

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION SCIENCE
The iSchool at Illinois

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

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design by Jaime Carpenter

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Introduction

Since Fall 2009 the eBlackChampaign-Urbana project has worked with local youth and community institutions to digitize local African-American history and make it accessible online. In doing this work we want to both make history come alive and preserve the documentation of our present moment. This booklet will become a historical record. Deposited in local libraries, stored in personal archives, and made available online, this booklet will be referred to twenty, forty years from today.

This booklet fits within a tradition of commemorative collective biographies produced both locally and nationally. Locally, we see this publication is building on the 1983 publication of Raymond Bial and the Champaign County Historical Museum, *In All My Years : Portraits of Older Black in Champaign-Urbana*, featuring photographs and brief biographies of a number of important difference makers in the local African-American community. This tradition continued in the early 2000s when the Early American Museum, in collaboration with the Champaign County African American History Committee and the local chapters of the National Council of Negro Women/National Council of African American Men produced an exhibit and accompanying website entitled "This Legacy is Yours" and "This Legacy is Yours Too" featuring biographies and photographs of a multitude of local difference makers in the African-American community. Nationally, this booklet fits within the tradition of "Who's Who" books that seek to list and honor individuals who go out of their way to make a difference.

At the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science we are interested in what is called "Community Informatics." Community informatics is the study of the interaction between transformation as expressed in information technology and continuity as expressed in a local, historical community. In eBlackChampaign-Urbana we are interested in the historical continuity of our local African-American community through the transformations of that community in the digital age.

Through the power of digital technology anyone can make a booklet like this one. We used OpenOffice, a free-to-download, open-source word processing program and GIMP, a free-to-download, open-source photo editing program to design and produce this booklet. With these free tools any community organization, such as a church or school, could produce their own difference makers booklet to make up for whatever absences appear in this booklet.

In a project like this one there are always going to be individuals and groups that are regrettably missed. We apologize for whatever important gaps this publication has and encourage individuals not represented in this booklet to use the available technological tools to represent themselves online and in-print. We encourage people and groups to grab the power of technology to represent themselves and ensure the preservation of their communities and their communities' history. This aim is the ultimate goal of the eBlackChampaign-Urbana project.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Ted Adkisson is currently director and minister of cultural affairs with African-American History Academy, a group designed to educate, inform and motivate African-American members and their families to build better relationships, apply hard work, and develop positive self-images in the community through the teaching and study of African-American history. The AAH Academy material is designed to rob the ignorance from African-Americans who have been culturally deprived because of mental slavery. Mr. Adkisson retired from human resources in 1993 at the University of Illinois, after working there for 30 years. He has been a business owner of TeRo's and Associates, a mentor in the Community Collaboration for Economic Development and an independent film and media maker. He has also taught free computer classes at a number of area churches as well as the Douglas Annex. In 1996 he received an award for black business-owners presented by Urban League of Champaign County, National Council of African-American Men and the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce.



Ted Adkisson

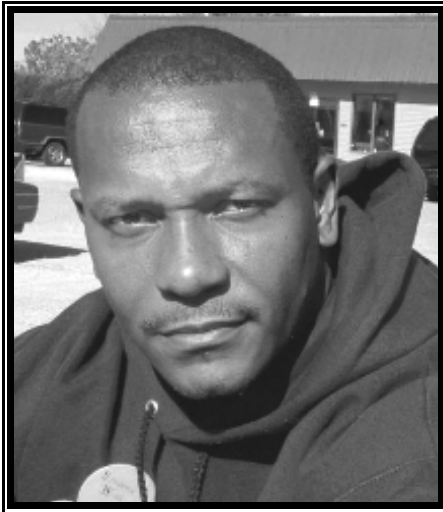


Harold Allston

Harold Allston, owner of the Great Impasta for the past ten years, learned his craft first at his grandmother's apron. His Louisiana relative would fix large family meals every morning and night using fresh vegetables and fruits delivered by neighboring farmers, sometimes serving the ducks she raised in her backyard. Harold would scurry under foot, more hindrance than help, but always comfortable in the heat of the kitchen. During his years at the University of Illinois, he paid the bills working in various restaurants as a cook. After college, he left the Midwest for several years to hone his skills on the East Coast. When he returned he was taken under wing by "Papa" Piero Faraci, the father of the Great Impasta. This relationship led to the opportunity to own the business. With great perseverance and patience, Mr. Allston has continued the restaurant's legacy of great food, great service and community involvement.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Aaron Ammons

Aaron Ammons co-founded the CU Citizens for Peace & Justice, an advocacy group in Champaign-Urbana. The group has fought to end the use of tasers in local jails, organized truck drives to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina and most recently protested the death of Kiwane Carrington. Ammons is also a poet, and has released two books: *As I Travel My Creation* and *Journey Through Another Man's Mind*. His poetry has also been published in the *Public i*. Since 2005 he has helped organize Speak Cafe, a monthly spoken word event at the Krannert Art Museum open to all in the community. He works for Facilities and Services on the University of Illinois and has been active in union organizing on campus. He has also taken courses at the University towards completing his Bachelor's Degree. With his wife, Carol Ammons, Champaign County board member, he has raised two boys, Jelani and Amir.

Andre Arrington is Executive Director of the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club in Champaign. He received a degree in Social Work from Alabama State University in 1994, where he was active in Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. He is a member of Rotary Club of Champaign and a member of the review committee charged with assessing the complaint process in the Champaign Police Department. Arrington has helped sustain and expand the Boys and Girls Club under his leadership, establishing new programs for teens and other youth and serving as the host of the North End Breakfast Club, a community men's organization that meets Saturday mornings at the Club.

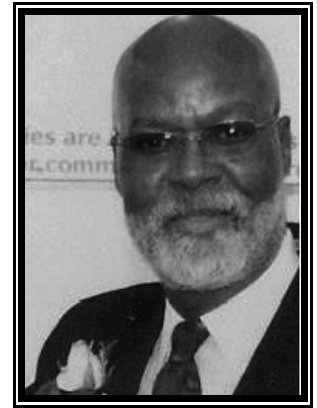


Andre Arrington

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes was born in St. Louis, and moved to Champaign in 2000. He is the Founder and Executive Director of the Metanoia Centers, a 501(c)3 community-based organization founded in 2000 that serves as a catalyst for improving both the physical and economic health of residents in Central Illinois. Rev. Dr. Barnes combines over 40 years of experience in social work with community organizing beginning with the NAACP in 1965. He has been instrumental in forming twelve nonprofits from the east coast to the Midwest. His most recent accomplishment was being invited to the White House for the signing of the historical Financial Reform Bill of 2010. He has won the Delaware state TRIO Outstanding Service award, Wilmington City Council award for New Directions Summer Youth Program, Phyllis K. Washington Outstanding Leadership award, and is listed in the 2000 edition of Who's Who International Entrepreneurs. Dr. Barnes holds a PH.D. in theology, graduating Cum Laude, from Slidell Baptist Seminary in Slidell, Louisiana and is an associate minister at New Life Church of Faith of Champaign-Urbana.



Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes



Nathaniel Banks

Nathaniel Banks is a life-long resident of Champaign, Illinois. He was educated in the Champaign schools, and graduated from what is now called Champaign Central High. He received his college education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign campus and has a Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Science in Applied Music and Music Education respectively. Upon leaving college, Nathaniel Banks worked as the Assistant Director of the Afro-American Cultural Program for nine years. He then left campus to become the Principal of Judah Christian High School. He returned to the U of I in 1990 to work in the Office of Minority Student Affairs. Mr. Banks has worked in several capacities in the University including the Director of Upward Bound, the President's Leadership Program, Director of the African American Cultural Program and Director of Campus-Community Interface, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement. With Robert Lewis, he formed Mo'Betta Music, a youth, volunteer music organization that has performed at community events. Nathaniel Banks is married to Lisha Banks. They have three sons.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Imani Bazzell

Imani Bazzell has worked as a community educator and organizer in the areas of racial justice, gender justice, healthcare access, educational reform, and leadership development for over thirty years. She is the founder and director of SisterNet, a local network of African American women committed to the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health of Black women. She is currently director and founder of Family Advocacy in Champaign. She has been director of At Promise... of Success, a collaboration between the Champaign Public

Schools, the Community Academic Support Network and the University of Illinois dedicated to increasing the numbers of African American students engaging the secondary rigorous curriculum and prepared to attend the college of their choice. She has also served as an independent consultant with public schools, colleges and universities, unions, non-profits, state and international agencies, and community-based organizations to promote organizational development and social justice.

