

NEWS
FROM THE
SOUTH
CAROLINA
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HERITAGE
COMMISSION



Mission Statement

The mission of the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission is to identify and promote the preservation of African American historic sites, structures, buildings, and culture of the African American experience in South Carolina, and to assist and enhance the efforts of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Call & Response

<https://scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/resources/african-american-heritage/south-carolina-african-american-heritage>

Volume XVII, Number I

Spring 2021



2

0

2

0

Preserving Our Places

In

History

2

0

2

1

Prominent SC Leaders Recognized in Annual Awards Program

With support from the WeGOJA Foundation, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission presented achievement awards to nine influencers for lifetime leadership or significant contributions to preserving and promoting African American history in South Carolina over the past year.

Under the theme "Preserving Our Places in History: Lest We Forget," the program featured inspiring remarks by keynote speaker State Senator Mia McLeod, who challenged the virtual audience to become the change they seek. "We have to first understand our history, then we have to challenge ourselves and each other to make history," she said. "And finally, we have to muster the courage to change history, lest we forget and repeat it." The program also acknowledged [2020 award winners](#) (pictured above) who were not recognized last year because the ceremony was cancelled due to COVID-19.

— Continued on Next Page

Winners Announced for Preserving Our Places in History Annual Awards Program

The awards ceremony also featured greetings by Congressman Jim Clyburn and Dr. Eric Emerson, South Carolina's state preservation officer and Director of the Department of Archives and History. There was also a performance by Christal Brown and the Gullah Geechee Choir. Local comedian Akintunde served as Master of Ceremony.

The 2021 Award Recipients were:

Leon Love Lifetime Achievement Award — Joseph McGill

McGill is founder of The Slave Dwelling Project. Ten years ago, McGill began spending the night in historic slave quarters and has slept overnight at more than 150 such sites across the country. He uses the experience to talk about the importance of preserving these historic structures so that we may have full and honest conversations about our country's history. He has worked as a field officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is a former director of history and culture at the Penn Center, and is a former docent to the Old Slave Mart Museum in Charleston. McGill is currently a history consultant for Magnolia Plantation & Gardens in Charleston.



Herbert A. DeCosta Trailblazer Award for Innovative Leadership — Marilyn Hemingway

Hemingway is the CEO, President and Founder of the Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce. She is a native of Georgetown and is passionate about Social Entrepreneurship, business development and economic vibrancy. She is a founding partner of The Hemingway Group, a public relations, advertising, marketing and political advocacy firm. She is also a registered fundraiser with the state of South Carolina and has completed Energy Justice and Sea Level Rising certifications through the national NAACP.

SCAAHC's Project Award — The Cecil Williams South Carolina Civil Rights Museum

This museum is the first and only civil rights museum in the state of South Carolina. The museum's official opening was offset by COVID-19, but still attracted more than 9,000 visitors. It has preserved more than 1,000 photographs, documents and artifacts – Including original photography of marches and protests, a travel trunk that once belonged to Justice Thurgood Marshall and more -- that are exclusive, one-of-a-kind historical treasures relating to the South Carolina civil rights movement.



— Continued on Next Page

The 2021 Award Recipients (cont.):



Legislator of the Year — State Representative Joseph H. Jefferson, Jr.

Rep. Jefferson represents Berkeley and Dorchester counties. This award recognizes a legislator who has endorsed the preservation of African American history and culture and/or solicited funding in 2020 through the state legislature for causes, groups or organizations that support the preservation of African American history and culture in South Carolina.

Group/Organization Award — The Village Group

The Village Group of Georgetown County is comprised of community leaders, parents, elders and concerned citizens with one common interest: to improve the Plantersville community and build a brighter future for our children. During the early months of the pandemic, Georgetown County school children were provided with access to Chromebooks, but many had no access to the internet. The HTC and the Village Group partnered to help provide Wi-Fi hotspots at the Plantersville Cultural Center and the Plantersville Community Center. The Village Group, a nonprofit serves approximately 88% of Plantersville Elementary School students in an after school program.



Group/Organization Award — Drayton Hall Preservation Trust

2020 was a watershed year for the Drayton Hall Preservation Trust (DHPT) concerning the interpretation of African American history. DHPT's proudest accomplishment is a new audio tour of the main house. Since the 1970s, tours of Drayton Hall focused primarily on architecture and the building's White residents. The new tour, which was featured on the front page of Charleston's Post and Courier, accentuates Drayton Hall's status as an African American history site dedicated to researching and interpreting that history. It is a social history tour that focuses primarily on the enslaved residents of Drayton Hall. In conjunction, a new self-guided walking tour was created for the grounds of Drayton Hall that provides much more information about enslaved people and their enormous contributions across the site.

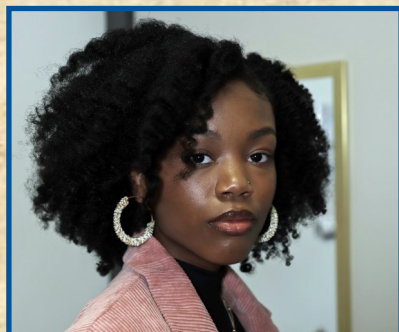


Learn more about the new House Tour that addresses the lives and labor of the enslaved at Drayton Hall by clicking [here](#).



