

# *A Black-Tie Affair*



Theme

**25 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE, PRESERVATION AND PROMISE**

*“Celebrating Our Past, Honoring Our Present, Building Our Future”*

Presented by

*The African American Heritage Society of Williamson County*

**Embassy Suites**

**820 Crescent Centre Drive**

**Franklin, Tennessee**

**February 7, 2026 7:00 P.M.**

## *Our Honorary Chairpersons- Doris McMillan & Mona Hayes*

The African American Heritage Society is pleased and honored to recognize Doris McMillan and Mona Hayes as our honorary co-chairs for our 25th Anniversary Black Tie Celebration. We salute these ladies, for they understood the assignment. The preservation of the McLemore House Museum, built in 1880 by formerly enslaved Harvey McLemore, was a big deal, a huge accomplishment and the education committee realized that there needed to be something spectacular to celebrate this great milestone in our community's history, and the assignment was fulfilled with elegance and enthusiasm. This was the first event of this caliber for the African American community. Doris and Mona were both on the board of the African American Heritage Society at that time. Thank you to Mrs. McMillan and Mrs. Hayes and to the board of directors for creating an amazing opportunity to share history, honor individuals in the community, and celebrate the African American pioneer families of Williamson County. Mrs. McMillan was the chair of the inaugural event and a few years following. All 24 years have been successful and well attended. The 25th annual is a sellout crowd as in years past and with the support of the community, the legacy will continue.



**Doris McMillan** serves as Community & Alumni Relations for New Hope Academy and owner of Seams by Doris, LLC. She currently sits on the Tennessee Historical Commission as a Governor Lee appointee. Mrs. McMillan stitched 23 years as the seamstress for the late Naomi Judd and been credited with wardrobe outfitting for numerous celebrities including Beyonce, Barry Manilow, Ariane Grande, New Edition, Lil Baby, Tyler Perry, Sheryl Crow, Tim McGraw, Scoot Hamilton, and Taylor Swift. Her garments have been featured on shows including the Oprah Winfrey Show, The Hallmark Channel, Bravo & the Kennedy Center. Her advocacy work for women and children has earned her the title "Williamson County Trailblazer". She has been involved in mentoring for all ages, but particularly for young people. Doris was named among Franklin Tennessee's Black Women Leaders. Helping people know their purpose is truly one of Mrs. McMillan's most brilliant strengths. Establishing the African American Heritage Society's Black-Tie Affair is one of her largest community accomplishments. The event is celebrating its 25th year and continues to sell out each year. McMillan currently serves on the board of Mercy

Children's Clinic, City of Franklin Parks & Riverwalk Committee, Franklin Transit Authority, and Franklin Charge. McMillan hails as a charter member of the National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, D.C. and the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). She has served on the boards of the African American Heritage Society, Franklin Tomorrow, Haiti Hospital Foundation, Inner City Coalition, 4H of Williamson County and the Williamson Co. Library. She is a member of the National Assoc. of Colored Women's Club, Top Ladies of Distinction Inc. Nashville Capitol City Chapter, and Les Gemmes Nashville Chapter. She is a graduate of Leadership Franklin, as well as Leadership Middle Tennessee. As an advocate for civic involvement and a champion for the ancestral accomplishments of African Americans who paved the way, her service in the Middle Tennessee region has cemented her purpose in the NACWC's motto, "Lifting as We Climb".



**Mona Hayes**, a resident of Franklin, became interested and involved with the African American Heritage Society after the original board was formed. Her dedication and contribution to AAHS was an asset. She was part of the AAHS education committee that wanted to take fundraising to a higher level and volunteered to chair the first formal ball. Mona's enthusiasm, involvement and willingness to head the event was a game changer for AAHS's fundraising efforts. She played a tremendous role in planting the seed for the first Black Tie. Mona, a member of First Bapt. Church, Capitol Hill, had leadership roles in several Christian, charitable and social organizations. She was an influential businesswoman in the community and owner of Hayes & Associates, an insurance and securities firm in Maryland Farms, in Brentwood, TN. Mona is unable to attend tonight, due to illness, but is very deserving of this recognition.

## *Master of Ceremonies - Tyson Smith*



The African American Heritage is pleased, honored and excited to have well-known Nashville professional and radio personality Tyson Smith, back once again, to serve as Master of Ceremonies for our 25th Anniversary event tonight.

Tyson Smith, an energetic native Nashvillian, who has a passion and desire to help others and his community, works as one of Nashville's long time personalities on R&B radio station 92Q/ 92.1 FM where you can listen to him every Saturday morning from 7am-10am with the best in Southern Soul and Old School. Tyson is also a long time Human Resources professional and is the Sr. Director of Human Resources for GEODIS, an international third party logistics company from Paris, France with its headquarters here in Nashville, TN and is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, OSL chapter. Tyson is married to Tammy Smith of Murfreesboro and they have three kids (Carrie, Cydney & Cameron) and 5 beautiful grandkids.

Tyson Smith is a high-performing, strategic-thinking professional with more than 20+ years in HR & Diversity Inclusion; he has his B.S. Degree in Human & Organizational Management from Bethel University in McKenzie, TN. Tyson is an energetic, accomplished professional with a proven track record of success leading Diversity & Inclusion initiatives that focus on building inclusive cultures and environments through engagement initiatives and community partnerships. His interpersonal skills and experience in creating an atmosphere of belonging have benefited many organizations such as Ascension Health, Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, and The General Insurance.

Currently working as the Director, Diversity Inclusion & Community Engagement for GEODIS, "I am excited and committed to bringing that same passion to our employees, customers, and community of GEODIS. We will build robust inclusive high functioning teams that reflect the communities we serve".

## *A Welcome To Our Honored Guests*

Welcome honorees and distinguished guests!! The African American Heritage Society would like to extend a warm and cordial welcome to each of you as we host our 25th Annual "Black Tie Affair". Our theme for this year's event is "25 Years of Perseverance, Preservation and Promise; Celebrating our Past, Honoring our Present, Building Our Future." We have enjoyed tremendous success with fulfilling our mission to chronicle the lives and contributions that African Americans have made and we continue to tell the African American stories that are woven threads in the fabric of our rich, local history. Our very 1st "Black Tie Affair", was held in 2002 in celebration of the opening of our historic "McLemore House Museum". Fast forward, thanks to your support and with the support of many others in the community, we now have another historic treasure, the Merrill-Williams House at 264 Natchez, which will be a History and Culture Center for Franklin and Williamson County and will be opening soon.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we must give honor and recognition to our organization's founders and deceased members who worked so diligently in the formation and sustainability of the organization. Deceased founders and trailblazers, Mary Mills, Bazilia Harris, Louise Patton, Tom Murdic, Eleanor Bright and Mary Walker. Other founding members are Mary Pearce, current board member, Thelma Battle, Williamson County African American Historian and AAHS Board Emeritus, and Rick Warwick, Williamson County Historian and AAHS Board Emeritus. We owe it to our youth and to today's society to share this significant history in order to appreciate as well as honor those who have gone before us and paved the way for many of our pathways to success. We must secure and ensure a bright future by preserving and protecting our cultures, people, places and historic events that connect us to our past. The lessons we learn from the past should help us to appreciate and respect all cultures, races and ethnic groups that make up our community, our state and our nation. Please enjoy your night as we salute and celebrate you, our amazing supporters, the esteemed Nathaniel Baugh pioneer family and all of our distinguished honorees!

### **"ABOUT OUR THEME"**

#### **25 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE, PRESERVATION AND PROMISE**

#### *Celebrating Our Past, Honoring Our Present, Building Our Future*

**By Rick Warwick, Williamson County Historian**

Dr. Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." This statement is so true when looking back at the formation of the African American Heritage Society of Williamson County. In 1992, a small group of interested visionaries met to save the McLemore House in Hardbargain. This project was the first of its kind in Franklin that involved the preservation of a Black historic home belonging to a former slave, Harvey McLemore. As a fundraiser and a way to recognize outstanding Black notables of Williamson County, we started a tradition on the first Friday night in February called A Black Tie Affair. This is our 25th year, and it has grown every year.



Our theme for this year is Perseverance, Preservation, and Promise, excellent watchwords for this organization. Besides saving the McLemore House, we celebrated Juneteenth, continued a long-standing tradition of a Talent Show, and hosted Porch Talks programs to promote local Black history.

Reflecting on that small group of visionaries who are our founders no longer with us, I know Mary Mills, Brazelia Harris, Louise Patton, Eleanor Bright, Mary Bright Walker, and Thomas Murdic are shouting down from the Elysian Fields, "Well done, old friends and comrades, continue our vision!"

**By Thelma Battle, Williamson County Historian & AAHS Board Emeritus**



Tonight represents a quarter of a century of the African American Heritage Society's annual Black Tie Celebration of local African American history. The steps taken by our organization to continuously present such a jubilant occasion has been through perseverance, preservation, and promise.

Tonight represents a journey from enslavement to freedom to present time. It is a cultural tribute to the legacy of our ancestors. The tone is set to celebrate African American history through public awareness and appreciation, recognizing discriminations, triumphs, and sacrifices made for opportunity.

**Never give out - Never give in - Never give up!**

### *Special Preservation Award*



As we look at our theme, **Perseverance, Preservation and Promise**, **preservation** is a key element of who we are, and we are not traveling this road alone. We must give honor to those who have and continue to support us along this journey.

The latest example is the "**Along Came Mary Committee**," who hosted a stellar event in honor of one of AAHS's founders, Mary Pearce and raised over \$120,000. The group donated these funds to the 264 Natchez project and the soon-to-be-completed Heritage and Culture Center.

