISAAC President, Senior Pastor of Grace Covenant Ministries
2018	Buddy Hannah, Former Radio Talk Show Host, Community Advocate
2017	Nathan Bolton, Vice-President and Manager, Old National Bank
2016	<b>Dr. Phillip Johnson,</b> Educator, Mental Health and Wellness Advocate
2015	James E. Greene, Jr, Corporate Executive and Community Advocate for Children**
2014	<b>Dr. Don Cooney,</b> Kalamazoo City Commissioner, Associate Professor Western Michigan
	University, Justice Activist
2013	The Honorable Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor, City of Kalamazoo
2012	Bishop Dr. Tommie D. Lockett, Pastor, Faith Temple Church of God
	Dr. Lewis Walker, Professor of Sociology Western Michigan University; Racial Justice Pioneer
2011	Reverend Dr. Addis Moore, Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church
2010	Carolyn G. Alford, Former Kalamazoo County Commissioner; Former School Board Trustee
2009	Pamela Roland, Director, Kalamazoo Junior Girls
	Dr. Harvey Myers, Retired Chemist; Co-Founder / Chairperson CAPS
2008	Dr. Martha Warfield, Retired Vice President, WMU; Former KPS Trustee
2007	Dr. Arthur R. James, Women's Health Advocate and Infant Mortality Expert
2006	Dr. Charles C. Warfield, Former MKB President, Professor, WMU, Community Activist**
2004	Dorothy Young, Educator; Community Activist**
2003	The Honorable Robert B. Jones, Former Mayor City of Kalamazoo; 60th House District
	State Representative**
2002	Mattie Jordan-Woods, Executive Director Northside Association for Community Developmen
2001	Vera Owens, Treasurer Northside Association for Educational Advancement**
2000	Dr. Romeo Phillips, Former MKB president, First Black Portage City Council Member
1998	Eva Ozier, Former Kalamazoo County Commissioner (1985-2006)
1997	Dr. Delores R. Jordan-Phillips, WMU Professor; Community Activist**
1996	Viola Gaines-McMillon, Former President, MKB-NAACP; Community Activist
1995	Moses L. Walker, Former Vice President Borgess Health Alliance; CEO Family Health Center*
1994	Beverly Moore, First Black Female Mayor-City of Kalamazoo (1991-1993)
1993	Vivian King, Dedicated Community Volunteer**
1992	Anna L. Whitten, Community Activist; Kalamazoo Valley Community College Trustee**
1991	Margaret T. Minot, First Black Kalamazoo Public Schools Board Trustee**
1990	Reverend Guyron Philbert, Director Kalamazoo Northside Non-Profit Housing Corporation*
1989	Arthur Washington, First Black Kalamazoo City Commissioners (1959-1966)**
1988	Charles Parker, Dedicated Youth Worker
1987	Nathaniel McCaslin, Community Activist; Former Kalamazoo Public Schools Board Trustee**
1986	Percy Clark, Sr., Lifetime Community Activist, Instrumental in Establishing NACD**
1985	The Right Reverend Robert Rasmussen, Pastor, North Presbyterian Church, Kalamazoo**
1984	Mary Mace Spradling, Former Young Adult Librarian, Kalamazoo Public Library**
1983	Duane Roberts, Former MKB NAACP President; Lifetime Community Activist**
1982	Leona H. Mitchell, Longtime NAACP Member; Community Activist**
1981	Georgia Dungey, Life NAACP Member; Community Activist**
1980	Rosa L. Parks, Mother of Civil Rights Movement**
1979	The Honorable Charles A. Pratt, 9th District County Judge**

\*\* Deceased

# DISTINGUISHED VETERAN AWARD

# **RASHIDI SHOBOWALE-BENSON II**

Born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Rashidi Shobowale-Benson II has dedicated his life to service, leadership, and community engagement. A proud graduate of Loy Norrix High School (Class of 1997), he embarked on a remarkable journey in the U.S. Navy, where he served for 20 years. Retiring in 2017 at the rank of Chief Petty Officer in Logistics, Rashidi completed numerous deployments aboard five submarines: USS Trepang, USS Hampton, USS Scranton, USS Oklahoma City, and USS West Virginia. His commitment to excellence also led him to three shore commands, including Trident Training Facility Bangor in Bremerton, Washington, and two tours with Commander Submarine Forces Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia. Notably, he volunteered to serve an 11-month tour running postal operations at Forward Operating Base Salerno in Bagram, Afghanistan, showcasing his dedication to duty in challenging environments.

