



The 2026
SPiRiT of KING
Award Ceremony



A Chronology
of Past and Present
Award Recipients



The Spirit of King Award

The life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has served as a tremendous inspiration for millions throughout the world.

King's influence can be witnessed in the Spirit of King Award program established in 1989 by the Kingsley Association, the Pittsburgh Pirates and Pittsburgh Regional Transit. In recognition of the significance of the life dedicated to the service of others, these organizations built a tradition based on acknowledging Pittsburgh-area citizens who have, like Dr. King, advanced civil rights.

The Spirit of King Award is given annually in January during a program celebrated at the Kingsley Association.

Led by Elmer McClung, the observance began with a simple tree planting in 1986. The program grew to include the establishment of the Wilhelmina Byrd Brown Parklet at that location, named for the first honoree. Subsequent honorees have included people from all walks of life, representing diverse areas of human endeavor. Some have been well known to many, while others quietly dedicated their lives to helping others. Each shares the dedication of spirit and perseverance through practice to the ideals of freedom.

Since 1993, a committee representing the sponsors names a new honoree each year, and the Spirit of King Award Plaque is rededicated.

The public celebration has grown to be a multi-generational affair involving school children and elders in the community. In addition to paying tribute to the honoree(s), the "Spirit of King" is represented through song and art.

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HISTORY OF THE SPIRIT OF KING AWARD

- 1986 Tree Planting along Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway
- 1987 Plaque installed at site of tree
- 1988 Parklet along Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway named after Wilhelmina Byrd Brown
- 1989 Spirit of King Award's First Recipient: Wilhelmina Byrd Brown
- 1990 Spirit of King Award's Second Year Recipient: Matthew Moore, Sr.
- 1991 Spirit of King Award's Third Year Recipient: James McCoy, Jr.
- 1992 Spirit of King Award's Fourth Year Recipient: Margaret Millions
- 1993 Spirit of King Award's Fifth Year Recipient: Mary Elizabeth Goode Dudley
- 1994 Spirit of King Award's Sixth Year Dual Recipients: Roberto W. Clemente & Josh Gibson
- 1995 Spirit of King Award's Seventh Year Recipient: Mary Cardwell-Dawson
- 1996 Spirit of King Award's Eighth Year Dual Recipients: John M. Brewer, Sr. & Robert L. Vann
- 1997 Spirit of King Award's Ninth Year Recipient: Daisy E. Lampkin
- 1998 Spirit of King Award's Tenth Year Recipient: Oliver Livingstone Johnson
- 1999 Spirit of King Award's Eleventh Year Recipient: Officer Oliver Wendell Mason
- 2000 Spirit of King Award's Twelfth Year Dual Recipients: Louis Mason, Jr. & Frankie Pace
- 2001 Spirit of King Award's Thirteenth Year Dual Recipients: Dr. Oswald Jerry Nickens & Hazel Garland
- 2002 Spirit of King Award's Fourteenth Year Dual Recipients: Dr. Alma Johnson Illery & Dr. James A. Stewart

HISTORY OF THE SPIRIT OF KING AWARD

- 2003 Spirit of King Award's Fifteenth Year Dual Recipients: Charles H. Kindle & Dr. Selma Hortense Burke
- 2004 Spirit of King Award's Sixteenth Year Dual Recipients: Billy Eckstine & George W. Gaines, Sr.
- 2005 Spirit of King Award's Seventeenth Year Dual Recipients: Florence Silverstein Reizenstein & Rev. Elmer Louis Williams
- 2006 Spirit of King Award's Eighteenth Year Dual Recipients: Everett Emory Utterback & Dr. Eugene Lloyd Youngue, Jr.
- 2007 Spirit of King Award's Nineteenth Year Recipient: Robert E. "Pappy" Williams
- 2008 Spirit of King Award's Twentieth Year Dual Recipients: Richard F. Jones & Mamie H. Lee
- 2009 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-First Year Dual Recipients: Frank E. Bolden & Charles "Teenie" Harris
- 2010 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Second Year Dual Recipients: Dr. Jake Milliones & Bishop Charles H. Foggie
- 2011 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Third Year Dual Recipients: Byrd Rowlette Brown & Malvin R. Goode
- 2012 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Fourth Year Dual Recipients: Edna Beatrice Chappell McKenzie & Msgr. Charles Owen Rice
- 2013 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Fifth Year Recipient: Barbara A. Sizemore, Ph.D.
- 2014 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Sixth Year Dual Recipients: August Wilson & Rev. Dr. LeRoy Patrick

HISTORY OF THE SPIRIT OF KING AWARD

- 2015 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Seventh Year Dual Recipients: Anderson Little & K. Leroy Irvis
- 2016 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Eighth Year Dual Recipients: Dorothy Height & Dr. Curtis L. Walker
- 2017 Spirit of King Award's Twenty-Ninth Year Dual Recipients: Cmdr. Gwen Elliott & Walt Harper
- 2018 Spirit of King Award's Thirtieth Year Recipient: Katie Everette-Johnson
- 2019 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-First Year Dual Recipients: Harvey Adams, Jr. & The Hon. Walter R. Little
- 2020 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Second Year Dual Recipients: Robert Lavelle & Nate Smith, Sr.
- 2021 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Third Year Recipient: Elmer McClung
- 2022 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Fourth Year Dual Recipients: Bernard H. Jones, Sr. & Dr. Sylvester Pace
- 2023 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Fifth Year Dual Recipients: John H. Adams & Bill Nunn, Jr.
- 2024 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Sixth Year Dual Recipients: Dr. Rex L. Crawley & James F. Henry, Jr.
- 2025 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Seventh Year Dual Recipients: Constance B.J. Parker & Rob Penny
- 2026 Spirit of King Award's Thirty-Eighth Year Dual Recipients: Rev. Samson M. Cooper & Wendell G. Freeland



Wilhelmina Byrd Brown
1989 Honoree

Mrs. Wilhelmina Byrd Brown's life exemplified the work and ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She dedicated 50 years of her life to public service work, which included participation on dozens of community boards and organizations, most notably the YWCA, the Community Chest (forerunner of United Way) and the USO (United Service Organization).

Through her work as an avid fundraiser for the United Negro College Fund, in her role as Secretary of the Board of Public Assistance, and through the distribution of scholarships from the Byrd-Brown fund, Mrs. Brown helped many black individuals obtain a college education so they could go on to successful careers.

For more than 30 years, Mrs. Brown also served as chairman of the Human Rights Dinner, which helped raise funds for the Pittsburgh branch of the NAACP.



Matthew Moore, Sr.
1990 Honoree

Mr. Matthew Moore, Sr. dedicated his life to working towards racial equality for minorities.

Prior to his death in 1985, Mr. Moore served as the First Vice President of the Pittsburgh Branch of the NAACP, board member of the Pennsylvania Branch of the NAACP, a supervisor for the Mayor's Committee on Human Relations, and as a consultant on minority affairs for Gulf Oil Corporation/Chevron.



James C. McCoy, Jr.
1991 Honoree

James McCoy was a tireless worker for human rights. He was a leader in the United Steel Workers of America, The Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Co-Founder and leader of the United Negro Protest Committee, one of the most important elements in the Pittsburgh Civil Rights Movement.

Jim was also a founder of Freedom House Ambulance Services, the first such service in the African American community, and was the predecessor to the City of Pittsburgh Ambulance Service, which grew out of Freedom House Ambulance Service.

His leadership provided inspiration for all of those who pressed for equality. He was a simple man of great faith, a charismatic leader whose early death left a void in the ranks of the civil rights movement.



Margaret L. Dobbins Milliones

1992 Honoree

Margaret Milliones' struggle for equal rights began in the early 1960s. She was active in civil rights struggles with the late Dr. Martin Luther King and she believed in his non-violent approach. Mrs. Milliones actively struggled for rights for the poor, for the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project, and she conducted voter registrations drives in Georgia and Mississippi.

From 1969 to 1970, Mrs. Milliones assisted in coordinating Pittsburgh's First Black Women's Forum, which consisted of Pittsburgh women gathering to address themselves to community issues.

Margaret Milliones was a devoted advocate of quality education for children, regardless of race, status, or ability. Mrs. Milliones vehemently addressed matters of school desegregation, cross busing, expansion of gifted programs to black students, and the retention of middle schools.



Mary Elizabeth Goode Dudley

1993 Honoree

Mary Elizabeth Goode Dudley was educated in the Homestead public schools and attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. She attended the SiMann School of Radio Announcers in Pittsburgh, PA and graduated with high honors.

She began broadcasting from radio station WHOD in August of 1948, becoming the first black woman radio announcer in western Pennsylvania. Her first program, "Moving Around with Mary Dee" aired for four hours a day, Monday through Saturday. Her program was maintained on the air at station WHOD and won the *Pittsburgh Courier* Radio Pool in 1952. In 1956, Mary Dee left Pittsburgh and went to Baltimore, MD to work at station WSID.

She worked with all the churches and helped singing groups to become established in all parts of the country. She was the recipient of numerous awards, plaques, trophies and citations from the American Legion, Boys Clubs of America, National Achievement Club, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Guardsman of Pittsburgh, and Community Chest of Allegheny County. In 1957, she was listed in *Who's Who in the East* and in 1958, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority of Baltimore named her a Living Maker of Negro History.



Roberto W. Clemente

1994 Honoree

Born on August 18, 1934 in Carolina, Puerto Rico, Clemente joined a professional Puerto Rican baseball team at age 17. At the end of the 1953 season, he signed with a Brooklyn Dodgers scout, but in 1954 the Pittsburgh Pirates drafted Clemente from the Dodgers.

Clemente was the Pirates' number one draft selection. For the next 18 years Clemente starred in the Pirates outfield. His World Series batting average of .362 helped the Pirates win two world championships (1960 and 1971). He was voted the most valuable player in the National League in 1966, the same year his peers named him outstanding player of the year. He won four National League batting titles, won 12 Gold Gloves for fielding excellence, was a 12-time All-Star and in 1972 became the 11th player in major league history to reach 3,000 hits.

He died with four others when a plane carrying supplies to earthquake-stricken Nicaragua crashed. He was inducted posthumously into the Hall of Fame, August 8, 1973. The Pirates retired Clemente's number in 1973.



Josh Gibson
1994 Honoree

Gibson was born December 21, 1911, in Buena Vista, GA. Gibson played for the Gimbel Brothers and Westinghouse Airbrake teams before his legendary career began in 1927 with the semi-pro Pittsburgh Crawfords.

Three years later, while attending a Homestead Grays game, young Josh suddenly got his first chance at pro ball. He played with the Grays for two seasons, then was recruited to play for the crosstown rival Crawfords. Gibson rejoined the Grays in 1937, left and went to play for the Santo Domingo Dictators and then returned to the Homestead Grays in 1938, winning home run crowns, and his first batting title in 1938 with a magnificent .440 average. Credited with 962 home runs against all levels of competition in his 17 year career, he compiled a .379 lifetime batting average in the Negro Leagues. He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972. Gibson will be the eternal monarch of home run kings. He dominated the game with majestic power like none other before him.



Mary Cardwell Dawson
1995 Honoree

Born February 14, 1894 in Madison, N.C., Madame Mary Cardwell Dawson is best remembered as an accomplished musician, impresario, teacher and conductor. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA, Madame Dawson's love of music led to many great accomplishments, making a significant contribution to cultural life both in Pittsburgh and throughout the nation.

In 1926, Madame Dawson founded the interracial Cardwell School of Music in Homewood. She also organized and directed the Cardwell Dawson Choir of Pittsburgh, which gave award-winning performances at the New York and Chicago World's Fairs from 1937 through 1940.

In 1941, she created the National Negro Opera Company. In 1950, Madame Dawson founded the National Negro Opera Foundation to perpetuate the Company. Madame Dawson was responsible for African American participation on the Board of Musical Artists' Union. In September 1994, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission dedicated an official State Historical Marker commemorating the National Negro Opera Company at the site of the old Cardwell School of Music at 7101 Apple Street.



John M. Brewer, Sr.
1996 Honoree

Born in 1917, John M. Brewer was educated at Peabody High School and later attended Virginia State University where he earned football All-American recognition.

John M. Brewer chose to become an educator and returned to Pittsburgh. He taught at Robert L. Vann Elementary and at several other schools within the district. He became the first black principal of a Pittsburgh Public School following the appointment at Miller Elementary.

He received presidential elections for his development of “team teaching” for over 30 years. Twice he was honored as Outstanding Educator in Pittsburgh and retired as an Assistant Superintendent of the District after 40 years of service. Mr. Brewer received hundreds of other awards and citations from Pittsburgh social agencies and civic groups for his tireless work in the community. Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Brewer held the office of the Urban Redevelopment Treasurer for 13 years. He was respected by his peers as a pioneer educator and respected by his students as a catalyst for change and opportunity.



Robert L. Vann

1996 Honoree

Born in 1887 in North Carolina, Robert L. Vann attended Waters National Institute and the Virginia University.

After receiving his law degree from the University of Pittsburgh and passing the Pennsylvania Bar examinations, Mr. Vann opened his own law office in Pittsburgh. With the help of associates, Mr. Vann founded the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1910.

The paper had a modest beginning, but soon earned a reputation for honest reporting and became a forum for the city's black community. He became the paper's publisher and editor in 1912 and through effective editorial policy and shrewd business sense, the *Pittsburgh Courier* became a platform from which black leaders could speak out for equality.

Robert L. Vann began his political career as Assistant County Solicitor for Pittsburgh from 1917 to 1921. He was the National Director of Negro Publicity during the presidential campaign of Warren G. Harding in 1920, Calvin Coolidge in 1924, and Herbert Hoover in 1928. In 1933, Mr. Vann was appointed Special Assistant to the Attorney General and became a member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's black cabinet.



Daisy E. Lampkin
1997 Honoree

Daisy migrated from her native Reading, PA to Pittsburgh in 1909. She was one of the foremost fighters for civil rights, serving as vice president of the *Pittsburgh Courier* from 1929-1965, and as field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1939-1948.

During her time with the *Pittsburgh Courier*, she was constantly called upon by dignitaries such as A. Philip Rudolph (founder of the March on Washington movement) and Robert Vann, *Pittsburgh Courier* founder and publisher who served on FDR's black cabinet, a 1996 Spirit of King Award recipient, to advise and approve goals and strategies. She led the Afro-American community in Liberty Bond drives during World War II and organized the first American Red Cross chapter among African American women.

She was named chairman of the National Association of Colored Women, Inc., and she served on the board of directors of Urban League, the Council of Churches and numerous fair-housing and civic communities. To honor her life, a number of memorials have been dedicated in her honor, including the unveiling of Pennsylvania's official historical marker, a free-standing blue and gold metal engraved plaque, in front of her home at 2519 Webster Avenue in the Hill District.



Oliver Livingstone Johnson
1998 Honoree

Oliver Livingstone Johnson first developed his wonderful attributes of dedication, dignity, honesty, integrity and service to others while working as a shoeshine boy when he was 11 years old.

Upon graduating from high school, he attended Howard University, where he completed four years of undergraduate school despite financial hardship. During the war, he served with the American Expeditionary Forces in France. After receiving his LL.B degree in 1921, he practiced law before the Pennsylvania courts and continued to do so in some capacity over the next half century. In 1942, he was appointed the first African American prosecuting attorney in the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office.



Oliver Wendell Mason

1999 Honoree

Oliver Wendell Mason was among the first African-Americans to be hired by the Pittsburgh Police Department. People in the black community were proud to be represented by such a deserving man as Officer Mason. He is believed to have single-handedly reduced juvenile delinquency and curtailed gang violence on the streets of Pittsburgh. To his peers, he is remembered as “a true hero, an honest man and a pioneer in civil tolerance”. On September 1, 1964, he was recognized with a special ceremony honoring him for “Outstanding Service with Pittsburgh’s Bureau of Police”.