After 4 years at Southern Illinois University in law enforcement and security management, Brian Bell worked in the private security field with a specialization in information technology. He is now project coordinator and part time faculty at Parkland Community College, Champaign, IL, specializing in computer literacy as coordinator of an NSF and Illinois Department of Commerce Digital Divide grant. He operates Parkland's Illinois WorkNet Center for service to the unemployed and teaches multiple sections in the Computer Science and Information Technology Department. Brian also worked at Don Moyers Boys and Girls Club developing and teaching, Crossroads Community Church developing computer curriculum at the middle school level, and Urban League of Champaign-Urbana where he set up and coordinated a community technology center. Currently Brian has been tirelessly devoted to establishing public computing centers in vulnerable locations throughout the champaign Urbana community. This is accomplished by the donation of computers obtained from local and national corporations, refurbished then redistributed throughout the community. Brian believes access to technology is the first step in bridging the digital divide.



Brian Bell

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Mary Haywood-Benson moved to Champaign from Chicago in December of 1970. She holds an Associate Degree in General Studies and a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration. She has worked at various jobs in the community including the Commercial Bank for 5 years and Kraft Foods for 25 years. She is a member of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and has served as President of the Lu Anna Riley Missionary Society. She has served as President and Secretary for Bethel Lay Organization and as President of National Council of Negro Women Champaign County Section from 1991-1995. She currently serves as



Mary Haywood-Benson

President of Church Women United of Champaign-Urbana. Her past community activities include serving on the Woman's Fund Board, YWCA Board, as a volunteer at Joanne Dorsey Homes working with girls age 10-12, with Girls Inc teaching sewing to girls 10-12 years old, with the United Way, the Steering Committee for Provena Hospice Celebration of Taste, and has delivered Meals on Wheels. She is mother of three, grandmother of five and great-grandmother of three.



Dawn Mosley
Blackman

Dawn Mosley Blackman, a Chicago native, moved to Champaign in April 1993. As a military wife she lived in Europe and the Middle East, where she apprenticed with native craft people, which led to Motherlands Multicultural Resource Center and Motherlands Culture Club, located at Church Street Square in 1995. In Spring 1999 Motherlands Culture Club was adopted as a ministry by the Church of the Brethren. Some of the programs that have grown out of this partnership include: Kwanzaa Karamu Celebration; Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Peace Banner Workshop; Community Craft Closet; Back to School/ Schools' Out Cook Outs; Children's Volunteer Network; Community Pot Lucks; Randolph Street Community Garden; Community Internet Access Point; Emergency Food Pantry; Dorcas Ministry - Clothing Assistance. Her community group associations include: Champaign Downtown Association; A Woman's Center; SisterNet; Champaign Public Library - Fredrick Douglas Sculpture Committee. She is a recipient of a McKinley Y.W.C.A. award for community service and The Madam C.J. Walker award for women in business, Champaign chapter of the National Council of African American Men. She is the mother of a grown daughter, Dawn Jr.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Rev. Zernial M. Bogan

Rev. Zernial M. Bogan was born in New York City and came to Champaign-Urbana by way of the U.S. Air Force in 1971. He has a G.E.D. from the Champaign County Department of Education, 1977, and certificates to be a firefighter II from the University of Illinois, locksmith from the Beslaw Institute, and auto diesel mechanic from Danville Area Community College. In March 1998 he became a baptist minister at Pilgrim Restoration Missionary Baptist Church and became an ordained minister in July 2006. He serves in the prison ministry at Salem Baptist Church in Champaign and has been since 2002 the church's

computer director. He has had radio shows on WEFT from 2001 to 2008 and on WRFU from 2004 to 2006. Since 2000 he has owned his own business, L & Z Cleaning and Contrustion. He is currently attending Ashford University online and will graduate with a B.A. in organizational management in July 2011. He is also involved in the Champaign County Black Chamber of Commerce and a non-voting policy board member with Urbana Champaign Big Broadband (UC2B).

Mrs. Erma Scott Bridgewater was born on November 24, 1913 at the home of her paternal grandparents at 305 E. Tremont Street. She is a 1937 graduate of the University of Illinois with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. She married Cecil Bridgewater of Tuscola, and raised three children:Cecil, Ron and Cassandra. She has 9 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. She was employed in 1939 as the Director of Douglass Center. She remained as Assistant Director and Director of Douglass Center until 1963. She later worked as a proof reader for the Courier Newspaper; an Outreach Worker at Frances Nelson Health Center; Relocation Officer for the Urban Renewal Program; and, Housing Specialist for the Community Development Program. She retired in 1984. She is a charter member of the local graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and a charter member of the local chapter of the National Council of Negro Women. Mrs. Bridgewater has been a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church since age 12 and a member of the Bethel Choir for over 70 years.



Erma Scott Bridgewater

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Jamar L. Brown, a Champaign native, is married to Erica Brown, with whom he has two children. He graduated in 2001 from Centennial High and is currently working to obtain a degree in Industrial Technology. Since 2006 he has worked for the University of Illinois as a Lab Mechanic in the department of civil engineering. He is currently Vice-Chair of the Champaign Human Relations Commission and a member of the Champaign Unit 4 schools EEE (Education Equity Excellence) Committee; the Ethic Diversity ministry at the Vineyard Church; and the Champaign Community and Police Partnership (CCAPP). He is also a member of the North End Breakfast club. He has helped deliver food boxes to the residents at Restoration Urban Ministries with the Vineyard Church and put together a food give away at the Boys and Girls Club with councilman William Kyles that served 145 families. He is a member of the mentoring program "Brothas Let's Talk." He is a graduate of the Citizens Police Academy offered by the Police Training Institute on the University of Illinois campus.



Jamar L. Brown

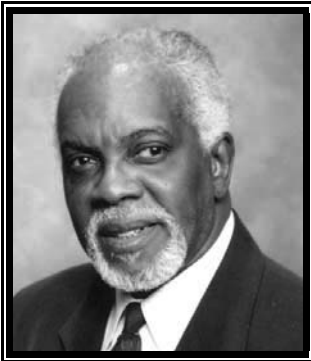


Sally K. Carter

Sally K. Carter is the Founder and Executive Director of TAP In Leadership Academy. The academy focuses on after-school and summer enrichment programming. She has always been an entrepreneur; however, her focus is social entrepreneurship. She recently earned a Masters in Business Administration from Kaplan University. She is a licensed cosmetology and successfully owned a hair salon for many years. She continues to operate a skin care line, Mahogany Essentials, with her daughter. Her Bachelors degree is in Mass Communications from Illinois State University. She has been a professional public speaker for over 15 years. Her husband, James, is a Police Officer. They have been married for over 11 years and have two daughters, one son, and a beautiful pit bull named Diamond. Her community involvement include: YWCA Board; Fundacion Progreso Board; Keynote, Television Host, Your Best Life Today; Radio Co-Host, WBCP; Motivational Speaker, Speaker, Children's Court Centennial Commemoration, Chicago; Member, Juvenile Court Centennial Initiative: A National Advisory Council; Co-facilitator and panelist, 27th National Conference on Juvenile Justice, Tampa; Member, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Jerome Charles
Chambers Jr.