While stationed in Virginia, Rashidi pursued higher education, earning a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Norfolk State University, graduating Magna Cum Laude from this Historically Black College and University (HBCU). His journey took a beautiful turn in 2014 when he met his wife, Shea-Lin. After their marriage in 2015, she proudly embraced the name Shobowale-Benson, creating a legacy of love and partnership. Dr. Shea, as she is affectionately known, uses her talents in psychology to help, encourage, and inspire individuals through various speaking engagements and forums.

In 2017, Rashidi and his wife returned to Kalamazoo, motivated to start a family and give back to their community. As a member of the Pi Lambda Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., he served as chapter president from 2018 to 2023, fostering a spirit of brotherhood, scholarship and service.



LSC/SS (RET)Rashidi Shobowale-Benson II E-7 / CHIEF PETTY OFFICER US NAVY 20 YEARS Commands USS TREPANG (SSN-674) USS HAMPTON (SSN-767) TRIDENT TRAINING FACILITY BANGOR (TRITRAAFAC) **USS SCRANTON (SSN-756)** USS OKLAHOMA CITY (SSN-723) COMMANDER SUBMARINE FORCES ATLANTIC (COMSUBLANT) 94TH HR COMPANY FOB SALERNO AFGANISTAN USS WEST VIRGINIA (SSBN\_&#^) COMMANDER SUBMARINE FORCES ATLANTIC (COMSUBLANT)

The couple welcomed twin sons, Rashidi (Beadie Bear) and Rashod (Bopdopolis), in 2019, further solidifying their commitment to family and community. Driven by a passion for empowering youth, Rashidi founded Greatness Unleashed in 2020. This nonprofit organization is dedicated to helping young people of color through the exploration of HBCUs as a consideration for their post primary education. As the motto says, "Know your options. See your future. Make your choice!"

Today, Rashidi continues to make a positive impact, embodying the values of service, leadership, and community engagement. His journey is a testament to the power of resilience and the importance of giving back.

His hobbies include family time, golf, weightlifting, travel, cigars, and serving the community. He also enjoys any book written by Walter Mosely. Rashidi is a proud member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP, and Galilee Baptist Church. He is also the self-published children's book author of "Our Words Have Power." To discover the book, please use ISBN: 978-1667830858.

# **DISTINGUISHED VETERAN AWARD RECIPIENTS**

2024	Rashidi Shobowale-Benson II, United States Navy, 1997-2017
2023	Antonia (Toni) Kennedy, United States Army, 1983-1987
2022	<b>Dr. LaSonda Wells,</b> United States Air Force, 1991-2001
2021	Pastor Michael L. Brown, United States Navy, 1969-2000
2020	<b>Dr. Von Washington, Sr.,</b> United States Air Force, 1961-1973
2019	Stephanie D. Hoffman, United States Army, 1987
2018	Albert T. Hampton, Elite 82nd Airborne, United States Army, 1961 - 1964
2017	William Mandella Roland, Elite 82nd Airborne, United States Army, 1970 - 1973
2016	Michael A. Seals, United States Navy, 1981 - 1989
2015	Corporal Irvin Darden, United States Army, 1952 (posthumously)**
2014	Dr. Denise Washington, United States Army, 1979**
2013	Ollie Chambers, United States Army, 1961
2012	Edward Parham, United States Navy, 1955
2011	Andrew Wilkerson, United States Air Force, 1963
2010	<b>Dwight B. King,</b> Air Force, 1949**
2009	Joyce Lynn Jones-Davis, United States Army, 1977
2008	Walter Jones, III, United States Army, 1967
	Dale J. Haywood (posthumously)**
2007	Theopolus T. Williams, United States Army**
2006	Buddy Hannah, United States Army, 1969
2004	David Mims
2003	Harold Bulger, United States Navy, 1941; United States Army, 1945**
	Prentice Stroud**
2002	Colonel Arthur Truss (posthumously)**
2001	Henry Goins**
2000	Edward J. Carter**
1999	Walter Summers
1997	Jesse V. Elliott-Larsen**
1996	Arthur Washington**