Louis Mason, Jr.
2000 Honoree

Louis Mason, Jr. became a prominent civil rights proponent in 1951, following a study he conducted for the Atomic Energy Commission and the U.S. Department of Labor. Written during his five-year tenure as Director of the Industrial Relations Department of the Urban League of Pittsburgh, he reported on the use of non-white personnel by industries holding federal defense contracts in 25 cities. His findings helped shape the way corporations function today. A native of Minneapolis, MN, he served in World War II, earned degrees at Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh. In 1953, he was named Deputy Director of the Fair Employment Practices Commission. He served from 1956-67 on the Mayor of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations, serving the last five years as Executive Director. From 1967-1977, he was a member of Pittsburgh City Council and served the last seven years as Council President.



Frankie Pace
2000 Honoree

A native of Clinton, LA, Frankie Pace grew up in Chicago and moved to Pittsburgh. Not long after moving to Pittsburgh she became a distinguished civic leader in her Hill District community. She worked hard to improve housing conditions and government programs for the poor. In 1942, she helped organize a neighborhood improvement community that became known as the Citizens Committee for Hill District Renewal. In 1954, Pittsburgh Mayor David L. Lawrence appointed Mrs. Pace to an exclusive committee to combat poverty in the City. She served on this committee for 16 years. In the sixties, she became a supporter of President Johnson's War on Poverty. She served on the board of directors for Urban League of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh's branch of the NAACP, Pittsburgh's Family & Children's Services, and the Coalition of Elders. She was elected to the board of C.O.O.P., an interracial interfaith group dedicated to improving the city's code enforcement regulations. She operates a school for troubled teens in Chicago.



Dr. Oswald Jerry Nickens

2001 Honoree

Born July 30, 1921, Dr. Oswald Jerry Nickens attended medical school and became a prominent obstetrician and gynecologist in the city of Pittsburgh. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Lincoln University, he achieved his dream by earning his medical degree from Howard University in 1949. He also earned his master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health. By 1954, Dr. Nickens entered into private practice and was honored as the first black physician to join the staff at Magee Women's hospital and West Penn. Outside medicine, Dr. Nickens founded the New World Bank, the first African American owned bank in Pittsburgh. He was active in several community, social and civil rights organizations as well. Dr. Nickens served on the board of directors for the Urban League and the local chapter of the National Medical Association, and was a member of several other affiliations such as the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and Chi Delta Mu and Rho Boule fraternities for black professionals.



Hazel Barbara Garland
2001 Honoree

Hazel was born on January 28, 1913 and grew up on the family farm outside Terra Haute, Indiana. Upon leaving the farm in 1920 and moving to Pennsylvania, Ms. Garland spent the next several years of her life caring for her eight younger siblings.

As a young homemaker, Hazel kept busy by volunteering as a secretary for a black women's club at the YWCA. Ms. Garland worked for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and she continued to receive more assignments. As Women's Editor and Entertainment Editor, she wrote numerous articles for the *Pittsburgh Courier* for 45 years. One of her most popular columns, "Things to Talk About", helped shape the lives of African Americans locally and nationally. She was named editor-in-chief of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the first African American woman to achieve this status at a nationally circulated newspaper. She made many significant contributions as editor-in-chief by creating a standard policy for the newspaper, shaping its staff assignments to reflect social needs and training future journalists. She won several awards, including "Editor of the Year" in 1974 by the National Newspaper Publishers Association and a "National Headliner Award" in 1975.



Dr. Alma Johnson Illery
2002 Honoree

For more than four decades, Alma Johnson Illery raised chicks in the basement of her Hill District home. These chicks provided eggs and meat for hundreds of underprivileged inner city youngsters at Camp Achievement.

Her work at Camp Achievement was only a humble beginning to what Alma Illery would achieve in her lifetime. Dr. Illery began her life of social work during the Depression. Illery became aware of the numerous opportunities to volunteer. Illery and six friends would go door-to-door gathering donations of cereal for patients at the financially strapped Passavant Hospital. They raised enough money to buy a bolt of unbleached muslin and made hospital sheets for the patients.

Years later, the six friends founded a group known as the Achievement Club, a service organization that grew to more than 50 chapters across the U.S.

Illery received an honorary degree from Tuskegee Institute in the field of humanities. In 1944, she successfully lobbied Congress to pass a bill establishing each January 5th as “George Washington Carver Day”, in memory of Tuskegee Institute’s fame. In the past, she convinced dignitaries such as the former Mayor David Lawrence and others to donate money toward her community projects.

She took her message to the White House and was welcomed by no less than five presidents. She used her influence to promote and integrated workforce at area hospitals. Prior to her death in 1972, a small community-run hospital in Homewood, PA was renamed the Alma Illery Medical Center in her honor.



Dr. James A. Stewart

2002 Honoree

Born on December 8, 1921, he attended a number of elementary and secondary schools before graduating with honors from George Westinghouse High School in 1940. Stewart attended Lincoln University, until the beginning of World War II interrupted his studies.

At the conclusion of his military service, Dr. Stewart received his B.S. in 1947 from the University of Pittsburgh. He earned a medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee in 1951.

Following graduation, he became a member of the medical staff at Montefiore Hospital. He practiced general medicine in addition to working in the research department, the Falk Multiple Sclerosis Clinic, while completing his fellowship in psychiatry at Western Psychiatric Institute's Staunton Clinic.

In 1970, he joined the Mercy Hospital staff as Director of Primary Care. He and a group of young neighborhood activists received a grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to start their own "Neighborhood Health Center". They founded the Alma Illery Neighborhood Health Center and it became the first in a series of community-based clinics of its kind. Dr. Stewart served as Medical Director until his retirement.



Charles H. Kindle

2003 Honoree

Charles Kindle graduated from Schenley High School before earning a Sociology and Psychology degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1971. Mr. Kindle is believed to have chaired the first African Affairs Committee of any NAACP branch in the country.

Among his many crusades, including providing opposition against the formation of a South African consulate in Pittsburgh, he also lobbied to free South African activist Nelson Mandela and to end U.S. investments in South Africa.

He was active in the NAACP's United Negro Protest Committee, was a tireless champion for the betterment of African-American workers, and was a vocal opponent of the apartheid government in South Africa.

Prior to his death, he was the driving force behind the construction of a baseball field adjacent to the Penn Hills Multi-Purpose Center. The Charles H. Kindle Memorial Field was dedicated in July 1996.



Dr. Selma Hortense Burke
2003 Honoree

Born in 1900, Selma was one of ten children. She enrolled and studied at St. Agnes Training School for Nurses in Raleigh, N.C.

Following the death of her husband, she moved to New York and worked her way through New York's Art Students League by taking classes at Sarah Lawrence College. Dr. Burke became one of the best-known contemporary artists. She earned numerous awards, including a Rosenwald Foundation Fellowship and the Boehler Foundation Fellowship Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Visual Arts in 1936. She completed her Master of Fine Arts degree at Columbia University in 1941.

She won an international competition to design a portrait of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, sponsored by the Fine Arts Commission of the District of Columbia. Many people credit Dr. Burk's work as the inspiration that artist John Sinnock used in designing the Roosevelt dime.

Her other notable pieces include her plaster *Falling Angle* and a bronze statue of Martin Luther King, Jr. that resides at Marshall Park in Charlotte, N.C. In 1940, she founded the Selma Burke School of Sculpture in New York City and opened the Selma Burke Art Center in Pittsburgh that now houses the Kingsley Association in East Liberty.



Billy Eckstine
2004 Honoree

Born July 8, 1914 in Pittsburgh, PA, William Eckstine got his first break in the music industry in 1939. After a brief stint with the Tommy Myles band, he moved to Chicago and joined the Earl “Fatha” Hines band. With the Earl “Fatha” band, he became an accomplished trumpeter and trombonist, and was responsible for discovering a number of talented young jazz singers by the names of Wardell Gray, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and Sarah Vaughan. In 1943, Billy decided to pursue a solo career and formed his own small band to serve as his background singers. In 1947, newly established MGM Records signed Eckstine to a contract. He will always be remembered as perhaps the first African American artist ever to achieve lasting success in pop music. His distinct baritone voice and vibrato style, combined with his eye for recognizing young music talent, has made him an everlasting legend in the music industry.



George W. Gaines, Sr.
2004 Honoree

Mr. Gaines attended Eckels College of Mortuary Science in Philadelphia. Following the apprenticeship, Mr. Gaines opened his first funeral home in 1919 on Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh. He operated the Gaines Funeral Home there for a couple of years before moving the business to Penn Avenue and then Homestead. Mr. Gaines' business became the largest in the area, primarily due to his creative and innovative thinking. He helped streamline funeral services for the family of the deceased and the church, produced many legal forms still used today by funeral directors for Social Security purposes, and worked diligently to open the first school of Mortuary Science in Pittsburgh. George Gaines was asked to serve on many prestigious committees, including: the Independent Funeral Directors Association of Western PA (President); Keystone State Funeral Directors (President); National Negro Funeral Directors Association (General Secretary); and the Frontiers Club of America (Board of Directors).



Mrs. Florence Silverstein Reizenstein
2005 Honoree

Mrs. Reizenstein established numerous organizations designed to advance human rights and community betterment. She founded the Pittsburgh Fair Employment Practices Commission, and helped establish the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, serving as the first woman commissioner.

She served as founding president of the United Jewish Foundation, and organized the first local chapter of ADA. She founded and served as a vice president of the Negro Educational Emergency Drive (NEED), a non-profit organization first organized to provide financial assistance for African American high school students wishing to begin or continue their post-secondary education.

She became involved with Women in the Urban Crisis. Among the memberships she held were those with the NAACP, the Urban League, National Conference of Christians & Jews, and the United Nations Association of Pittsburgh. She was the third person in the United States to win the Herbert Lehman Israel Award, given to persons whose life and work reflect the actions and beliefs of New York Governor Herbert Lehman. She was named Distinguished Daughter of PA in 1964, and awarded the Sojourner Truth Citation by the National Association of Business Women, and also received the Herman Fineberg B'nai B'rith Humanitarian Award. Following her death, the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education named its new middle school in East Liberty the "Florence Reizenstein Middle School" in her honor.



Reverend Elmer Louis Williams

2005 Honoree

On October 13, 1942, Elmer preached his inaugural sermon at the First Baptist Church in East Liberty.

In 1969, Reverend Williams left First Baptist Church to spread his divine message as pastor of the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church. Under his leadership, the church purchased a large piece of property to expand the ministry. The land was renamed “Elmer L. Williams Square”.

He was a visionary who used a dynamic style of preaching and teaching to stimulate spiritual growth among his congregation. He was often asked to share his knowledge and talents throughout the community.

He served as Executive Director of Pittsburgh Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc. and as a member of the school board. He was also affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh as a member of its Board of Trustees, and as instructor with both the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and Community College of Allegheny County. He was co-organizer of the East End Baptist Fellowship, lifetime member of the NAACP, spiritual advisor for the Pittsburgh Alumni Choral and moderator of the Pittsburgh Area Allegheny Union Baptist Association. He also served two and one-half years as President of the Pennsylvania Baptist State Convention, Inc.



Everett Emory Utterback
2006 Honoree

Born March 2, 1906, Everett learned to make the most of his abilities. He graduated from Dunbar High School, and in 1923, he was accepted at Lincoln University. He continued his education after receiving an athletic scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh. He graduated from the University's School of Business Administration in 1932 and went on to work for several organizations, including Kay's Boys Club, Allegheny County Juvenile Courts and the Pittsburgh Housing Authority. He attended Duquesne University's School of Law.

He practiced in the Courts of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania Superior and Supreme Courts, U.S. Court for Western District of PA, and served as General Counsel to the Housing Authority in 1950. Mr. Utterback became a Senior Partner in the law firm of Utterback, Brown and Harper. He became the first African American to captain a varsity team at the University of Pittsburgh. He was later inducted into the Western Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame. He was the first African American selected for Pitt's Lettermen of Distinction Honor in 1964 and the first African American to sit on the University of Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees. He was involved in many professional organizations, including the NAACP, American Bar Association, Allegheny County Bar Association, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Kay's Boys Club, Hill House Association, Pittsburgh Child Guidance Center, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Presbyterian University Hospital.



Dr. Eugene Lloyd Youngue, Jr.
2006 Honoree

Born May 21, 1914 in Welch, West Virginia, Youngue's family moved to Washington, D.C., where he attended the prestigious Dunbar High School. He attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Howard University Medical School for his post-graduate education.

He studied psychiatry at Homer Phillips Hospital and Washington University in St. Louis, MO. He also studied under world-renowned psychiatrist Dr. Karl Menninger, at the Menninger Psychiatric Institute in Topeka, Kansas. In 1950, Dr. Youngue came to Pittsburgh to work at the Veterans Hospital in Oakland.

After two years, he went to Georgetown University to study under the well-known neurologist Dr. Francis Forrester. Dr. Youngue was the first African American to receive this opportunity. Dr. Youngue belonged to numerous professional organizations including the Gateway Medical Society, Chi Delta Mu Medical Society, the National Medical Association and the Black Faculty and Advisory Board of the Minority Health Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

He also served as medical director of the Homewood Brushton Health Center and the El Elegba Drug Center. Even in his retirement, he continued to serve on the staffs of Mayview State Hospital, Western Penitentiary and Somerset State Hospital.



Robert E. "Pappy" Williams

2007 Honoree

Robert E. "Pappy" Williams was born on Tannehill Street in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on January 1, 1907. He was the oldest of eleven children born to the late Henry M. and Alice Johnson Williams. He married the former Alberta M. Russell and they had two children, a son, Khalil (Robert) and a daughter, Asia (Roslyn).

"Pappy" was educated in the Pittsburgh Public School System, where he attended Moorehead and Minersville Elementary Schools and Schenley High School. While in school, he was an able student, a violinist, and an outstanding basketball player. After graduation from high school, he completed a plumbing engineering program at Carnegie Institute of Technology and obtained his Registered Master Plumber's license. "Pappy" did this in the evening while working full-time in his father's plumbing business. He continued to renew his license from 1925 until his death in 1964.

While growing up, "Pappy" was strongly influenced by his parents. As he worked with his father, he thrived on the interactions he had with people from all walks of life. He acquired fine tool skills from his father and compassion, charm, and wit from his mother. These all stood him in good stead for the challenges he faced in his later years.

The inspiration and skills that "Pappy" received from his parents were passed on to his family and friends. He loved the people and the people loved him. In his 57 years of life, he never lived more than 18 blocks from his birthplace. He lived by a philosophy, which he learned from his parents: "You are your brother's keeper!"

“Pappy” was an active and involved citizen in his community. He served in the following organizations: member of Saint Richard’s Church, Centre Avenue YMCA (Board of Management, Membership Drive), NAACP, Frontiers of America (national service organization), North Side Elks Lodge, Shriners, 32nd Degree Mason, Hill City (Board Member) and the Loendi Club (Board of Governors).

In addition to volunteering his efforts to various community organizations, “Pappy” served his community in other ways. For one, he was a powerful political leader for more than three decades (1931-1964). His leadership engendered respect for his community at the city, state and national levels. He unselfishly used his own financial resources to support the election campaigns for many in the 5th Ward.

His accomplishments were unsurpassed. Some of the most outstanding included his:

- Appointment as Deputy Constable in 1931
- Appointment as Constable of the 5th Ward in 1934
- Establishment of a private detective agency in 1936
- Election as Constable of the 5th Ward in 1939 and re-elected in 1943 by a landslide vote
- Appointment as City Detective in 1945 (first black in this position)
- Appointment as Magistrate in 1946 (according to *Ebony Magazine* one of only 21 blacks in the nation to be involved in the judiciary in 1950)
- Election as Chairman of the 5th Ward Democratic Committee in 1947
- Service on the Executive Committee of the Allegheny County Democratic Party

Noteworthy of his leadership within the Democratic Party was his influence in the election of: Judge Homer S. Brown (first black on the Court of Common Pleas), Attorney Paul F. Jones (first black on the Pittsburgh City Council) and Attorney K. Leroy Irvis (State Legislator). “Pappy” was also influential in the appointment of the first black police lieutenant, the first black patrol car officer and the first black fire captain. The challenges were many, the struggles difficult; “Pappy” said, however, “We fight hard among ourselves, but when we get through, we solve our problems and join in a program of unity.” “Pappy” was indeed a man of the people, by the people and for the people. His nickname, “Pappy” was given to him as a young man who was deemed old, wise and caring at a very early age. This is fitting for the man who will now be honored with “The Spirit of King” Award.