Jerome Charles Chambers Jr., son of Jerome & Pearl (Culbreath) Chambers, Sr., a preacher and missionary, was reared and educated in St. Louis. He celebrated 50 years in the Gospel Ministry, February 2009. He has preached in the United States, Great Britain, Central America, Canada, and Caribbean islands. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Ministry degrees from Anchor Theological Seminary and Bible College, Texarkana, Arkansas. He is presently serving as Pastor of Liberty Temple Ministries (COGIC), Champaign, Illinois. He has been a

contributing writer for many publications include The Whole Truth (COGIC) and the St. Louis North Star Magazine. He has been an instructor/facilitator in the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Central Illinois Quarterly meetings of the Church of God in Christ; Member of the Executive Committee, Administrative Assistant & Jurisdictional Expeditor. Other civic affiliations include: former Secretary, Champaign/Urbana Ministerial Alliance & Vicinity; President, Champaign County Branch of the NAACP; Champaign Community and Police Partnership (CCAPP); Champaign County Juvenile Issues Forum (CCJIF), and Excellence & Equity in Education Committee for Champaign Unit 4 School District (EEE)..

Rev. Dr. Harold D. Davis was born in Charleston, West Virginia. He moved to Champaign-Urbana in August of 1980 with his wife, Ollie Watts Davis. From 1981-1986, Rev. Davis served as a music specialist/teacher for Champaign Unit #4 School District. He took courses toward a Master's degree in Music Education. In 1984 he accepted his calling to the gospel preaching ministry. In 1986 he joined the staff at Canaan Baptist Church as the Assistant Pastor/Pastor of Youth Activities, and served for twelve years. There he developed a program called "Love Triangle," which developed into the TALKS Mentoring Curriculum in 1993. Since 1998, Reverend Davis has devoted his full attention as Executive Director of TALKS Mentoring to assisting adults reach youth through mentoring. There are TALKS affiliate offices across the country. He has served as the President of the Board of Directors for the SAFE House (Substance Abuse-Free Environment) and on the boards of Youth for Christ and Boy Scouts of America. He has authored several books.



Rev. Dr. Harold D.
Davis

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Dr. Ollie Watts Davis was born in Oak Hill, West Virginia and raised in Mount Hope, West Virginia. She moved to Champaign-Urbana in August of 1980 with her husband, Rev. Dr. Harold D. Davis, to attend the University of Illinois as a graduate Fellow in music. A Professor of Music on the Voice faculty, in 2008 she was named a University Scholar, one of the highest recognitions bestowed upon faculty. She is Conductor of the University of Illinois Black Chorus, and Director of the biennial Black Sacred Music Symposium. She has released two CDs and has written two books for mentoring young girls as part of the TALKS Mentoring Leadership curriculum. She has also served on the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Board of Directors, as a mentor in the Champaign Unit #4 District schools, and as the Choral Director for the Empty Tomb Ministry's Children's Arts Festival. She recently hosted the inaugural session of StudiO: the Ollie Watts Davis Vocal Institute for young singers. Dr. Davis attends Canaan Missionary Baptist Church and has served in the Music, Counseling, Children, Youth, and Evangelism Ministries.



Dr. Ollie Watts Davis

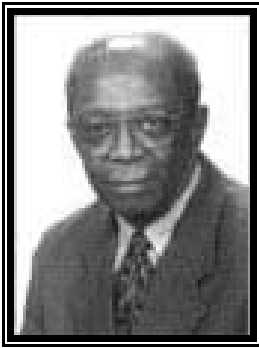


Connie R. Dillard

Connie R. Dillard was born in East St. Louis and moved to Champaign as a young adult. She is a graduate of Urbana High School. She is an Information Services Professional, voting member representing the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on the Urbana Champaign Big Broadband project. She has a Master's Degree from Eastern Illinois University in Technology Training and Development, a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and an associates degree in Computer Information Systems from Parkland College. She worked for many years in Cataloging and other department of the Main Library at the University, where she remembers using computers before they were used widely by the general public. She is a member of Salem Baptist Church and has been involved in the church's technology program. She currently works at CMT Ventures as an administrative assistant.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Nate Dixon

Nate Dixon was one of ten black high school students who in 1956, under federal court order, had to be escorted by 160 National Guardsmen past rows of fist-waving white people to school in Sturgis, Kentucky. Dixon came to Champaign to finish his degree at the University of Illinois and worked at the Adler Mental Health Clinic, Illinois Department of Mental Health. From 1973 to 2000 he worked for the Champaign Park District, first as director of the Douglas Center and later as director of community services, where

he awarded scholarships to underprivileged families and served as the districts Affirmative Action Officer. He has been involved in numerous professional and community organizations. He has served on the board of Illinois Park and Recreation Association and was a charter member of Illinois Association of Park District's Illinois Ethnic Minority Society in 1991. He has been a member of the Champaign County United Way Board and has been actively involved with the Champaign Lions Club and Urban League.

Gerald (Candy) Foster has been performing classic rhythm and blues throughout the Midwest for 40 years. Born in Danville, and based in Champaign-Urbana since the 1960s, Candy is well-known as one of the hardest working blues singers in the area. An early influence was his mother, a locally prominent jazz singer. Candy got his big break when saxophonist Tony Zamora asked Candy to sing the blues for a nightly gig at the Rainbow on North First Street. Candy went on to have his own band, Soul Brothers, which gained regional fame in the Vietnam era. Since 1996 his band has been Shades of Blue. Over the years, Candy has appeared with such blues greats as Lonnie Brooks, Etta James, Big Daddy Kinsey, KoKo Taylor, Junior Wells, Gatemouth Brown, Little Milton, Eddie Shaw, Son Seals, Bobby Blue Bland, and Bobby Rush, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, The Temptations, Natalie Cole, The Four Tops, The Marvelettes, Del Shannon, and Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. Candy says his main accomplishments have been keeping live entertainment alive in the Midwest and helping young people develop their craft.



Gerald (Candy)
Foster

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Benita Ann Rollins-Gay was born and raised in Urbana.

She received a B.S. from Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio and a Master's from Wright State University in Fairborn, Ohio. She taught high school and college for 19 years in Dayton, Ohio. She is the mother of three children. After the death of her husband, Robert W. Gay, Jr., she returned to Urbana.



Benita Ann Gay

She is currently Crisis Line Coordinator at Community Elements (formerly Mental Health Center of Champaign County), which provides emotional support, information, referrals and suicide prevention. She is also a facilitator for Children's First at Family Service and a nine-year Tax Specialist II at H & R Block. She is a member of Bethel A.M.E. and is president of the Usher Board, Steward and a member of the Missionary Society where she wrote a book on the Research and Status of Black Women. She is active in NAACP, Central State Alumni Association, and NCNW. She is Vice-President of Urbana School District 116 Board and serves as a Regional Leader of the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.



Tiffany Gholson-Johnson

Tiffany Gholson-Johnson is a social worker and director of African-American Club at Central High School in Champaign. She grew up on the Southside of Chicago. She was a psychology major at the University of Illinois and earned a Masters in Social Work at the University of Illinois in 2000 with a specialization in schools. She received the Community Alumni Achievement Award from the School of Social Work in 2010. She is a DCFS foster and adoptive parent and a member of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Illinois Association of School Social Workers (IASSW). She has also worked as a child welfare worker for Lutheran Social Services, a WrapAround facilitator in Champaign and Urbana School Districts and a Peer Mediation Coordinator. I am a mother of four children who all attend Champaign Unit 4 schools and I am a lifetime member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a public service organization.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



**Dr. Barbara
Gillespie-
Washington**

Dr. Barbara Gillespie-Washington is a widow and mother of three adult children. She attended the University of Illinois, graduating with a Bachelors Degree from the College of Agriculture, Masters Degree in Education and a Doctor of Theology from North Carolina College of Theology. She retired in June of 2005 after being an educator for 36 years in the Urbana Public School system. Some of Dr. Gillespie-Washington's community involvements include:

Board of Directors Orpheum Children's Science Museum; Champaign Mental Health Board; NAACP Executive Board; Past 1st Vice President National Council of Negro Women; Optimist Club Board; Retired Teachers Association; Board of Director Urbana Free Library; Schools Foundation Team; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority; One-to-One Mentoring Scholarship Board of Directors; Founder and Director "WISDOM WORKS." Barbara has received numerous awards and recognition for community and academic involvement, including "Those Who Excel" – State Board of Education Award; First Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Teacher of the Year Award," Parkland College; "Teacher of the Year" – Urbana School District; and Proclamation by the Mayor of the City of Urbana, Barbara Gillespie-Washington's Day, May 24, 2005.