— Continued on Next Page

The 2021 Award Recipients (cont.):



Student Award — Keighla Pope

This Claflin University student produced a noteworthy documentary on the impact of the coronavirus on her local community. The documentary explores the impact of COVID-19 on not only a religious community, but also the African American business community. The documentary titled: *The Lowcountry Battle with Covid-19* can be found on YouTube.

Individual Award — Dr. Beatrice Rice Thompson

Well-known in the Anderson community as a member of the Anderson City Council, this octogenarian worked on the Church Street Heritage Plaza with a team of artists on art installations with stories, a series of clay reliefs and a sculpture in homage to a key era in Anderson's history featuring a generation of black entrepreneurs and community leaders. Dr. Thompson shepherded the city of Anderson's \$450,000 upgrade to the park named in her honor. And in 2020, the United Way of Anderson County named Dr. Thompson as the African American Legacy Award Winner.



SCAAHC Commissioner of the Year — Dr. Abel Bartley

Dr. Bartley is an African American history professor at Clemson University and currently serves as Vice Chair of the Commission. However, he has served in leadership roles for the Commission for at least a decade. Under his leadership, the Commission produced teacher's guides, hosted teacher's webinars and institutes, created the Green Book of South Carolina, published a resource guide for rural entrepreneurship and a book that documents historic African American schools around the state, and managed the oral history project *Black Carolinians Speak*.



The NEW Jannie Harriot Founders Award

A new award was presented in the 2021 program – the Jannie Harriot Founders Award – to recognize an individual who has given significant contributions to the growth and sustainability of the SCAAHC. The inaugural award was given to Jannie Harriot, Chairperson of the SCAAHC and former Executive Director of the WeGOJA Foundation. Jannie began her commitment to African American historic preservation when she successfully saved Butler High School in Hartsville. She was part of the group of historians and activists who founded the SC African American Heritage Council in 1993 (now the SCAAHC) and, later, the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation (now WeGOJA Foundation.) Under her leadership, both organizations became models for preservation programs in other states.

[Take Action](#)

TAKE ACTION

Support African American Heritage!

You can support the WeGOJA Foundation in a variety of ways and help preserve African American heritage in South Carolina.

Donations/Memberships

We make it easy with a Cash App account! Send any amount to **\$WeGOJA**.

One of the best ways to support WeGOJA is by committing to a monthly donation at the link below.

Memberships (Individual, family, church or organization) provide engagement with our ongoing work.

Membership benefits include:

- Invitations and discounted registrations to all SC African American Heritage Commission conferences
- A subscription to the SC African American Heritage Commission's Call & Response quarterly e-newsletter
- A subscription to "News and Notes," a monthly online e-newsletter from the Historic Preservation Division of the SC Department of Archives and History

Other ways to help include:

- Purchasing T-Shirts, mugs and caps so that you can show off your pride for WeGOJA, or
- Shift your regular Amazon shopping to the [Amazon Smiles](#) Program and choose "WeGOJA Foundation" as your charity of choice.

[Donate/Join](#)[Merchandise](#)[Amazon Smiles](#)

[Take Action](#)

Amazon Smiles

Supporter:

Thank you for donating to the WeGOJA Foundation! Amazon will contribute a portion of the proceeds from your purchase, at no charge to you, if you make that purchase on their charitable giving site. In your browser, enter Smile.Amazon.com, and follow their prompts to **choose “WeGOJA Foundation” as your charity of choice!**



Image Courtesy of Amazon

Bookmark the site for all of your future Amazon purchases!

[Click Here to Purchase](#)



For more information about Amazon's program, visit

[Amazon](#)





Preserving Our Places in History In the Classroom

A FREE Professional Development Webinar Series for South Carolina Educators



The WeGOJA Foundation and the SC African American Heritage Commission hosted a series of FREE professional development webinars for South Carolina educators to help enhance their classroom instruction. The webinars provided easy-to-follow, curriculum based lesson plans, activities and resources for 3rd and 8th grade art and social studies. The material incorporates African American history and heritage into lesson plans and, through modeling, demonstrates how to address complex historical subjects like slavery and Civil Rights in the classroom.

South Carolina educators who attended at least two of the five webinars received 3 CEU credits, a \$75 stipend and a copy of the Commission's *A Teacher's Guide to African American Historic Places in South Carolina*.

Special thanks to WeGOJA and SCAAHC leadership, project leader Alada Shinault Small, Jeremy Harriot, Dr. Bobby J. Donaldson, Cecil Williams, Demetri Brown, Antoinette Clyburn, Seandra Molden, Steven Getz, the Leevy Family, and all of the teachers who attended each session. We truly appreciate your hard work and support!



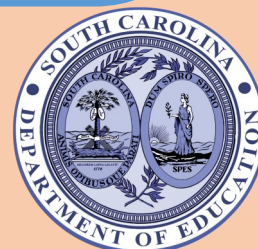
Did you miss our series of professional development webinars?