The above information was compiled from the *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Ebony Magazine*, and the Williams family.



Richard F. Jones, Esq.
2008 Honoree

In a speech about Frederick Douglass to the Pittsburgh NAACP, Richard F. Jones emphasized that "...we honor him because he devoted his freedom and talents to obtain freedom for others." Attorney Jones used his gifts as a trial lawyer to obtain recognition of the civil rights of all citizens.

He participated in three major steps forward: Hiring African American teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (1936-1937), hiring African American workers in defense industries and government following WWII, and opening of Highland Park pool to all people of the community (1951-1953). As a lead attorney for the NAACP and Urban League, his presentation of evidence to a special legislative committee resulted in Laurence Peeler, teacher, being hired in 1937. As a member of a team of dedicated lawyers from across the USA petitioning President Truman, he saw President Truman order integration of the federal government and the military and order that they not discriminate on the basis of race in 1948. As President of the Pittsburgh Branch, NAACP (1951-1954), he was fully engaged in the successful suit to open safely Highland Park swimming pool to all citizens.

Attorney Jones was an active board member, at times holding the following high office: Pittsburgh Housing Authority (1934-1954, received the National Service Award), YMCA of Pittsburgh, Metropolitan Board of Directors and Centre Avenue Branch (31 years), Irene Kaufmann Settlement House (trustee, 1946-1954), Pittsburgh Branch NAACP; Pittsburgh Board of Education (1959-1970) and Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh (trustee).

Other long-held affiliations were Allegheny County and Pennsylvania State Bar Associations; Business and Professional Association of Pittsburgh, Holy Cross Episcopal Church, and Rho Boule, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. Born December 18, 1899 in Lynchburg, VA, his family migrated to Pittsburgh by 1903. He graduated with honor from Peabody High School and was a commencement speaker.

He served a brief period in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged with the ending of WWI. By June, 1923, he had earned his B.S. in Economics and LL.B degree with honor at the University of Pittsburgh. He graduated first in his law school class and became the first African American to be inducted into the Order of the Coif (1930), a national honorary legal fraternity.

The law firm of Brown and Jones was established October 1923 and continued over 26 years until Homer S. Brown became a judge. Jones, at the time, was senior trial Assistant District Attorney for Allegheny County (1948-1951). He resigned the position to form Jones, Smith and Freeland law firm, which continued until Henry R. Smith became a judge in 1970. Jones had become Chief Counsel of the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority in 1963. He retired from this position and full-time employment in December 1975.

He married Eleanor Monroe in 1926. Their one child, Rose Eleanor, married Donald E. Scott in 1952. Attorney Jones died November 11, 1983.



Mamie H. Lee
2008 Honoree

Born May 9, 1938, the youngest of six children to Royal and Geneva Hargrove Hamilton, Ms. Lee grew up in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Upon graduating from Schenley High School, she enrolled in the Tam-O'Shanter Arts Program at Carnegie Mellon University and then earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pittsburgh. In 1971 Ms. Lee was deeply affected by a prison uprising in Attica, New York. She set out to make sure that a similar event would not occur in Pittsburgh, and began a prison reform movement called Vibrations. Supporters of this movement lobbied for the fair and ethical treatment of inmates at Western Penitentiary and other prisons throughout the state.

As a result of her work, WYEP Radio launched a radio program called *Vibrations II*, which brought to the forefront problems in the American criminal justice system and the adverse impact on African Americans and other disadvantaged members of society. Ms. Lee was later asked to serve as President of the WYEP Board of Directors.

Ms. Lee helped to ensure participation of African-Americans and women in the political process. During the early 1970s she was the first African American woman to run for Jury Commissioner of Allegheny County and a seat on Pittsburgh's City Council. Ms. Lee's courage helped her gain support for future endeavors.

Ms. Lee later began a career with Meals on Wheels to help homebound individuals, mainly seniors, live independently and enjoy better nutrition when they could no longer prepare meals for themselves.

She was quickly promoted to director of the program, and in 1982 became the first African American woman to be appointed president of the National Meals on Wheels Program.

Through this position Mamie became a national leader in the field of aging and was called upon several times to testify before Congress on the importance of independent living and other critical rights for seniors.

Ms. Lee's lifelong commitment to improving the quality of life for others guided her to become a member of the Thomas Merton Center, whose mission is to find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring peace and justice to the world.

Before she could complete her life's work, Ms. Mamie Lee passed away on February 6, 1984. She was given a special memorial service in Washington, D.C. by the National Meals on Wheels Program, and was presented with the "Golden Rose Aware" for her years of service as a civil servant and her concern for the greater good of society. Mamie Lee will be forever remembered as a thoughtful and caring person who worked tirelessly for the rights and respect of all people.



Frank E. Bolden
2009 Honoree

Although he earned a bachelor's degree in Education and later became a member of Phi Sigma, an honorary fraternity for biologists, Frank E. Bolden built a career as a prominent journalist.

Born December 24, 1912 to Franklin and Mary Woods Bolden, Frank grew up in Washington, PA and graduated from Washington Pennsylvania Public Schools. In the early 1930s he attended the University of Pittsburgh, where he was the first African American to play in the varsity marching and concert bands. Upon graduation, Mr. Bolden accepted a part-time position with the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Shortly thereafter, he began working full-time as a feature writer, columnist, copy desk editor, war correspondent and city editor. He remained with the *Courier* for more than 27 years.

With the onset of WWII in 1939, Mr. Bolden was one of only two accredited African American correspondents assigned to cover the war. For his outstanding work, Mr. Bolden was presented with a citation from the United States War Department for his "Distinguished reporting during WWII".

Later, he was reassigned to cover the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theatre of Operations, where he became the first African American journalist in history to report from those countries. During this time, he interviewed world leaders such as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin at the Tehran Conference. In following years, he also interviewed Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

Mr. Bolden left the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1962 to join the *New York Times*.

A short time later, he was hired by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) as a news reporter. After much persuasion by the Pittsburgh Board of Education, Mr. Bolden left NBC and returned home to take a position with the district. He led the effort to promote desegregation throughout the school system. One year later, he took a leave of absence from this position when NBC asked him to cover the 1964 Republican National Convention. There, he had several conversations with Martin Luther King Jr. Following his retirement from the school district, Mr. Bolden was hired by Pennsylvania Speaker of the House, The Honorable K. Leroy Irvis, to be his senior archivist.

Throughout his very busy and distinguished career, Mr. Bolden always made time to give back to the community. He served on the Boards of the Early Learning Institute, the United Cerebral Palsy Association and Family Services of Western PA. He was an active member in the Historical Society of Western PA, the History and Landmarks Foundation, the University of Pittsburgh Athletic Club and Kiwanis Club of Oakland.

For his efforts, he received numerous honors, including the “Distinguished Past Lieutenant Governor of District 6” Award (1979), Pittsburgh City Council’s “Outstanding Historian and Journalist” Award (1991) and the Pittsburgh Press Club’s “President’s lifetime Award for Career Achievement and Contributions to Western PA Journalism” (1995), to name a few. As his diverse educational background would indicate, Frank E. Bolden used his many talents to overcome barriers and open new doors for talented African-Americans who would follow in his footsteps.

Mr. Bolden and his wife, Nancy, lived in Squirrel Hill until his passing on August 28, 2003.



Charles “Teenie” Harris
2009 Honoree

Not many of us have worked with one of the most influential civil rights leaders in our nation’s history and then received an award named after him. But this is the case for renowned Pittsburgh photographer, Charles “Teenie” Harris, who is a recipient of the 2009 Martin Luther King, Jr. “Spirit of King Award”.

Born in Pittsburgh on July 2, 1908, Teenie Harris was the third son of William “Monk” and Ella Harris. The family lived in the Hill District where Teenie, and brothers, George and William, attended the Watt School (now the Robert L. Vann School).

Teenie purchased his first professional camera with money loaned to him by his brother William. Shortly thereafter, “One Shot”, as Teenie became affectionately known for his candid ability to capture a great photograph in just one shot, took a freelance position as a photographer for Washington, D.C.-based *Flash! Magazine*. Teenie liked the magazine’s name so much that years later he opened his own photography studio on Centre Avenue in the Hill District under the same name. Eventually, he renamed it “Harris Studio”.

In 1936, Mr. Harris accepted a freelance position with the *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the country’s most widely read African American newspapers and a powerful voice for African Americans and other minorities in their struggle to end discrimination at home and throughout the world.

Disturbed by the negative manner in which African Americans were depicted in Hollywood movies and by the mainstream media, Mr. Harris used his position with the *Pittsburgh Courier* to spotlight the many positive aspects of the black community. These positive aspects became the inspiration for many of his finest and most remembered photos.

In 1941 Mr. Harris accepted a full-time position as the staff photographer with the *Courier* and worked there until he retired in 1975.

During his career, Mr. Harris took more than 80,000 photos. His primary focus was to recreate Pittsburgh on film. As a result, he took advantage of the many opportunities he had to photograph well-known celebrities and dignitaries when they stopped in Pittsburgh. Among the most notable individuals in his collections are Lena Horne, Duke Ellington, John F. Kennedy, Joe Louis and Roberto Clemente.

Although Mr. Harris made a name for himself by photographing famous people, he also enjoyed taking photos of people from all walks of life, and believed the average man and woman needed to be recognized too. Today, his negatives are stored in the Teenie Harris Archives of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Art.

Teenie's legacy goes beyond photography. Many recognize him as someone who helped pave the way for African American athletes in sports. In the late 1920s, Teenie was one of the founding members of the Pittsburgh Crawfords, an amateur sandlot team that he had played for until 1930, when it entered its inaugural season in the Negro League. The team featured future Hall-of-Famers Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson.

Furthermore, despite his small stature, Teenie was a fantastic basketball player. He loved the game and is credited with recruiting talented African American players to play for the Pittsburgh Renaissance of the now defunct American Basketball League.

Charles Teenie Harris married Elsa Elliot in 1944, and the couple had four children: Ira Vann, Lionel, Crystal and Cheryl. Mr. Harris also had a son, Charles, from a previous marriage to Ruth M. Butler.

Mr. Harris died on June 12, 1998, less than three weeks before his 90th birthday. He left behind photographs that are a testament to his talent and to his life. The world will continue to enjoy and appreciate his work for years to come.



Bishop Charles H. Foggie
2010 Honoree

During his distinguished life, Bishop Foggie developed friendships with national civil rights leaders Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Justice Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell. He also served on Boards with Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, labored for racial equality with Senators Robert Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey and took part in a Papal Mass with Pope John Paul II in October 1979. On June 13, 1986, the U.S. Congress paid tribute to his leadership by flying a flag over the U.S. Capitol in his honor.

These remarkable experiences, however, were vastly different from a terrifying experience he had as a child when his family was threatened by a lunch mob in Sumter, South Carolina. Yet, the memory of this ordeal did not alter the way he viewed others. Throughout his life, he was a thoughtful and caring man who always helped people regardless of their race, color or religion.

The Foggie family relocated to Boston, MA where Charles and his eight siblings found refuge. Charles, the third child of Mamie and James Foggie, attended school there for several years, but was forced to quit high school just before graduation in order to help his struggling family make ends meet.

Charles eventually returned to school and later attended Livingstone College. Upon receiving his divine calling, Charles continued his studies and later earned a Master's Degree in Sacred Theology from Boston University, an S.T.B. and S.T.M. from the University's School of Theology and a Doctor of Divinity Degree from Livingstone College.

Rev. Dr. Foggie served at churches in Providence, Rhode Island and Cambridge, MA before coming to Pittsburgh, where he served as pastor of the Wesley Center A.M.E. Church for more than two decades. Besides his spirited services, Rev. Foggie persuaded the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra to perform Handel's "Messiah" at the Church each Christmas season.

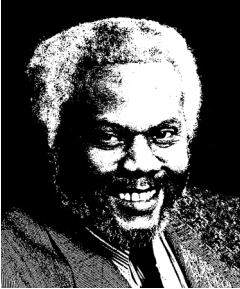
After moving to Pittsburgh, Rev. Foggie married Madeline Sharpe Swan and together raised two children, Milton L. Swan Jr. and Charlene Foggie (Barnett). In 1968, Rev. Foggie was consecrated Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church and was assigned to three world-wide Episcopal Districts. He worked hard to bridge the common concerns within the church and community and spoke out against the lack of black involvement in urban renewal. He also served multiple terms as President and Secretary of the Board of Bishops of the A.M.E. Zion Church, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Livingstone College, and Chairman of the Home Missions Board of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

A tireless pursuit for equality guided Bishop Foggie when he served as President of the Pittsburgh Branch of the NAACP; as President/Commissioner of the Board of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority under Mayor David L. Lawrence; as Chairman of the Department of Cultural and Racial Relations – Pittsburgh Council of Churches; as an Executive Board Member of NEED (Negro Education Emergency Drive), Pittsburgh Urban League, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights.

Within the Church, Bishop Foggie served as Chairman of the North American Consultation on Worship – World Methodist Conference, and on committees such as World and National Council of Churches, National Conference of Christians and Jews, Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania, Churchmen’s Goodwill Tour (Taiwan, Republic of China) and the Zion Church Centennial Celebration (Africa).

Former *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper Religion Editor, Willa Mae Rice, wrote a chapter of a book entitled, “Profile of a Prelate: The Right Reverend Charles Herbert Foggie, D.D.” In it, she stated that “As the Greater Pittsburgh Community became aware of Rev. Foggie’s unique leadership ability and accomplishment as pastor of this congregation, they hurried to tap his resourceful expertise, to the point that Rev. Foggie was regarded as “The Black Mayor of Pittsburgh”.

Today, Bishop Foggie’s name is forever etched on the monument in Pittsburgh’s Freedom Corner as a lasting tribute to the man who cared so much about his community.



Jake Milliones, Ph.D.
2010 Honoree

Many Pittsburghers believe that Dr. Jake Milliones would have become the city's first African American mayor had it not been for his untimely death at the age of 53. Ironically, it was the unexpected death of his wife, Margaret, which thrust him into public life, ultimately positioning him to become one of Pittsburgh's most influential leaders.

In 1978, while working as a trained psychologist at the Western Psychiatric Institute of Pittsburgh and as a research professor at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Milliones accepted an invitation from then Mayor Richard Caliguiri to fill the vacant seat on the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education left by the death of his wife, Margaret. He agreed to take the position because he shared her passion and zeal for academic excellence in the public school system. Dr. Milliones went on to become the Board's first African American president in 1983.

As president, he promoted the increased hiring of African American teachers, insisted on strong performance standards for both students and faculty and sought administrative and staff accountability during a tumultuous period of desegregation in the schools.

His successful tenure on the school board helped Dr. Milliones win election to Pittsburgh City Council in 1989, where he represented District Six which includes the Hill District, Downtown, Uptown, Manchester, other parts of the North Side and Oakland.

As councilman, Dr. Milliones is credited with working to lower the black infant mortality rate, preserving historic neighborhoods and structures such as revitalizing the Ammon Recreation Center for Youths, bringing forth quality housing for single mothers and establishing much-needed health care services for families.

Milliones was also committed to the redevelopment of underserved communities and heralded the Crawford Square development in the lower Hill District, which served as a catalyst for interest and investment for the historic neighborhood.

While planning for the Crawford Square development, Milliones ensured that land at Centre Avenue and Crawford Street, Freedom Corner, was reserved to erect a monument. Freedom Corner was critical to the civil rights movement in Pittsburgh and remains the point of departure for social justice demonstrations and marches. Though Milliones passed by the time the monument was erected, his name is appropriately inscribed with the “Prayer Circle” at Freedom Corner.