<sup>\*\*</sup> Deceased



# DENISE CRAWFORD, CEO



For the past 15 years, Denise Crawford has fearlessly led Family Health Center (FHC) through expansion, crisis & growth. At times she has dared to do what others considered impossible — and yet her vision remains steadfast and her dedication unwavering. From humble beginnings in 2009 — when Ms. Crawford inherited a negative \$1M deficit balance sheet for an organization challenged to serve 11,000 patients with minimal services — to hearty reserves in 2024 — where over 45,000 patients are served with over 167,000 high-quality visits, her vision has proven to be spot-on and impeccable. Buildings have been built, services continue to improve, and yet Ms. Crawford doesn't rest on any laurels. Her anticipatory forethought continues to push FHC into the next chapter of excellence.

Under her leadership, the Family Health Center underwent a monumental expansion project, resulting in a threefold increase in examination rooms and the accommodation of an additional 20,000 patients annually at the flagship location in Kalamazoo's Northside neighborhood. The establishment of the Burdick Street location dedicated to dental and behavioral healthcare exemplifies her commitment to enhancing access to essential care services in underserved communities.

Moreover, her innovative approach led to the introduction of physical and occupational therapist services at both Paterson and Alcott locations, facilitating specialized care delivery in an integrated and coordinated manner. The implementation of the Mobile Health Clinic further underscores her dedication to reaching underserved populations, providing quality care to young people and families in the Kalamazoo Public Schools district.

Not content with conventional healthcare boundaries, Ms. Crawford acquired a Mobile Dental Unit to expand dental services, demonstrating a holistic approach to healthcare delivery. The completion of their second world-class facility, a \$15 million expansion in Kalamazoo's Edison neighborhood

reflects her unwavering commitment to increasing access to integrated medical, behavioral, dental, and therapy services for a substantial underserved patient population.

In addition to infrastructure enhancements, Ms. Crawford prioritized human capital development by doubling medical providers, tripling behavioral health specialists, and significantly expanding the dental professionals team. This strategic investment in talent aimed to meet the growing patient needs and bridge the crucial gap between physical and mental health services.

Furthermore, the opening of the Fitness Park underscores her holistic approach to healthcare, promoting wellness and preventive care within the community. Through her transformative leadership, Ms. Crawford has not only elevated healthcare standards but also exemplified a profound commitment to serving and improving the well-being of all members of our community.

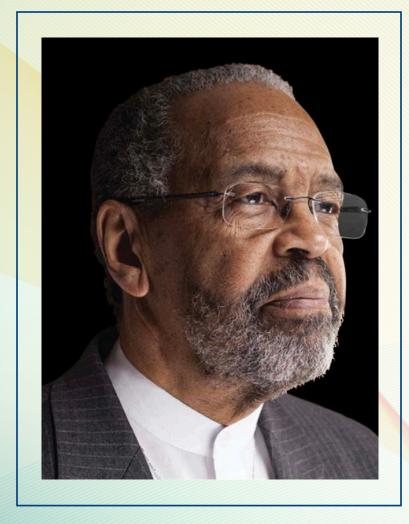
Ms. Crawford has an Executive Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Notre Dame, a Master of Social Work degree from Western Michigan University and a Bachelor of Science degree from Western Michigan University.

