



Preserving Our Places in History Awards

On January 27, 2006, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission presented its first *Preserving Our Places in History Awards* at a reception at the [Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture](#) at the College of Charleston. The Commission's purpose in giving these awards was to recognize the efforts already being made by a number of organizations to preserve the legacy of the African American experience in South Carolina and to encourage others in these efforts.

Elected officials receiving awards for their support of preservation were:



Congressman James E. Clyburn as a national official for his record of assisting African American preservation efforts;



State Representative Lonnie Hosey for his efforts to obtain state appropriations for the Commission, which helped establish the African American Programs Coordinator staff position at the Department of Archives and History; and



Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. of Charleston for his long record of service and commitment to the preservation of African American places.

Organizations representing six projects received awards. Project recipients were honored for their efforts to preserve important aspects of South Carolina's history. The honorees and their projects were:



The **Bettis Academy Heritage Team** for the renovation of Biddle Hall (1942), a former home economics teaching facility on the Bettis Academy campus in Trenton, Edgefield County. The Team has set up a museum in the renovated building that

tells the history of Bettis Academy and the surrounding communities. [Bettis Academy and Junior College](#), which was established in 1881 by the Mt. Canaan [Baptist] Educational Association and closed in 1952, played a critical educational role during a time when public schools for African Americans were often inadequate. The campus is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The **Mt. Zion Rosenwald Preservation Committee** for its efforts to preserve the **Mt. Zion Rosenwald School** in Mars Bluff, Florence County. This school was built in 1925 with matching funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. It served the rural community of Mars Bluff until 1952. The [Mt. Zion Rosenwald School](#) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.





The **Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Committee** for organizing the [Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival](#) in Mt. Pleasant, Charleston County. The Festival highlights the importance of sweetgrass basket making, a traditional African art form. In addition to handmade baskets, it highlights

quilts, paintings, and other crafts and features live entertainment, ethnic foods, storytelling, and activities for children and families to enjoy.

[GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission](#), the **Palmetto Conservation Foundation**, and the **City of Greenwood** for their labors to save and preserve the **Benjamin E. Mays House** in Ninety-Six, Greenwood County. The childhood home of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, was seriously deteriorated, but could not be preserved on its original site. These groups collaborated to move the house and restore it on the campus of the GLEAMS Human Resources Commission.





The Committee for the Beautification and Restoration of Randolph Cemetery for its long-term dedication to restoring **Randolph Cemetery** in Columbia, Richland County. The Cemetery, established in 1872, was named for Benjamin Franklin Randolph, who served as a chaplain in the Union Army during the Civil War and was active in South Carolina politics during Reconstruction. He was assassinated by white men while campaigning in Abbeville County in 1868. [Randolph Cemetery](#) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The [Historic Columbia Foundation](#) for its twenty-seven years of service in producing the **Jubilee Festival** in Columbia, Richland County. The Festival, which is free and open to the public, explores African American traditional arts and culture. It features musical performers, artists, storytellers, and re-enactors at the historic [Mann-Simons Cottage](#).



