



# South Carolina African American Heritage Commission

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## Preserving Our Places in History Award Recipients

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## Preserving Our Places in History Annual Awards Ceremony

The "Preserving Our Places in History" awards are presented to recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions to the preservation of African American history and culture in South Carolina.

*The following were recognized:*

**The 2017 Leon A. Love Lifetime Achievement Award**

Mabel James Dickey, historian and preservationist  
Florence

**The 2017 Herbert A. DeCosta Trailblazer Award**

Barbara Williams Jenkins, founding Commission member, retired librarian and historian  
Manning

**The 2017 Group or Organization Award**

WMBF News, In Their Own Words: Stories of former S.C. slaves told by descendants  
Myrtle Beach, SC

**The 2017 Project Award (two recipients)**

Gullah Geechee Wisdom Cards, used for instruction in the Gullah Geechee history  
Ron and Natalie Daise  
Georgetown

AND

There Is Something About Edgefield  
Natonne E. Kemp and the late Edna Gail Bush, a book about doing Black genealogical and geographical historical research  
Takoma Park, MD

*The following are two new awards, awarded the first time this year:*

**The 2017 Student Award**

Enfinitee R. Irving, her work on "How Did We Get to Now"  
South Carolina State University, Orangeburg

**The 2017 Legislator of the Year Award**

Senator Vincent Sheheen, District 27  
Camden



## Preserving Our Places in History Annual Awards Ceremony

The South Carolina African American Heritage Commission presented its inaugural Preserving our Places in History Legislator of the Year Award to Sen. Vincent Sheheen of Camden, representing the 27<sup>th</sup> District. Sen. Sheheen was instrumental in securing funding in fiscal year 2016-17 for the Commission's heritage tourism project, which culminated in the development of the Green Book of South Carolina, the state's first online travel guide to African American historic places in South Carolina. The Green Book lists more than 300 sites associated with African



American history including markers, districts, churches, schools, historic sites, cemeteries, museums and cultural attractions.

Presenting the award were Jannie Harriot, vice chairperson of the Commission, and Strauss Moore Shiple of the Olde English District Tourism Commission and a member of the Commission. For more information go to: <https://greenbookofsc.com/scaahc-presents-legislator-year-award-sen-vincent-sheheen/>



**2017 Preserving Our Places in History Awards Recipients (l-r):** Terry James, accepting for Mabel James Dickey, Jannie Harriot, accepting for Senator Vincent Sheheen, WMBF News (Ashley Talley and Christel Bell), Natalie and Ron Daise (Gullah Geechee Wisdom Cards), Enfinitee R. Irving, Dr. Barbara Williams Jenkins. Not pictured: Natonne E. Kemp (There is Something About Edgefield).



***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 45<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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.



## 2014 Preserving Our Places in History Awards

### **Individual Award -**

Anita Joyce Singleton-Prather

### **Project Award -**

Historic Brattonsville's By the Sweat of Our Brows

### **Project Award -**

Columbia SC 63: Our Story Matters

### **Group or Organization Award -**

Preservation Society of Charleston

### **Group or Organization Award -**

The Mitchelville Preservation Project

### **Lifetime Achievement Award -**

Kitty "Miss Kitty" Wilson-Evans

### **Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr. Trailblazer Award -**

Jannie Harriot

## 2013 Preserving Our Places in History Awards

### **Individual Award:**

Curtis Franks, for his curatorial work at the Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston

### **Project Award:**

Town of Mount Pleasant for the US 17 Road Widening Project

### **Organization Award:**

Charleston County for Palmetto Commerce Parkway, Inland Rice Fields Mitigation Effort

### **Group Award:**

Historic Columbia Foundation for the Mann-Simons Site

### **Lifetime Achievement Award:**

Dr. Walter Edgar for documenting and publishing South Carolina's history

### **Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr. Trailblazer Award:**

Congressman James E. Clyburn for preservation efforts for HBCUs, the National Heritage Corridor, and the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