Christopher Paul Hamb, originally a Chicago native, has lived in Champaign-Urbana for the last thirteen years. During that time he has had many roles, including college student, graduate student, University of Illinois Faculty and most recently small business owner. Mr. Hamb currently serves on several boards and committees in the community (Champaign County NAACP Executive Board, CUperStar Steering Committee, Cnaan Men's SAFEHouse Steering Committee, Champaign County Black Chamber of Commerce Executive Board, Salem Cyber Church Committee and the UC2B Technical Committee). Mr. Hamb is an active member of Canaan Baptist Church where he serves as the Web Ministry Chair. Christopher is a mentor with the Talks Mentoring and the One-to-One Mentoring programs. In 2009 he was named one of United Way's Emerging Community Leaders. When Christopher is not volunteering he runs and operates Chrisp Media, LLC, a web consulting business he founded. Chrisp Meida, LLC specializes in bringing non-for-profits and small businesses online.



**Christopher Paul
Hamb**

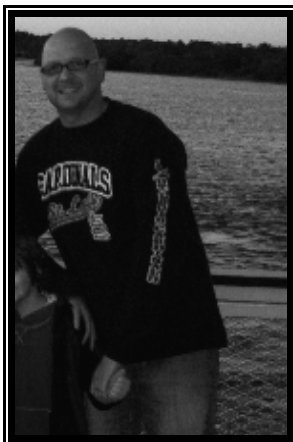
Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Essie Gordon Harris was born and raised in the Champaign area. She is the sixth of eight children, mother of four, grandmother of twenty, great-grandmother of two. She graduated from Central High School and attended Parkland College. She is a member of Salem Baptist Church. She has worked for the Champaign Public Library since 1969 and has been Branch Manager at the Douglass Branch Library for the last eight years. She has initiated many youth activities and encouraged community involvement at the Branch. She has been a board member of the Champaign-Urbana Area Project for the last 17 years and is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Post 559, and had also served on the Family Service Board. She volunteers a great deal in the community and helped start the Eager Beaver Preschool that was at the Douglass Center. Among her awards are: Crystal Laws Green Parent of the Year, Douglass Day Camp, Milestone Award for Continuous Commitment and Involvement in Douglass Community Center Programs, Women of Distinction Award, the Girls Scouts, and Randolph Street Community Garden's Praise and Honor Camellia Award.



Essie Gordon Harris



Jeff Hunt

Jeff Hunt is married to Shannon for 13 years and father of two, Cassidy, 10 and Caden, 7. He has worked with youth for over 14 years in urban, suburban and rural settings. He graduated with a BS in Bible/Youth Ministry from Lincoln Christian University and a BS in History from Illinois State University. He is founder and Director of Mission 180, a non-profit which helps at-risk youth break free from destructive lifestyles through faith-based mentoring and counseling. With a ministry to the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center, Mission 180 builds relationships with troubled youth with the goal of funneling them into a mentoring program. The most important things in his life are his faith, his family and helping others.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Kevin J. Jackson

Kevin J. Jackson is a native of Phoenix, Arizona. He holds Concurrent Bachelors of Arts degrees in Psychology and Sociology and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Arizona State University. He also has an Associates of Arts Degree from South Mountain Community College – an educational accomplishment for which he takes great pride and regards has having transformative significance in his life. He has over 14 years of professional public service experience through his work in both local government and the nonprofit sector. Since 2008 he has been Neighborhood Services

Director for the City of Champaign. Prior to this position, he has worked for the cities of Phoenix and Glendale, Arizona. His professional affiliations include the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), National Association of Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), the International Association of Public Participation (IA2P) and most recently, the Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA). Kevin enjoys attending sporting events, reading history and philosophy and volunteering his time to help youth and others in need.

William and Carla Jones are co-owners of the new Rose & Taylor Barbershop in Champaign. Carla came was born in Chicago and came to Champaign attended the University of Illinois, where she earned a B.S. in 1991. She completed cosmetology school in 2004 and became licensed in 2005. She has attended Canaan Baptist Church since 1987 and is active on the praise team, the choir and has been a musician in the church. William Jones grew up in Champaign and remembered cutting his hair cut at Rose & Taylor as a child. In 2008 the Joneses bought the business and moved and re-modeled the business. The Joneses have built a website and facebook page for the barbershop and regularly hold community events such as barbeques and back-to-school celebrations. They have served as mentors for young adults in the area. William is a member and president of the North First Street Business Association.



William and Carla Jones

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Dr. Sandra Kato, a Chicago native, dedicated her professional career to helping others. She earned B.A. in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and worked extensively as a social worker and clinical therapist in the Chicago land area. She later received an M.A. degree in Clinical Psychology from Roosevelt University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in Education, specializing in Organization and Leadership. She has been director of Upward Bound College Prep Academy since 1993 and is also Assistant Dean in the Office of Minority Student Affairs, University of Illinois. She is a former President of ILAEOPP (Illinois Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel). Dr. Kato's research centers Access and Equity at the Post-Secondary level. Dr. Kato has volunteered in the University of Illinois Black Alumni Association (UIBAA) Board for 15 years and currently enjoys volunteering with Alzheimer patients and community organizations representing those who have been marginalized in society, such as the Champaign County chapter of NAACP.



Dr. Sandra Kato



Cynthia Keaton-Williams

Cynthia Keaton-Williams, fondly known as “Cook”, was the fourth child born to the late Reverend W.B. and Jessie Mae Keaton. She relocated from the Chicago area with her parents, as a young child, to the Champaign area where she and her siblings were active in Pilgrim Baptist Church where her father served as Pastor. Cynthia has been employed with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus for 22 years and is the parent of two daughters. She attends Salem Baptist Church and is active in both her church and the Champaign-Urbana community. She serves as a

Volunteer Coordinator for the Douglas Library “Juneteenth” Celebration, Mid-West Youth Quake Coordinator, Youth Director of the Salem Baptist Church and Youth Director for the Fellowship Baptist District Association. She is the organizer and president of the Beautiful Women’s Breakfast Club with the success of this club expanding to Chicago and Atlanta. Cynthia can always be found with a camera in her hand and serves as photographer for Salem Baptist Church.

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Phoebe Lenear

Phoebe Lenear was born in Chicago into a family of singers and instrumentalists, the eighth of ten children. She holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in General Engineering (Mathematics and Human-Computer Interaction), and a Ph.D. degree in Human Resource Education (Technology Education) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Since 1984 she has appeared with the University of Illinois Black Chorus as a signature voice, and is the featured soloist on the title song of the "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" compact disc. She is also a frequent featured artist for the UIUC Black Sacred Music

Symposium and has appeared with noted artists, including the late Thomas Whitfield, V. Michael McKay. She has appeared in Daryl Pandy's gospel drama production, *I'm Goin' In*. She is married to Rev. Booth Lenear and has two sons. She is a member of Canaan Baptist Church of Urbana, where she serves as a worship leader and member of the Victory Chorale. She is currently educational programs manager at the Center on Emergent Behaviors of Integrated Cellular Systems (EBICS) at the University.

Hattie LeNoir-Price was born Hattie Dean LeNoir in Tylertown, Mississippi, on November 23, 1950. She was raised in Gulfport, Mississippi and Champaign, Illinois. She graduated from Champaign Central High, Parkland College, and has both Bachelors and Masters degrees from the University of Illinois. She is currently enrolled in the Department of Social Work. She been involved with the SOAR after-school project at the U of I/Booker T.