Milliones’ commitment to social justice spanned beyond Pittsburgh. He was an instrumental member of Pittsburghers Against Apartheid and crusaded against United States investments in South Africa until full human rights were granted to all citizens and apartheid was ended. As a result of his hard work, Dr. Milliones had the honor of welcoming South African President and human rights icon, Nelson Mandela, during a rare visit to the Pittsburgh region.

Those closest to Dr. Milliones said he had a true gift for bridging the gap between diverse cultural groups. He has been described as a fair leader who was intolerant of injustice, a humanitarian, a faithful family man and a jazz music enthusiast.

Jake and Margaret Milliones are survived by their four children: Beatena, DuBois, Momar and Marimba.



Byrd Rowlette Brown
2011 Honoree

Living up to the standards established by two prominent African American leaders like the Honorable Homer and Wilhelmina Byrd Brown is difficult, but when they are your parents it can be even more difficult.

Yet, Byrd Rowlette Brown not only lived up to those standards, he built his own legacy as a man who would stand up and fight against social injustice and discrimination.

Born July 26, 1929, in Pittsburgh's upper Hill District, Byrd Brown attended Pittsburgh Public Schools. Through the years, he succeeded academically and athletically and began to exhibit the qualities of leadership that would define his adult life. In high school, he was the first African American quarterback to lead the Schenley High School football team. He graduated from Schenley in 1947 and received an academic scholarship to Yale University, where he earned degrees in Liberal Arts and in Law.

Following college, Mr. Brown served in the United States Army from 1954-56. After receiving an honorable discharge, he returned to Pittsburgh to practice law in the firm of Utterback and Brown.

Mr. Brown worked untiringly for social justice. In 1958, he was elected to the first of six-bi-annual terms as President of the Pittsburgh Branch of the NAACP. He co-founded the United Negro Protest Committee, a committee dedicated to breaking down racial barriers and injustices that often existed in corporations, government agencies and trade unions.

Despite his popularity in the African American community, Mr. Brown made an unsuccessful run to become Mayor of Pittsburgh. But his determination to “right” Pittsburgh never altered. He always found time to serve on legal and civic boards and committees including the Lawyers Advisory Committee, US Court of Appeals, Third District, the Disciplinary Board, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the National Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the American Bar Foundation and the Academy of Trial Lawyers. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Pittsburgh Foundation.

Mr. Brown died on May 3, 2001. He was survived by his loving wife, Barbara, and two children, Cortlyn Wilhelmina Brown and Patricia Stevens.

Today, the Brown family legacy will be celebrated as Byrd Rowlette Brown will join his mother (1989 recipient) in receiving the Spirit of King Award.



Malvin R. Goode
2011 Honoree

When Jackie Robinson first put on a Brooklyn Dodgers uniform on April 15, 1947, he helped break the color barrier for African Americans in Major League Baseball. Years later he would help pave the way for African Americans such as Mal Goode to overcome racial discrimination in their chosen careers.

Malvin Russell Goode was born on February 13, 1908 in White Plains, Virginia. At a young age, he and his family moved to Homestead, PA. His father, William H. Goode, took a job in the steel mill and enrolled his children in the Homestead Public Schools.

Malvin Goode worked as a janitor in the Homestead Works of United States Steel at night while attending the University of Pittsburgh by day. He continued that job upon graduating from the University of Pittsburgh in 1931. Later Mr. Goode went to work as a probation officer for Pittsburgh's juvenile court. He then took a position with the Centre Avenue YMCA, followed by taking a management position with the Pittsburgh Housing Authority.

In 1948, at the age of 40, he joined the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the leading newspaper for the African American community, as a reporter. While still employed with the *Courier*, he developed an interest in another form of media – broadcasting.

KQV Radio in Pittsburgh was the first to hire Mr. Goode. There, he hosted two 15-minute news programs each week. In 1952, WHOD Radio also gave him an opportunity to do a daily news show with his sister, Mary Dee, a pioneering deejay.

Mr. Goode's big break came in 1962 when he was hired by ABC-TV News at the recommendation of his close friend and baseball legend, Jackie Robinson. Mr. Robinson was an activist for African American equality and openly expressed his dissatisfaction at the lack of minorities in TV journalism. ABC-TV selected Mr. Goode from nearly 40 candidates to be its first African American reporter. As a full-time news correspondent for ABC-TV, "Mal Goode", as he was known, quickly made a name for himself.

Assigned to the network's bureau at the United Nations in New York City, he spent two decades covering major news stories. Just a few months after taking the job, he earned the respect of American viewers for his reporting on the Cuban Missile Crisis when it appeared the United States and Soviet Union were on the brink of nuclear war. Later, Mr. Goode would also cover significant news stories, including the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.; the 1964 and 1968 Republican and Democratic National Conventions; and major civil rights events.

Mr. Goode's work inspired many young African Americans to become journalists. He welcomed and mentored those who followed in his footsteps, including Ed Bradley, Max Robinson, Carol Simpson and Bernard Shaw. In later years, he and several of his African American colleagues traveled to the countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia to teach journalism and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

Mr. Goode was a distinguished reporter who tackled all news assignments with professionalism and dignity. He received numerous prestigious awards and memberships throughout his life including The Alpha Phi Alpha “Man of the Year” award in 1964; the Mary McLeod Bethune Award from Bethune-Cookman College, a private, historically black university in Daytona Beach, Florida; a Polish Government Award through the United Nations in 1972; and the Michelle Clark Award from Columbia University School of Journalism in 1974.

In 1979 President Jimmy Carter honored Mal Goode and his wife, Mary, at the White House along with other distinguished senior citizens. Mr. Goode was the first African American member of the Association of Radio and TV News Directors, and later was elected its president. He also served as president of the United Nations Correspondents Association. He held membership with the New York 100 Black Men Club and served as a board member for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

He was a prolific orator frequently speaking for local NAACP chapter dinners throughout the United States and as an inspirational speaker at dozens of Historical Black Colleges and Universities.

Despite his hectic schedule, Mr. Goode always made time for his wife Mary Lavelle and their six children. Malvin R. Goode passed away on September 12, 1995 at the age of 87. His speeches, tapes, correspondence, and memorabilia are housed at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the Graduate School of Journalism at the Columbia campus of the University of Missouri, and may be accessed at <https://collections.shsmo.org/manuscripts/columbia/c1706.pdf>



Edna Beatrice Chappell McKenzie 2012 Honoree

Edna Beatrice Chappell McKenzie was highly respected for her knowledge, tireless enthusiasm and engaging persuasive skills. She is remembered for her achievements as an educator, historian, author and advocate for social change.

In the 1940s she worked for the *Pittsburgh Courier* as a copywriter and general assignment reporter. At the *Courier*, she was mentored by Daisy Lampkin. She began as a society reporter, but soon jumped to the news desk and covered lynching and other hard news. At the time, she was the only female reporter at the *Courier* and going into hard news put her on a path to the history books. When she went on the road for her series on discrimination, Charles “Teenie” Harris, the *Courier*’s legendary photographer, accompanied her. She was part of the team that carried out *Courier* Editor Robert L. Vann’s “Double V” campaign during World War II, calling for victory against U.S. racism as well as against the Axis powers.

In the 1950s, the young reporter met and befriended K. Leroy Irvis, a young law school graduate destined to become Pennsylvania’s first black Speaker of the House of Representatives. He worked in publicity for the *Courier*. He admired his friend’s brilliance, especially her study of black life and culture. Following her time at the *Courier*, Edna Chappell McKenzie became a longtime advocate for the black press. So that she could always “tell the truth and write the truth”, she enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh, where she earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees – a bachelor’s degree in education, a master’s in fine arts and a doctorate in history. She was the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in history at Pitt.

At the same time Dr. McKenzie was completing her doctoral work at Pitt, she finished a program of studies at the Harty Bible School of Pittsburgh.

After receiving her doctorate in 1973, she accepted a teaching position at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). For 23 years, she served as chairperson of a department she established – Black, Minority, and Ethnic Studies. During her tenure at CCAC, she was tapped by the Honorable K. Leroy Irvis to serve on the board of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). Upon her retirement from CCAC with the status of professor emerita, she continued to advocate for the needs of all students by serving as a member of the PHEAA executive committee and as chairman of the Committee on Need Analysis. She served on the Higher Education Council of the Pennsylvania Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Conference on Blacks in Higher Education. Dr. McKenzie served on the Board of Trustees at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania and her alma mater the University of Pittsburgh. An accomplished musician, she sang with the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and served as pianist for Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church and St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Three institutions that provided her Afrocentric grounding were the extended Chappell family, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Richard Allen, and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Mother of two sons – Clyde Marcellus Jackson, Jr. and Edmond McKenzie, Jr. – she was a devoted family member and a lifetime member of the A.M.E. Church, the ASALH as well as a lifetime member of the NAACP.

Believing in information from original documents, Dr. McKenzie did extensive research in archives and libraries throughout the United States and Africa. She authored articles for numerous local, state and national publications, as well as two books – *Freedom in the Midst of a Slave Society* and *Selected Essays on Contemporary African American Issues*. A book about the life's work of the late Daisy Lampkin was in progress at the time of Dr. McKenzie's death in 2005.

During her lifetime, Dr. Edna B. McKenzie was the recipient of countless awards in recognition of her work as an educator, an historian, an author and a social activist. The work that she did speaks abundantly about who she was. Thankfully, she lives on in the productive actions of those she touched.



Monsignor Charles Owen Rice
2012 Honoree

Charles Owen Rice was one of the most influential religious figures in Western Pennsylvania history. He used his positions as a Roman Catholic priest, a radio commentator and a newspaper columnist to support union workers, fight racism, reprimand the comfortable and champion the poor, the homeless and the imprisoned.

Born in Brooklyn, New York on November 21, 1908. Charles was four years old when his mother passed away. His father sent him and his older brother, Patrick, to Ireland to stay with their grandmother and other relatives.

Seven years later, Charles returned to Pittsburgh. He attended St. Mary of the Mount parochial school and later Duquesne University. In 1930, he graduated from college and decided to follow his brother's footsteps and become a priest. He studied at St. Vincent's Seminary in Latrobe and was ordained on June 17, 1934.

In addition to performing his duties as a priest, Monsignor Rice quickly established himself as an energetic vocal presence against social injustice.

During the Great Depression, he helped establish the Catholic Radical Alliance "to reform and remold society". He founded the St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, where, in the depths of the Depression, hundreds were housed and thousands were fed. He became an activist in the American labor movement. For 60 years, he walked picket lines throughout the region to show support for union workers and often spoke at labor rallies.

Monsignor Rice published weekly articles in the *Pittsburgh Catholic* newspaper for over 60 years and hosted radio programs on stations WWSW and WJAS for over 40 years. He forcefully communicate his opposition to war and support for civil rights and social justice.

He became a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He strongly supported job opportunities for African American workers in construction trade unions. In 1967, he walked arm-in-arm with Martin Luther King Jr. to the United Nations building to protest the Vietnam War and later spoke at the “March on the Pentagon” anti-war rally.

In 1971, Monsignor Rice ran for a seat on Pittsburgh City Council. Despite losing the election, he continued to fight for Pittsburghers. During the early 1980s, he tried to stop the demise of the steel industry in Pittsburgh by pressing government to change the law so that private entities could not make unilateral decisions that would affect the livelihoods of so many people.

Monsignor Rice died on November 15, 2005 at the age of 96.

Throughout his lifetime, Monsignor Rice consistently articulated a Catholic vision of social justice and responsibility. One of Duquesne University’s one hundred most influential graduates, he will be remembered as the “most influential labor priest of the cold war era” who made his mark on the American labor movement as profoundly as any other person in this century.



Barbara A. Sizemore, Ph.D.
2013 Honoree

Barbara Sizemore had a special passion for helping children and young adults succeed in the world.

In addition to raising her own six children, she also helped countless other children improve the quality of their educations during her 57-year academic career.

Born in Chicago, Illinois on December 17, 1927, Barbara Ann Sizemore excelled as a student. She graduated from high school at the age of 16 and was ranked first in her Wiley High School class and was named president of the National Honor Society.

She attended Northwestern University and earned a degree in classical languages. She then went to the University of Chicago and received a master's degree in elementary education and a doctorate in educational administration.

In 1954, Dr. Sizemore began her career as an educator – one of the few professions open to African American women at the time. She taught in the Chicago Public School system from 1947 to 1962 before being hired as an elementary school principal and high school principal in outlying school districts. She especially embraced disadvantaged students, and worked hard to help African American students from low-income backgrounds succeed in school.

In 1972, Dr. Sizemore was hired as the first African American woman to serve as superintendent of schools in Washington, D.C. As superintendent, she developed a reputation for being a brilliant educator and fierce advocate for community-controlled schools.

As superintendent, she never shied away from controversial or political issues. Dr. Sizemore fought tirelessly for the abolishment of standardized testing for school students, believing that these tests placed minority students at a significant disadvantage.

During her tenure, Dr. Sizemore also authorized the decentralization of the D.C. school system into six separate regions to reduce the administrative hierarchy of the public school system. By doing this, she hoped to involve more parents, teachers, community leaders and students in the day-to-day decisions of the schools.

In 1975, Dr. Sizemore left Washington, D.C. to come to Pittsburgh. She taught at the University of Pittsburgh for more than a decade and conducted groundbreaking research on the relationship between low-income African American children and education. She also served as the interim chairperson of the Department of Black Community, Research and Education.

After returning to Chicago in 1992, Dr. Sizemore became Dean of the School of Education at DePaul University. There, she established the School Achievement Structure (SAS) to help more African American students achieve higher scores on standardized tests through improved curriculums, student placement and instruction.

This philosophy created the ground work for Dr. Sizemore's *Structured Ten Routines*, a model used by many schools to help close the educational gap among underprivileged minorities. Schools that embraced Dr. Sizemore's model soon saw significant increases in test scores and graduation rates. Dr. Sizemore also wrote several books, including *The Ruptured Diamond* and *An Abashing Anomaly*.

For her efforts, Dr. Sizemore received numerous honors and awards during her career, including the Charles D. Moody Service Award from the National Alliance of Black School Educators, the Harold Delaney Educational Leadership Award from the American Association of Higher Education, the Maude G. Reynolds Classical Language Scholarship, the Danforth Fellowship, the Chicago Board Fellowship, the African Heritage Studies Association Edward Blyden Award, the YWCA Racial Justice Award and the New Jersey Association of Parent Coordinators Award.

Dr. Sizemore was a member of several prestigious organizations, including Delta Sigma Theta, the Urban League, NAACP, and Phi Delta Kappa, and she served on the board of the Consortium on Chicago Schools Research.

On July 24, 2004, Dr. Sizemore passed away, but her legacy will live on. Following her death, Duquesne University established the Barbara A. Sizemore Distinguished Professorship in Urban Education to prepare future educators with an opportunity to share her enthusiasm for teaching.

She is survived by six children and seven grandchildren, who she loved and helped prepare to succeed in the world.



August Wilson
2014 Honoree

Ironically, the complex life and career of Frederick August Kittle, Jr. – better known as August Wilson – were influenced by three simple letters – A, E and the four B’s.

In the 10th grade, Wilson’s teacher accused him of plagiarizing a paper because it was written so well. “My teacher said she was going to give me either an A+ or an E”, Wilson once recounted.

The teacher told Wilson to prove that he wrote the paper. Wilson refused. He didn’t believe he needed to defend his writing ability; so the teacher gave him an E. Wilson responded by quitting school. This event helped to shape Wilson’s future. It gave him the determination to show the world that he was an incredibly talented writer.

Wilson also was influenced by the four B’s – Blues music, Argentine novelist and poet Jorge Luis Borges, playwright Amiri Baraka and artist Romare Bearden.

Born April 27, 1945, Wilson and his five siblings were raised by their mother in a small, two- room apartment on Bedford Avenue in the Hill District. He attended Central Catholic High School in 1959, where he was the only African American in his class. Threats and abuse caused Wilson to enroll at Connelly Vocational High School, but he didn’t find the curriculum challenging. He eventually went to Gladstone High School.