(NOBLE), amongst other organizations. She is a facilitator and strategic thought partner consultant who is the Founder and CEO of Black & Blue Networking & Consulting, LLC., and retired as a Captain after serving a 25+ year career in law enforcement.

# **VANGUARD AWARD RECIPIENTS**

2024	Family Health Center, Denise Crawford, President and CEO
2023	St. Luke's Diaper Bank, Gracie Coston, Executive Director
2022	Psychologist, Entrepreneur, Business Mentor, Wine Maker, Nicole R. Triplett LLP, LPC
2021	Merze Tate Explorers, Sonya Bernard-Hollins, Founder
2020	Moms of Interfaith, Iesha Williams & Sharon Hutchins, Founders
2019	Park Street Market, Kiar Gumsho, Owner/Operator
2018	Northside Association for Community Development (NACD), Mattie Jordan Woods, Founder
	Stephanie Moore, President's Award
	Eugene Wright, Legacy Award
2017	ProKzoo, Nelly Fuentes-Donnachello, Founder
	Stacey Randolph, President's Award
	Juanita Goodwin, Legacy Award
	Dr. Michael Liepman (posthumously)   Legacy Award
2016	Michigan State NAACP, Yvonne White, State President
2015	Kalamazoo College, Dr. Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran, Former President
2014	City of Kalamazoo, Human Resources Department
2013	Black Arts & Cultural Center, Sid Ellis, Former Executive Director
2012	Boys & Girls Club of Greater Kalamazoo, Bob Ezelle, Executive Director
2011	The Funders of the Kalamazoo Promise

<sup>\*\*</sup> Deceased



# DR. CHARLES C. WARFIELD

SEPTEMBER 2, 1938 - JUNE 5, 2016

IN LOVING MEMORY,
DR. MARTHA WARFIELD AND FAMILY



# DR. CHARLES C. WARFIELD

# YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

2024	Michael T. Scott II, Kalamazoo Central High School Makiyah Williams, Kalamazoo Central High School
2023	Clark Atkinson, Kalamazoo Central High School Ashton Hall, Portage Northern High School
2022	Brooke Edwards, Kalamazoo Central High School
2021	Morgan Scott, Kalamazoo Central High School Brittany Wright, Kalamazoo Central High School
2020	Syann Hollins, Gull Lake High School
2019	Aaron Dickason, Kalamazoo Central High School
2018	Trinity M. Scott, Kalamazoo Central High School
2017	Makayla A. Myles, Kalamazoo Central High School
2016	T. Ontario Burnett, Kalamazoo Central High School Cameron Bolton, Kalamazoo Central High School
2015	Jamila McKenzie, Portage Northern High School
2014	Arianna Dickason, Kalamazoo Central High School
2013	Kayla Evans, Portage Nothern High School
2012	Ollie Barnes, IV, Kalamazoo Central High School



# YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD MICHAEL T. SCOTT II

Michael T. Scott II is a senior at Kalamazoo Central High School. Born in Salisbury, Maryland, he is the son of Bishop Michael T. Scott II and Dr. Tamara T. Scott. Michael's upbringing has been deeply rooted in faith, family, and service. He has spent many years actively involved in his community, with a strong commitment to helping others and making a positive impact. Michael enjoys volunteering his time at the Kalamazoo Deacon's Conference and distributing fruits and vegetables through the Southwest Food Bank and Dorothy L. Hobbs Food Pantry Ministry.

As a dedicated member of The Galilee Baptist Church, Michael serves in several capacities. He plays an important role in the youth ministry, men's ministry, and media ministry, contributing his time and talents to these vital church functions. His work in the media ministry, in particular, reflects his passion for digital arts and his desire to combine his technical skills with his commitment to the faith community.