The African American Heritage Society is pleased and honored to present this year's Preservation Award to the "**Along Came Mary Team**"—the amazing group of individuals who worked hard and raised these funds and who are now part of the 264 Natchez preservation story. The team members' names will be listed as part of the preservation recognition in a room named in Mary's honor. Mary has impacted

Franklin and Williamson County in a profound way and her fingerprints are everywhere; the results of her preservation efforts. **Thank you, Along Came Mary team!!** Another historic victory for Franklin!



**Rogers C. Anderson**  
Williamson County Mayor



## WILLIAMSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

February 2026

The African-American Heritage Society  
P.O. Box 1053  
Franklin, Tennessee 37065

Greetings!

Welcome to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Annual Black Tie Affair with this year's theme of *"Celebrating our Past, Honoring our Present, Building our Future"* which demonstrates your continued commitment to future generations of the importance of keeping history significant!

Our history is crucial for the valuable lessons it provides on both successes and failures. It connects all of us and shows how we have evolved as a society to make things better for the future.

Congratulations on celebrating your silver anniversary and on behalf of the citizens of Williamson County, thank you for your dedication and hard work towards ensuring our residents realize the vision of a new heritage and culture center in our community.

Sincerely,

Rogers C. Anderson  
Williamson County Mayor

RCA/dg



ADMINISTRATION



**Dr. Ken Moore**  
Mayor

**Eric S. Stuckey**  
City Administrator

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HISTORIC  
**FRANKLIN**  
TENNESSEE

February 7, 2026

Good Evening,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the African American Heritage Society, their families, and friends to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Black-Tie Affair.

“25 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE, PRESERVATION AND PROMISE - Celebrating Our Past, Honoring Our Present, Building Our Future” is an important theme as you highlight individuals who have contributed greatly to this community.

I wanted to express my heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable work and dedication of the African American Heritage Society. Your efforts in preserving and celebrating the rich cultural legacy have made a lasting impact, fostering understanding and unity in Williamson County.

Thank you to everyone being honored tonight and thank you to the African American Heritage Society for making Franklin a better place.

I wish you all the success with this year’s event!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ken Moore', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Ken Moore  
Mayor  
City of Franklin



*Reigning Mr. & Mrs. AAHS*  
*Kevin & Dorothy Townsel*

Kevin & Dorothy Townsel, were crowned Mr. & Mrs. AAHS Prom King & Queen, July 2025. Funds raised by participating couples provide critical dollars to the scholarship program and contribute greatly to its success.

**SAVE THE DATE**

*Prom Night 2026*

**July 25, 2026**

**2026 Tom E. Murdic Educational Scholarship Fundraiser**

Any married couple interested in vying for the title of Mr. & Mrs. AAHS for Prom 2026 should contact [info@aahswc.org](mailto:info@aahswc.org) for information.

*Congratulations - Winners of the 2025 Tom E. Murdic Educational Scholarship*



*Sophia DeGrasse*



*Aaliyah Fleming*



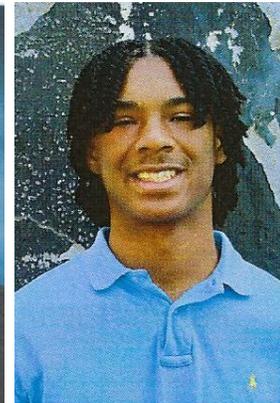
*Evan Mitchell*



*Ryan Moore*



*Travon Murry*



*Amir Rahman*



*Jaylen Spring*



*Kennedy Townsel*

Winners at the Prom event were: **Sophia DeGrasse**, a graduate of Battle Ground Academy, attending Flagler College, **Aaliyah Fleming**, a graduate of Independence High School, is attending Kennesaw State University. **Evan Mitchell**, a graduate of Franklin Road Academy, is attending North Carolina Central University. **Ryan Moore**, a graduate of Centennial High School, is attending North Carolina A&T University. **Travon Murry**, a graduate of Fairview High School, is attending Clark Atlanta University. **Amir Rahman**, a graduate of Nolensville High School, is attending Florida A&M University. **Jaylen Spring**, a graduate of Franklin High School, is attending Roane State Community College. **Kennedy Townsel**, a graduate of Centennial High School, is attending the University of Alabama.

The current Tom Murdic Educational Scholarship Application period is from October 1, 2025 through March 1, 2026.

Applications may be submitted online until March 1, 2026 at <https://aahswc.org>.

**African American Heritage Society of Williamson County  
February 7, 2026 – Embassy Suites**

**Theme:  
25 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE, PRESERVATION AND PROMISE  
*Celebrating Our Past, Honoring Our Present, Building Our Future***

***Programme***

Prelude ..... Julius Fisher & The Genius Band  
*Welcome & Introduction of Diamond Sponsor, Atmos Energy & Introduction of Mr. & Mrs. AAHS, Kevin & Dorothy Townsel  
Introduction of Honorary Chairs, Doris McMillan & Mona Hayes  
Alma McLemore, President & Pamela V. Bright, Board Chair*

Presenting Master of Ceremonies..... Pamela V. Bright, Board Chair  
Master of Ceremonies..... Tyson Smith  
Song “Lift Every Voice and Sing” ..... Evangelist Charlene Harrison  
Invocation and Grace ..... Elder Herbert Hobson

***Dinner***

**African American Heritage Society Annual Awards**

**Harvey Chrisman, Carvin Vaughn, Carolyn Wall & Wanda Onodeko**

<i>Business.....Roundtree Napier &amp; Ogilvie Funeral Home</i>	<i>Education..... Tinna Dodson</i>
<i>Business..... Quality Glass Services-Reggie Ennis &amp; Tracy Ennis</i>	<i>Education..... Takako Jackson-Price</i>
<i>Civic..... Georgia Gaines</i>	<i>Organization ..... Home Boys for Life</i>
<i>Communication...City of Franklin Communication Division</i>	<i>Religion ..... Elder John Haynes</i>
<i>Communication...Williamson County TV</i>	<i>Community Volunteer Award....Kingdom Love Ministries</i>

Special Awards.....Thelma Battle & Alma McLemore

***Along Came Mary Team***

***James Arthur & Elizabeth Diane Carothers***

***Williamson County. Master Gardeners Association & Andrew Hazelton***

***Williamson County Public Library***

**African American Pioneer Family Award – The Nathaniel Baugh Family**

Introduction of Historic Family ..... Thelma Battle, Board Emeritus/Historian & Paige Hurley  
Response ..... Pioneer Family Member

Recognition of Sponsors ..... Kimberly Menifee, Sarah Critchlow & James Moore

Gold..... Anonymous, Justice Loves Mercy, Mayor Ken & Linda Moore, Vulcan Material Company

Silver ..... Leiper’s Fork Market, Emily Magid, Renasant Bank, RNM Management, LLC, Franklin Noon Rotary,  
The Rotary Club of Franklin At Breakfast

Bronze ..... Andy Marshall For Williamson Co Mayor, Buerger, Moseley & Carson, PLC,  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Clayton’s Real Estate Service, Crowder’s Trucking, LLC,  
First Horizon, Gamble Design Collaborative, Robert & Evelyn Hickerson, Lee Company, PLA Media

Patron..... ALDAY Communications, Allstate Foundation, Beech Realty LLC , Franklin Community Church,  
JM Maintenance, Leiper’s Fork Distillery, Mckissack

Supporting ..... Ed Silva, Plumbing Pro

Tom E. Murdic Educational Scholarship ..... Deborah Murdic

Door Prizes ..... Mary Pearce, Dexter Adams, Jayla Christmon & Asiana Swift-Miller

Closing Remarks ..... Alma McLemore & Pamela Bright

Benediction ..... Elder John Haynes

Dancing ..... Julius Fisher & The Genius Band



***Don't forget to visit Keepsake Photography for your Professional Portrait tonight!***

## The Black Tie Affair

The earlier quests for innovated ideas to raise funds for the African American Heritage Society always revolved around bringing the community closer together as well as the financial aspects. These financial aspects in the earlier days began as “grass roots fish fries” and donations. The funds grew, and the introduction of new ideas as fund raisers began to take root.

The thought of carrying the fund raising to a higher level was discussed by a branch of the African American Heritage Society, then known as the Education Committee. This committee was headed by Dr. Malinda Taylor, an AAHS member at that time. The committee was made up of non-board members as well as board members; they included board members Mona Hayes and Thelma Battle. Non-board members were Lillian Hamilton. The committee decided that having a formal ball would be a perfect way to enhance the AAHS fund raising appeal. Lillian Hamilton told of the formal affairs her daughter Faith Fancher, a CNN news reporter (now deceased) had put on in California, with the aid of professional athletics. The education committee discussed the possibility of our organization receiving help from the Tennessee Titans to put on such an event for the AAHS.

African American Heritage Society board member Mona Hayes carried the information discussed at the Education Committee’s meeting before the African American Heritage Society and volunteered to take responsibility of heading up such an endeavor. The board discussed the matter but unfortunately board member Mona Hayes left the board before the idea could be put into gear. Board member Doris McMillan stepped up to the plate to head up the formal ball.

The African American Heritage Society’s higher level fund raising appeal soared by the phenomenal work done by Doris McMillan, who chaired the first African American Heritage Society Black Tie Affair. Doris was able to acquire booking at Embassy Suites Hotel through her zeal. Her knack for getting sponsors saw her chair the Black Tie Affair for many years afterwards. Our hats are off to this remarkable lady who carried the torch on to victory and over the finish line.