After serving in the United States Army, Wilson returned to Pittsburgh and worked a number of odd jobs. He enjoyed observing people in his neighborhood, many of whom would become characters in his writings.

In 1968, Wilson and a close friend co-founded the Black Horizons Theatre in the Hill District.

Although Wilson began his career as a talented poet, he soon focused on writing plays. Wilson is perhaps best known for *Pittsburgh Cycle*, a series of ten plays depicting African American heritage during the 20th century. Each play is set in a different decade.

Fences, *The Piano Lesson*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* all earned him a long list of awards including the Pulitzer Prize, Tony Awards and the New York Drama Critics Circle Awards.

Wilson once said that “my plays offer white Americans a different way to look at black Americans”.

August Wilson passed away on October 2, 2005 in Seattle, Washington, leaving behind his wife, Constanza Romero, their daughter, Azula Carmen Wilson, and a legacy that will live on forever.

In the years following his death, the Virginia Theatre on Broadway in New York City was renamed the August Wilson Theatre in his honor. In addition, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture opened in Downtown Pittsburgh in 2006 as a tribute to his lifetime of literary achievements; and his childhood home was declared an historic landmark in 2007.



Rev. Dr. LeRoy Patrick
2014 Honoree

Rev. Dr. LeRoy Patrick was born in Adam's Run, South Carolina, a small village outside of Charleston. His father was a farmer who also provided logs for a lumber mill. His mother was a homemaker. They moved the family to Philadelphia from Florida in the mid-1920s.

He was the youngest of three sons. The oldest, Gregory, was killed by a white youth at age 12 in front of Dr. Patrick, who was about four years old at the time. In 1920s South Carolina a case was never considered, much less investigated. This event remained seared in Dr. Patrick's memory the rest of his life. His other brother, Edgar, died in 1948 of tuberculosis.

Upon graduation from high school in Philadelphia, Dr. Patrick realized he wanted more out of life though, he was uncertain as to what it might be. After much thought and prayer, Dr. Patrick knew he was, in his own words "Claimed by the Cross...", and should become a minister. He indicated this to the pastor of his church, who arranged to send him to Lincoln University in Chester County.

It was Lincoln University which made Dr. Patrick a scholar and, through the mentoring of one of its faculty, a gentleman. He graduated in 1939 and fate brought him entry into the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. There he earned Master Degrees in Divinity and Sacred Theology in 1942 and 1943, respectively.

Dr. Patrick taught Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Old Testament Religion at Lincoln University from 1943 to 1949. Lincoln awarded him an honorary Doctorate in 1964. He later served on the Board of Trustees at Lincoln, rising to Chairman. Even after becoming an Emeritus Trustee, he remained a force for suggestion and advice which was heeded by his fellow board members.

Rev. Dr. LeRoy Patrick was a determined figure at the center of the movement that confronted racism in Pittsburgh in the 1950s and 1960s. He often said in later years this was not a role he sought. Dr. Patrick regarded himself first as the pastor of his church, Bethesda Presbyterian. However, he would add he felt someone had to take the lead in the fight for social justice; in his words, “To do less is to reject the Lord”.

His civil rights activism in Pittsburgh began in 1951 with a campaign to integrate the public swimming pools. Dr. Patrick’s focus was based on his feeling of the injustice of black children being excluded from entry to some of the city pools because they were “traditionally white”.

In the summer of 1951 Dr. Patrick, recently arrived in Pittsburgh with his family, began to organize groups of young blacks to swim in the “traditionally white” pools. It was not an easy task. Many Blacks were reluctant to challenge the status quo. After all, previous attempts had been met with violence. There were places where the pools would be drained rather than integrate. In one instance, white toughs threw so many rocks over the fence where Dr. Patrick and his followers were swimming, the pool later had to be drained. Yet Dr. Patrick persisted in his efforts of leading the hesitant and challenging the unjust status quo.

The first public pool to integrate was Highland Park. Other city pools followed and eventually pools around the country became integrated. This was an historic achievement led by a man who couldn't swim.

This first campaign led to subsequent struggles as Dr. Patrick championed equal opportunity in housing, employment, education and public accommodation. In the process he came to serve the community in a variety of roles.

In the 1950s Dr. Patrick chaired the Allegheny County Council on Civil Rights as well as the Allegheny County Committee for Fair Housing Practices. By the 1960s he was serving on the board of the Pittsburgh NAACP and continuing the struggle by sitting at lunch counters and walking picket lines. The focus remained better employment opportunities, better housing, and better education. In the latter category Dr. Patrick led a series of demonstrations at the Pittsburgh School Board calling for an improved educational experience for the children through racial integration, quality education, history and social studies lessons that were racially balanced. As a result of his tireless efforts he was appointed president of the Pittsburgh School Board in 1976.

Dr. Patrick believed institutions were no less obliged to provide social justice. In that vein he was a participant in bringing lawsuits against the Pittsburgh Police Bureau and the University of Pittsburgh regarding employment practices.

Dr. Patrick was both theologically and politically progressive, backing the campaigns of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and Rev. Jesse Jackson for President. He also created Bethesda Center, which he used as an instrument to aggressively pursue social services for the Homewood area. Dr. Patrick also chaired the Pennsylvania Negro Democratic Committee (later the Pennsylvania Black Democratic Committee). The Committee's objective was to increase the number of qualified blacks in the upper management and executive levels in state government. Among its first results was the appointment of C. Delores Tucker as the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

At the same time, Dr. Patrick could be non-partisan. He supported former Governor Thornburgh in his two terms. One legacy of this activity was his appointment as a commissioner to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. During his tenure, which lasted a record 24 years, Dr. Patrick helped promote the history of black Pennsylvanians throughout the Commonwealth.

In keeping with his self-description of a pastor concerned with his church and community, Dr. Patrick led Bethesda Center for more than 30 years. It was a social service mission supported by the church to provide outreach to the people of Homewood. Among the features of this inner city ministry were recreation, employment, family development and spiritual programming. While it no longer exists, the Bethesda Center was a model used today by other urban churches.

The legacy of Rev. Dr. LeRoy Patrick is that the quest for spiritual and social justice required action, great and small.



Anderson Little
2015 Honoree

Anderson Little's career in radio spanned more than 30 years. But it wasn't the length of his career, it was his exceptional accomplishments that distinguished his career in radio. As a result of his accomplishments, Mr. Little received many national and local awards.

He was recognized by the United States House of Representatives in 1998 for his superior work as a radio journalist. The Thomas Merton Center honored Mr. Little with the New People Justice Award. The Alleghenians LTD presented Mr. Little with its Community Services and Communications Award. He also received the 2003 Professional Man of the Year Award from the Pittsburgh Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

These awards are especially impressive for a man who always preferred to stay behind the scenes and never put himself ahead of any news story he covered. The one thing that remained constant throughout Mr. Little's career was his desire to give listeners a full, unedited account of the topic being discussed.

Mr. Little's interest in radio started while he was in high school attending Pittsburgh Public Schools.

In the late 1960s, Mr. Little began his radio career in Pittsburgh at a startup station called the Hill City Youth Municipality radio station. Later he became a DJ at radio stations in Kansas City and St. Louis.

After returning to Pittsburgh, he worked at WAMO-AM, WAMO-FM, WQED-TV and KQV radio. At KQV radio, Mr. Little hosted his nightly show, which mixed hit music and talk.

In 1972, Mr. Little was hired by WDUQ-FM at Duquesne University. There, he became a prominent radio journalist. His show brought current social issues such as African American struggles for equality to the forefront on public radio and provided a minority voice on these issues.

Over the years, Mr. Little produced and hosted a number of radio shows, including *Window into the Community*, *Community Perspective* and *Pittsburgh Perspective*, before finally hosting a show bearing his name, *The Anderson Little Report*.

The Anderson Little Report aired each Sunday on WDUQ and focused on topics like jobs, education and other public affairs issues. Each year, Mr. Little hosted a series of special programs during Black History Month, which centered on topics such as military segregation during World War II and the Homestead Grays and Pittsburgh Crawfords baseball teams.

Sadly, just two months after retiring from WDUQ, Mr. Little passed away on June 4, 2006 at the age of 66.



K. Leroy Irvis
2015 Honoree

K. Leroy Irvis was a dedicated public servant who worked tirelessly to enrich the lives of Pennsylvania citizens. Throughout his political career, his constituents and colleagues recognized him for his outstanding service and ardor.

Representative Irvis was first elected to represent the 19th Legislative District of Pittsburgh in 1958, and was re-elected to this seat for 15 consecutive terms.

While in office, his colleagues within the House of Representatives bestowed several noteworthy honors on him, including electing him Democratic Caucus Chairman – making him the first African American elected to a leadership position. Later, he also served as the Majority Caucus Chairman, Minority Whip and Majority Leader.

On May 23, 1977 Representative Irvis was unanimously elected to serve as Speaker of the House – an honor he shared with Benjamin Franklin, who was the only other person ever unanimously elected to that position. He regained the Speaker position on January 4, 1983 and remained in this position until he retired on November 30, 1988.

Fulfilling the obligations of his leadership roles did not hamper Irvis' ability to promote key pieces of legislation. He sponsored over 1,600 pieces of legislation addressing his concerns on education, civil rights, health, consumer protection, prison reform, housing and governmental reform.

His most noted achievements include the sponsorship and passage of legislation creating the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; the Pennsylvania Higher Education Equal Opportunity Program; the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency; and the Minority Business Development Authority.

Irvis also introduced the idea of a community-based higher education system in the Commonwealth and has been called the “father” of the present-day community college system.

His legislative efforts also considered the efficiency and accountability of the House. Such reforms include creation of the House Ethics Committee, the Lobbyist Registration Act, Legislative Audit Advisory Committee, and the House Bipartisan Management Committee.

Eventually, Irvis’ legislative interests lead to his selection as a delegate to the 1967-1968 Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention. He also served as a delegate to the Democratic National Conventions in 1968, 1972 and 1980. At the 1980 Democratic National Convention, Irvis served as Vice-Chairman of the Pennsylvania Delegation and as Convention Co-Chairman - again, a first for an African American. Irvis was elected to serve as a member of the Democratic National Committee in 1982.

Speaker Irvis was able to achieve these political accomplishments because of his strong family connections and belief in education.

He was born on December 27, 1916 to Francis H. and Harriet Ten Broeck Cantine Irvis, in Saugerties, New York. He credited his parents with instilling in him and his siblings an appreciation for education. As a result, he graduated summa cum laude from New York State Teachers College (now the University of the State of New York at Albany, S.U.N.Y., at Albany). In 1939, he earned his Master's Degree in English Literature from the University of New York at Albany.

Irvis then attended the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. In 1969 his law degree was converted to a Juris Doctorate.

After graduating from law school, Irvis served as law clerk to Judge Anne X. Alpern and Judge Loran Lewis. In 1957 he was appointed Assistant District Attorney for Allegheny County, and held that position for six years.

Many organizations have honored Irvis for his public service, including the NAACP, the Conference on Black Basic Education, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Pittsburgh Junior Chamber of Commerce. The university awarded him the "Distinguished Alumnus Award for Political Leadership", honoring his work as a political leader. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate in Public Affairs from his University, S.U.N.Y. at Albany and received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Law from Lincoln University of Pennsylvania.

Irvis' civic involvement included membership on the Boards of the United Black Front, Community Action Pittsburgh, Neighborhood Assistance Advisory Board, Three Rivers Improvement and Development, Greater Pittsburgh Business Development Corporation, the *Post-Gazette* Dapper Dan Club, the Bidwell Cultural and Training Center, and WQED Public Television. He was also a life member of NAACP, a Trustee of the University of Pittsburgh and a member of the University of Pittsburgh Medical School Advisory Committee.

A devoted wood sculptor, painter and published poet, K. Leroy Irvis actively participated in and supported the arts. His wood sculptures have been displayed in exhibits throughout the country and also for two years throughout Europe.

Irvis was also an avid model airplane enthusiast since childhood. He designed, built and flew the radio-controlled airplanes and even started his own club for others who shared his interest.

K. Leroy Irvis died on March 16, 2006. Irvis was married to the former Cathryn L. Edwards. Speaker and Mrs. Irvis are the parents of a son, Reginald D. Irvis and a daughter, Sherri L. Irvis-Hill. They have four grandchildren.



Dorothy I. Height
2016 Honoree

Described by President Barack Obama as the “Godmother of the American Civil Rights Movement”, Dorothy Height is best remembered for her work as a civil rights and women’s rights activist, devoting her life to helping African American women break through race and literacy-related issues, unemployment and suffrage issues.

As a youth, Ms. Height’s family moved to Rankin, PA where she grew up and graduated from Rankin High School.

She was accepted into Barnard College in 1929, but upon arriving for her first day of class, she was denied entry because the school had a strict policy to only permit two African American students per school year. This incident only made her stronger and more determined to fight for civil rights.

Ms. Height was later accepted into New York University and earned her undergraduate degree and master’s degree in education and psychology. She continued her studies at Columbia University and New York School of Social Work.

Upon entering the workforce, Ms. Height worked as a case worker for the New York City Welfare Department before joining the National Council of Negro Women. Years later, she accepted a position on the national staff of the YWCA.

Ms. Height continued to fight for equal rights for both African Americans and women, and was later named president of the National Council of Negro Women, a position she held for more than four decades.

In 1963, Height helped organize the famed March on Washington, during which she stood close to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech.

At the pinnacle of the civil rights movement, Ms. Height organized “Wednesdays in Mississippi”, a series of regular meetings that brought together African Americans and white women in order to create a productive discussion of issues they faced.

National respect for Ms. Height continued to grow. During the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration, Ms. Height helped persuade the president to desegregate schools, and years later helped convince President Lyndon B. Johnson to appoint African American women to positions in government.

Ms. Height was also nominated chairperson for the Executive Committee of the Leadership on Civil Rights, the largest civil rights organization in the United States.

Ms. Height’s achievements certainly did not go unrecognized. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994, the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004, the Presidential Citizens Medal in 1989, Spingarn Medal from the NAACP in 1993 and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Freedom from Want Award in 1993.

Other honors include Ms. Height's induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1993 and being enshrined on The Extra Mile Memorial in Washington D.C. in 2005. Google even featured a sketch of Ms. Height on its site in celebration of the 102nd anniversary of her birthday in 2014.

Her memoir, *Open Wide The Freedom Gates*, was later made into a musical entitled, *If This Hat Could Talk*, which debuted nationwide in 2005.

When Ms. Height died on April 20, 2010 at the age of 98, President Barack Obama ordered all flags to be flown at half-mast in her memory. The President also attended Ms. Height's funeral and delivered her eulogy.

During his tearful 13-minute tribute to Ms. Height, the president praised her for "devoting her life to those struggling for equality ... witnessing every march and milestone along the way."

The President continued, "She too, deserves a place in our history books. She too, deserves a place of honor in America's memory."



Dr. Curtis L. Walker
2016 Honoree

Curtis Walker always believed he could make a difference in the lives of young men and women. It was no surprise, then, that he had a long and very successful career in education – first as a teacher, then as a top administrator for the Pittsburgh Public School system.

Walker graduated from Aliquippa High School and went on to attend the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts, Masters of Education and Doctor in Education Administration degrees.

In 1958, Dr. Walker began teaching in the Aliquippa School District. He taught all levels, from elementary to senior high school. A decade later, he was promoted to assistant principal of Aliquippa Junior High School before becoming the assistant superintendent of Aliquippa School District.

Throughout his career, Dr. Walker instilled the importance of advanced degrees and education in all of his students. Many of his students grew up to become educators. Others went on to careers as physicians, attorneys, engineers, successful business persons, and leaders in their communities.

In 1970, Dr. Walker left Aliquippa School District and headed back to the University of Pittsburgh, this time as a teacher.