Hattie LeNoir-Price

Washington School, the Wesley Foundation Food Pantry, the Restorative Justice project at the Champaign County Court Diversion Services, the Black History Committee, the Women Safe-House Steering Committee, YWCA. She has also been a GED instructor. She is the fifth of ten children of Helen Inez (nee Brock) and John Wesley LeNoir, Sr. Her father was a Construction worker. My mother was a Food Production Supervisor at the University of Illinois.

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Carol J. (Alexander) Lewis was raised in Champaign in the First street area and graduated from Champaign High School (now Central High). She attended the U of I. When World War II began, her father was sent to Lima, Ohio, where she was born. After the war ended, the family moved back to Champaign. After marrying Joe Lewis, her husband of forty-four years with whom she has two children, she moved to Decatur. She then moved to Danville. She lived in Danville for over twenty five years. While there, she served on the Danville School Board for two and one half terms. After moving back to Champaign she reunited with Salem Baptist Church, which is the church she was baptized in. At Salem, she serves in the Deaconess ministry, Membership and Outreach ministry, Salem Baptist Cyber Project committee secretary, and chaired many special days. She is presently president of the Champaign County Section on the National Council of Negro Women. During the civil rights struggles in Champaign, she worked with her mother in several capacities such as serving on the committee to picket J.C. Penny and as one of the picketers at Penny's when it first opened in Champaign.



Carol J. (Alexander) Lewis



Rev. Larry
Darnell Lewis

Rev. Larry Darnell Lewis was born in Charleston, Mississippi, and raised in East St. Louis. Currently pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Champaign, he is married to Delores Lewis and they are the parents of three daughters and two grandchildren. Rev. Lewis earned a B.S. from the UIUC and a M.A. in Social Justice Profession from the UI-Springfield. He then worked for 33 years with the Illinois Bureau of Disability Determination Services. He is currently pursuing a Master's of Divinity from Payne Theological Seminary. Pastor Lewis serves in his church by being Chairman of the Ministerial Efficiency Committee, Chairperson of the Presiding Elder Support Committee, Treasurer of both the 4th Episcopal Conference Finance Committee and the Illinois North District. Reverend Lewis civic activities include working with Illinois One Family One Child for almost ten years and presently serving on the board of directors as secretary; serving as secretary, parliamentarian and social action chairperson of the Ministerial Alliance of Springfield and Champaign. He has also served as second vice president of NAACP, Champaign County.

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Robert E. Lewis

Robert E. Lewis was born February 9, 1946, in Urbana, Illinois, a son of Jasper and Lottie (Miller) Lewis. He earned a degree from Parkland College. To family and friends, Robert is known as "Mr. Fix-It." He worked for American Seating Corporation, Baltimore Aircoil and the Housing Authority of Champaign County. Two U.S. patents have been issued in his name. He currently serves on the Urbana City Council representing Ward 3. In his youth, Robert played in the Douglas Center Drum Corp. He serves as Sunday School Superintendent and Percussionist at Salem Baptist Church. In 2004 he became Co-Director of the Mo'Betta Music program. Despite being born with Factor IX Hemophilia, Robert continues to defy the predictions and astounds his doctors with his physical condition. He has been a guest lecturer to medical students from the University of Illinois/Carle Clinic and regularly participates in programs and activities of the Hemophilia Foundation of Illinois. Married to the former Rosalind Johnson, Robert is the proud father of two children, Eric and Nicole.

Sonya A. Lynch was born in Chicago, Illinois. She moved to Champaign in 1996 to provide her children with a safe environment. She received her Bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies, with a minor in Psychology, from the University of Illinois at Springfield and her Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is currently licensed as a Social Worker in the State of Illinois. She is employed full-time as a Program Director of Prevention



Sonya A. Lynch

Services at the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club (DMBGC) and is currently site supervisor for DMBGC Teen Center and also manages the Juvenile Upward Mobility Program (JUMP), a therapeutic Day and Evening program for at-risk youth. She received the social justice award from the McKinley Foundation and the Verdell Frazier Yong Award. She serves on the board of the coordinating council of Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, is a member of Urbana Rotary Club, is President of the Taylor Thomas Homeowner's Association and a member of the Champaign Neighborhood Services Advisory Board.

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Barbara Algee-McGee was born and raised in Champaign-Urbana. She attended Champaign and Urbana Schools and graduated from Urbana High School in June of 1969. She was one of the first to attend the Clerical Learner Program at the University of Illinois, and earned a certificate in clerical work studies. She has three children and five grandchildren. She has worked at the Champaign Park District for the past 26 years. She has truly enjoyed her work with the seniors and the district. She is a member of the Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Pastor Rickey E. Parks. She has been a member of Pilgrim for 49 years, and has served the Trustee Ministry, Beautification Ministry and at present am working on the Building Fund Ministry and am a Travel Coordinator. She has helped coordinate Champaign-Urbana Days at Douglas Park and has worked with the Champaign County African-American History Committee.



Barbara Algee-McGee



Joe McVay, left, and the Heavenly Seven

Joe McVay (Heavenly Seven) is current club president of the Heavenly Seven group, which was formed a few years ago for local men to get together, play cards and have fun, but has dedicated itself to serve the community, especially children and the elderly. They have sponsored school supply giveaways, Thanksgiving dinners for senior citizens, sponsored a job fair for young adults and organized cook-outs at

Champaign-Urbana Days, among other activities. The club now has over fifteen members and meets monthly. Joe McVay was not one of the original seven that founded the group, but joined after seeing the great work in the community they were doing.

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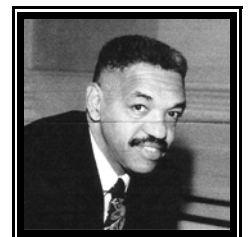


Janice M. Mitchell

Janice M. Mitchell was born in 1963 in Natchitoches, Louisiana and relocated to Urbana in June 1988 after earning a Masters Degree from The University of Chicago School Of Social Service Administration. She and her husband (Danny) of 21 years have raised two children. She has been an active member of the Jericho Missionary Baptist Church for 21 years as Coordinator of Praise Dancers, Church Clerk, and involved in Women's Fellowship and Ushers Ministry. A community

activist with a special interest in helping to improve the lives of local African American children, she served as volunteer coordinator/facilitator of evening programs at Prairie Elementary School. In 1989, she began Mitchell's Sweet Creations. She has worked at Cunningham Children's Home, the Mental Health Center of Champaign County and is currently District Parent and Community Outreach Liaison for Urbana School District 116. On January 19, 2010 she established a neighborhood center, Urbana Neighborhood Connections Center, Inc. (UNCC), after eleven years of work. In partnership with the Housing Authority of Champaign County, with support from the City of Urbana, Urbana School District and United Way of Champaign County, she transformed an unused warehouse into a viable human service facility located at 1401 East Main Street in Urbana.

Thom Moore was born in Pittsburgh in 1942 and moved to Champaign in 1973 after taking a job as assistant professor in the Department of Psychology. He received a PhD from West Virginia University and the campus award for excellence in public service from the University of Illinois in 2000. He is or has been a member of First Mennonite Church, Urban League of Champaign County, NAACP, Champaign Unit 4 School Board (1988-1991 and 1993-2001), Champaign County Mental Health Board, Community Collaboration for Economic Development, 40 North/88 West Arts, Culture and Education Council, Champaign Unit 4 program and implementation committee, Mennonite Economic Development Committee and Director of the Psychological Services Center, which is one of his proudest accomplishments. He helped found and support Oasis Graphic Arts and Our Gang Day Care, which served local African-Americans from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s.