## **Previous Black Tie Years Honorees**

### **First Black Tie 2002**

**Theme: The Opening of the McLemore House Museum**

**Pioneer Family: Harvey McLemore Family**

Theme Honorees: Thelma Battle, Mary Mills,-deceased,  
Louise Patton-deceased, Bazelia Harris-deceased

### **2003 - Theme: “A Story to Tell”**

**Pioneer Family: The Descendents of Anderson Lee & the  
Descendents of Richard Smith**

Annual Award Honorees  
Business: Patton Bros. Funeral Home  
Business: Edward Morton’s Concrete  
Civic: Robert Blair  
Education: Tosha Robinson Hawkins  
Education: Mr. Eugene Wade  
Organization: Natchez Place  
Religion: Rev. Jasper Hatcher  
Theme Awards: Founders

### **2004 - Theme : “Education”**

**Pioneer Family: Booker Hunter Family**

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: Waters Funeral Home  
Civic: Tommie Mai McLemore  
Civic: Mr. Travis Wasemiler  
Community Advocate: Rozella Peebles  
Education: Ms. Tovitha Brown  
Education: Mrs. Willie Dickerson  
Organization: Jack & Jill of America  
Religion: Rev. William F. Scruggs  
Theme Awards: Educators

### **2005 Theme : “Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory”**

**Pioneer Family: Dick Poynor Family**

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: Gentry’s Market    Civic: Ms. Bernice Bates  
Education: Ms. Evelyn Hickerson  
Education: Mr. Anthony Johnson  
Organization: Community Child Care  
Religion: Rev. Hewitt Sawyers  
Theme Awards: Willie Mack Gentry and Dr. Joseph C. White

### **2006-Theme: “African Americans in Healthcare in Wmson Co.**

**Freedom Award Family: Carter Family**

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: Mr. Jesse Dotson  
Civic: Ms. Diane Carothers  
Civic: Ms. Denise Carothers  
Communication: Mr. Tom Lawrence  
Education: Mrs. Mattie Reeves  
Organization: Business & Prof. Women  
Religion: Elder Richard Lloyd  
Theme Awards: Deborah Murdic, Narciss Cheatham, Dorothy  
Murray Roberts, Lillian Hamilton , Dr., Felix Lawrence

### **2007 Theme : Celebrate Black Businesses Then & Now**

**Freedom Award Family: Fitzgerald Family**

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: C & F Meat Company  
Civic: Mr. Zack Hodge  
Communication: Ms. Monique McCullough  
Education: Fred Lane, Sr.  
Organization: American Legion Post 215  
Religion: Rev. Wayne McCullough

### **2008 - Theme : “African Americans in the Sports Arena in Wmson County**

**Pioneer Family: Crowder Family**

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: Cuts N Blessings  
Civic: Ms. Juanita Patton  
Communication: Mr. Maurice Patton  
Education: Ms. Marian Watkins  
Organization: Hard Bargain Mt. Hope Red.  
Religion: Rev. Denny Denson  
Theme Awards: Alexander Bright III, Bubba Miller, Troy Fleming,  
Fred Lane Jr., Marcell Scales, William Witherspoon, Barry Booker,  
Fred Lane Sr. Karen Booker, Ostranda Lane, O J. Fleming, James  
Prince, Martin Kelton, William Ratcliff, William Reynolds, Charles  
Patton, Clay Jenkins

**2009 - Theme : African Americans in the Political Arena in Wmson County**

***Pioneer Family: Rucker Sharp***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: McLemore Bonding  
Civic: Willie Otey Communication: Mr. Bill Ormes  
Education: Mrs. Pearlette Green  
Organization: United Community Resource Foundation  
Religion: Rev. Chris Williamson  
Theme awards: Pioneers and Elected Officials: Senator Thelma Harper, Rep. Mary Pruitt, Emily Brown, Amy Brown Calloway, Fred Williams, Rev. William F. Scruggs, Commissioner Mary Mills, Willie Dickerson, Tom Murdic, Charles Miller, Vience McCullough, Marcia Allen, Robert Blair, Pearl Bransford, Louise Patton. Receiving certificates from the city and county- Janice Booker, Elder William Esmo, George Brown, Elder John Haynes, Littleton Wade Alma McLemore, Jesse Turner, Charles Covington, Frances Patton, Lee Ruth Gosey, Houston and Malinda Taylor, Darlene Morton, Doris McMillan, Colleen Douglas, Thomas Gentry, Walter Rucker, William Booker, Fulton Patton, Rasheed.

**2010 - Theme : African Americans in the Music Arena in Wmson County**

***Pioneer Family: David McLemore Family***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: Calvin Malone Barber Shop  
Education: Mr. Stuart Tutler Education: Ms. Helen Kinnard  
Organization: Toussaint L'ouvertue Cemetery Club  
Religion: Bro. Nathaniel Grimes  
Theme Honorees: Fred Williams, Robert Knight, David Lee McLemore, Charlene Harrison, James Watkins, Jimmy Otey, Soul Purpose  
Special Award- Forget Me Not Club celebrating 100 years

**2011-10 Year Anniversary Celebration**

**Theme : "Night Of The Stars"**

***Pioneer Family: Buford Family***

***Freedom Family: William James Boyd Family***

**Honorees - Founders of the Organization:**

Mrs. Thelma Battle, Mrs. Mary Mills, Mrs. Mary Pearce, Mrs. Louise Patton, Ms. Bazilia Harris –deceased, Mr. Rick Warwick

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business : Bernice Sanford's Beauty Shop  
Business: Thompson's Lawn Care  
Civic: Evelyn Hickerson  
Communication: Mindy Tate  
Education: Reggie Mason Education: Amanda North  
Religion:Eld. Walter Amos  
Organization: Heritage Foundation

Theme Honorees: Thelma Battle, Mary Pearce, Heritage Foundation, Primus (Ford Motor Credit), Mary Mills, Rick Warwick, Janice Keck, Malinda Taylor, Louise Patton, Jay & Marcia Franks, Doris McMillan, Williamson Medical Center  
Special Award- Canarian Art Club Celebrating 100 Years

**2012 Theme : "Socialization Across the Generations"**

***Pioneer Family: - The Harvey Otey Family***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business :N.&L. Construction  
Civic:FHA Resident Assoc.& Sassy Seniors  
Communication: Vicki Stout Education: Josephine Reynolds  
Education: Brenda Williams  
Religion: Pastor Edward Anderson  
Organization: Fifth Sunday Club  
Special Award: Tennessee Century Farm- The Luster Family

**2013 Theme : African American Churches in Williamson County "We Have Come This Far By Faith"**

***Pioneer Family: The Perkins Jordan Family***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: James Maurice & Evelyn Pope–Moe Better BBQ & Fish  
Civic: Howard Donnell & Barbara Sue Lane  
Communication: Brandy Blanton  
Education: Mayes Waters, Jr.  
Education: George A. Northern  
Religion : Elder Vernon Ray McGuire, Jr.  
Organization: Ty2 Foundation  
Theme Awards:  
Oldest Church – First Franklin Primitive Bapt. Church  
Oldest Association - Lynn Creek Primitive Baptist Assoc.

**2014 - Theme : A Struggle for Freedom 1861-1865 - "Commemorating the Sesquicentennial"**

***Pioneer Family: The Fleming Family***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Business: Frazier Beech–Frazier's Car Care  
Civic: Anthony Pickett  
Communication: Ernie Campbell - Mocha Market  
Education: Dr. Katie C. White  
Education: Valerie Meggs  
Organization: Franktown Open Hearts  
Religion: Pastor Mack Morton  
Special Awards :  
Community Supporter-Julian Bibb  
Community Supporter Kenneth Young  
Preservation Award: Leadership Franklin Group  
Youth Volunteer Award: Mark E. Crowder

**2015 - Theme : Oh, Freedom, New Beginnings**

***Pioneer Family: The Smith/ Davis Family***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Communication: Derby Jones-Williamson Herald  
Education: Maggie Betty Brown  
Education: Machel Fleming Thompson  
Organization: Club NHS 67  
Religion: Pastor Brandon L. Mason  
Religion/Business:Elder James Sylvester Coure  
AAHS Volunteer Award: Fowlkes Street Church of Christ  
Special Awards :  
Community Supporter Award: Stacey Watson  
AAHS Youth Volunteer Award: Chanan AlecZandria McMillan  
Preservation Award: Leadership Franklin Group

**2016-Theme:"African Americans in Franklin & Williamson Co. "Education - Our Key To The Future"**

***Pioneer Family: The Carothers/Caruthers Family***

Annual Award Honorees:  
Education Award: Prof. Gloria Reese & Mrs. Jerzine Johnson  
Business: Dr. Ray White-Pro Health  
Organization: Franklin Breakfast Rotary  
Civic:Mr. Charles Henry Booker  
Communication: Ms. Shelly Robertson-Birdsong  
Religion: Elder Corey Howse  
AAHS Volunteer Award: Franklin Community Church  
Special Awards:  
Community Supporter Award: Mr. Ronald Crutcher  
AAHS Youth Volunteer Award: Quintavious Johnson  
Special Recognition Award: Mrs. Emma Witherspoon  
Special Recognition: African American Past/Present Elected School Board Members of Franklin &Williamson County Schools

**2017 - Theme : “Courage, Faith and Commitment”**

***Pioneer Family: The Lucretia Holt Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: Bossman Cookies and Pies

Business: Vanessa’s Hair Salon

Civic: Mrs. Darlene Morton

Communication: Mrs. Rosetta Miller-Perry, Tennessee Tribune

Education: Ms. Charlotte Hall Education: Mrs. Annie Sawyers

Organization: Daughters of the King

Religion: Rev. Eric Williams

AAHS Volunteer Award: New Brentwood UPB Church

Special Awards: Preservation Award: The Lawrence Family

AAHS Youth Preservation Award: Seth Troseth

Community Supporter Award: Buerger, Moseley & Carson, PLC

**2018 - Theme : Our Theme: “Preserving the Past, Securing the Future”**

***Pioneer Family: The Jerry Gosey Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: Franklin Pest Control Business: Allen Properties

Civic: Cassandra Wray Communication: Carole Robinson

Education: William Charles Patton

Education: Dr. Cindy Cotton Davis

Organization: St. Paul’s-Spring St. Ministries

Religion: Rev. Timothy Gaines

AAHS Volunteer Award:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Special Awards:

Preservation Award : Pam Lewis, Damani and Ife Keene

Community Partners Award:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, Battle of Franklin Trust,

Williamson Co. Convention & Visitor’s Bureau

Special Recognition: Rucker Park Founders

**2019 - Theme : “Preserve, Protect & Honor”**

***Pioneer Family: The Claybrooks Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: Bill Reynolds- Reynolds Janitorial Services, Inc Civic:

George Spencer Patton Communication: The Tennessean

Education: Eleanor Bright, Mary B. Walker & Mary A. Hunter

Organization: One Generation Away

Religion: Pastor Emeritus John R. Holt AAHS Volunteer Award:

Connection Hill Primitive Baptist Church

Special Awards -

AAHS Preservation Award: Inetta Gaines, Wanda Bruce Graham,

David Rector, Carolyn Bright Worthy, Christina Jones

Special Recognition: Martesha L. Johnson

**2020 - Theme : Commemoration of the 15th & 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment “The Right to Vote”**

***Pioneer Family: The Bostic Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: Crowder’s Trucking

Business: Chris' Automotive Repair

Civic: Gwendolyn Ann Bright

Communication: Home Page Media Group

Education: Lou Ella Harrison & Dorothy Mildred Jackson

Organization: Mercy Community Health Care

Religion: Rev. Kenneth Hill

AAHS Volunteer Award: First Missionary Bapt. Church

Special Awards:

AAHS Preservation Awards: Dr. Eleanor Fleming, Pastor Kevin

Riggs, Pastor Hewitt Sawyers, Pastor Chris Williamson, Eric

Jacobson, The City of Franklin

**2021 - Theme : We Stand United**

***Pioneer Family: Wiley & Jane Brown Scruggs Family***

Special Awards :

AAHS Preservation Awards: Carroll Van West, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, Ford Classic Homes, The McDowell Family, Barlow Builders

**2022-Theme : “Keeping Hope Alive”**

***Pioneer Family: The Nelson Wilson Sr. Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business : Big Shakes Hot Chicken & Fish

Business: Pinkerton Transportation

Civic: Annette Lane & Lamont Turner

Communication: Anika Exum

Education: Donzaleigh Wattlely Phillips

Organization: Franklin Justice & Equity Coalition

Religion: Elder Roosevelt Conway

Religion: Pastor Maurice Johnson

AAHS Volunteer Award: Limestone Baptist Church

Special Awards: AAHS Preservation Awards: Emily Magid,

Calvin & Marilyn Lehew, Jeffrey Caruth, Kenneth Green,

Tennessee Historic Commission

**2023 -“Remember the Time”**

***Pioneer Family: The Hatcher Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: American Sign Design

Civic: Samantha Shepherd Communication: Levi Ismail

Education: James P. Watkins Education: Elder Bernard Jones

Religion: Rev. James Green Religion: Pastor Howard Rucker

Special Awards:

AAHS Posthumous Award: Sargent Barbara Jean Lane Derricks

AAHS Posthumous Award: Lee Douglas Waters

**2024 -“A Royal Courtship -Telling the African American Story-Connecting the Past and Securing the Future”**

***Pioneer Family: The Sol House Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: AAP Graphics, Inc- Anita & Acel Pope

& Hambrick 1 Trucking- Troy Hambrick Civic: Sheila Swift

Communication: Alexandria Adams; April Eaton

Education: Alexis Bright; Thelma Hayes Northern

Organization: Build Her A Bridge-Samantha DeGrasse

Religion: Thomas Wilson

Religion: Elder William Tucker & Evangelist Tracye Tucker

Special Awards:

Posthumous Community Communicator Award: Odessa Carter

Special Recognition-Maurice & Evelyn Pope-MoeBetter BBQ &

Fish; Fred & Mary Curll- So Smooth Soul Food

**2025 -“ Preserving and Protecting Our Past and Securing Our Future**

***Pioneer Family: The Mary Banks Family***

Annual Award Honorees:

Business: Classic Sports Barbershop

Business: Murry’s Barbershop

Business: Pope’s Handyman Services

Civic: Cassandra Ridley Communication: Lelan A. Statom

Education: Dr. Terrance Haynes Education: Andrea McCullough

Organization: The Public

Religion: Pastor Elliott Webb

Special Awards: Marcia Fraser & Marjorie Smith

Preservation Awards: Georgia Harris, Hattie McCullough Baines,

Emily Magid, Heritage Foundation

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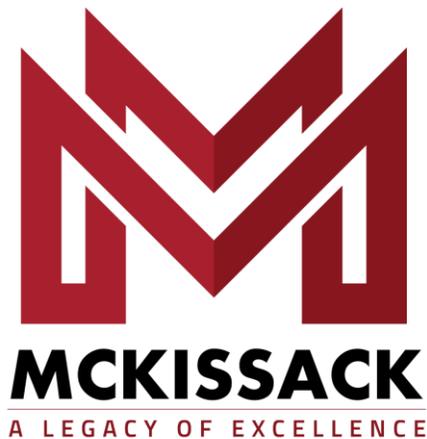
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# AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL AWARDS

## Business Award- Roundtree-Napier & Ogilvie Funeral Home



MS. MARLENE OGILVIE MCCLAIN  
*Co Partner*

DR. ROSE OGILVIE MCCLAIN  
*Co Partner*

MRS. AUDREY YVONNE GILBREATH  
*Co Partner*

ROUNDTREE, NAPIER & OGILVIE  
FUNERAL HOME

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115 Columbian Ave  
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The narrative of the establishment and evolution of the funeral home business, initiated by Rev. Earlie Jack Napier in 1984, is a poignant story of resilience, community, and familial bonds. After the passing of his partner, Rev. Cubie Roundtree, Rev. Napier faced the challenge of a growing demand for funeral services, particularly in the wake of losses within the community, notably among those connected to Bishop Charlene Ogilvie.

Enter Dr. Rose Ogilvie McClain, who observed the needs of the funeral home and approached Rev. Napier with an offer to help. Her unique touch and fresh perspective quickly became essential, earning her the affectionate title of “God Daughter” to the Napiers. The existing staff, including beautician Mrs. Cora Bell Legg, maintenance worker Mr. Harvey Palmer, and Rev. Napier’s wife, Mrs. Sarah Napier—who was dedicated mainly to answering calls—welcomed Dr. McClain wholeheartedly.

Recognizing the need for more resources, Dr. McClain encouraged Rev. Napier to allow her to drive families, adding significant value to the

services provided. The expansion continued as she involved her parents, Rev. Edward Allen Ogilvie and Bishop Charlene Ogilvie, further enriching the business with their capabilities and compassion, especially in comforting grieving families. Bishop Ogilvie’s nurturing spirit and culinary skills became an integral part of the care extended to families, bringing warmth and solace through her home-cooked meals during difficult times. These offerings created a memorable experience marked by love and community support—highlighted by beloved dishes such as turnip greens, macaroni and cheese, and cakes that delighted many.

As time passed, Rev. Napier’s health declined, prompting Dr. McClain and her parents to prepare for a significant transition: the purchase of the funeral home. This acquisition, which they kept discreet until 1989, signified not just a business transaction but a continuation of a legacy of care for families in mourning. With determination, Dr. McClain obtained her license to operate as a funeral director, fulfilling a family need and embarking on a new journey that honored both the history of the business and the community it served.

The Franklin Funeral Home Consultants are: Vince McCollough (Lead), Cassandra Ridley, Kendra Stephens, A. Marlene Ogilvie (Co-Partner), A. Yvonne Ogilvie Gilbreath (LFD & Co-Partner), Steve Bennett, Dr. Rose Ogilvie-McClain (LFD & Co-Partner), Steve L. Bennett the late Rev. Charles Edward Ogilvie (Consultant)

This story encapsulates the deep interconnections between family, community, and the often unheralded work of those who support others in their most vulnerable moments, showcasing the importance of compassion and dedication in service.



## Business Award - Quality Glass Services-Reggie Ennis, Jr. and Tracy Ennis



Founded on January 17, 1994, by Franklin natives Reggie Ennis Sr. and Stephen (Steve) Powell, Quality Glass Services has established itself as a trusted provider in the glass industry. Both founders began their careers at Lewis Glass Company in the early

1980s, where their professional partnership evolved into a strong working relationship. Their shared vision led to the creation of Quality Glass Services, initially operating from Reggie Ennis Sr.’s personal garage on Fairground Street, with Reggie Sr.’s wife Barbara and children Montica (Shonta) Reggie Jr. and Tracy helping with daily operations.

As the business expanded, it relocated to its current facility on Beasley Drive and extended its services to the Nashville and Spring Hill areas. The company is recognized for its commitment to customer service and community engagement, regularly supporting local schools, nonprofits, and organizations.

Following the retirement of the founders, ownership transitioned to Reggie Ennis Jr. and Tracy Ennis, who continue to uphold the legacy and values established by their father. Quality Glass Services remains dedicated to serving its customers and strengthening the communities it operates in.