After receiving his doctorate in 1972, Dr. Walker became the first Director of the Consultative Resources Center on School Desegregation and Conflict at the University of Pittsburgh, the first university desegregation center in the North. He also received a faculty appointment as an assistant professor and adjunct associate professor in the School of Education's Department of Educational Administration.

Dr. Walker left the university in 1975 for an opportunity to serve as the Deputy Superintendent, Associate Superintendent and Executive Officer of the Pittsburgh School District's Equity, Compliance and Community Relations Department. His main duties were overseeing district expectation for minority and female participation in the offices of facilities and purchasing.

Some of Dr. Walker's proudest career achievements include serving as the founding member of the Urban Emphasis Committee, spearheading the development of an in-school Learning for Life program that taught life skills to more than 3,000 area youths, and his involvement in the Boy Scouts of American Scoutreach Program where he was able to teach the same life lessons he learned as a scout to thousands of urban youths.

Dr. Walker is credited with organizing the Pittsburgh Chapter of the United Negro College Fund.

As an active member of the community, Dr. Walker also belonged to several national, state and local professional and social organizations, including the American Association of School Administrators, National and Greater Pittsburgh Alliance of Black School Educators, Board of Directors of Tyler Youth Group, Conference of Black Basic Educators, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., the FROGS, President of the Pittsburgh Pan-Hellenic Association, Hand In Hand, Inc., the Emanons, and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Rho Boule.

Dr. Walker passed away on October 8, 2006 at the age of 73. He is survived by his wife, Margie, who he had courted since the two met back in the seventh grade, and their three daughters, Cara, Curtistine, and Anita.



Commander Gwen Elliott
2017 Honoree

Gwen Elliott wore many uniforms throughout her life, and each one served as a symbol of her resilience and determination to break down racial and gender barriers.

Born and raised in the Mon Valley, Ms. Elliott graduated from West Mifflin High School in 1962. She received a partial scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh, and to help further her education, enrolled in the military, serving five years in the United States Air Force.

As a young enlistee, Ms. Elliott was subjected to gender discrimination by her male counterparts. But through perseverance, she eventually overcame those challenges and rose to the rank of staff sergeant. After her honorable discharge, she would later serve in the National Guard and Air Force Reserves.

In 1976, the City of Pittsburgh Police Department hired Ms. Elliott as one of its first female officers following a consent decree that opened the door for African American women and men. Again, despite facing opposition from her male counterparts, she quickly ascended the ranks and became the first female sergeant. She would eventually serve for more than 16 years as the department's first African American police commander.

Under her supervision, she headed the Office of Family, Violence, Youth and Missing Persons, and founded the Moms and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. Cmdr. Elliott was also a visionary leader who helped the Mayor's Office in developing policies for youth in the community. Cmdr. Elliott retired from the force in 2002.

For more than three decades, Cmdr. Elliot gave her time and talents to serving the community on a number of boards, and helped raise money and awareness for important issues.

Elliott was especially committed to helping young, urban females face the challenges of living in at-risk neighborhoods. She founded Gwen's Girls, a non-profit agency dedicated to helping young girls and women become self-sufficient adults, in 2006. Gwen's Girls also helps build a strong family unit by offering a wide range of support services, from prevention services to residential services and foster care.

Opening Gwen's Girls was Ms. Elliott's life-long dream after she witnessed firsthand the struggles of young women during her years with the Pittsburgh Police Department. She dedicated the remainder of her years to helping young women have a better quality of life - not just for themselves, but for their children and future generations to come.

Ms. Elliott passed away on May 14, 2007 at the age of 62. Her spirit and legacy continue to shine on through the many lives she touched and served over the years – both in uniform and out – to improve the community.



Walt Harper
2017 Honoree

Walt Harper loved music and entertaining. Despite his international following, he never cared much for taking his show on the road. Instead, Mr. Harper loved Pittsburgh and made a conscious effort to play his music locally.

Growing up in Schenley Heights, Mr. Harper showed his musical talents at an early age. During his high school years, he played trombone in the All-City Band at Schenley High School and formed a quintet known as the “Swingin’ Five”.

Following graduation, Mr. Harper attended the Pittsburgh Musical Institute and University of Pittsburgh. After two years, he formed a 10-piece band that also included his brother, Nate, and soon began appearing along the east coast with renowned artists like Nat King Cole, Sarah Vaughan and George Shearing.

Both a jazz pianist and composer, Mr. Harper is perhaps best known for this rendition of *Satin Doll*, written by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. He performed his version so often and so well that many believed he composed the song himself.

In the years that followed, Mr. Harper appeared regularly at the legendary Crawford Grill in Pittsburgh’s Hill District neighborhood. In 1969, he opened Walt Harper’s Attic, a jazz nightclub in Market Square.

Many of Pittsburgh's most recognizable celebrities often patronized the Attic and became close friends of Mr. Harper. In fact, Pittsburgh Steelers owner and president Dan Rooney personally invited Mr. Harper to perform at all Steelers home games between the 1970s and 2002.

In the early 1980s, Harper's Jazz Club opened at One Oxford Center. The 148-seat venue featured a full-size restaurant featuring menu items named after other famous artists. Nancy Wilson, Dave Brubeck, Max Roach and Wynton Marsalis all performed to sellout crowds at the club.

In 2001, *Pittsburgh Magazine* presented Mr. Harper with its Mellon Jazz Community Award and Harry Schwab Excellence in the Arts Award for his accomplishments as an artist and his contributions to the music industry.

During his more than six decades in the business, Mr. Harper recorded eight albums and four CDs and performed numerous times on national and local television.

Walt Harper remained an active performer until his passing on October 25, 2006.



Katie Everette-Johnson

2018 Honoree

Despite her small stature and quiet personality, Katie Everette-Johnson always stood tall and made her voice heard when it came to fighting for human rights.

Born February 3, 1923, to George and Mattie Everette, Ms. Everette-Johnson was one of eight siblings. She attended grade school at Herron Hill Junior High School (known now as Margaret Milliones Middle School) in the Hill District before graduating from Schenley High School in 1941. She was accepted into Duffs Iron City Business Institute and went on to graduate from the University of Pittsburgh with a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

Ms. Everette-Johnson began her professional career as an administrative assistant at United Mental Health Services. She later accepted a position with the Urban League of Pittsburgh, where she fought to improve working conditions for factory workers and also participated in numerous civil rights demonstrations, including one at a well-known Downtown restaurant.

In 1973, Port Authority hired Ms. Everette-Johnson as a consumer affairs officer; she held a number of positions in her 20 years with the agency, including supervisor of consumer relations and special assistant for community and consumer affairs. In 1986, Mrs. Everette-Johnson became Port Authority's first African American manager when she was promoted to lead the office of equal opportunity.

As manager, Ms. Everette-Johnson managed the hiring and career development process for minorities and also addressed discrimination complaints. She managed the authority's

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program to ensure minority business owners received equal opportunities to bid on Port Authority contracts.

Ms. Everette-Johnson is credited with establishing Port Authority's Classroom on Wheels program, which traveled to local schools and gave students the opportunity to meet Port Authority drivers and learn more about transit. The experience helped students gain a greater respect for drivers.

Following her retirement from Port Authority in 1993, Ms. Everette-Johnson stayed very active in the community. She served on a number of professional and civic committees, including the Consumer Federation of America, the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Advisory Committee, Pittsburgh Job Corps, Women in the Urban Crisis, NAACP Human Rights Dinner and Membership Committees, and the Pennsylvania Program for Women and Girl Offenders. Ms. Everette-Johnson was the founding member of the Black Women's Political Crusade and the Program for Female Offenders. She also served on the Board of Trustees at her church, Bethel A.M.E. Church on Webster Avenue.

Ms. Everette-Johnson helped establish the Spirit of King Award Ceremony in the late 1980s, and served on the committee for nearly three decades.

Katie Everette-Johnson died on March 8, 2017, at the age of 94.

Ms. Everette-Johnson received numerous honors and awards over the years, including the IOTA Woman of the Year Award, *TALK Magazine's* 25 Most Influential Black Women of 1976, the *New Pittsburgh Courier's* Distinguished Citizen Award in 1966, NAACP's Women's Auxiliary (Pittsburgh) Special Award, the National Sojourner Trust (Meritorious Service Award), the *New Pittsburgh Courier's* 2014 Fifty Women of Excellence Legacy Honoree and *New Pittsburgh Courier's* 2015 Women of Excellence Award. Although Ms. Everette-Johnson never sought any recognition for her accomplishments, she certainly deserved it. Her remarkable achievements helped countless others overcome barriers and opened doors for minorities to reach their full potential.



Harvey Adams, Jr.
2019 Honoree

Harvey Adams, Jr. held positions of authority in the community for more than three decades. He used those positions to become one of the most powerful and outspoken civil rights activists in Pittsburgh history.

Born on April 11, 1929, Harvey, Jr. was the only child born to Harvey Adams, Sr. and Virginia Elaine (Hall) Adams. He spent his childhood in Polish Hill before graduating from South Hills High School and attending West Virginia State University.

After serving his country in the Korean War, Harvey returned home to serve the City of Pittsburgh.

In 1955, Harvey was hired by the City of Pittsburgh Police Department after achieving the first-ever perfect score on the entrance exam. He ascended through the ranks on his way to becoming chief of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority Police.

While still employed in his role with the police, Harvey was also elected president of the NAACP Pittsburgh Chapter. He held this position from 1976-1992.

During that time, Harvey took a firm stance against racism and injustice within the police department. He engaged other community leaders to march in protest against police brutality and unfair hiring practices. His efforts to promote affirmative action led to the creation of the *1-1-1-1 Plan*, which prohibited discrimination by requiring the department to hire one black male officer, one black female officer, one white male officer and one white female officer. Harvey also helped establish the Guardians of Greater Pittsburgh, an organization that advocated for equality for black police officers.

Harvey also was instrumental in demanding fair hiring practices at Volkswagen when the corporation opened a factory in Pittsburgh and he fought to ensure African American workers had jobs during Pittsburgh's Renaissance II project. Furthermore, he founded the Freedom from Hunger Campaign to benefit underprivileged families and helped establish the city's African American Heritage Parade.

Harvey's other passion was to help students achieve their dreams through higher education. Along with two other dedicated partners, he established the Neighborhood Academy through the POISE Foundation, which later created the Harvey Adams Scholarship Fund in his honor to distribute educational scholarships to young men and women.

Harvey Adams, Jr. died September 7, 2009, at the age of 80. He was survived by his wife, Shirley Adams; son, Harvey Adams III; and two daughters, Carol Adams and Nikkisha Wright.



The Honorable Walter R. Little
2019 Honoree

As a young teen growing up in a public housing community, Walter R. Little dreamed of building a better life for himself. When the opportunity finally arose, he made the most of it by becoming one of the hardest working judges to ever serve the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Born on October 1, 1943, to George and Lillie Belle Little, Walter was the youngest of 12 children. He grew up in the Hill District, attended St. Richard's grade school (later renamed St. Benedict the Moor), and graduated from Oakland's Central Catholic High School in 1961.

Walter served in the United States Army for a number of years before enrolling at the Community College of Allegheny County. He went on to attend the University of Pittsburgh, where he received both a political science degree and law degree.

After college, Walter worked as a deputy attorney general for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a trial attorney in the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office, and a law clerk for both The Honorable I. Martin Wekselman and The Honorable Livingston Johnson. He was also employed by Neighborhood Legal Services, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Consumer Affairs, and became a partner at a law firm with attorney Clifford Cooper and future Federal Court Judge Gary Lancaster.

In 1979, former Pittsburgh Mayor Richard Caliguiri appointed Walter to city magistrate. He served in that role until he was elected to the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Criminal Division in 1985. Judge Little served in the Allegheny County Orphans Court Division for another eight years.

During his time on the bench, Judge Little earned a reputation as a no nonsense jurist who mixed his vast legal knowledge with a common street sense. However, not everyone appreciated his strict and demanding demeanor. In fact, Judge Little was once bitten on the face by a defendant in his courtroom.

Declining health forced Judge Little to accept Sr. Judge status on January 31, 2006.

Judge Little sat on a number of boards and held memberships with numerous professional and civic organizations throughout his career including the Pittsburgh Chapter of the NAACP, Guardians of Greater Pittsburgh Inc., Sickle Cell Society, Auberle, Children of Love Theatre, Pittsburgh Community Services, National Association for the Study of Afro-American History, Smith Watkins Veterans Post No. 2, Allegheny County Prison Board and the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

Judge Little passed away on June 5, 2006, at the age of 62 – just one day after his brother and former Spirit of King Award recipient, Anderson, died. He was survived by his wife, Elizabeth, their two daughters, Karren Denise and Lisa Lonnnette and grandson, Diontay Walter.



Robert R. Lavelle
2020 Honoree

Growing up with seven siblings during the Great Depression can make life very challenging. But for Robert Lavelle, it prepared him for a lifetime of helping those less fortunate in the community.

Born October 4, 1915 in Cleveland, Tennessee, Robert was the sixth of eight children born to the Reverend Franklin and Mary Anderson Lavelle. His father was a traveling Church of God Minister who eventually settled the family in Pittsburgh.

Robert attended Westinghouse High School, but dropped out to help support his struggling family after his father's death. For several years he worked odd jobs, including as a dishwasher in a department store restaurant.

In 1935, Robert was offered an opportunity with the *Pittsburgh Courier*. He worked there for twenty one years, first in the mailroom and then later in accounting. While still with the *Courier* he met his future wife, Adah Moore, and the two wed in 1942.

A year later, Robert was drafted and served four years in the United States Army during World War II. In 1946, he returned home after receiving an honorable discharge as a First Lieutenant. Robert began taking evening classes and completed his education at Schenley High School. He then enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh and earned a B.S. degree in 1951 and M.S. degree from the University's prestigious Katz School of Business in 1954.

While still in school, Robert started his own independent real estate business, Lavelle Real Estate. As a broker, he soon realized the inequity African Americans faced when applying for mortgages.

While trying to secure a mortgage for one of his clients through Dwelling House Building and Loan, Robert learned that the institution was about to close. After a brief meeting with its executives, Robert was named a director and moved the institution into his Hill District real estate office. He would remain with the company for more than 50 years serving as executive vice president and chief executive officer.

During that time, Robert focused on serving the underprivileged in his community by providing loans to low-income individuals who would not have otherwise qualified for bank loans.

Robert also served his community in other ways. He was a devoted member of several boards, including: the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; Salvation Army; United Presbyterian Foundation; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; the Urban League of Pittsburgh; the University of Pittsburgh Katz Graduate School of Business and the Pittsburgh Symphony Society.

He will always be remembered for his faithful devotion to God. Rarely did he speak with or write to anyone about anything without God's word being included in the message. He was known for his very active membership in Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church where he served as an elder, Sunday school teacher, Bible study leader and worship service leader.

For his service, Robert received honorary degrees from Geneva College and Gordon College.

The University of Pittsburgh named a four-year scholarship in his honor.

On July 4, 2010, Robert Lavelle passed away at the age of 94. He is survived by his sons Robert and John and their wives; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. His wife of more than 68 years, Adah, recently passed away in November 2019.



Nate Smith, Sr.
2020 Honoree

Nate Smith, Sr. never backed down from anyone or anything that got in his way. His fighting spirit made him a champion both inside the ring and in the community.

Born February 23, 1929 to Mr. and Mrs. Nobel Smith, Sr., Nate grew up in the Hill District and attended school there through the seventh grade. At age 12, he quit school to join the United States Navy. There, he served on a heavy cruiser during World War II and learned to box in his spare time. Two years later, the Navy discovered his true age and presented him with an honorable discharge.

Nate returned home to Pittsburgh, but instead of returning to school he decided to pursue his passion for boxing. Pittsburgh Steelers owner Art Rooney, Sr. and Kaufmann's Department Store owner, Edgar Kaufmann both helped finance Nate's boxing career. Known as Nate "Available" Smith, he fought over 125 professional bouts.

