

***2016 SCAAHC Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony
Preserving Our Places in History Through Trial and Triumph***

AWARD WINNERS

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award recognizes a person, group or organization that has made a notable, successful, sustained and lasting contribution to the preservation of African-American history and culture in South Carolina.

Senator Clementa Pinckney

The late senator of South Carolina's 45th district was a child from a religious and socially active family. He established himself as a leader in the African Methodist Episcopal church early on in his life. Senator Pinckney developed a reputation as a strong but gentle, soft-spoken leader measured in his talk and admired by all who met him. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1996 at the age of 23, becoming the youngest African-American elected as a South Carolina state legislator. He was elected Senator in 2000 and represented his district for 15 years until his untimely death. Senator Pinckney was one of nine parishioners killed on June 17, 2015. Senator Clementa's legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of those who loved him, and has inspired a movement of unity that most notably led to the removal of the Confederate flag from the State House grounds. Even in his death, he served the state he loved.

Individual Award

This award recognizes a person who has demonstrated or made an outstanding accomplishment in preserving and interpreting African-American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year.

State Representative Joseph Neal

Representative Neal uses his influence to passionately support African-American culture and history. He represents District 70 which encompasses portions of Sumter and Richland counties. Throughout his legislative career, he has sponsored legislation to improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians. He continues to work to end predatory lending and racial profiling in South Carolina. He introduced the state's first and only anti-racial profiling legislation which was passed and enacted by the South Carolina General Assembly.

His is a preacher of the gospel, serving as Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Chester, South Carolina. He is also founder of two non-profit community development organizations. Perhaps it was his faith and oratorical gift that helped him gain his most recent distinction as a game changer in the debate to remove the Confederate flag from the State House grounds. Representative Neal gave a passionate speech on July 8, 2015, about finding the courage to acknowledge all sides of history and finding the grace to do the right things.

Organization Award

This award recognizes a group or organization that has demonstrated or made an outstanding accomplishment in preserving and interpreting African-American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year.

Slave Dwelling Project

This year's award recognizes the mission of identifying and assisting property owners, government agencies and organizations in the preservation of extant slave dwellings. Founder of the Slave Dwelling Project, Joseph McGill, says "While we're taught the painful story of slavery, it centers on the massive plantation house. The big house is only part of the story. The rest of the story can be found inside the small cabins and shacks spread across plantation estates and farmlands ... forgotten

... oftentimes dilapidated, dwellings that tell a much more poignant tale." The Slave Dwelling Project is a living history lesson which finds McGill attempting to spend an evening in every one of the remaining slave dwellings across the country, to help raise awareness and hopefully preserve them for future study and remembrance. He once said there was a void in this part of history, a lack of buildings that recognized the enslaved, and he set out to do something about it.

Two Project Awards

This award recognizes a project that has significantly and dramatically influenced in a permanent way the preservation and interpretation of African-American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year.

Daufuskie Endangered Places Program

The Daufuskie Endangered Places Program, a project of the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation. This program aims to preserve and retain Gullah family ownership of original cottages and houses. Most of these homes, unique in design to the Gullah culture, were left empty and abandoned after owners sought better opportunities off the island. Many of the structures are contributing properties in the National Register of Historic Places. The leaders of this project entered into a unique arrangement with family owners to restore and preserve the homes, and have them serve as revenue generating rental property until the money used to restore the homes has been recouped. Once the money has been recouped, the families are free to utilize the properties however they chose. This arrangement provides exceptional vacation experiences for visitors to Daufuskie while keeping the homes within family ownership. The project's first home was the Frances Jones House, a circa 1865 freedman's one-room dwelling believed to be constructed by Jones' great-grandmother, and it is currently available for rent. The second home is the Hinson-White/Lesesne House, which features two expansive porches and is ideal for large family gatherings.

Restoration of the Woodrow Wilson Family Home

The Historic Columbia receives the award for its efforts to restore and re-open the Woodrow Wilson Family Home. This property celebrates the life of Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States. It was closed in 2005 due to structural issues. The home was built in 1871 and was the only home owned by Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson. The family lived in the home for three years before the family moved to Wilmington, North Carolina. It underwent rehabilitation and was re-opened to the public in February of 2014. Today, the home features

professionally designed exhibit galleries, period vignettes, virtual tours and waysides that interpret the home owned by the parents of the nation's 28th president and of the Reconstruction era in which he grew up.

Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr. Trailblazer Award

The Trailblazer award is given at the discretion of the SCAAHC to an organization or individual who has been a trailblazer in the preservation of African American history and culture. The award carries the name of Herbert A. Decosta, Jr. who served faithfully on the African American Historical Commission and made many significant contributions to preservation efforts in the South Carolina Lowcountry. This year there were a record 17 winners of this prestigious award to symbolize the breadth and depth of our triumph and perseverance in spite of the trials we faced in 2015.

Mayor Steve Benjamin

Mayor Steve Benjamin was actually our sole trailblazer winner in 2015. Since an awards ceremony was not held that year, we presented his award this year. Mayor Benjamin has been mayor of the state's capital city since 2010. He is the first African-American to be elected to serve in that position. He has helped bring new capital investment to the region and he's at the forefront of a new resurgence on Main Street.

Jonathan Green

Jonathan Green is a celebrated artist from the Lowcountry of South Carolina. He is internationally recognized as a visual master for capturing Southern culture and traditions through art. His work is often called narrative realism for his extraordinary ability to narrate the rich cultural heritage of the Gullah community in which he was raised. His paintings can be found in major museums and collections throughout the world.