## **Civic Award-Georgia Gaines.**



On October 29, 1943, the late George Howard Dixon and Mary Elizabeth Dixon bore a sweet baby girl, whom they named Georgia Lee Dixon. Through their union, Georgia witnessed a great example of a strong marriage in Christ! At an early age, her path of giving became evident as she began running errands for loved ones and neighbors. The importance of giving and helping others was continually instilled in her by her parents as she grew. As her responsibility grew, it soon became her duty on designated evenings to care for and stay with her grandmother, whom she called “Big Mama.” During the summer of her adolescent years, Georgia could be found at her Uncle Ed’s farm in the country, where she cultivated a strong work ethic as well as a love for the earth and gardening. There she milked cows, grew and tended to crops, and assisted with other farm responsibilities. While in early adulthood, she accepted the Lord Jesus Christ in 1966 at Providence United Primitive Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee. There she eagerly joined the choir. She has even led many songs over the years. While serving at Providence, her love for others continued to abound. She

helped establish a Christ centered ministry called Eat and Chat, with the collaboration of local Pastor, Kevin Riggs. During its three year existence, Eat and Chat provided community members access to home cooked meals, resources to assist with housing and employment, as well as help with expungement of criminal records. Georgia continues to serve at Providence as a faithful member of the choir and active member of the congregation until this very day. As the years progressed throughout the 70’s and 80’s, Georgia began working at Lasko Metal Products. It was during this time that she first began volunteering at Claiborne and Hughes Nursing Home in Franklin. There she would fill water pitchers for residents and deliver them to their rooms. Georgia’s warm presence became very welcomed and expected by residents. As rapport grew, she was soon able to assist with larger volunteer projects, such as assisting activity directors with planning parties for residents and passing out gifts, so that each person felt special! She would even use her vocal talents to sing for residents as well as pray for them. Her volunteering spirit continued to blossom and she also began volunteering at other long-term care facilities all over Franklin! Now she continues this type of care for her husband, Larry Gaines, as she is his caretaker. Serving and taking care of others continually fulfills Georgia! Along with her caregiving spirit, she greatly enjoyed volunteering with the Giving Garden, which is an organization that grows, harvests, and distributes fresh vegetables for families and individuals free of charge. These efforts help provide fresh food options and help mitigate food insecurity in the community. For approximately ten years, “Mrs. Georgia”, as she is so lovingly called, volunteered with the Giving Garden. “Ms. Georgia” could always be seen passing out food to neighbors, family members, and other people within the community. While volunteering with the Giving Garden and working for Franklin Special School District, she was given the wonderful opportunity to pass out fresh vegetables to students. She would do this during the summer as she delivered daily meals with the Franklin Special’s district Summer Lunch Feeding Program. Georgia can even be quoted as saying, “ I so enjoyed those babies getting a nutritious meal.”

Known for her sense of style, Georgia has always loved clothes. However, her love for clothes far exceeds beyond herself. She has been able to give clothes, shoes, and accessories to the Nashville Mission, which brought her so much joy! She has also found ways to continue to give clothes and other items to the ARC, churches, and other non- profits in support of their missions as well. Georgia continues to rely on the strength and guidance of Jesus daily. As HE ALONE has kept her thus far and is continuing to do so still! Even at eighty-two years young, God still allows her the time and strength to prepare Sunday dinners for others in the community. She distributes these meals to her neighbors, other seniors, and those whom she knows are sick and unable to leave the house. Georgia is tremendously blessed by every opportunity she has now and has had to give back and help others. She is blessed to be a blessing.

## **Communication Award- City of Franklin’s Communications Division**



The City of Franklin’s Communications Division was created in 2008 to develop internal and external communications and citizen participation initiatives. The Division also handles all media relations for the City and manages the City’s Government Access Channel, Franklin TV, the City Website and all social media. The team is made up of government and former television news professionals who make up a creative crew who tell the stories of the City’s department services and our City as a whole. We aim to be the best, and most creative communications team of any City in the U.S. We are honored to receive this award from the African American Heritage Society for our work to help preserve the history of Franklin’s African American community.

Pictured in photo: Back Row L-R- Stephen Price, Social and Digital Media Producer, Joey Echeverria, Public Outreach Coordinator, Robert Mott, Cable Television Operations Supervisor. Front Row L-R- Monique McCullough, Public Outreach Supervisor, Milissa Reiersen, Chief Communications Officer.

## Communication Award- Williamson County TV



Williamson County African American Heritage Society for years to come." Creed Henderson, Director | Williamson County Television

The African Heritage American Society honors WC-TV for their support in the videoing of our Porch Talks and many of our community events.

WC-TV Mission Statement: To provide quality local programming showcasing the people, places, and events within the Williamson County government and school system, while at the same time serving as a valuable training resource for students interested in media production. "WC-TV is honored to receive this communication award. We appreciate getting to be a part of the recording and archiving of these important Williamson County stories and helping to preserve these essential elements of county history. We look forward to our continued work alongside the

## Education Award-Tinna Dodson



Tinna Dodson is a proud native of Franklin, Tennessee, and currently teaches fifth grade at Freedom Intermediate School. Growing up in the Franklin Special School District, she was fortunate to have several inspirational teachers who made a lasting impact on her life. Tinna says, "It was because of their influence that I decided to become a teacher myself. Just as they did for me, I strive every day to be a positive influence in the lives of the students I teach."

Tinna graduated from Tennessee State University in May of 1998. Although she received several job offers outside of Franklin, she turned them all down because her goal was to work with the children in the same community where she grew up. In August of that same year, she was hired at Freedom Intermediate and has been teaching fifth grade here for twenty-eight years.

Throughout her career, she continued to challenge herself and grow as an educator. In 2003, she earned a degree in Educational Leadership from Trevecca Nazarene University. Over the years, she's been honored to be nominated by her peers for Teacher of the Year and recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education in 2012 for innovative teaching and teamwork in a science inclusion classroom. That same year, she was also nominated as Fox Teacher of the Week.

In addition to teaching, she's enjoyed taking part in many school activities and traditions. She has helped lead our Black History plays and sponsored several Bulldog Council events, including starting our annual Bonfire and Veterans Day Breakfast—two traditions that bring our school community together.

When she is not in the classroom, she loves traveling and spending time with her family and friends. Tinna says "Teaching in the same community that raised me has been one of my greatest joys, and I feel grateful every day to do what I love with such amazing students."

## Education Award- Takako Jackson-Price



Takako Price has 29 years of experience as an educator and instructional leader in Metro Nashville Public Schools. A proud product of the Franklin Special School District, she completed all of her K–12 education in Franklin, Tennessee before earning her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee—where she was named Ms. Tennessee Tech in 1996. She later earned a master's degree in Effective Curriculum and Instruction from Trevecca Nazarene University.

Takako began her career teaching 5th grade at Buena Vista Paideia Magnet School, where she was honored early in her career as a Channel 5 Golden Apple Award recipient and voted as "Teacher of the Year" on three separate occasions. She later served as an Elementary Gifted and Talented (ENCORE) teacher for 13 years before becoming a MNPS district classroom management specialist with the COMP Program, through Vanderbilt University, supporting educators across elementary, middle, and high schools.

She provides professional development training for schools and frequently presents at both technology conferences and educational conferences, sharing research-based and practical strategies related to classroom management, instructional effectiveness, student engagement, social and emotional learning, and instructional technology. Her professional interests include integrating technology to support learning and exploring innovative teaching practices to help the teachers that she works alongside.

In her free time, Takako enjoys crafting and is a proud mother of a daughter currently attending Tennessee Tech University.

## **Organization Award – Home Boys For Life**

Home Boys for Life began when hometown friends Johnny Robertson, Garfield German, Chris Murry, Jeffrey Patton, and Jeffrey Hamilton started cooking in Garfield German's backyard several years ago. The cookout became an event as more and more hometown boys joined the group each year. It grew so large that they moved to Strahl St. Park, where they now meet annually on the 4th Saturday in July. Many people born and raised in Franklin no longer live here due to high housing costs or by choice, but the Hometown Boys host this annual cookout, open to the public and free of charge, bringing Franklin natives and others together for a huge reunion and a cultural event that is part of the history and legacy of Franklin and the families who made an impact and many who continue to do so now. There is food, music, dancing, and lots of camaraderie on the last Saturday in July, thanks to the generosity of what is now about 45 to 50 young men who donate their money and work in unity to sponsor an event in the town they grew up in.



One of the members of the group sent the following describing the Home Boys for Life:

Every year, a group of Black men born & raised in Franklin, TN pool together their time, treasures, money and talents to have a community event in our hometown. No agendas, no strings, no propaganda, no ulterior motives. Just friends and families sitting, eating, remembering and enjoying in a relaxed, safe, fun environment.

It's how we were raised in our small town. As minorities, we experienced a lifetime of adversity, but we always knew that our strength came from

community, and we always had each other's back. Each raised on the grit, wisdom, and prayer of the generation before us, we've learned the importance of both giving back and coming back. "Each one, teach one." This is Black Franklin. This is Family. We exist.

## **Religion Award-Elder John Haynes**



Elder Haynes is a born native of Franklin TN. He lives in The Rolling Meadows Subdivision, where he mostly grew up. He is married to his Beautiful and Lovely wife Julia, for fourteen years. He is the proud pastor of The Burns Tabernacle Primitive Baptist Church; for twenty-six years. Elder Haynes has five strong children, Anitra, who is deceased, Keeda, Prince, German and Johnathon.

Elder has always been involved in the community from his teenage years to now. In his younger years, he was president of The United Blacks Unlimited; and a member of the NAACP. He was the chief reporter for the Black Perspective Newspaper and also the Executive Director of The United Community Resource Foundation, where affordable housing was introduced in the African American community before the crashing of the housing market. Elder Haynes was a member of the board of directors for Community Housing Partnership and served on the committee that developed the headstone for the unnamed soldiers in the Battle of Franklin. He has an Associate Degree in Christian and Pastoral Education, as well as being on the Cumberland Association of Primitive Baptist Ordination Committee and the Chief Evangelist for Williamson County of the Cumberland Association.

In 2021, he ran for Alderman At-Large for the City of Franklin. He lost the race but was very encouraged by the support he received. Elder Haynes has always been deeply concerned about housing for low-income families; education for underprivileged families; equal justice and rights for the underserved, along with the African American history and development and growth for the City of Franklin/Williamson County.

Elder Haynes recently retired in March of 2024, from a lifelong career in the medical profession as an Emergency Medical Technician in the Department of Nephrology, the Emergency Room, Cardiology, Preoperative Care and Neurology at Vanderbilt Medical Center. Currently he spends most of his time at the church he pastors, some farming and just being available to help in his community. Last year, he was asked to join and accepted to become a member of the board of directors for the African American Heritage Society.