In addition to boxing, Nate was fascinated with bulldozers, cranes and other forms of heavy equipment. He used his charm and connections with local contractors to get practice time on their equipment. Before long, Nate taught himself how to operate each vehicle.

Still, Nate found it extremely difficult to find work in the construction industry. He was denied a union card by the predominantly segregated unions.

However, Nate had something that the union leaders didn't— four tickets to a championship boxing match. Knowing that the union leaders were avid boxing fans, Nate showed up one day at the local union office and traded his tickets for that union card. He became the first African American to become an official member of Local 66 of the Operating Engineer's Union.

During the post-World War II construction boom in Pittsburgh, Nate became outraged by the inequity he saw in the construction industry. Union leaders cited the lack of skilled African American workers to fill these jobs.

In response, Nate started Operation Dig in 1968, a program designed to train African Americans and women-workers for construction jobs. This cause was so important to Nate that he re-mortgaged his house to pay for the training equipment. Later, he would receive additional funding from his friend Edgar Kaufmann and Pittsburgh philanthropist Elsie Hillman, who also supported his mission.

It's estimated that Nate trained thousands of minorities for construction jobs and helped them get their union cards. For his efforts, he was featured in the Wall Street Journal and was named one of the top 100 most influential African Americans by *Ebony Magazine*.

Despite the success of Operation Dig, African American union workers were still not being hired. So, Nate helped found the Black Construction Coalition. The Coalition participated in protest rallies against the largest construction firms for excluding African American workers. Nate's defining moment came during a protest at the construction site of the former Three Rivers Stadium when he stopped work by laying down in front of a moving bulldozer.

Nate's fighting spirit led to many death threats against him and his family. Yet, he persevered. Nate's actions were instrumental in the creation of the Pittsburgh Plan in 1970, an agreement between local government and unions to hire 1,250 African American workers over the next four years.

His work as a labor leader earned him both national and international fame as a civil rights leader. He was recognized by United States Presidents Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush, as well as the Rev. Jesse Jackson. His legacy is showcased in an exhibit at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

Nate received numerous other honors during his lifetime including: the Health Education Center, Action Board Member of the Year; Pittsburgh Junior Chamber of Commerce, Man of the Year in Labor and the Pittsburgh African American Legacy Committee's Pittsburgh Freedom Fighter Award (2004).

Nate still had one goal left to achieve. At age 75, he taught himself to read and write, and earned an honorary diploma from Westinghouse High School.

Nate Smith, Sr. passed away on March 31, 2011. He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Minnie, and daughter, the late Sabrina Smith, and was survived by two other children: Dr. Renee Smith Clark and Nate Smith, Jr.



Elmer A. McClung
2021 Honoree

Elmer Albert McClung (aka Porky), was the eldest son of Gladys McClung (deceased) and Fletcher Payne (deceased). Along with his two sisters (Gladys Carolyn McClung and Shirley Maxine McClung) and only brother (Alexander Gus McClung – deceased), he grew up in Lawrenceville/Garfield, PA and later resided in Shadyside, PA. Elmer graduated from Schenley High School in 1964 and attended Community College of Allegheny County.

Elmer McClung’s work life was the story of a self-made man. He was a man who lived his life dedicated to the service of his community. Nowhere was this more evident than his time at Kingsley Association, although it took him a while to arrive there. Beginning his time in the workforce in a little neighborhood store in the late 1960s, he enjoyed an easy camaraderie with customers, and never forgot a name or a face. He used his money to help his family and proudly purchased prom dresses for his two sisters.

In the early 1970s, he moved on to the steel mills, finding the bonds of fraternity amongst the men he worked with. From that brotherhood, he found his place among an organization devoted to community service, the JayCeas. From there, it was a natural evolution to join the health department, first as a contact tracer, and then helping to develop and implement a plan to identify and assist addicts in getting treatment, and, after losing a good friend to sickle cell anemia, beginning a program to provide testing and treatment for the often fatal disease.

Later he progressed to a series of jobs with Allegheny County. In the mid 1970s, he was on the board of Community College of Allegheny County, where he strove to increase minority attendance and improve life outcomes for students. In the late 1970s, he found his way to the Kingsley Association, a community center in the heart of East Liberty. Here, he found his true calling, creating a place where the youth of the neighborhood could congregate without fear of violence, or the police. Between Friday Night Dances, pickup basketball games, and organizing the Robotic Tick-Tockers (a young hip-hop breakdancing crew), Elmer did his best to ensure Kingsley was a welcoming place. He also strove to contribute to the safety and well-being of children in the community, developing a partnership between Kingsley and Clark Candy Company to screen for suspicious Halloween treats, and providing alternative candy to eager superheroes and witches alike. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, he had on a full white beard, and red suit, settling himself for hours in a makeshift throne, doling out gifts and tidings as “Kingsley Claus”. He also felt that inner city children needed to be exposed to nature, becoming ‘Uncle Elmer’ to the many children who attended Lillian Taylor Camp during his tenure.

It is impossible, of course, to think of Elmer McClung without thinking of politics. His historic run for city council as a Republican was instrumental in changing the way elections worked, from at-large, to district elections. Of course, this was primarily due to the fact that the local democratic party had failed to endorse a single person of color, resulting in a lack of minority representation at the political table. Elmer’s political run and near win opened the door and ensured minority representation. His efforts were reflective and true to his campaign slogan: McClung Gets It Done!” From there, he went on to work with then-County Commissioner, Larry Dunn; and rejoined the Masonic Brotherhood, continuing his community service, providing mentorship, and providing job opportunities for many. He retired from Allegheny county after a car accident, which left him unable to return to work. Elmer never knew a stranger and was affectionately referred to as “the Mayor of Shadyside”.

During his life, he fathered 4 children. Three sons: Eric Hamilton McClung (deceased), Michael Elmer McClung, and David Richard McClung (deceased) and one daughter: Jaime Elizabeth McClung.

Elmer loved his family. He and his mother were very close and he was compassionate and protective about his younger sisters and brother. In his last years, Elmer's son, Michael, took care of him in Georgia.

Elmer was a son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and a friend. He spent his life trying to make his little corner of the world a better place. His family can think of no better recognition than this Spirit of King Recognition, which he helped to establish to honor the service and dedication of those who exemplified the service spirit of the Honorable Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Bernard H. Jones, Sr.
2022 Honoree

Bernard Jones always had a special appreciation for the challenges teenagers faced in the inner city. As a youth growing up in Pittsburgh’s Hill District neighborhood, he, too, experienced his share of struggles and was determined to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged youths in his community.

Born February 13, 1931, Bernard attended Miller Elementary School and would later graduate from Fifth Avenue High School. He went on to attend Knoxville College, a historically black liberal arts college in Knoxville, Tennessee, on a football scholarship. He earned a degree in sociology in 1957.

After graduation, Bernard took a position with the Friendly Service Bureau as its Community Services Director. There, he pressed forward with his vision to mentor African American youths by establishing the Explorer Scout Post (Explorer Post #48). He used Explorer Post #48 as an opportunity to develop a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit in the youths.

A few years later in 1966, Bernard founded Urban Youth Action (UYA), a program designed to prepare youths in grades 9-12 for graduation by becoming “work-ready, life-prepared and community-minded individuals.” With support from the Urban Redevelopment Authority, UYA taught youths the fundamentals of workplace expectations, money management, personal development, life skills, and health and career opportunities.

As time went on, Bernard continued to maintain close relationships with many of his former protégés. He, and eight of his protégés collaborated to create The Misters, an investment club that soon became a Pittsburgh institution. The organization sponsored financial lectures and informational luncheons in the city, and invited prominent business professionals to speak to the group.

He was also influential in the formation of other support groups, including the Pittsburgh Afro-American Investment & Development (PAID) association, the U.M.P Investment Club, Retism, as well as the Financial and Moral Supporters group (FAMS) which consisted of all women.

Bernard then joined the staff of Allegheny Conference on Community Development after leaving the Urban Redevelopment Authority in 1968.

In 1980, he founded POISE Foundation. Bernard served as its President and two of his former Explorer Scouts served as trustees. In doing so, they fulfilled an unspoken promise they made to always make good use of his counsel and give back to those who made it possible for them to advance.

A year later, POISE Foundation began making grants to support various minority and majority organizations with worthy projects that directly impacted the black community.

For his efforts, Bernard received numerous awards, including the *Pittsburgh Courier* Top Hat Award, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, the Outstanding Citizen Award, the United Way Outstanding Volunteer Award, the WAMO Community Service Award, and many others.

Bernard Jones died on February 4, 2002, leaving behind his wife Geraldine, and three children: Bernard Jones Jr., Rev. Cornell Jones and Hylene Jones Pankey. However, his legacy continues to carry on in the lives of the countless individuals he helped to inspire during his lifetime.



Dr. Sylvester Pace
2022 Honoree

Sylvester Pace learned the value of higher education at a very young age and sought to instill that passion in others throughout his community. He realized early on that his own academic achievements afforded him the opportunity to accomplish many of his life's goals and he wanted others to experience similar opportunities.

Born January 18, 1954, in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood, Sylvester Pace attended Madison Elementary, Herron Hill Junior High School and Schenley High School after his family moved from the "Lower Hill" to the Schenley Heights section of the Hill District, called "SugarTop." He was the youngest of five children.

Sylvester graduated from high school in 1972 and was accepted into Cheyney University in Cheyney, PA. There, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in 1976. He was also initiated as a member of the university's Omega Psi Phi Fraternity through the Beta Gamma Chapter at Cheyney University. He went on to earn a master's degree in Counseling Education and a Certificate in Marketing from the University of Pittsburgh.

Later, he graduated from Leadership Pittsburgh Class VIII and became an educational advocate for public policy through the Institute for Community Leadership in Education. His aspiration for higher education continued as a doctoral candidate at Duquesne's Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders.

After college, Sylvester took a position with Pressley Ridge School and The Abraxas Foundation, serving as an advocate for troubled youths. After a career that lasted nearly two decades, Sylvester decided to embark on new career in the pharmaceutical industry. Before long, however, Sylvester decided to give up the lucrative healthcare industry to follow his real passion – assisting young inner-city African American students find a pathway to college.

Sylvester was named President and CEO of NEED (Negro Educational Emergency Drive) and was able to transform the non-profit organization into a nationally recognized college access program. As just the third executive in the organization's 50-year history, he was also actively involved in establishing and growing an endowment to ensure a solid financial ground for the future of the organization.

Under Sylvester's leadership, NEED annually leveraged two million dollars in funds that help provide scholarships and grants, financial assistance, mentoring, internships and counseling for students.

He created and founded two black college tours for high school students – Omega Psi Phi and NEED – and was also involved with the Mary Lou Stone black college tour for numerous years to expose students to higher education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Sylvester gave back to the community in other ways as well. He served on the Board of the Cheyney Foundation, Absalom Jones Foundation, Pennsylvania ACT, Pennsylvania Advisory Council Board, The Center for Family Excellence, Mel Blount Youth Home, Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise Advisory (PACE), and Spiritan Division of Academic Programs at Duquesne University. For his efforts, Sylvester was named one of the 50 most influential black men in the city of Pittsburgh and has also received the Men of Excellence Award by the *New Pittsburgh Courier*.

In 2012, the members of Iota Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., were proud to honor Brother Sylvester Pace with the Community Humanitarian Award for his unwavering commitment to helping future generations as evidenced throughout his life. Through his efforts, young men and women have been energized and empowered to reach for and attain their goals of higher education and fulfilling careers. Clearly the impact of his efforts are immeasurable through the number of individuals who have and will continue to benefit from his steady presence in the Greater Pittsburgh community. Brother Pace has left an indelible brand on everything and everyone he touched and will remain an influence for years to come.

Over the course of his career, he was also presented numerous awards including: the Cheyney University National Alumni Association Outstanding Alumni Award, Pittsburgh Black Media Federation Community Service Award, Ivy Charitable Endowment Pittsburgh Community Service Award, Mt. Ararat Community Service Award, Bernard H. Jones, Sr. Lifetime Achievement Award, Duquesne Light/WQED Multimedia Black History Month African-American Leadership Award, and Education Policy Leadership Center Alumni Award.

Sylvester passed away on June 8, 2012 at the age of 58. He left behind his wife of 33 years, Rhonda, and their two daughters, Rachel and Stephanie.



John H. Adams
2023 Honoree

For more than three 30 years, John H. Adams was a distinguished business leader in the City of Pittsburgh.

Born September 8, 1924, to Lorenzo and Sadie Adams, John grew up in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood and graduated from Schenley High School. He went on to attend Pinkerton Business School before enrolling in the United States Army where he was stationed in China, Burma and India during World War II. While still serving his country, Adams took a position as a reporter at the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

Years later, he founded the John H. Adams Agency, where he served the community by providing insurance, advertising, public relations and notary services. However, perhaps the most important service he provided the community was his unwavering advocacy for other small, minority-owned businesses at a time when there was very little support.

A self-made entrepreneur, John always envisioned other minorities could follow in his footsteps and realize their dreams of becoming successful business owners. To lend his support, John published Pittsburgh's first ever black business directory called *The New Negro Directory*."

In 1968, John accepted a position with the Allegheny Conference on Community Development as coordinator of economic development. He was later appointed director of the Pittsburgh Business Resource Center.

As director, John established a new division called the Pittsburgh Regional Minority Council, which is now known as the Western Pennsylvania Minority Supplier Development Council. There, he served as executive director and helped to encourage the purchase of local and national goods and services from minority business owners. It was one of the first councils of its kind to be established in the United States.

Throughout his career, John gained tremendous respect from business owners, heads of major corporations and even United States Presidents. It's estimated that John counseled and helped certify more than 300 minority businesses.

During his lifetime, John served on many boards including the Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Allegheny Club, Goodwill Industries, Small Business Administration, the District Export Council, the Minority Business Enterprise Committee of the City of Pittsburgh and the Advisory Board of Urban Youth Action. He was also the first Black President of the Downtown Rotary Club.

He was also recognized by Renaissance Publications, the Minority Business Journal, the United States Business Administration, the National Minority Suppliers Development Council the POISE Foundation and the Pittsburgh Jaycees.

John Adams passed away on June 5, 2011. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 53 years, Margaret, H. Adams. He left behind his two daughters, the late Laura Adams-Hunt and Cynthia Adams-Glenn.



Bill Nunn, Jr.
2023 Honoree

Despite never playing or coaching professional football, William Goldwyn Nunn, Jr. had a profound role in helping the Pittsburgh Steelers win four Super Bowls from 1975 to 1980.

Born in Homewood on September 30, 1924, Bill attended Westinghouse High School where he was a standout basketball player. He went on to study at West Virginia State University. There, he was a three-year captain on the basketball team and helped lead the Yellow Jackets in 1948 to an undefeated 26-0 record during his senior season. For his achievements on the hardwood, Bill was inducted into the West Virginia State Athletics Hall of Fame in 1990.

Upon graduation, Bill's basketball talents earned him an offer from the Harlem Globetrotters, but he instead chose the more sensible career path and followed in his father's footsteps by joining the staff of the *Pittsburgh Courier*- one of the most prominent African-American newspapers in the United States. His work ethic and intelligence earned him the position of sports editor before eventually following in his father's footsteps as managing editor of the entire newspaper.

Bill always had a keen eye for athletic talent. His position with the *Courier* gave Bill unprecedented coverage to sports at historically Black colleges and universities. As a result of Bill's vision, in 1950 the *Courier* named its first-ever Black College All-American Football Team and held an annual awards banquet in Pittsburgh to celebrate.

By the late 1960s, Bill set his focus on National Football League. At the time, the Pittsburgh Steelers were among the worst teams in the National Football League and little to none of the players honored by the *Courier* had been drafted. After several conversations with Dan Rooney, the son of Steelers' owner, Art Rooney, Bill was hired by the Steelers and joined their scouting staff.

