

Recording Yalobusha's Black History – Phase 1 Begins



By Dottie
Chapman Reed

Reed is a native of Water Valley and graduated from Davidson High School in 1970. This article is part of a project to compile and share info about women in the county who have made an impact on the African American community. Her column appears bi-monthly, with occasional exceptions. She can be reached at (678) 825-2356 or reed2318@bellsouth.net

Spending almost five days on the University of Mississippi campus recently left me with a combination of déjà vu and where am I? It was not my first visit since graduating in 1974, leaving my university job in 1977 or attending the second black student alumni reunion in 2012. But it was at that reunion, when to my astonishment, then chancellor Dr. Dan Jones apologized to Myrlie Evers-Williams and to black alumni. He apologized to Mrs. Evers-Williams for the university law school denying admission to her late husband, Medgar, who had met all the requirements.

And he apologized to us, the black alumni, for years of discrimination and the wrongdoings we experienced. Linda Lewis Jamison and I looked at each other in amazement and disbelief. We confirmed later that he said what we thought we heard. We also feared that some in the audience might have missed the significance of this first-ever apology from the highest paid position in the state.

When the news broke roughly three years later, that Chancellor Jones was asked to resign shortly after returning from a medical leave, I sent a note wishing him well and thanking him for that apology and for all the positive changes he brought to the university.

My visit this time was to meet with Dr. Jessie Wilkerson and her graduate level oral history class. In addition, she and I met with various administrators to discuss the oral history project that we, along with 6 of her students, launched in the Yalobusha County towns of Water Valley and Coffeeville on Sunday, September 29th. I had barely made it back home to Georgia before the latest uproar at the university once again captured national attention. The Institutions of Higher Learning, which had been charged with finding a new leader, announced that it had hired a former IHF commissioner who had been paid as a consultant in the search process. He had not been on the list of candidates under consideration.



The oral history project in Yalobusha County was launched last month as Ole Miss students visited Spring Hill North Baptist Church and Mt. Moriah District Association. The group at Mt. Moriah

Students immediately protested, and the university canceled the press conference to announce the selection of the 18th chancellor. The first picture I saw showed my cousin and Water Valley native Ray Hawkins, the chief of university police, carrying a female student protester out of the room. It was he who announced the cancellation after the IHF officials retreated.

Then I remembered a comment from an administrator I had met a few days earlier – that negative acts inside and outside the university continue to thwart the school's positive efforts.

The previous article in this column, "A Quietly Kept First," featured Ruthie White, who with a high score on the ACT in 1970 wanted to go to college but did not know whom to talk to, nor did she or her family have the money.

Almost 50 years later, on September 27, 2019, Abby Sonnier, a junior public policy and leadership major from Louisiana, wrote an opinion piece in the *Daily Mississippian* entitled, "Higher education isn't accessible to every-

one." "I never worried about paying for college," she began. "As an upper-middle class individual, it never crossed my mind that I would not be able to go to college because of financial factors outside my control. Until I got to college, I honestly did not know that people just like me in nearly every way – except financially – had to sacrifice higher education because they could not afford it. Unfortunately, this is the reality for many aspiring students across Mississippi. Thousands of students are deprived of the basic tools they need to pursue higher education, and it is not by accident.

"A sufficient education can only be provided if it is properly funded," she continued. And Mississippi falls short. According to the U.S. Department of Education, she noted, the state spends \$33,000 less per student throughout their K-12 public education than the U.S. average (\$137,467).

In closing Abby wrote, "I have heard many stories of my peers having to forgo a meal because they couldn't afford it or forgo a shower and lights in their apartment because they couldn't pay rent that month. The state motto of Mississippi is 'by valor and arms'. Wouldn't it be the brave thing – the valiant thing – for Mississippi to allow education and opportunity to extend to (and) to be fully accessible to a whole new socioeconomic group which has never before been allotted this opportunity?"

Hats off to you Abby! How wonderful it would be if the IHL, which oversees all of the public institutions of higher education, paid more serious attention to this new socioeconomic group - the students and children of Mississippi.

Our oral history project in Yalobusha County is forging ahead with this ideal, reaching out, educating, engaging and connecting communities.