***Preserving Our Places in History Awards***

***Individual Award***

***Rev. Dr. M. Charmaine Ragin***

***Project Award***

***Historic Columbia Foundation***

***Connecting Communities Through History***

***Group or Organization Award***

***Fort Sumter National Monument***

***Lifetime Achievement***

***Jack Solomon Bass***

***Herbert A. Decosta, Jr. Trailblazer Award***

***AT&T African American History Calendar  
& Website***

## 2011 SCAAHC Awards



### All Winners

In January 2011, the SCAAHC presented its sixth annual Preserving Our Places in History awards. The annual meeting and awards ceremony was held at the South Carolina Archives and History Center in Columbia. The awards recognize individuals, organizations and groups, and projects that have made major contributions to the preservation of African American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year. This year's winners are:



**The Project Award:** The Seashore Farmers' Lodge Museum & Cultural Center



**Individual Award: Dr. Karen Chandler**

**Lifetime Achievement Award:  
Wilhemina Prince Johnson**



**Herbert A. Decosta, Jr. Trailblazer Award: African American Historical Alliance of South Carolina (No Picture)**

**Group or Organization Award: Southeast Rural Community Outreach (No Picture)**

## 2010 SCAAHC Awards

On January 29, 2010, the SCAAHC presented its fifth annual *Preserving Our Places in History* awards. The annual meeting and awards ceremony was held at the South Carolina Archives and History Center in Columbia. The awards recognize individuals, organizations and groups, and projects that have made major contributions to the preservation of African American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year. This year's winners are:



### The **Project Award:**

The Daufuskie Island  
Historical Foundation  
Daufuskie Island, SC



### The **Individual Award:**

Andrew Agha and Nicole  
Isengarger, Mt. Pleasant, SC



The **Group/Organizational Award:**

The Sweet Grass Cultural Arts Festival Association, Mt. Pleasant, SC

**Lifetime Achievement Awards:**

Queen Quet, St. Helena Island, SC



Dr. Cleveland Sellers, Jr., Denmark, SC





## The Fourth Annual South Carolina African American Heritage Commission "Preserving Our Places in History Awards"

On January 22nd, 2009 the SCAAHC presented its fourth annual Preserving Our Places in History awards at a banquet at the Brookland Baptist Church Banquet & Conference Center in West Columbia. The awards recognize individuals, organizations and groups, and projects that have made major contributions to the preservation of African American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year. This year's winners are (photos by Abel Bartley):



The **Individual Award** goes to **Harlan Greene** of the Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston. Mr. Greene, left, receives his award from State Sen. John Scott.

The **Organization/Group Award** goes to **David Williams & The Williams Muscadine Vineyard & Farm**, Nesmith. Mr. Williams accepts their award from Ms. Mary Anne Jacobs of Time Warner Cable.







The **Project Award** goes to the **Carolina Low Country & Atlantic World Program (CLAW)** at the College of Charleston. Dr. Simon Lewis, center, accepts the award from representatives from state Sen. Darrell Jackson's and Rep. Leon Howard's offices.

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** goes to **The Penn Center**, St. Helena Island. Representatives from Penn Center accept their award from SCAAHC Vice Chair Jannie Harriot and Ms. Jacobs.



On Friday, January 23, the second **"Trailblazer"** Award was presented at the Trailblazer Luncheon. The Trailblazer award has only been presented once. In 2007 the Commission presented the Trailblazer award to the Honorable Judge Matthew J. Perry for his life long work as a civil rights lawyer. This year's "Trailblazers" are Rhoda Green for her years of work in exploring and promoting the Barbados/Carolina connection and Bobby Ginn for his collaboration with the City of Charleston to save and preserve Morris Island.