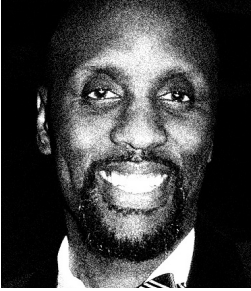
Bill began working for the team at first part-time in 1967 and became full-time in 1969, the same year Chuck Noll became the head coach. Over the next decade, he served as a scout and helped steer the team toward many players otherwise overlooked and undervalued. His connections to small Black college coaches provided the opportunity for so many Black athletes who later developed into great players for the Steelers. These players went on to star for the Steelers teams for nearly a decade.

Bill retired from his full-time position with the Steelers in 1987 but continued to assess talent and advise the team for the annual NFL Draft. His knowledge and expertise for evaluating talent was so well respected within the organization that he continued to work part-time for the team until his death on May 6, 2014 at the age of 89.

In recognition of his many accomplishments, Bill Nunn, Jr. was inducted into the Black College Football Hall of Fame in 2010 without ever playing or coaching a game. And, in 2018, the Pittsburgh Steelers inducted him into the Steelers Hall of Honor.

For his endearing contributions to the sport in which he opened the door for many Black athletes who likely otherwise would have never been given an opportunity, Bill was ultimately inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame class of 2021. His efforts to promote racial equality in the NFL, both in the player ranks and in the front office, and the result of his lifetime of work can still be seen to this day.

Bill Nunn, Jr. legacy is undeniable. It's hard to measure the full impact of his successes, contributions and trailblazing achievements, but his indelible legacy is being recognized and fully appreciated even after his death.



Dr. Rex L. Crawley
2024 Honoree

Rex Crawley has left a profound and lasting impact on generations of young African American men both locally and across the country. His amazing work in the face of a serious illness should be an inspiration to us all.

Born April 30, 1964 to James and Marie Crawley, Rex spent his childhood years in Steubenville, Ohio with his two siblings, Silvia and Helen. He graduated from Steubenville High School in 1982 and was also a very active member of Greater Zion Temple Family Worship Center in Steubenville, Ohio.

Following graduation, Rex attended Ohio University, where he earned a BA degree in political science and a MA degree in public administration. He would continue on to earn a Ph.D. in Intercultural Communication from the university.

Dr. Crawley's doctorate work focused primarily on black masculinity which is the study of roles, behaviors, and attributes for African Americans in society. This research empowered him to begin his life's work preparing black males for success through education.

After receiving international acclaim for his research, Dr. Crawley began providing intercultural communication consulting services across the United States and published numerous articles.

In 1999, Dr. Crawley joined the staff at Robert Morris University in Moon. He held many positions during his university career from faculty to administrator, before being named the assistant dean of the School of Communication and Information Systems.

Later in his career, Dr. Crawley established and served as the endowed chair and executive director of the Uzuri Think Tank. Funded by the Heinz Endowments, the Uzuri Think Tank took its name from the Swahili word meaning “brilliance.” The think tank was dedicated to identifying attributes shared by successful African American men and developing models of success for others to follow.

Years later, Dr. Crawley co-founded the Black Male Leadership Development Institute (BMLDI) to help mentor, educate and nurture young African American men.

As a result of Dr. Crawley’s hard work, the year-long program sponsored by the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and Robert Morris University, has inducted nearly 200 African American high school males into its annual leadership program. The program focused on education, leadership, character and ethics, and conflict resolution.

In addition to his professional career, Dr. Crawley was an active member of Triumph Church, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., where he conducted leadership training for the National Undergraduate Leadership Institute.

Dr. Crawley also served on the Board of the Community College of Allegheny County and the August Wilson Center for African American Culture. As president of the Kappa Scholarship

Endowment Fund of Western Pennsylvania (KSEF), he helped award more than \$400,000 in scholarships to area students.

While still advocating for young African American men, Dr. Crawley also became a passionate advocate for cancer patients after being diagnosed in 1991 with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Dr. Crawley was named president of the American Cancer Society- Steubenville, OH Chapter and also served on the Board of National Marrow Donors Program.

He urged all African Americans to get tested and consider becoming bone marrow and organ donors.

Despite a courageous battle, Dr. Crawley died of complications of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma on November 25, 2013.

None of his accomplishments would have been possible without the loving support of his parents whom he cherished; his dear sisters; and, the love of his life, Daria, whom he married on June 12, 2004. Together, Rex and Daria raised two sons, Xavier and Vaughan.



James F. Henry, Jr.
2024 Honoree

James F. Henry, Jr. was a great communicator who knew how to bring people together to better serve the needs of the community.

Born June 14, 1938, to Dr. James and Jereline Henry, James grew up in Pittsburgh and attended grade school in the Hill District. He graduated from Schenley High School and enrolled at Michigan State University. There, he started a musical group called the Cappaliers.

After serving in the United States Navy, James returned home and began taking classes at the University of Pittsburgh where he would earn a master's degree in social work and business.

James began his career at the Kingsley Association, a community center located in the East End of Pittsburgh, and quickly developed a passion for serving others.

His work at the Kingsley would soon lead James to a new opportunity with The Hill House Association on Centre Avenue in Pittsburgh's Hill District. He worked tirelessly to establish and administer new service programs for the African American community. Before long, James was named Executive Director of the Hill House Association.

During his more than 25-year career with the organization, James helped to rebuild the Hill District community and expand the Hill House to include 17 essential health and social service programs such as: The Young Mother's Program, The Young Father's Program, free health and medical programs, free dental and childcare programs, free job training and GED classes, a free lunch program, senior community services and home delivered meals.

James passed away on July 26, 2003, leaving behind his wife, LeLaine, and three children- Northern Allen Evans, James F. Henry III and LeLaine.

James will always be remembered as a fearless leader, a pillar of hope in the community and a dedicated family man. He was loved by anyone who had the pleasure of meeting him.



Constance B.J. Parker
2025 Honoree

Constance B.J. Parker, also affectionately known as “Connie” or “Jeannie,” left a lasting impact in the City of Pittsburgh and the State of Pennsylvania by using her voice and her leadership for community and neighborhood change.

Constance was born August 29, 1942, to James and Anna Mae Downing. She was one of six children which included her five brothers. Connie attended Peabody High School and then Carnegie Mellon Tech (now known as Carnegie Mellon University), where she was employed. She was a hard worker and once she committed to a project she would complete it no matter how long and how complicated.

Constance left Carnegie Mellon for an opportunity with IBM. She was the first African American woman to hold the position of customer engineer in the eastern part of the country. During a time when most major companies were not open to the idea of having African Americans- especially an African American woman- coming to their workplace to repair their equipment, Connie soon became one of the most requested customer engineers in the Pittsburgh area. Connie loved to clean and she quickly earned a reputation for leaving the equipment she repaired cleaner than she found it.

In 1995, Constance took a position with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) as a liaison to Governor Tom Ridge. She traveled the state and relished her opportunity to interact with the community.

Connie was a life member of the NAACP Pittsburgh Branch for over 50 years. She began as a young member and worked hard through years of challenge and change in Pittsburgh to rise to the position of president. She steered NAACP Pittsburgh initiatives that included: health, wealth and education and she worked with corporations, politicians and the community at-large to empower and impact change for all people. To generate awareness for these initiatives, Connie hosted a weekly Saturday morning radio show on WAMO radio. Her show began and ended with the message “Wake up Everybody.”

One of her greatest accomplishments as NAACP president was meeting with the past owners of Panera Bread to hire and prepare more African Americans for leadership roles in their establishments. Panera Bread became a partner for change to the NAACP Pittsburgh funding several projects including the Human Rights Banquet.

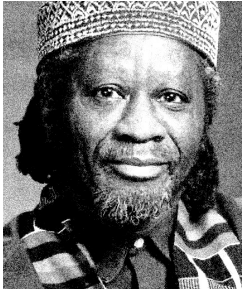
During the 1970s, Connie was also a member of Black Women’s Political Crusade under the leadership of Convenors Cathryn Irvis and Katie Everett Johnson. The organization worked to empower women to be selected, elected and appointed to political office. Later, Constance would become the executive convenor.

Connie became increasingly more interested in politics. She worked on numerous election campaigns including those for: Byrd Brown, Mayor Bob O’Connor, Senator Bob Casey, Governor Tom Ridge, Governor Tom Wolf, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, Judge Kim Eaton, Judge Allen, Judge Doris Smith, Lt. Governor Catherine Baker Knoll and President Barack Obama just to name a few. Connie never wanted paid for her work. However, in return, she would call on these elected officials to help resolve issues in the community.

Throughout her lifetime, Connie received numerous awards and was an active member of several boards including Port Authority of Allegheny County and Duquesne University Advisory Board. She was also a member of Eastern Star Cyrene #9.

Connie was an active member of Homewood A.M.E. Zion Church for years and served on the usher board.

After suffering from a series of health issues, Constance B.J. Parker transitioned this life on July 27, 2017. She leaves behind her daughter, Twanda Carlisle (Alexander) and son, Curtis Lamont; two grandsons, Curtis Davon and Miles; and other close family members.



Robert "Rob" Lee Penny
2025 Honoree

Growing up in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood provided Rob Penny with all of the subject matter he would need in order to pen more than 30 plays and 300 poems throughout his illustrious career.

Robert "Rob" Lee Penny was born August 6, 1941, in Opelika, Ala. to Lily and Jefferson Davis Penny. While still a toddler, his family moved to Pittsburgh. He attended Holy Trinity Elementary School and graduated from Central Catholic High School in 1957.

Mr. Penny always had a passion for writing and storytelling. He would often write while listening to blues and jazz music which many believe helped provide rhythm and inspiration for his poetry.

In 1965, Mr. Penny, along with his childhood friends, August Wilson, Nicholas Flournoy and Chawley Williams, co-founded the Centre Avenue Theater Workshop. Together, they wrote poetry about their experiences living near Pittsburgh's Centre Avenue.

Mr. Penny and Wilson then established Black Horizons Theatre in 1968 and produced numerous plays focusing on black empowerment. That same year, Mr. Penny was also hired by Jack Daniel and Curtis Porter as part of the first cohort of Black Studies faculty at the University of Pittsburgh's Africana Studies program.

Mr. Penny became an associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh in 1971. As associate professor, he taught courses including Black Consciousness, Intro to Black American Theatre,

and Intro to Black Poetry in America. He would go on to serve as the chair of the university's Africana Studies Department alongside Dr. Vernell Lillie from 1978-84.

Dr. Lillie and Mr. Penny co-founded the Kuntu Repertory Theatre in 1974. Mr. Penny served as the theatre's playwright-in-residence for nearly 30 years and wrote 17 plays performed at the venue.

Mr. Penny's work soon expanded nationally to theaters in New York and Chicago. Some of his most-recognizable work includes: *Among the Best: The Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Homestead Grays*; *Bad News*; *Blue Yonder*; *Boppin' With the Ancestors*; *Good Black Don't Crack*; *Killin' and Chillin'*; *Little Willie Armstrong Jones*; and *Sun Rising on the Hill District*.

In 1976, Mr. Penny and August Wilson created the Kuntu Writers Workshop. The Workshop helped provide a forum for the next generation of young writers to publish their work. Mr. Penny continued to coordinate monthly workshop meetings for more than two decades.

Rob Penny passed away on March 16, 2003, at the age of 62. He is survived by his two children, Johnny Penny and Robert Lee Penny, Jr. His third child, Kadumu Penny, and his wife, Betty Penny, predeceased him.

On July 29, 2008, Pittsburgh City Council honored Mr. Penny posthumously with a key to the city for his commitment to social activism, dedication to helping area youths, and his service to the greater Hill District community.

Mr. Penny's legacy will forever live on at the University of Pittsburgh after the school acquired the collection of his work to serve as an inspiration to future poets and playwrights.



Rev. Samson M. Cooper
2026 Honoree

Samson Menoah Cooper's vocation to religious life began at the age of just 5 years old when he delivered his very first sermon in front of a packed congregation. By the time he was 9 years old, he followed in his father's footsteps and was granted a formal license to preach by the St. Paul AME Church in Bellefonte, Pa.

Born October 5, 1931, Samson was the third of four children born to the late Rev. Solomon Morris Cooper and Mary Alice Freeman Cooper.

Samson graduated from Mount Union High School in 1949. He went on to earn his B.A. degree in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from Wilberforce University in 1955 before earning a Master of Divinity degree from Payne Theological Seminary in 1956.

After graduation, Rev. Cooper pastored churches across Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania between 1956 and 2001. He then served as the presiding elder of the Pittsburgh District of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference from 2001 until he retired in 2007.

In addition to his ministry, he held many administrative and leadership roles in groups including: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Third Episcopal District Presiding Elder's Council, Hill District Five in One Ministerial Alliance, the Pittsburgh Annual Conference and General Conference.

Rev. Cooper was also active in the television broadcast ministry of Christian Associates. He used this platform to confront injustice.

Being one of the few black clergy on a predominantly white council, Rev. Cooper used his role to promote unity across divisions — of both denominations and race — and to address racial issues.

After nearly six decades of serving in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Cooper retired and was united with the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church in East Liberty. He also served as the supply pastor of Christ Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church in McKeesport until illness prevented him from doing so.

In addition to his ministry work, Rev. Cooper was active in politics and community services. He worked tirelessly to address racial injustices. He was a member of Pittsburgh's Branch of the NAACP, on the board of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) and the Sickle Cell Anemia Society and participated in the March on Washington in 1963.

Rev. Cooper also participated in two inaugurations for Gov. Jay Rockefeller and attended the inaugurations of President Bill Clinton, Gov. Robert Casey and Gov. Edward Rendell.

Rev. Cooper passed away on November 8, 2016 at the age of 85, leaving behind a legacy of promoting unity across divisions.

Rev. Cooper leaves behind five children: Samuel Aaron Cooper, Mary Rebecca Cooper-Ali, Demareus Naomi Cooper, The Rev. Solomon Cooper and Marcus Cooper.



Wendell G. Freeland
2026 Honoree

Wendell Freeland’s childhood was shaped by the inescapable segregation he encountered at an early age. As a result, he spent his entire adult life fighting for racial equality and desegregation.

Born February 21, 1925 in Baltimore, Md, Wendell attended several segregated schools in the Baltimore Public School system. In 1941, he graduated from Frederick Douglass High School and received a scholarship to attend Howard University, another historically black school.

While still attending college, Wendell enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in 1941 as a Tuskegee Airman in the 477th Bombardment Group— an entirely African American segregated unit. By the time he was 19 years old, Wendell had been arrested twice for defying Army segregation policies. During his second arrest, he was charged with mutiny, a crime punishable by execution, for his involvement in what is now known as the Freedom Field Mutiny. Later, Wendell and the other officers arrested during the Mutiny were released without a full court-martial due to a lack of evidence and the “bad optics” associated with the Army punishing black airmen who were challenging a discriminatory segregation policy.

Freeland went on to graduate cum laude from Howard University in 1947 and from the University of Maryland School of Law with honors in 1950. He was the first African American student at the University of Maryland elected to the honorary legal fraternity, the Order of the Coif, and one of the first African Americans to graduate from the University of Maryland.

In 1950, he moved to Pittsburgh and was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar a year later.

One of the first cases Wendell took on was the desegregation of Highland Park Pool. Freeland sued the City of Pittsburgh to ensure the safety of African Americans who tried to swim at the pool.

Wendell later went on to chair the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh's education committee and served as its chairman of the Board of Directors from 1962-67. He played a major role in desegregating Pittsburgh Public Schools and advocated for hiring African American teachers.

Additionally, Wendell served many roles in the community including: president of Neighborhood Legal Services, president of the Homers S. Brown Law Association, member of the House of Delegates of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, and a member of the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania, senior vice president of the National Urban League Board of Trustees, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Wendell relentlessly fought for the advancement of women and minorities in the legal field his entire career. In 2010, he persuaded the state Supreme Court to posthumously admit George Vashon to the Pennsylvania bar, after twice being denied admission because he was black.

Survived by his wife (Jane), son (Michael), and daughter (Lisa), Wendell Freeland died on January 24, 2014 at the age of 88. He leaves behind a lasting legacy as a prominent leader and distinguished attorney in the fight for civil rights.

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