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Past and Present Voting Rights Activists

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Alabama Department of History and  
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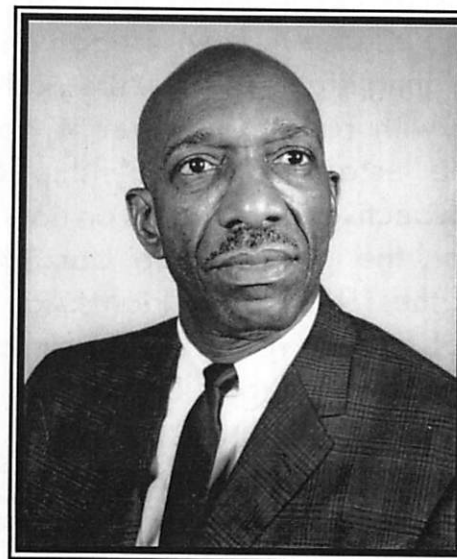
Alabama Historic Association

Ross-Clayton Funeral Home

Hutchinson Missionary Baptist Church

*Printed by: Shirley Billups-Smith*

*UNVEILING OF HISTORIC  
MARKER IN HONOR OF*



TSTC Archives

**RUFUS A. LEWIS**

**FATHER OF MONTGOMERY AND CENTRAL ALABAMA'S  
VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2001  
11:00 A.M.**

**801 BOLIVER STREET  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104**

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Alabama Historical Association**

## BIOGRAPHY

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. He is credited with registering over 4 generations of voters. He established Citizenship Schools that tutored prospective Black voters on how to fill out the literacy test, the pre-requisite barrier before the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Lewis was a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University. He was a widower (Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis-d. 1958) with 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Lewis was an associate in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home business and opened the "Citizens' Club," a social club for African-Americans who were registered voters and who helped others to become registered voters. Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President for the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC), the oldest Black political organization in the state. Lewis was elected to the Alabama State Legislature, but resigned in 1976, when United States President Jimmy Carter appointed him to serve as an U.S. Marshal, the first Black to serve in the Middle District.

## PROGRAMME

INVOCATION . . . . . REV. RON GILES, STAFF  
H. COUNCILL TRENHOLM STATE TECH COLLEGE

OCCASION . . . . . DR. GWEN PATTON, ARCHIVIST  
H. COUNCILL TRENHOLM STATE TECH COLLEGE

MS. K. T. BROWN, BOARD MEMBER  
MONTGOMERY FRIENDS OF THE  
HISTORIC VOTING RIGHTS TRAIL

REMARKS . . DR. FRED GAINOUS, CHANCELLOR  
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

TRIBUTES . . . . . LEWIS LEGATEES  
ELECTED OFFICIALS, VETERAN VOTING  
RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, COMMUNITY LEADERS

RESPONSES . . MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS,  
DAUGHTER

MS. KAREN DAWKINS,  
GRANDDAUGHTER

BENEDICTION REV. HENRY HENDRICKS, STAFF  
H. COUNCILL TRENHOLM STATE TECH COLLEGE

REPAST FOLLOWING CEREMONY  
CATERED BY  
H. COUNCILL TRENHOLM STATE TECHNICAL  
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