In addition to his involvement at Galilee, Michael is an active participant in the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) Youth Ministry. Through this national platform, he has developed a deeper understanding of social justice, service, and the teachings of Jesus. His experiences with PNBC have taken him across the country, where he has participated in service projects that focus on supporting the marginalized and disenfranchised. These opportunities have not only shaped his worldview but also inspired him to continue working towards justice and equality in his own local community.

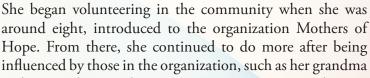
Beyond his church and community work, Michael is a member of DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), where he has honed his leadership and entrepreneurial skills. His interest in digital media has led him to employment at Pixel Punch Studios, a video production and editing firm. At Pixel Punch, Michael enjoys working in the digital space, utilizing his creativity and technical expertise to produce high-quality media content.

Looking ahead, Michael plans to pursue a degree in digital media arts. He is excited about the future opportunities that lie ahead in the rapidly growing digital industry. However, his dedication to service remains at the core of his ambitions. Michael is committed to continuing his work in the community and using his skills to be a blessing to others for many years to come. In his down time, Michael enjoys gaming, watching sports, eating, and spending time with family and friends. Michael wholeheartedly believes that "in life, every minor setback is a setup for a major comeback!"

# YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

# MAKIYAH WILLIAMS

Makiyah Williams, daughter of Aaron and Yakiena Williams, is a current senior at Kalamazoo Central High School who has excelled in her studies and involvement in the community. Starting with her involvement in the community, when she was young, she found her passion and stuck with it. Ever since then, she has been volunteering for certain activities throughout the community while still keeping her grades up and enjoying her hobbies. While in school, Makiyah found her love for the arts, and from then on, she has been involved with them ever since. Makiyah has performed in musicals at school and outside of school and has been a performer in choir since the third grade. She recently performed at Carnegie Hall in New York with an SSAA choir.





and aunt. She was the youngest person to ever volunteer at the K.I.A downtown, where she also took art classes. She volunteered at Read and Write Kalamazoo, helping kids with their reading and literature, and Kalamazoo Civic Theater, where she recently played Sarafina in Disney's The Lion King. Also, rallying for women's rights here in Kalamazoo, Makiyah was recently nominated for and won the Black Women's Roundtable Sistar Leadership Award, which allowed her the opportunity to go to Washington D.C. During her time there, she talked about injustice in the Black community and her involvement in the community. She also attended this event when she was younger, which was a main influence in her life to do more.

Makiyah's aspirations include attending Michigan State University and becoming an Interventional Radiologist. She wants to open her own clinic to give back to those less fortunate and become an influence on those around her who have the same dreams and aspirations as her.

# **MEMBERSHIP**

# THE LIFE BLOOD OF THE NAACP

### **New Life Members**

Deveta Gardner Tonja Marshall Lori Owens-Rogers

### **Active Subscribing Life Members**

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V. Yvonne Chambers

Yvonne Conner

Yasmin Eckel Wendy Yvonne Fields Ivy Fields-Releford Richard Fuller Eva Gaines Frieda L Gilyard Harper Gorman Cindy Green Carole Greene Francis L. Gross Ir. Eleanor Harris Brent Hepp Abeni Raiy Hester Heather A. Hilgart Joshua C. Hilgart Larry Linstrone Hodge\*\* Vincent Conrad Hodge Stephanie Hoffman Constance T. Hudson Agnes Hughes Dosh R. Jackson Sandra H. Jackson Dr. Arthur James Dorothy James Dr. Janice James Dr. Phillip Johnson Diane Jones Tommie Jones Antonia Kennedy Cleo Lancaster

Dr. Timothy Light Hon. Alexander Lipsey Anne Lipsey Aubrey Matthews Yolanda Matthews Franklin McCarroll Dr. Nathaniel McCaslin\*\* Thelma McCaslin Opal McGinnis Sadie Clark Miles Merdis Miller Rev. Dr. Addis Moore Gwendolyn Moore Maggie Mosby Dr. Delores Myers Dr. Harvey Myers Louis B. Northam Avonda V. Oliver Dr. Elmon Oliver Craig Owens Dr. Diane Owens-Rogers Renaford L. Owens Sr. Eva Lee Ozier Vincenza Rita Palms Mahleywa Some' Parrish Robert Patchell Jeffrey E. Patton Vernon Payne Donna F. Pettiford Steven D. Pettiford