## **Community Volunteer Award – Kingdom’s Love Ministries**



Rev. Timothy L. Gaines Sr. "Pastor G" founded Kingdom's Love Ministries, along with his beautiful wife, Lady Maria Gaines, on November 15, 2021, with a church mission aimed at "Creating a Christ-centered and family atmosphere that bridges the gap between praise, worship, and community through outreach, while empowering the masses through the teaching of God's Holy scriptures."

The genesis of "Kingdom's Love" is derived from biblical scripture as written in the Gospel according to Matthew 25:40, where Jesus, using a parable, makes a statement: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did for me." And when Jesus speaks of "the least of these", He is referring to people who,

because of life circumstances, have become vulnerable, socially, psychologically, or economically disadvantaged. And likewise, this has become the mission of Kingdom's Love Ministries. In other words, we have vowed to become a church that extends Kingdom-type love, not just towards some people or people with needs, but Kingdom-type love towards all of God's creation. To make it plain, we are vowed to be the 21st-century church embedded in "Kingdom Love", a church that meets people where they are, and a church engaged to seek out and save the lost, serve the needy, and minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people.

It is through Kingdom's Love Evangelism & Outreach Ministry that we address both the "good news" of the gospel and the tangible needs of individuals and families living in our local community and abroad. Whether it's preparing and distributing meals in partnership with local groups to ensure no one misses a meal or goes to bed hungry, celebrating the Christmas season along with food, songs & gifts for seniors residing in the Franklin Community, visiting and fellowship with those residing in local nursing homes, or providing canned goods through our free standing COMMUNITY LOVE BOX stocked with non-perishable food, open year-round, 24/7, where individuals can anonymously leave and take donations for those in need, exchange for food and goods operating on the "take what you need, leave what you can" principle; TENT OF TABERNACLE -A food harvest and distribution effort in partnership with nonprofit organizations, businesses, pastors, churches located in the Franklin, TN and Nashville, TN areas; KINGDOM SUPPLY CLOSET stocked with household commodities (bar soap, tissue, paper towels, trash bags, dish detergent, wash detergent, toiletries) distributed to individuals, families, and seniors throughout the year; BABY'S BOTTOM BASICS which provide diapers and wipes to families in need as a supplement to ensure families have an adequate supply of diapers, babies stay clean, dry, and healthy, or our ANNUAL BACK-TO-SCHOOL HAIR AFFAIR EVENT-A community focused initiative, which provides free haircuts and styles for girls, boys & teens to boost their confidence, improve self-esteem, overall school readiness and alleviate financial burdens for families, Kingdom's Love Ministries appreciates the opportunity to serve our community, send a clear message of "Kingdom Love" and look forward to expanding our reach to serve a greater number.

### **Special Awards**

#### **James Arthur Carothers & Elizabeth Diane Carothers**



James Arthur Carothers and Elizabeth Diane Carothers are Franklin natives, born and raised in Franklin, TN. They both attended the, then all-colored public schools here, including the Historic Natchez High School, which is still standing today. James is a descendant of the enslaved Carothers family and Diane is a descendant of the enslaved David McLemore family. Both pioneer families have been honored at previous "Black Tie Event". James Arthur served his country in the US Marine Corp and is a member of the American Legion Post 215. Diane is a member of the post's Lady Auxiliary and is employed with the Boys & Girls Club here in Franklin and a member of the Providence United Primitive Bapt. Church in Franklin. Many people may know James Arthur and Elizabeth Diane Carothers but many people may not know of their community service or "community garden" and that they are contributors to healthy eating here in Franklin.

James & Diane have a huge vegetable garden and turnip green patch that they plant and grow each year for people in our community to enjoy. Planting and producing a garden that provides food free of charge shows care and love for others. Many people here enjoy the fruits of David & Diane's labor and probably are very grateful. We want to extend the thanks further and on behalf of the African American Heritage Society and this community, we want to say thank you for this recurring benefit to our community with a special recognition award.

## **Williamson County Master Gardeners Association & Andrew Hazelton**

The African American Heritage Society would like to honor and recognize the Williamson County Master Gardeners Association for their support of the McLemore House Museum in providing and maintaining landscaping plants and landscaping services at the historic home since its last renovation 5 years ago. Andrew Hazelton has been the primary landscape gardener for the museum and the organization would like to give special recognition to Andrew whose dedication and diligent work keeps the grounds looking great!



Andrew Hazelton moved to Franklin, Tennessee as a child in 1992 and attended schools in both the Franklin Special School District and Williamson County Schools. After graduating, he proudly served in the United States Navy from 1999 to 2004 as an Electronics Technician Third Class Petty Officer on the USS Ticonderoga.

Following his military service, Andrew returned to Franklin and built a career rooted in his passion for the outdoors and community. He is now a local landscape gardener and owner of Middle TN Lawns, serving exclusively the Franklin, Tennessee area.

Andrew has been an active volunteer with the Williamson County Master Gardener program since 2011, contributing countless hours to local horticultural education and community projects. Since 2021, he served as the McLemore House Project Leader, further demonstrating his commitment to preserving and enhancing Franklin's historic and natural landscapes.

According to statements on the WCMG website, they are keeping history alive. "Historical sites often have a large need for grounds maintenance with little assistance. In addition to the

McLemore House, WCMGs support and maintain some gardens at Carnton Plantation and also maintain the Heirloom Fruit Orchard and Vegetable Garden, the Kitchen Herb Garden and the Flower Gardens at the Carter House."

The mission of the WCMGA is to provide research-based horticultural education, while promoting environmental stewardship, via community volunteerism, delivered by a dedicated and skilled volunteer network. The WCMGA's vision is provide useful research-based horticulture information to Williamson County residents and communities and are part of the UT/TSU Williamson County Extension Office. The African American Heritage Society is appreciative to WCMGA for their continued dedication and support to the McLemore House Museum and its role in telling the story of formerly enslaved Harvey McLemore and showcasing his 1880 built home.



## **Williamson County Public Library**



AAHS is pleased and honored to recognize The Williamson County Public Library, who has been an exceptional community partner. For many years, the library has sponsored February exhibits to commemorate Black History Month. Each year, library staff collaborates with our organization and Williamson County African American Historian Thelma Battle, to feature a pioneer family for recognition at our annual Black Tie Fundraiser. To receive this prestigious designation, families must trace their roots to the 1850s and beyond, with direct lineage to pioneer families who resided in the

county before that time. The certificate signifies the family's long-standing presence and contributions to our area. Recipients express deep appreciation for this distinction, as it generates tremendous pride and gratitude for their ancestors' resilience and determination during a challenging period in our nation's history. With the pioneer family honor each year by AAHS & WCPL, the community also has the opportunity to meet honoree family members at a reception hosted by the library the Sunday following our Black Tie Event. The library's Special Collections Department has worked extensively with Ms. Battle and numerous community members to compile, document, and archive our community's rich history through photographs, newspapers, and other historical documents. Their genealogy and family research services benefit individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, representing an invaluable community resource that deserves recognition.

AAHS hosts Monthly Porch Talks and the library generously provides meeting room space, to host monthly educational talks, previously held on the porch of our historic McLemore House Museum. When increasingly extreme weather conditions made outdoor meetings impractical, the library's support and cooperation enabled us to relocate our "Porch Talks" to their meeting rooms and begin video recording each session. This community asset allows our organization to archive these important educational events as part of our community's historical record while reaching a broader audience. Many thanks to WCPL for its many programs that help to tell the fuller story of our community's history.

# **2026 Historic African American Pioneer Family**

## **Beyond the Bough: the Nathaniel Baugh Family of the 11th District**

Nathaniel Baugh was born in 1814 in Virginia and raised in Tennessee, where he was enslaved to Daniel Baugh in the 11<sup>th</sup> District of Williamson County, near Thompson's Station. In approximately 1848, Nathaniel married Mary, and their first child was born the following year. In 1865, Nathaniel signed a Freedman's Contract with Joseph W. Baugh of Franklin, working on his farm for two years. After, Nathaniel returned to the Thompson's Station area and purchased 56 acres of land from Clement and Thomas Wade.

According to the 1880 Census, Nathaniel was a farmer, who had 25 acres of cultivated land along with 30 acres of woodland. Although Nathaniel could not read or write, he managed a sizeable farm and raised a family. After Nathaniel's wife, Mary, passed away in 1894, he was cared for by his daughter, Eliza Overton, and her family. Nathaniel died in 1902, leaving behind a will bequeathing his property to his daughter Mary Eliza Baugh Overton and Richard (Dick) Baugh. Nathaniel and Mary's children were: Mary Eliza, Richard (Dick), Felix, Clifton, and Bettie.

Two of Nathaniel and Mary's children are highlighted here: Mary Eliza and Richard. After, descendants of Richard are highlighted: Thomas, George Thomas, and Georgia.

Mary Elizabeth (Eliza) Baugh Overton was born between 1857 and 1861. By the 1880's, Mary Eliza became a schoolteacher in Williamson County's 11<sup>th</sup> District. After marrying Dock Overton in 1889, the family lived on Spring Hill Road, where Mary raised three children while also caring for her father, Nathaniel. Her brother, Richard, lived next door. Mary Eliza may have been a midwife in the Duplex area of Williamson County around the 1910's. After her husband, Dock, passed away between 1910 and 1920, Mary Eliza became a sick nurse and moved in with her son, Winstead, and his wife Bessie. In the 1930's, Mary Eliza moved to Nashville, living with her daughter Missouri Dillard. Mary Eliza passed away in 1935 of a cerebral hemorrhage. Mary Eliza and Dock's children were: Missouri Overton Dillard, Blanche Overton Pankey, and Winstead.