Thom Moore

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Margaret Neil is a resident of the Joann Dorsey Homes, run by the Champaign County Housing Authority, where she directs the residents council. She is also a current housing commissioner. A Center at the Dorsey Homes has been named in her honor. Neil was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in 1978. The disease limits the use of her limbs and she uses a wheelchair for mobility. Despite her physical limitations, Margaret's goal is to be as independent as possible. Margaret views her disability as "a blessing" and says it created an opportunity for her to "do something right in life". Margaret is an energetic and dynamic force in her community. She is well-known in Champaign and across the country as a public housing organizer. She has successfully received grants for low income housing programs and has created job clubs and other programs to help residents develop skills and connect with resources to become self-supporting.



Margaret Neil



Tanya Parker

Tanya Parker is a native of Champaign. She was born and raised in Garden Hills and attended Booker T. Washington, Edison, Central High School, and the University of Illinois. She committed her life at an early age to working to help build healthier families and communities. Despite life challenges, she continues to use her education and life experiences to develop and influence innovative, creative ideas to help improve African-American communities and put our community into action. Her accomplishments include: Winner of the 2010 Social Entrepreneurship Innovation Award issued by the University of Illinois and the Economic Development Corporation for her work with Unity in Action Magazine; Received Bachelors in Economics from the University of Illinois; Founder of Habari Connection in 2005, which was dissolved to form Unity in Action Magazine, which she formed in 2009; Created and ran "Career Success Training Program" a 4-week program for middle school age students in 2006; Created and ran "Club Freestyle Program" for local teens in 2007, which was funded in part by the United Way of Champaign County.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Dr. William M.
Patterson

Dr. William M. Patterson, a lifelong Champaign-Urbana resident and married father of three is an Associate Director of the Nesbitt African American Cultural Center. He also teaches regularly in the Department of African-American studies on Black Leadership at the University of Illinois. Dr. Patterson's work concentrates on linking the academy (higher education institutions) with public schools, corporate America, and social service organizations such as the Urban League, YMCA's and Boys and Girls Clubs. From programs such as Cyber Club, Nature's Playground, B.E.S.T., and First String, Inc. Dr. Patterson has been able to demonstrate the significance of educational and social development partnerships to enhance the educational awareness and social responsibility of at-risk students. Dr. Patterson was instrumental in establishing programs such as the Youth Media Workshop in Illinois Public Media and SPEAK Cafe. Most recently, he launched the Hip Hop Express trailer, and is always seeking new ways to engage the hip hop generation. Dr. Patterson has a PhD in Education from the University of Illinois.

Ms. Perzavia Praylow was born and raised in Jersey City, New Jersey. The 1998 valedictorian of James J. Ferris High School, she graduated cum laude in 2002 at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. She earned a Master's of Education at Urbana-Champaign in 2005. She is currently a PhD student in the Department of History. She is working towards completing her dissertation entitled "Transforming Respectability: Black Women and the Development of Coeducation at Fisk, 1924-1970." She is also a Diversifying Faculty in Illinois Fellow and an instructor in the Department of African American Studies. In addition to being a historian, she is an ordained minister at The Church Of The Living God located in Champaign where Bishop Lloyd E. Gwin is the Pastor and Evangelist Mary Gwin is the Executive Director of Ministries. In The Church Of The Living God Brotherhood, she was licensed as a minister July 2006 and ordained as a minister July 2007. She has served in a variety of ministries where she has been able to exercise her gifts.



Ms. Perzavia Praylow

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Marsha Reardon was born in Champaign and has lived here most of her life. She attended SIU Carbondale, graduating in spring 2008. Shortly after school, she returned to Champaign to serve with AmeriCorps *VISTA and was stationed at Parkland College as Volunteer Coordinator. At Parkland, she oversaw the Garden Hills Homework Club, an after school service-learning program that uses Parkland students as tutors and mentors. She was also the Chair of Parkland's Earth Week event, chaired on the Latino Family Day alternative spring break project, and coordinated volunteer fairs. After serving two years at Parkland, Miss Reardon was hired as the Volunteer and Site Coordinator for RSVP of Champaign, Piatt, and Douglas counties through Family Service of Champaign County. She also plays an active role on the committee for the East Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference, as well as on the TIMES Center Advisory Council. In her spare time, Miss Reardon volunteers for several organizations and is also an avid reader, runner, and concert-goer. She currently enjoys living and working in downtown Champaign.



Marsha Reardon

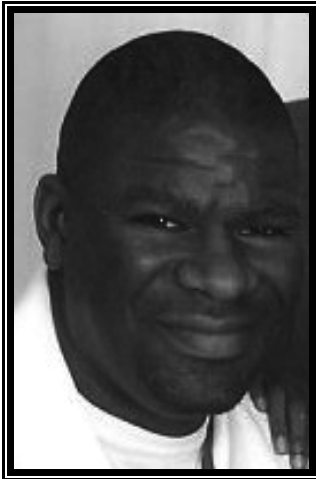


Clarence Shelley

Clarence Shelley earned his Master's Degree from Wayne State University in Detroit. He then taught English and Speech at Northeastern High School for several years. He subsequently developed programs to facilitate the admission and retention of minority students in colleges and universities throughout the Midwest. He has taught and counseled at the Cranbrook School, Bloomfield Hills; Dartmouth College and Wayne State University. He came to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1968 to organize one of the nation's earliest minority student recruitment efforts. In 1974 he was named Dean of Students, and in 1984 he became Assistant Vice Chancellor then Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and finally Special Assistant to the Chancellor. He has received numerous awards and citations for his service to higher education, with a special interest in advocacy for those groups that remain underrepresented in American colleges and universities. In 2002, he was awarded the Chancellor's Medallion for service to the Campus.

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Alton J. Shevlin

Alton J. Shevlin was born in Rockford, and moved to Champaign-Urbana to go to school at the University of Illinois. He graduated in 1998 with a concentration in English Literature and Minor in African American Studies. He became a tutor-counselor for the University of Illinois Upward Bound program in summer of 1998. He then became a teacher assistant at Canaan Academy for two years working with kindergarten and first grade classes. He then became detention officer for the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center. In 2007 he began working for the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. He now works as an Intake Coordinator for the Court Diversion program. The program offers a station adjustment opportunity, which is a probation program and a way for the youth to be accountable for their actions but without going to juvenile court. He's also a proud member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc, married to a doctor and the father of two beautiful girls.

Samuel Smith is the biological father of three and the friend to many more. A first generation college graduate, he earned a B.A. from Oberlin College and an M.S.W. from the University of Illinois. He is a former school social worker and school guidance counselor at University Laboratory High School, as well as a Kung-Fu Instructor. He is currently Director of Engagement at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. He has been a Statewide Trainer at the Illinois Gifted Education Seminar (Illinois State Board of Education); an Instructor at Aurora University; and a Trainer/Consultant at the Illinois State University/Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Illinois Permanency Enhancement Project. He is a board member with the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music, UIUC; City of Urbana Sister City International Committee member; and the Champaign County Black Chamber of Commerce.



Samuel Smith

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Christopher M. Span is an Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. An historian of education, his research focuses on the educational history of African Americans. In 2007, he participated on a "Brief of Historians" for the Supreme Court consolidated Parents and Meredith (2007) school desegregation case. The case determined whether race could be used as a qualification for public school assignment at the elementary and secondary level. His book, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875* (2009), was published through the University of North Carolina Press. It details the first schooling opportunities of African Americans in the state during and after the Civil War. He is currently working on a book that details the educational history of African Americans during the 19th century. He is an immediate past board member for the Don Moyers Boys and Girls Club. He is the co-president of the Black Faculty and Academic Professional Alliances (BFAPA) and is an immediate past President of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK).



Christopher M. Span



Joe A. Stovall

Joe A. Stovall was born in Chicago in 1964. His family moved to Champaign when he was around a young child; he grew up at the corner of First and Church. He was one of the original members of the Boys Club. He graduated from Central High in 1982, attended Quincy College and transferred to Illinois State University in Normal, where he received a B.S. in Chemistry in 1988. After graduation, he worked for Dow Chemical. Later he became an employee with State Farm Insurance. He currently runs his own agency in Champaign. Heavily involved in the community, he has been President of the Urban Business Network, Board President of the Don Moyer's Boys & Girls Club, and an avid supporter of the Urban League of Champaign County. He was a sponsor, coach and volunteer for 1st String, Inc., Instructor for the Junior Achievement program, and Mentors through the Talks mentoring program. He currently hosts "Talkin' Sportz" Fridays on WBCP with Sam Britton. He is married to Elizabeth Stovall, with whom he has two sons.