Dr. Romeo Phillips Jean Odesa Phillips Richard Phillips Melvin H. Polk Robert Pratt William "Bill" Reed Dr. Michael Rice I. Vicki Richard Alfrelynn Roberts Rep. Julie Rogers Troy Robertson Jr. Pamela Rups Iris Salters Donovan Saunders Michael Seals Bishop Michael T. Scott I Jennifer Shoub Randall L. Siesser LaDora Smith Susan Springgate Elder Della Spurlock-Redding\*\* Nathaniel Perry Stewart O. Jeannette Taver Eugenia Thompson Robert E. Thomas Pauline Thornton Larry Tolbert Meri Watkins-Tolbert **Authur Toy** 

# **MEMBERSHIP**

# THE LIFE BLOOD OF THE NAACP

### Life Members Cont....

Charlie F. Tyus Judith A. Tyus

Dr. Martha B. Warfield

Dr. L. Marshall Washington

Sandra M. Williams Attorney Sidney B.

Williams\*\*

Stephanie Williams Gloria Foster-Wimbley

Mattie Jordan-Woods Gwendolyn Moore

Maggie Mosby

Dr. Delores Myers Dr. Harvey Myers

Nella Neely\*\*

Louis B. Northam Avonda V. Oliver

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LaDora Smith

Gloria Smith-Lett\*\*

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Redding

Nathaniel Perry Stewart

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Robert E. Thomas

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Larry Tolbert

Meri Walkins-Tolbert

Authur Toy

Charlie F. Tyus

Judith A. Tyus

Nicholas Vallar Moses L. Walker\*\*

Dr. Charles C. Warfield\*\*

Dr. Martha B. Warfield

Dr. L. Marshall

Washington

Seantiana Wilhite

Sandra M. Williams

Attorney Sidney B.

Williams\*\*

Stephanie Williams

Michael O. Wilson\*\*

Gloria Foster-Wimbley

Howard Wolpe\*\*

Mattie Jordan-Woods

Rev. Matthew W. Wright\*\*

### Organizations and Corporate Memberships

Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church - Kalamazoo

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. - Kalamazoo Alumnae Chapter

Black Student Organization of Kalamazoo College

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. - Kalamazoo Alumnae Chapter

Douglass Community Association

Dulcet Club of Kalamazoo

Ecumenical Senior Center

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

Galilee Baptist Church

Hoopsters Classic Association

Kalamazoo Community Foundation

Kalamazoo Education Association

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. - Kalamazoo Chapter

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. - Upsilon Pi Chapter (WMU)

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Second Baptist Church

Tabernacle Church of God in Christ

Western Michigan University

WRKR

YWCA of Kalamazoo

<sup>\*\*</sup> Deceased

# **FREEDOM FUND 2024**

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Bringing the community together helps all of us move forward. At PNC, we proudly support the people, events and institutions that help to strengthen the places we call home and the world around us.

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# A place to thrive

Diversity is a strength. Nurturing a strong sense of community and belonging is fundamental for all students to succeed. At Western, students are empowered with opportunities to connect, collaborate and thrive together.

Western Michigan University is proud to support the 2024 Kalamazoo NAACP Freedom Fund.





# Proud to support the NAACP Freedom Fund Celebration





#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

All recent Michigan high school graduates can earn a skills certificate or degree **TUITION FREE** with the NEW Community College Guarantee

KalamazooVALLEY Community college

COMMUNITY COLLEGE GUARANTEE



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Inclusive excellence exists when an organization is strategically positioned to meet the needs of a changing world and embraces a culture that values diversity as fundamental to its success.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are at the core of the Kalamazoo Valley Community College mission.
We are looking to collaborate with others who share these values and who

will join with us as we continue to work across lines of identity and difference to make an impact on lives of our students, faculty and staff and the communities we serve.