Richard (Dick) Baugh was born around 1860. In 1879, he married Harriott Patton, and like many newlywed couples do, the couple spent their early years of marriage living with Richard's father, Nathaniel. Come the 1880's, Census records show Richard was employed as a laborer in Williamson County. While he could not read or write, Richard, like his father, built a life in care of his family. He managed a farm on his half of his father's land. Richard passed away between 1909 and 1911 near Thompson's Station. Leaving behind his wife, Harriott, and his family. Richard and Harriott's children were: Thomas, Nathaniel, George I, Sarah, Scott, Elizabeth, Richard B., Counsel, Robert Bradley, Mary D., William B., John B., and Gertrude.



**Thomas Baugh, son of Richard Baugh and Harriott Patton Baugh.**



**Mary Baugh Waddy, daughter of Richard Baugh and Harriott Patton Baugh.**

Thomas Baugh was born in November of 1880. After marrying Ella Jordan in 1907, the couple rented a home off Columbia Pike in the 11<sup>th</sup> District. Thomas was a farm laborer while Ella was a laundress. Thomas passed away in 1966. Thomas and Ella's children were: Sarah, John, Kerniler, May Emma, George Thomas, James Henry, Fleetwood (Bully), and Jesse.

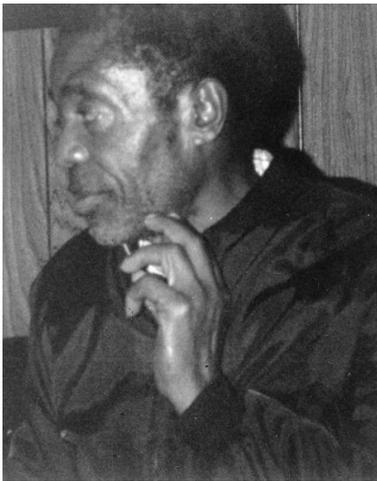
George Thomas Baugh was born in 1913 and married Willie B. Gentry in 1933. The young family raised their two children on

Carter's Creek Pike in the 1940's. The marriage between George Thomas and Willie B ended in divorce in 1948. George Thomas and Willie B.'s children were: Georgia Mae and Saint Clair. George Thomas passed away in 1982.

Georgia Mae Baugh Stewart Harris was born in January 1939 on the Jim Cannon farm in Thompson Station. Georgia spent her early years relocating with her family. In 1944, at the age of five, Georgia moved to maternal grandparents home Culleoka, Tennessee with her mother, Willie B., after her divorce to their father, George Thomas. Her brother, Saint Clair, was born soon after. Georgia also lived in Columbia, the Duplex area, Nashville, and Franklin rotationally until the age of 13. Georgia had attended school in Lee Buckner, Rock City, Briarville, and Haynes Schools. Georgia married James Thomas Stewart in 1955, welcoming four children before their divorce in 1969. Georgia and James' surviving children are: Thomas Edward, Michael Dean, and Mary Ruth. Georgia and James suffered the loss of their third child, Gloria Jean, three weeks after her birth. Georgia went on to marry Fred Harris in 1974, spending 36 glorious years together until Fred's passing in 2010. Georgia worked as a medical assistant at Meharry Medical College and later becoming a bus monitor for FSSD. Georgia is also a genealogist, assisting others in documenting their African American ancestry.

This is a farming family. Growing wheat, cutting tobacco, picking hay, the Nathaniel Baugh family found freedom in the 56 acres Nathaniel purchased in 1869, and they carried on his legacy, stewarding the rich agricultural land and traditions of Middle Tennessee and feeding their communities.

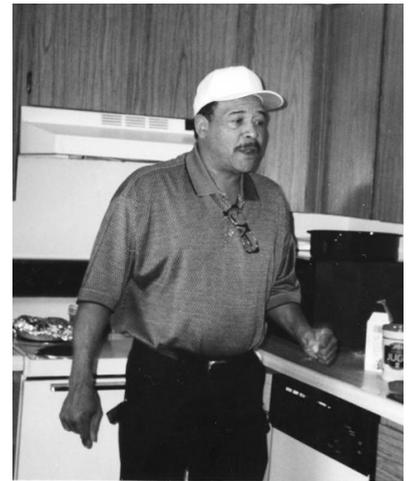
The story of Nathaniel Baugh's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren and so on is told in this year's rendition of the *Thelma Battle African American Photographic Exhibit* entitled "Beyond the Bough: The Nathaniel Baugh Family of the 11<sup>th</sup> District".



**George Thomas Baugh (1913-1982), son of Thomas Baugh and Ella Jordan Baugh.**



**Willie B. Gentry (1912-1998), mother of Georgia Mai Baugh Stewart Harris.**



**Saint Clair Baugh, son of George Thomas Baugh and Willie B. Gentry.**



**Jesse Baugh (1923-2009), son of Thomas Baugh and Ella Jordan Baugh.**



**Georgia Mai Baugh Stewart Harris, in front of the house she was born in.**



**Georgia Mai Baugh Stewart Harris and late husband Fred Harris. Georgia Mai is the daughter of George Thomas Baugh and Willie B. Gentry.**



1948 Class Picture outside the Lee Buckner School. Georgia Mai Baugh is in the center of the middle row.

The Georgia Mai Baugh Harris family, 2010.



Please view: The Thelma Battle Exhibit “Beyond the Bough: The Nathaniel Baugh Family of the 11<sup>th</sup> District” sponsored by the African American Heritage Society at the Williamson County Public Library.

*Our Pioneer & Freedom Families (Descendants of the Formerly Enslaved in Williamson County)*

Previous Honorees

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <i>Harvey McLemore Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2002            | <i>Rucker Sharp Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2009  | <i>The Fleming Family</i><br>Pioneer/Freedom Family 2014     | <i>Wiley &amp; Jane Brown Scruggs Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2021 |
| <i>Anderson Lee/Richard Smith Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2003 | <i>David McLemore Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2010  | <i>The Smith/Davis Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2015         | <i>Nelson Wilson Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2022                  |
| <i>Booker Hunter Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2004              | <i>Buford Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2011  | <i>The Carothers/Caruthers Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2016 | <i>Hatcher Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2023                        |
| <i>Dick Poynor Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2005                | <i>William J. Boyd, Sr. Family</i><br>Freedom Family 2011<br>(Pioneer Family Status in 2024) | <i>The Lucretia Holt Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2017       | <i>Sol House Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2024                      |
| <i>Carter Family</i><br>Freedom Family 2006                     | <i>Harvey Otey Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2012   | <i>The Jerry Gosey Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2018         | <i>Mary Banks Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2025                     |
| <i>Fitzgerald Family</i><br>Freedom Family 2007                 | <i>Perkins Jordan Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2013  | <i>The Claybrooks Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2019          |   |
| <i>Crowder Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2008                    |  | <i>The Bostic Family</i><br>Pioneer Family 2020              |   |

Each year the African American Heritage Society strives to add another chapter to the rich African American History of Williamson County. In compiling and recording this history we include names of the formerly enslaved, the enslaved owners and locations merely as references. We interpret the records used to the best of our knowledge and ability without blame or malice, for only by doing this can the "Whole Story Be Told". Pioneer Family research contributors: Paige Hurley & Lane Collins of the Williamson County Public Library-Special Collections, Thelma Battle, Georgia Harris and Rick Warwick and volunteers. (\*Some pictures taken from the Nathaniel Baugh Family Collection, social media and the Thelma Battle collection.

## *Thank You*

The African American Heritage Society would like to extend our gratitude and thanks for your attendance tonight and for your continued support to our organization. Many of you have attended since our very first Black Tie in 2002 and we thank you for your support to this event as well as our many activities throughout the year. A special thanks to our Co-Honorary Chairpersons, Doris McMillan & Mona Hayes, Master of Ceremonies, Tyson Smith and our other program participants, Evangelist Charlene Harrison, Elder Herbert Hobson, Elder John Haynes, Asiana Swift-Miller, Ms. Universe United Ms. Tennessee 2025, Jayla Christmon, Mrs. Williamson County, Julius Fisher and the Genius Band, committee members, volunteers and our AAHS board members.



### *The Band- Julius Fisher @ the Genius Band*

Julius "Genius" Fisher is an African-American Musician, Singer, Songwriter, Producer, Promoter & DJ. He is the founder of Astarfish Entertainment, CEO of the Crush Record Label & leader of the Genius Band.