Difference Makers 2010

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Hester Nelson Suggs

Hester Nelson Suggs was born in 1928 in Champaign-Urbana. She has a master's degree in teaching administration from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. She attended Gregory School, which was a mixed school, however after completing her degree from the University she had a hard time finding employment because of the racist climate of the time. In 1948 she married her husband, Raymond Eugene Suggs, a photographer with the Courier, a local newspaper. She was principal of Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Champaign for 22 years. Before that, she taught at Dr. Howard School and was the first Black teacher at Leal School. She has attended Bethel A.M.E. Church her entire life. She remembers helping African-American students at the University of Illinois through her church when blacks could not live on campus. In the 1990s she served in the Champaign County African-American History Committee, writing articles on local African-American history for the Through the Years... newsletter series.

Deacon Willie T. Summerville was born in Sunshine (Ashley County), Arkansas. He graduated from Arkansas AM&N College and the University of Illinois with degrees in Music Education. From 1970 to 2005 he was Choral Music Director of the Urbana Middle School 8th Grade Chorus; and the Director of the Urbana High School Concert Choir. His former students created a facebook page "Thank You Willie T. Summerville" to honor his work. Mr. Summerville is a member of the Canaan Baptist Church Board of Deacons and has worked at the Canaan Academy of Urbana. He is a charter member of Canaan's SWAT Team (Soul Winning Action Team). He has also been Minister of Music at Canaan and Director/Organist of the St. Luke CME New Life Choir in Champaign. He is currently campus and community affairs specialist in the Department of African-American Studies at the University of Illinois. He has been a guest clinician/director at more than 20 school district music festivals; and fourteen universities. He has been married for 37 years to Mrs. Valerian A. Summerville and they have 3 children and two wonderful grandsons.



Deacon Willie T. Summerville

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Rhonda Alaina Sykes was born in Kankakee in August 1982. She earned a B.A. degree from Eastern Illinois University in 2004. In 2003 she became a member in Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Omicron Delta Chapter, and served in its youth auxiliary. In 2008 she was an Honored Soror at the 5th Annual Finer Womanhood Awards Breakfast, Urbana, where she spoke on her passion, youth. She moved to the Champaign-Urbana area in September of 2005 to start her career with Green Meadows Girl Scouts, now Girl Scouts of Central Illinois. She has also been a mentor through the C-U 1 to 1 mentoring program for three years. She has also given time and money to The United Way in Champaign and Danville. She graduated from the Emerging Community Leader's Program, United Way of Champaign County, in 2008. The mission of this program is to foster community involvement through volunteer service and education. She continues to be active with United Way by being a Site Chair for the Basic Needs Site Review Panel which includes reviewing grants and visiting sites of various non-profit organizations.



Rhonda A. Sykes

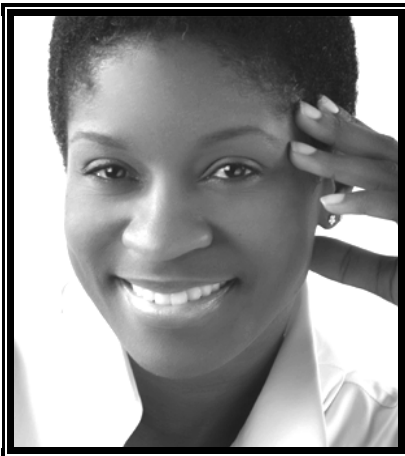


Terry Townsend

Terry Townsend is a native of Champaign. He has been a tireless advocate for equal rights and opportunity for nearly 40 years. As a public official, Mr. Townsend was personally influential in procuring the first grant dollars for the improvement of the Housing Authority of Champaign County properties. He is also the founder of the African-American All-Class high school reunion, perhaps the largest and most successful event of this type in the United States. He owns the copyright for this event. He is both an alumnus and retiree of the University of Illinois and a member of the Kappa Delta Phi Honor Society.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication



Cynthia W. Turner, PhD

Cynthia W. Turner, PhD, CPA, is a native of Portsmouth, VA and holds an undergraduate degree (North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, NC), a master's degree and doctorate degree (The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH) in accounting. She currently serves on the faculty in the accountancy department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She also leads the national recording contemporary gospel ensemble, Cynthia Turner and Heartspeak. A devoted wife, Dr. Turner is married to Stellar-nominated jazz guitarist and music educator, Kevin Turner. Further, she

and her husband are the loving parents of two young sons, Julien and Justen, and adult daughter, Kia. She is the author of a book, *My Seven-Day Makeover*, chronicling her battle against breast cancer. She is an evangelist at Canaan Baptist Church and director of the Women's Ministry.

Ronnie Turner-Winston grew up in the Washington DC area better known now as the DMV. After University of Maryland, she enlisted in the United States Air Force. She served 4 years active duty during Operation Desert Storm and 4 years reserves. Her last tour of duty left her at Chanute Air Force Base, Rantoul, where she met her husband, with whom she has four children. Currently they reside in Urbana and she works in human resources at Parkland College. In the Air Force she frequently volunteered with military commemorative events and parades, in addition to



Ronnie Turner-Winston

her responsibilities as a chapel management specialist. Once Chanute air base closed she began looking for an organization that would offer her the camaraderie and sense of purpose the military did. She is currently Post Senior Vice Commander with American Legion Post #559. The American Legion is a meeting place for veterans, a place to seek assistance with veteran affairs, a stepping stone to gaining leadership in the community, and for some of us a home away from home.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Bishop King James and Dr. Evelyn Underwood are pastor and associate minister at New Free Will Baptist Church in Champaign. He built and founded the church using his skills as a general contractor. Born in 1938 and 1943, respectively, both in Mississippi the Underwoods both came to Champaign while children. Bishop Underwood has a Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Divinity; Dr. Evelyn Underwood received her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Illinois in 2000. Both have been heavily involved in local community groups, including helping to form the Free Will Baptist District and leading the Ministerial Alliance of Champaign-Urbana and Vicinity, the local NAACP, N.C.N.W. and the Champaign County Urban League. Evelyn Underwood was the first African-American elected to the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education and served for 12 years. By mayoral proclamation "Bishop King James Underwood Day" has been established in Urbana, Illinois.



Bishop King James and
Dr. Evelyn Underwood
Photo by Patricia Rosario.



Esther Louise VanDyke

Esther Louise VanDyke was born in Paducah, Kentucky, and moved to Champaign-Urbana in 1971. She moved to Champaign her husband had family here and he had a position as a chemical lab technician with the Cabot Corporation in Tuscola. She ministers daily to all. She was raised by her grandmother Esther Crumpton and accepted Christ at the age of twelve. She attended an all-black high school, Lincoln High, in Paducah, and has one sister, Carolyn Crossland. She was married to the late Luchion VanDyke for 26 years, and has five children and many god-children. She has been a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church for 38 years under Rev. Lundy Savage. She is an evangelist in the church and founded the organization, Sisters of CU. For thirteen years the Sisters have offered a prayer breakfast in the Champaign-Urbana area and the sisters have ministered throughout the United States and other countries.