If you are looking to join an organization where your experience, education and voice will be heard, consider joining us at Kalamazoo Valley.





#### Strengthening the fabric of our community.

#### Old National proudly supports The Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP.

As much as we are a financial institution, Old National is a group of parents, volunteers, artists, athletes, neighbors and friends. By making investments of our time, talent and treasure, we work with you to strengthen the fabric of our community.



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Health equity for all in Southwest Michigan through innovation in the practice and study of medicine.



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NAACP.

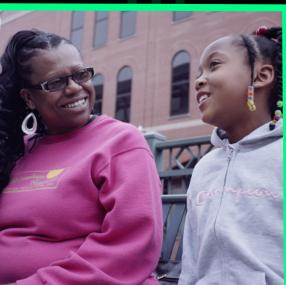
Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch





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What if every child had an additional mentor in their corner?







#### THE IMPACT OF MENTORING:

One year into their match, Littles report...

93%

better able to manage their emotions



91%

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100%

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Big Brothers Big Sisters matches local youth (Littles) with a mentor (Big) who helps ignite their potential.

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Our mission is to help children, families, and adults heal from the trauma of abuse, addiction, and behavioral and mental health disorders.

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE METROPOLITAN KALAMAZOO BRANCH OF THE NAACP 45TH ANNUAL FREEDOM FUND BANQUET



"Theme: Leading Transformation in the Family through the Power of the Holy Spirit."

II Corinthians 3:17-18

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1216 N. Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007
Bishop Michael Thomas Scott, I , D.Min., Chief Servant
Dr. Tamara T. Scott, Leading Lady





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# Hamilton Law is proud to support the NAACP in its mission to advocate equal opportunities for all.



## llove this town.



Thanks, Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP. I love being here to help in a community where people are making a difference every day. Thank you for all you do.

Ivy Fields-Releford, Agent 2925 Walton Blvd Rochester Hills, MI 48309 Bus: 248-375-0510 ivy.fields-releford.mdis@statefarm.com Se habla Español





Thank you to the Metropolitan Kalamzoo Branch - NAACP. Since 1946, you've led the fight for equity, political rights, and social inclusion in our community. Your work to expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and elevate all people is courageous and necessary.

## Jessica Swartz For congress

Paid for by Jessica for Michigan





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#### FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT US

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Highest percentage of students passing AP exams in KPS history



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#### **FOR MORE INFO**

Kalamazoo Public Schools 1220 Howard Street Kalamazoo, MI 49008 Dr. Darrin Slade, Superintendent (269) 337-0100 www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

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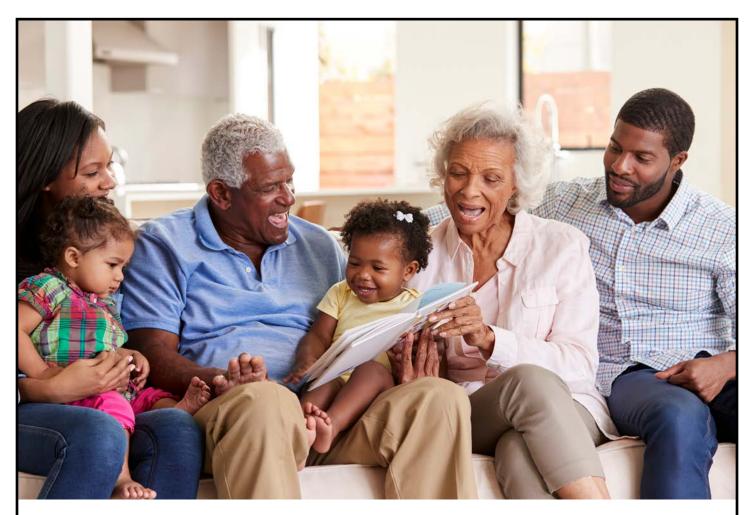
- Martin Luther King, Jr.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP for their outstanding work hosting another meaningful and impactful Freedom Fund Banquet. Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients! Thank you for your dedication to our community.