## The South Carolina African American Heritage Commission Third Annual "Preserving Our Places in History Awards"

On Thursday, 24 January 2008, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission presented its third annual "Preserving Our Place in History" Awards at Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Two individuals and three organizations received awards for their work in preserving the history and culture of African Americans in South Carolina. Recipients included:

### **Individual Award – Clifton W. Anderson**

Mr. Anderson is the chairman of the Kershaw County Clean Community Commission in Camden, South Carolina. In 1997-1998, Mr. Anderson first got involved in what was the "lower end of Camden" and found that the further down Campbell Street one walked, the less attention was paid to the area's history and preservation. He brought this neglect to the attention of the city of Camden, but received very little encouragement in his efforts to document and preserve the area's



African-American history. With the assistance of other community members, however, he began several projects to document the history of the Campbell Street area, to clean up the area, to clean up and preserve Cedars Cemetery, and to place a historic memorial to mark the site of the historic Boylan-Haven Mather Academy for the Children of Freed Slaves. With grants, community support, and through his tireless efforts, Mr. Anderson succeeded in adding an African American Corridor to the Camden Trace, producing a brochure documenting the area's history, and raising the consciousness of the entire Camden community about the need to preserve the African-American experience in Kershaw County.

The Commission presented awards to two projects completed by the following organizations: the Woman's Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina and the Rock Hill Historical Marker Committee/Piedmont Regional association of Realtors.

**First Project Award - Woman's Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina.** In 2001, the Woman's

Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention began a statewide project to collect, document and preserve its history. Led by its president at that time, Dr. Jacqueline Canty, and the project director, Dr. Lucille S. Whipper, the organization collected the minutes of its annual meetings dating back to 1887, conducted oral history interviews with some of its former officers and senior members, and acquired photographs and biographical sketches of many of the women who were still serving the organization. One of the most important parts of the project was the three workshops that



the organization held in Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville to raise the consciousness of its members about the importance of preserving church records, programs, organizational minutes and other documents related to church history and the convention's history. The project culminated in 2006 with the publication of *Born to Serve: A History of the Woman's Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina*, the first comprehensive history of a Women's Baptist State Convention and a model of how other organizations can develop preservation projects and write their organizational histories. On the right: Dr. Lucille S. Whipper - project director and WBEMC statewide president



**Second Project Award - the Rock Hill Historical Marker Committee and the Piedmont Regional Association of Realtors.**

These two groups collaborated to preserve a very important site in downtown Rock Hill, South Carolina related to this nation's civil rights history. On January 31, 1961, ten Friendship Junior College students sat in at the McCrory's Department store at 135 East Main Street in downtown Rock Hill, South Carolina. Nine of the students refused bail and served thirty-day jail sentences. They

became known as the "Friendship Nine" and their strategy of "Jail, No Bail" to dramatize the injustice of segregation in public accommodations for African Americans became a model for the Freedom Rides that followed in 1961. A year ago, in January 2007, forty-six years after the Friendship Nine incident in Rock Hill, the Historical Marker Committee and the Piedmont Regional Association of Realtors commemorated the 1961 event by erecting a state historical marker and by making a part of the McCrory's building a permanent historic site to recognize and honor the Friendship Nine. In addition to preserving the site, the groups have preserved the original lunch counter and the nine stools with the names of the members of the Friendship Nine on them, and created a Heritage Hall that includes a permanent exhibit composed of text and photographs documenting this historic event in American history.

**Organization Award - 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company I Civil War Reenactment Unit.**

The 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment travels all over the state of South Carolina doing reenactments, teaching school children and



others about the often unknown role of African-American soldiers in the Civil War, and engaging in authentic demonstrations of soldiering in the American Civil War. Most importantly, the members of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment provide their services to schools and community groups for free. In a state where most re-enactors represent the Confederacy and where the African-American presence in the Civil War is often ignored, the 54th Massachusetts Regiment provides public education, preserves an important part of South Carolina history, and brings to the public's attention each July one of the most important battles of the Civil War—the Battle of Fort Wagner. By commemorating this battle—which established the bravery and the ability to fight of African-American soldiers at a time when most Americans doubted their courage--and participating in a variety of public events related to the history of African Americans in the Civil War, the 54<sup>th</sup> has become the leading organization in the state promoting the preservation of the history of African Americans in the American Civil War.