Willie Jefferies

Willie Jefferies served as head football coach at South Carolina State University for 19 seasons. While head football coach for SC State he won the black college football national championship in 1976, 1977 and 1994. He also won seven Mid-eastern Athletic Conference championships. He received numerous coaching awards. He was the first African American head coach of an NCAA Division 1 school as the head coach of Wichita State from 1979 to 1983. Coach Jefferies was given the Order of the Palmetto, the highest civilian honor in the state of South Carolina in 1988.

Attorney I.S. Leevy Johnson

Attorney Johnson's legal profession spans 48 years. He reached the zenith in his profession in 1985 when he became president of the South Carolina Bar. In 1998, Attorney Johnson was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers, the "Hall of Fame" of trial lawyers. The State newspaper reported on January 3, 2005, that Attorney Johnson had been named among the best lawyers in America in the area of criminal defense. His distinguished career also included serving as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives from 1971 to 1980. He represented Richland County. In 1995, he took over as owner Leevy Funeral Home which was founded by his grandparents.

Rev. Nelson B. Rivers, III

The Rev. Nelson B. Rivers, III, has risen through the ranks of the NAACP to become the Chief Operating Officer. With Rivers at the helm in South Carolina, NAACP membership in the state tripled from 1984 to 1994. His work led to the election of more than 300 new black elected officials in South Carolina between the years of 1986 and 1994. His skills as a grassroots organizer resulted in massive direct action activities including the January 2000 historic march and rally that brought more than 50,000 people to the grounds of the South Carolina Statehouse to protest the state's flying of the Confederate flag. Rev. Rivers has been inducted into the South Carolina Black Hall of Fame and received the Order of the Palmetto in 1994.

Dori Sanders

Ms. Sanders is an American novelist who captures the cultural traditions of rural South Carolina in her books, including the best-selling novel "Clover" and her most recent novel "Her Own Place." She grew up on a peach farm in Filbert, South Carolina, the eighth of 10 children. She often recounts heartwarming stories of her childhood. She says farming life and writing life go hand-in-hand. It is that richness of place that serves as a wellspring for her writings. Ms. Sanders was featured in *Southern Lady* magazine in July 2004 and *Gourmet* magazine in August of the same year. She can be found most days from Memorial Day to Labor Day at her family's peach stand in Filbert selling peaches and autographing her books.

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

Rev. Jackson is best known as an American civil rights activist, Baptist minister and protégé of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He is also the founder of the Rainbow/PUSH coalition. He is recognized by the media and the nation's political leadership as a trusted voice for civil rights.

Congressman James E. and Mrs. Emily Clyburn

Congressman Clyburn has been the U.S. Representative for South Carolina's 6th Congressional District for the past 23 years. As Assistant Democratic Leader in the 114th Congress, the number three Democrat in the House, James E. Clyburn is the leadership liaison to the Appropriations Committee, one of the Democratic Caucus' primary liaisons to the White House and Chair of the recently formed House Democrats' Democratic Outreach & Engagement Task Force. He and his wife, Emily, have generously donated to their alma mater, South Carolina State University.

Cecil Williams

Mr. Williams' photographic images of the civil rights movement provided one of the most comprehensive collections of the era. His photographs have been published in 126 books and 17 newspapers. His work has been featured in at least 11 television documentaries. Mr. Williams acquired a hand-me-down camera when he was nine. By the age of 15 he was working as a professional and freelance photographer for such publications as *Jet*, the *Afro-American* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, as well as a stringer for the Associated Press. Today, he is lauded as one of the country's most accomplished visual artists.

Justice Ernest Adolphus Finney, Jr.

Justice Finney was the first African American Supreme Court Justice appointed to the South Carolina Supreme Court since the Reconstruction Era. He represented the Friendship Nine, a group of black junior college students who were arrested and charged when trying to desegregate a lunch counter in Rock Hill. He is also a former member of the South Carolina House of Representatives.

Harvey Bernard Gantt

Mr. Gantt is an American architect and politician. He was the first African American student admitted to Clemson University in the 1960s. He continued to blaze a trail in the struggle for equal rights when he was elected the first black mayor of Charlotte, NC in 1983. He served from 1983 to 1987.

Eugene Harold Robinson

Mr. Robinson is a native of Orangeburg. He is viewed as a leading voice in the world of liberal politics. He is a syndicated columnist and former assistant managing editor of the *Washington Post*. He is also an analyst on MSNBC network news programs.

Marian Wright Edelman

This Bennettsville native is a renowned activist who has been fighting for the rights of children for more than 40 years. She blazed a trail as the first African American woman admitted to the Mississippi bar in 1963. She began her legal career as an attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and served as the director of the Jackson, Mississippi office, defending her peers in the Civil Rights Movement, as well as helping to establish the local Head Start program. She established the Children's Defense Fund in 1973 to champion policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation.

Charles Frank Bolden, Jr.

Mr. Bolden is a retired U.S. Marine Corps Major General. Mr. Bolden piloted or served as crew commander on four space shuttle missions. He was appointed the Administrator of NASA in 2009 by President Barack Obama.

Mayor Joseph P. Riley

Mayor Riley was one of the nation's longest serving mayors having served 10 terms in Charleston. He blazed trails when he organized a five-day protest walk from Charleston to Columbia in the year 2000 to protest the flying of the Confederate flag above the South Carolina statehouse. He also led the city's healing in the aftermath of the tragic shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church.