- Rick & Lisa Fuller -





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The City of Kalamazoo is proud to support the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP and celebrate its decades of service in our community.

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The City of Portage proudly supports the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP Freedom Fund









The Ecumenical Senior Center Seniors, Staff, and Board of Directors Congratulates the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP 2024 Freedom Fund Banquet Awardees!



Board of Directors: President: Janine Seals; Vice-President: Toni Woolfork-Barnes, EdD; Secretary: Sara R. Tanis, PhD; Treasurer: Franklin McCarroll; Halbert E. Bates Sr.; Alexander Brand; Marcy Cheatham; Maureen Mickus, PhD; Joel Phillips; Deacon Joseph Schmitt

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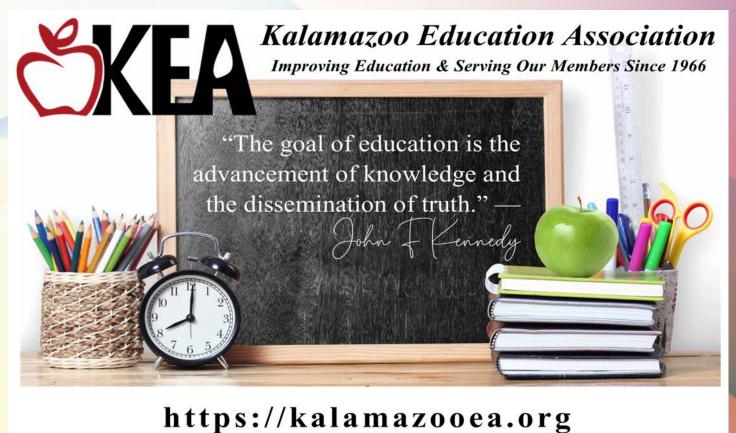
Paid for by Julie Rogers for State Rep 3428 Marlane Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49006

Rep. Rogers salutes the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP on another year working toward equity.



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Congratulations to the Metropolitan Branch of the Kalamazoo NAACP from your brothers & sisters of the affiliated local unions of the South Central Michigan AFL-CIO Labor Council!

**Austin Brown** 

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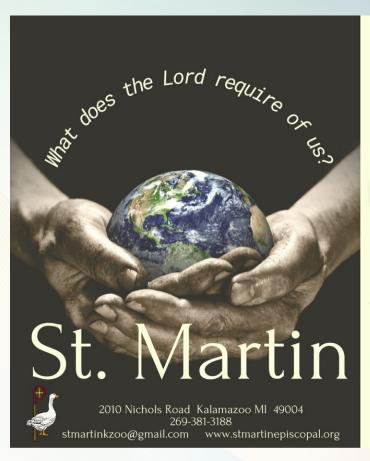
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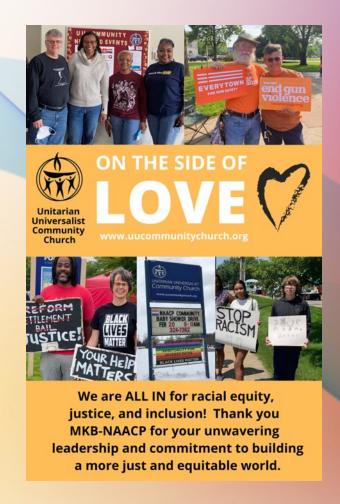




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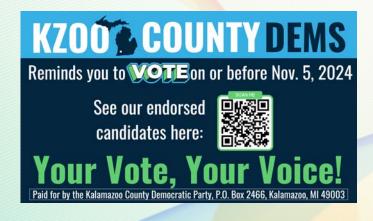
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