**Lifetime Achievement Award  
- Ronald Daise**

Ronald Daise is an educator, author, entrepreneur and historian. His productions, recordings, and writings throughout his 30-year professional career have documented Gullah heritage in an exemplary manner that transcends stereotypical points-of-view of Gullah culture. Since 2004 he has served as Brookgreen Gardens' Vice President for Creative Education and he is also a member of the newly appointed Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission. He began chronicling Gullah history and lore in 1978 during his employment as a reporter for the *Beaufort Gazette* newspaper. His feature stories of elderly residents of St. Helena Island, South Carolina were culled for



inclusion in his first book, *Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage*. This book and others that he has published have become valuable resources for Gullah studies. From 1986-1993, he and his wife Natalie scripted the book's contents into *Sea Island Montage*, a theatrical production which they toured throughout the United States –at a time before public appreciation of Gullah culture was popular, He was the co-star and cultural consultant for the Nick Jr. television's award-winning *Gullah-Gullah Island*. Most recently, he has published *Gullah Branches, West African Roots*. This book is unparalleled in its artistic promotion and preservation of Gullah heritage and culture through stunning photographs, poetry, memoirs of personal experiences, spirituals and short stories. According to Congressman Jim Clyburn, who wrote the foreword for the book, stated that "Ron affords readers an unabashed celebration of a vibrant culture . . . that turns what was once the embarrassment of having enslaved ancestors to one that demonstrates the value of their ancestors' talents and treasures."



## The South Carolina African American Heritage Commission

### "Preserving Our Places in History Awards"

On the evening of Thursday, January 25, 2007, during its annual meeting in Columbia, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission presented the second annual *Preserving Our Places in History* awards. The awards recognized individuals, an organization and a project that have demonstrated or made an outstanding contribution to the preservation and interpretation of African American history and culture in South Carolina during the past year.



Cecil J. Williams, Bernie Wright, and Senator Kay Patterson. Photo by Abel Bartley

**Cecil J. Williams** of Orangeburg received the individual award for his ongoing work as one of the state's most significant photographers. His work documents African American life in South Carolina from the 1940s to the recent present.



Emory Campbell photo by Abel Bartley

**Emory Campbell** of Hilton Head was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifelong commitment to the preservation of the African American experience in South Carolina. He is executive director emeritus of the Penn Center on St Helena Island. During his twenty-year tenure, he organized the nationally recognized Penn Center Heritage Days, revised the Center's family farm program, and expanded its museum program to assist writers, filmmakers and authors. He continues to do African American heritage tours of the Sea Islands, to work with other communities to preserve the property rights of African Americans on the Sea Islands (in the face of creeping development), and to write and publish about Gullah-Geechee history and culture.





Marvin Dulaney, Jennie Stephens, executive director of the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, and Michael Allen. Photo by Abel Bartley

The **Center for Heirs' Property Preservation** in North Charleston received the organizational award for its work in providing education and legal services to African Americans in the Lowcountry on how to preserve heirs' property. Created in 2005 by the Coastal Community Foundation, the Center provides pro bono legal counsel, court representation, family mediation, and community based education to enable its clients to actively protect and preserve their property rights.



Rep. Lonnie Hosey (far right) and Bernie Wright present the Project Award to (from l to r) McKenzie Kubly, Ashley Guinn, Linday Crawford, and Patricia Shandor.

Not pictured are Dr. Robert Weyeneth, Lindsay Maybin, Santi Thompson, and Louis Venters. Photo by Abel Bartley

The **Camden African American Heritage Project** completed by seven graduate students in Dr. Robert Weyeneth's History 712 "Historic Preservation Practicum" class at the University of South Carolina received the project award. The Camden African American Heritage Project not only documented African American history and Culture in Camden, South Carolina (including the discovery of a little known slave revolt planned in the city in 1816), the project also had the real world impact of being used by public officials in Camden to secure a \$100,000 grant to establish a local African American history museum.



## 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](#).