Julius Fisher & the Genius Band have performed at the Black Tie Affair for the last several years and do an outstanding job! Contact:(615)593-5122

### *Black Tie Table Hosts*

<b><i>Robert &amp; Pamela V. Bright</i></b>	<b><i>Annie Sawyers</i></b>	<b><i>Franklin Housing Authority</i></b>
<b><i>Melody Bowers</i></b>	<b><i>Carolyn Wall</i></b>	<b><i>Gamble Collaborative Design</i></b>
<b><i>Diane Carothers</i></b>	<b><i>Quen Williams</i></b>	<b><i>Hard Bargain Assoc.</i></b>
<b><i>David Critchlow</i></b>	<b><i>Emma Witherspoon</i></b>	<b><i>Home Boys For Life</i></b>
<b><i>Tinna Dodson</i></b>	<b><i>Carolyn Worthy</i></b>	<b><i>Kingdom Love Ministries</i></b>
<b><i>Jessie Dotson</i></b>	<b><i>AAHS Book Club</i></b>	<b><i>Limestone Missionary Baptist Church</i></b>
<b><i>Georgia Gaines</i></b>	<b><i>Atmos Energy</i></b>	<b><i>Morton Properties</i></b>
<b><i>Teresa Green</i></b>	<b><i>Baugh Pioneer Family</i></b>	<b><i>Music City Baseball</i></b>
<b><i>Andrea Prince Jeffries</i></b>	<b><i>Beech Realty</i></b>	<b><i>Providence Primitive Baptist Church</i></b>
<b><i>Paula Kinnard</i></b>	<b><i>Bison Builders</i></b>	<b><i>Providence Primitive Baptist Church Choir</i></b>
<b><i>Paula McCord</i></b>	<b><i>Buerger Moseley &amp; Carson</i></b>	<b><i>RBGB Foundation</i></b>
<b><i>Alma McLemore</i></b>	<b><i>City of Franklin-Communications Div.</i></b>	<b><i>Roundtree Napier &amp; Ogilvie</i></b>
<b><i>Cleatrice McTorry</i></b>	<b><i>Club NHS' 67-Sonny Kelton</i></b>	<b><i>Simmons Bank</i></b>
<b><i>Kim Menifee &amp; Dexter Adams</i></b>	<b><i>Club NHS' 67-Peaches Prince</i></b>	<b><i>Steven's Trucking</i></b>
<b><i>Mary Pearce &amp; Rick Warwick</i></b>	<b><i>Elected Officials</i></b>	<b><i>Vulcan Materials</i></b>
<b><i>Evon Rhames</i></b>	<b><i>First Missionary Baptist Church</i></b>	<b><i>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</i></b>
<b><i>Tim Richards</i></b>	<b><i>Fowlkes Street Church of Christ</i></b>	<b><i>Williamson County Master Gardeners</i></b>
<b><i>Cassandra Ridley</i></b>	<b><i>Franklin Community Dev.</i></b>	

### *Black Tie Door Prize Sponsor*

<b><i>Thelma Battle</i></b>	<b><i>B. Media Communications</i></b>	<b><i>Merridee's</i></b>
<b><i>Rick Warwick</i></b>	<b><i>Southern Manor</i></b>	<b><i>AAHS</i></b>
	<b><i>Embassy Suites</i></b>	

### *Black Tie Committee Members & Volunteers*

<b><i>AAHS Board Members</i></b>	<b><i>Eric King</i></b>	<b><i>Juanita Patton</i></b>	<b><i>Marjorie Smith</i></b>
<b><i>Rikkita Adkinson</i></b>	<b><i>Nina Leach</i></b>	<b><i>Chris Payne</i></b>	<b><i>Renetta Smith</i></b>
<b><i>David Critchlow</i></b>	<b><i>Monica Loar</i></b>	<b><i>Sue Perkins</i></b>	<b><i>Mitz Spring</i></b>
<b><i>Dana Hardy</i></b>	<b><i>Janet Mayberry-Wales</i></b>	<b><i>Christie Perry</i></b>	<b><i>Summer Thacker</i></b>
<b><i>Lynn Jackson</i></b>	<b><i>Kanasha McDavid</i></b>	<b><i>Debra Shaw</i></b>	<b><i>Nicole Vaughn</i></b>
<b><i>Glendale King</i></b>	<b><i>Beth McDonald</i></b>	<b><i>Amy Shuh</i></b>	<b><i>Jenny Williamson</i></b>

### Board of Directors

<i>Pamela V. Bright, Board Chair</i>	<i>Harvey Chrisman</i>	<i>Sonya Johnson</i>	<i>Mary Pearce</i>
<i>Wanda Onodeko, Treasurer</i>	<i>April Eaton</i>	<i>Cleatrice McTorry</i>	<i>Carvin Vaughn</i>
<i>Sarah Critchlow, Secretary</i>	<i>Elder John Haynes</i>	<i>Kimberly Meniffee</i>	<i>Carolyn Wall</i>
<i>Dexter Adams</i>	<i>Laura Holder</i>	<i>James Moore</i>	

President: *Alma McLemore*

Advisory Board: *Tosha Robinson-Baugh* *Dr. Carroll Van West* *Tyrus Sturgis* *Dr. Learotha Williams*

Board Emeritus: *Thelma Battle, Historian* *Rick Warwick, Historian*

### 2025 Accomplishments, Activities & Continued Events

- The renovation of the **Merrill-Williams Historic Home**, at 264 Natchez St., acquired by the African American Heritage Society in November of 2021, has finally turned a corner and the organization is eagerly looking forward to **Dedication Day** of our new **Heritage and Culture Center** in May of this year!!(2026) AAHS reported last year, the anticipation of a 2025 opening of the center, however, due to unexpected challenges, completion of the center did not proceed as projected. Extensive progress has been made and we are moving toward the finish line.
- **Proc's Amateur-** Our annual Proc Show was held once again after cancelling a couple of years, beginning with the year of Covid. It was a successful event, with amazing talent, good food and great music.
- A very successful “**Juneteenth Celebration** at the McLemore House” was held on **Thursday, June 19th, 2025** with a large crowd in attendance. AAHS began hosting Juneteenth events in 2004 and will continue the celebration each year on the actual Juneteenth holiday at the museum on 446 11th Ave. North (Any changes to this schedule will be publicly announced later).
- **T. E. Murdic Educational Scholarship**, established in 2015 and named to honor the late Thomas E. Murdic, community leader and past AAHS board president, continues to have very strong support. Our sincere thanks to our many sponsors and donations from community. AAHS awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 8 graduating seniors in Williamson County in 2025. Students were honored at the annual prom held on **July 19th** where **Kevin & Dorothy Townsel** were crowned **Mr. & Mrs. AAHS**.
- **McLemore House Regular Tour Hours:** The McLemore House Museum reopened once again in August 2025 with regularly scheduled hours of operation: Fridays & Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Don't miss an opportunity to visit this historic treasure.
- **Pumpkins On The Porch-** Our 2nd annual. was a fall event held on October 4th, 2025, to invite the community to the McLemore House for free museum tours and the opportunity to purchase a pumpkin to support the museum. Beth Garlock, founder of the event, lives in California. Beth came back to Franklin especially for the event and worked hard once again and made it a success.
- **AAHS BOOK Club-** The AAHS book club formed in 2019, continues to be a huge success. **Deborah Murdic**, founder of the club, has been facilitator since the clubs inception. Deborah is passing the torch to **LisaAnn Carlson & Sheila Swift**, who are now serving as co-facilitators of the club. The organization sincerely appreciate the dedication and excellency of Deborah's service in this capacity. Many thanks to our current facilitators, LisaAnn and Sheila for their willingness to serve. The AAHS book club is extraordinary as it provides golden opportunities for a diverse group of individuals to come together, discuss the book, as well as build relationships and community. The members enjoy very interesting, thought provoking and stimulating discussion. The AAHS Book Club meets regularly on the third Thursday of each month at the **Williamson County Archives** at 611 West Main St. AAHS has also been rewarded with some **exceptional volunteers** as a result of the book club.
- **Education & Community Awareness-** Historians and board members continue to conduct seminars, give speeches at events and are part of several videos that are being and have been produced. Local media as well as TV continue to share history and stories in support of AAHS!
- **Black History Month-**Williamson County Library once again graciously awarded AAHS the opportunity to display African American History for Black History Month and to showcase the Pioneer Family in February. We appreciate the partnership to kickoff Black History Month. The pioneer family honored was the **Mary Banks** family.
- **Porch Talks-** Held monthly from March to October annually. The location of the porch talks has changed due to recent high temperatures. If space is available, the talks will be located at the **Williamson County Public Library**, with dates and times to be determined and announced at a later date. Many thanks to WCPL and Wmson Co. TV for their support in hosting and videoing the talks.

## AAHS Upcoming Events

In commemoration of **Black History Month**, The **Williamson County Public Library** will feature the African American Heritage Society's Pioneer Family at the library on Columbia Avenue in the Special Collections Department from February 1st to February 28th. This year's family is the **Nathaniel Baugh family** from the 11th District of Williamson County, near Thompson's Station, TN. This year's theme is "Beyond the Bough". There will be an opportunity to meet members of the **Nathaniel Baugh** family on Sunday, February 8, 2026, from 2pm-4pm at the Williamson County Public Library.

**6/19/26- Juneteenth Celebration- McLemore House Museum or TBD**

**7/25/26 - Prom 2026- Fundraiser for Tom Murdic Educational Scholarship- Crowning of Mr. & Mrs. AAHS-Embassy Suites**  
Contact info: [info@aahswc.org](mailto:info@aahswc.org).

**10/01/26 thru 03/01/27 - Application Period for Tom E. Murdic Educational Scholarship** - Visit our website at [aahswc.org](http://aahswc.org).

**Annually in February- African American Heritage Society Black Tie Event, 1st Saturday in February.**

The next Black Tie will be February 6, 2027.

## McLemore House & Merrill-Williams House- AAHS Membership/Volunteer



The McLemore House is the oldest residential structure built by an African American in Williamson County. The Merrill -Williams house is another AAHS historic treasure that was acquired in 2021 and is being restored as a heritage and culture center for the community. The African American Heritage Society and our community are aware of the importance of preserving these structures and continuing to share the Harvey McLemore and Merrill-Williams story.



With this effort, it is very important to have a community partnership and community interest in preserving and appreciating our historical treasures. We would like to invite all who are interested to become members, volunteer and get involved in the AAHS organization. P.O. 1053 Franklin, TN 37065 [info@aahswc.org](mailto:info@aahswc.org) <https://aahswc.org/>



### TOURS

Currently tours of the McLemore house Museum are Fridays & Saturdays from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Group appointments may be scheduled as well by calling 615-224-3140 or email [info@aahswc.org](mailto:info@aahswc.org).

## **Lift Every Voice and Sing**

*By James Weldon Johnson*

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.  
Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,

We have come, treading our path through the blood of the  
slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.  
God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

Thanks to historians, Rick Warwick, Thelma Battle and the Nathaniel Baugh pioneer family and others for historical data, photos and use of copyright material with permission granted. Other information and photographs taken from the Thelma Battle Collection, WCPL, Franklin, TN, Williamson County Archives, media websites and honorees personal possessions.

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