Our launch was a great success. The graduate students will conduct oral history interviews of black residents and natives of Yalobusha County. We were able to speak to approximately 150 people at worship services at Spring Hill North Baptist Church in Water Valley and the Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist District Church Association in Coffeeville. Several individuals volunteered, agreeing to grant interviews to begin immediately. The students who are participating in this project are excited and describe their recent visit and anticipation on the next page.

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A History Lesson In Water Valley

Emma Gooch, a 1970 Davidson High graduate and a retired Army veteran, shares history of the former Davidson Elementary School on Calhoun Street with the University of Mississippi graduate students.

PUBLIC NOTICES

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF YALOBU SHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF FRANCES VIRGINIA HOWELL, DECEASED

NO. 19-CV-103

CHARLES MILLS AND JEAN MILLS,
EXECUTORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters Testamentary having been granted to the undersigned, by Order of the Chancery Court of Yalobusha County, Mississippi, in Cause No. 19-CV-103 on the 4th day of September, 2019; you are hereby given notice that you must present your claim, or claims, against said estate to the Clerk of said Court, Yalobusha County, Mississippi, Courthouse, Water Valley, Mississippi, for probate and registration according to law within ninety (90) days from the first publication of this notice; and you are further given notice that if your claim, or claims, is not registered and probated within said time, it will be forever barred.

This the 27th day of September, 2019.

/s/ Charles Mills
Charles Mills
/s/ Jean Mills
Jean Mills

Publish: October 3, 10 & 17, 2019

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF THE SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT
OF YALOBU SHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

ESTATE OF DOLLIE ANN HENDERSON, DECEASED

NO. 19-CV-29

RODNEY WOODARD HENDERSON, EXECUTOR

SUMMONS

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

TO: Floressa (Florissa) Henderson McCallister
address unknown

You have been made a respondent in the suit filed in this Court by Rodney Woodard Henderson, petitioner seeking to close the estate of Dollie Ann Henderson, deceased.

The respondent other than you in this action is Mose Young Henderson, Jr.

You are summoned to appear and defend against the petition filed against you in this action at 9 o'clock A.M. on the 12th day of November, 2019, in the courtroom of the Panola County Courthouse at Batesville, Mississippi, and in case of your failure to appear and defend a judgment will be entered against you for the money or other things demanded in the petition.

You are not required to file an answer or other pleading but you may do so if you desire.

Issued under my hand and the seal of said Court, this 27th day of September, 2019.

AMY F. MCMINN
CHANCERY CLERK OF YALOBU SHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

BY: Brenda K. Joiner D. C.

PUBLISH: October 3, 10 & 17, 2019

ANNOUNCEMENTS

School Board Meeting Is Oct. 21

The Water Valley Board of Trustees has scheduled a school board meeting on Monday, October 21, at 6:30 in the central office. The public is invited to attend.

VFW Will Have Haunted House And Trunk Or Treat On Oct. 29

VFW Post 4100 and its Auxiliary will have a haunted house Tuesday, October 29, at the Post Home, located at 11535 Highway 315, west of Water Valley. There will be a free Trunk or Treat for ages three to 12 years old in the parking lot. The haunted house will cost \$3 per person and attendees will use the back entrance for this event.

VFW Announces Weekend Events

Bingo is scheduled Friday, Oct. 18, at VFW Post 4100. Doors will open at 5 p.m. and play will begin at 7. Music for the Saturday night dance on October 19, will be by the band, "Southern Lights." VFW Post 4100 is located at 11535 Highway 315, west of Water Valley. All adults are invited to attend bingo and the dance.

Valley Fall Fest Scheduled Oct. 26

Valley Fall Fest, sponsored by Brilliant Little Gifts (Jazmine Walker), is scheduled October 26 from 1 to 5 p.m. at 123 Baker Street, Water Valley. The event will feature Actor Trent Bounds, Brian Banks Films, Being Mary Jane, Tales, The Best of Enemies, and Rampage. There will also be games, bouncy houses, face painting, balloon creations, food, drinks, music, and much more!

Bell Family Reunion Is Oct. 20

The Bell reunion is scheduled Sunday, October 20, at Cossar State Park, Oakland. Lunch will be served in the visitors' center at noon.