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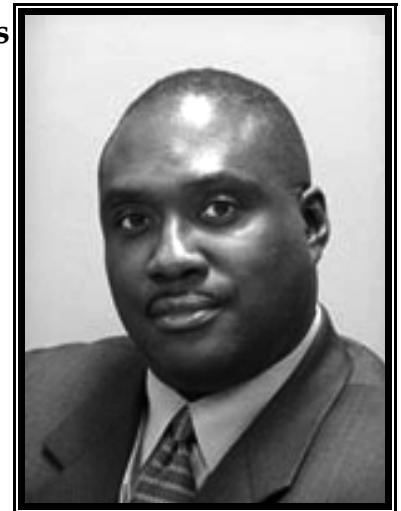
Women of Prestige (LaTanya Washington at center)

LaTanya Washington (Women of Prestige, president) was born in Champaign-Urbana and raised in New York. After marrying she and her husband decided to move back to Champaign-Urbana. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. Wanting to help and mentor youth, she took a test for Probation and Court Services to be able to become a juvenile probation officer. In 2005 she became a juvenile detention officer for Champaign County. She is proud of her work and her ability to statistically see the needs of local African-Americans. In May 2009 she started Women of Prestige with a childhood friend, Nyree Gaines, who is vice-president. The group now has ten ambitious women involved. Women of Prestige's mission is to help empower others. Striving to unite women from different professional fields, the group wanted to inspire local youth with possibilities. The group has sponsored give-aways of hygiene products, bicycles, coats and books; has sponsored literacy programs. The group continues to work on making contributions to and supporting charitable organizations to make long lasting change. Current officers include: Kenni-Sergeant At Arms; Robin-Coordinator; Trinita-Captain; Delisha-Social Awareness Captain; Marshona-C.S.O (Strategic Planning Officer); Samantha-Business Manager; and Teddra-Secretary.

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An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Dr. Preston L. Williams, Jr. is the Superintendent of Schools for Urbana School District #116. He came to Urbana from Kankakee. He completed his undergraduate degree at Indiana State University as a double major in social science education and African American Studies with an emphasis on political science and U.S. History. He then began teaching in the special education area at an alternative education center, while receiving his S.E.D. (Social and Emotionally Disturbed) certification in night classes through Illinois State University and the National College of Education. He then received a job offer from Champaign Centennial High School to teach U.S. History and consumer education. Then he moved onto District 116, first to teach at UHS and then as an assistant principal at UMS. The next step in his career was a move over to Central Office. Preston and his wife, Ivy have two children. He received his Ed.D. in May 2000, focusing his dissertation on the history of desegregation of schools in Urbana.



Dr. Preston L. Williams, Jr



Seon Williams

Seon Williams was born and raised in the Champaign-Urbana area and graduated from Urbana High School in 1987. He is one of twenty-two children born to Roline Brumfield. He has lost a total of 10 brothers to either death or incarceration. His answer to the destruction he witnessed was to escape to the U.S. Military, where he earned an honorable discharge as E-4 Promotable. After his military stint, he worked for large companies before pursuing his dream of becoming an entrepreneur. He obtained his Cosmetology License from Concept School of Cosmetology in Urbana in 1999. With Moneyil Antonio Turner he founded The Whip Hair Design. Three years later, he founded The Whip Cafe "With A Taste Of Soul" by drawing on his culinary skills. He recently opened Williams' Memorial Service, Ltd., a funeral home founded by Robert Hambrick in 1996. In his community leadership he focused on economic outreach for the North End Community and finding solutions to break the cycle of poverty that grips this area.

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Not Pictured

In putting together this booklet we relied on the submission of photographs and biographies from the individuals honored. In trying to put together a large publication in a short amount of time we regrettable were not able to receive photos and biographies of everyone. The individuals listed below are also difference makers. We encourage anyone interested to put together a second volume of *Difference Makers* featuring biographies and photographs of these individuals.

Name

Affiliations

Abernathy, Linda

Recent Champaign Township Supervisor

Ali, Khair (Freddie Davis)

Khair Ali Enterprises

Ammons, Carol

UC-IMC and Champaign County Board

Avery, Patricia

Champaign-Urbana Area Project

Bland, Ed

Champaign County Housing Authority

Bridgewater, Ron

Mo'Betta Music and Community Music

Burnett, Herbert

Suits by Soouljah owner

Burton, Charles

Douglas Center Manager

Clark, Lonnie

WBCP co-founder/owner

Clark, Phyllis D.

City of Urbana Clerk , YWCA and CCHCC

Clark, Vacellia

City of Urbana Human Resources Manager

Conerly, Tyla

Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church website

Cowan, Larine Y.

Past Affirmative Action at UIUC

Gipson, Vernessa

Champaign School District's Freedom School

Griggs, Alvin

Champaign Park District

Gwin, Bishop

The Church of the Living God

Hughes, Cyprus

Mt. Olive Baptist Church

Irwin, Kim

Restoration Urban Ministries

Difference Makers 2010

An eBlackChampaign-Urbana Publication

Jackson, Minor W.	Parkland College Workforce Development
Jeffries, Gayle	Urbana School District/Gamma Upsilon Psi
Jeffries, Michael	Office of Minority Student Affairs, UIUC
Jones, Lyn	United Way of Champaign County
Kyles, Will	Champaign City Council, District 1
Miller, Martel	CU Citizens for Peace and Justice
Nash, Charles O.	New Hope Church of God
Nesbitt , Diane	Champaign Cty. Regional Planning Comm.
Nesbitt, C.D.	Glory Center International
Parsons, Tracy	ACCESS Initiative
Paulk, Hattie	Champaign School District Unit 4
Pirtle, J.W.	WBCP co-founder/owner
Rosales, Giraldo and Melodye	Community Advocacy and Activism
Salo, Ken	UIUC Urban Planning Civic Engagement
Scott, Anna Wall	Community Advocacy and Activism
Shelby, Pastor	Salem Baptist Church
Simms, Karen	Peer Ambassadors Program/Project ACCESS
Summerville, Shandra	Project ACCESS/C-U Area Project
Thompson, Averia	Femme Fatale Social Club
Walker, Robert, Sr.	National Council of African-American Men
Walls, Joan	Community Relations, City of Champaign
Williams, Douglas	Engaged member of Salem Baptist Church
Williams, Ervin T.	Restoration Urban Ministries
Williams, Otis	Office of Minority Student Affairs

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Late Additions

Patricia Avery has served as the Executive Director of the Champaign-Urbana Area Project (CUAP) since 2004. CUAP's mission is to reduce juvenile delinquency by providing direct services, advocating on behalf of youth and families, and working with community committees. She has also worked with the UC2B project and CCAP, whose work is to improve community and police relationships within the African American community, and Project ACCESS whose aim is to create a system of care for youth with SED's and those involved with the juvenile justice system. She helped organize CUAP from 1997-2003. She also founded the Mentoring Young Sisters Program, which offers one-on-one and group mentoring, teaches life skills, and offers cultural and recreational activities to middle school girls. MYS has served over 200 girls in Champaign County and the program is now serving girls in Hawaii. Other programs under she helped develop are the CUperStar Performing Arts Program, and the Peer Jury program at Central High School. In 1986 she began her work in the Office of the County Auditor and County Recorder. In 1996, she was the first African-American Woman ever appointed or elected to a Champaign County office. In 1998, she ran again for the Champaign County Board and won, being the first African-American to win in a district outside of District #5 in Champaign County. On December 4, 2000, she became the first woman, the first African-American and the first Democrat to chair the Champaign County Board.



Patricia Avery



Minor W.
Jackson, III

Minor W. Jackson, III holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Quincy University. He was the first African-American admitted in Quincy College's initial MBA Program in 1984. He has worked at Parkland College since 2000. Previously he was employed in Human Resources for 16 years with four different Fortune 500 Corporations. He has also served as Director of Human Resources for 3 local companies. As a U.S. Army Veteran, Minor served for 6 years, 3 years active duty and 3 years in the Reserve. Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, forty years ago he worked for all of the Chicago sports teams as an Andy Frain usher. Mr. Jackson is very active in his community and is a member of the following: He has served on the Board of Directors for the Urban League of Champaign County, and the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), plus he is active in the Talks Mentoring Program. He and his wife, Louise, have been married for 35 years. They are the parents of two children. Minor and Louise are licensed as a relative foster home in the State of Illinois and they adopted both children in March 1995.