Recordings Can Be Found [HERE](#).



This webinar series was funded in part by the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

This project was also funded in part by the South Carolina Department of Education



The Green Book of South Carolina: Family Reunion Toolkit

One of the most distinctive aspects of African American culture is the Family Reunion, the weekend gathering of extended family members who reconnect, share, update and rediscover.

Its roots stretch back to Emancipation, when formerly enslaved people placed "Information Wanted" advertisements in search of relatives who were cruelly separated from them while in bondage.

Reunions grew and became more joyful gatherings during the Great Migration, when nearly four million African Americans fled the South to the North and West between 1915 and 1960. As they found education and professional opportunities that were denied to them in the Jim Crow South, they developed the country's first African American middle class. With their discretionary income, they traveled back to the family and the communities they left behind. Many of them used the *Negro Motorist Green Book* to help them find welcoming establishments on their journey.

The reunion became a tangible symbol of memory and resilience that endured atrocities since slavery. Today, African American family reunions continue as an intergenerational celebration of community, fellowship and heritage.



RECONNECT & REDISCOVER

Plan your next
family reunion
with the Green Book of SC



FamilyReunionSC.com

Need Help Planning Your Next Family Reunion?

Visit: <https://greenbookofsc.com/family-reunion-toolkit/>

Green Book Spotlight

First published in 1936 by New York postal worker and entrepreneur Victor Hugo Green, the original Negro Motorist Green Book was created to provide African American travelers with vital information to avoid the embarrassments, difficulties, and dangers caused by southern Jim Crow customs and de facto segregation in other sections of the country. Aided by a cadre of informants—most of whom were Black postal workers—Green and his small, dedicated staff began to list businesses that accommodated Black customers nationwide beginning in 1938. Roughly 200 Black owned businesses and other institutions in South Carolina were listed prior to its final edition in 1967.

Preserving Green Book History through the Arts

Over the past few months, we have been surveying extant *Green Book* sites in South Carolina and collecting stories about the former proprietors and families who operated these businesses that sustained Black communities during segregation.

The stories of *Green Book* businesses that are no longer standing are equally important. Although these buildings have been demolished, many South Carolinians fondly remember these establishments and have honored their legacies in unique ways. This week, the City of Columbia, Columbia SC 63 and their partners unveiled “The Pursuit of Opportunity: Celebrating African American Business,” a stunning mural based on a 65-year-old photo of the city’s once thriving African American business district on Washington Street, home to the Green Leaf Café, a Black owned restaurant listed in the popular travel guide between 1939 and 1967.

The Green Leaf Café was established in 1930 by Emory Wallace Vance and Mrs. Otis Edna Tucker Vance. Their bustling café was a popular destination for hungry residents, travelers, civil rights attorneys (Harold Boulware’s law office was located one floor above), and musicians. The Mills Brothers, a popular jazz quartet, reportedly dined here. In addition to being entrepreneurs, the Vances were devoted members of Bethel AME Church, the Allen Alumni Association, and the Columbia NAACP.



Green Leaf Café, 1117 Washington Street, Columbia.
Photo by Eugene Sloan. Courtesy of the South Caroliniana Library.



Ija Charles, “The Pursuit of Opportunity: Celebrating African American Business,” 2021. Photo by Ramon Jackson.



A Travel Guide to S.C.
African American Cultural Sites

Visit Our Website!

The Green Book of South Carolina

www.greenbookofsc.com

Join the conversation on social media:

[@SCAAHC1993](https://twitter.com/SCAAHC1993)



**South Carolina African American Heritage Commission
Presents**

▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼ **Drumbeat** ▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼▼

The Rhythm of African American History and Culture in
South Carolina

**Join the Conversation!
Sundays at 5pm**

Watch Previous Episodes!

Complete Playlist: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/243581086591559/385900462417058>

Legendary Civil Rights Photographer Cecil Williams::

<https://www.facebook.com/243581086591559/>

Celebrating Jazz Appreciation Month:

<https://www.facebook.com/243581086591559/videos/1124546328012632>

<https://www.facebook.com/243581086591559/videos/308204620654792>



Host
Bhakti Larry Hough

Livestreaming on Facebook!

- **WeGOJA Foundation:** <https://facebook.com/SCAAHistory/?ref=bookmarks>
- **South Carolina African American Heritage Commission:** <https://facebook.com/SCAAHC1993/>
- **Bhakti's New World Arts:** <https://www.facebook.com/bhaktilarryhough>

Sponsored By





Become a Member TODAY!

Help us continue to tell the full story of
African American Heritage in South Carolina

wegoja.org

Thank you for supporting WeGOJA Foundation! Please complete the membership form below and mail in with your payment, or visit www.WeGOJA.org to sign up online.

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Type of membership

Individual \$25 _____ Family \$100 _____ Church/Non-Profit \$150 _____

Business/Corporation \$200 _____ DONATION \$ _____

Mail to: Jannie Harriot, Executive Director, WeGOJA Foundation, PO Box 1053, Hartsville, SC 29551



Pride · Future · Courage · Purpose · Culture

Thank You for Your Support!

