



## H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



### Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis

September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and ~~football~~ coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker

Unveiling

9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~order~~ <sup>order</sup> to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this position~~ <sup>this position</sup> in the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--

**The Hon. Rufus A. Lewis**  
**1906 - 1999**

Lewis began an earnest voting rights drive in the early 1940s. Credited with registering 4 generations of Montgomery voters, he established Citizenship Schools that tutored prospective black voters to fill out the literacy text, a barrier before the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Lewis opened, in 1952, the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans who were registered voters and who helped others to become voters. Lewis was a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University. In 1958, he became a partner in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home business. He was one of the founders and first Montgomery Chapter president of the Alabama Democratic Conference, the oldest continuing black political organization in the state. Lewis was elected to the Alabama state legislature in 1974, but resigned in 1976, when U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed him to serve as a U.S. Marshal, the first black marshal for the Middle District in Alabama.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

2001

**THE INSCRIPTION FOR THE HISTORIC MARKER**

# The Montgomery-Tuskegee Times 11/25-31/01

## Trenholm Technical College Archives' 2001 Program

Trenholm Archives is sending out an ABP to all BUS BOYCOTT DRIVERS, CITIZENS' CLUB MEMBERS, CITIZENSHIP SCHOOL TEACHERS and organizers TO CALL 240-9739 ASAP. Please leave your name, address and phone number on the vice mail.

You will be honored as special guests at the unveiling of the Hon. Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker at his Home House, where his granddaughter, Ms. Karen Dawkins, now resides. Also, during this auspicious occasion, you will witness the changing of Bolivar Street to the Hon. Rufus A. Lewis Lane,

Please call 240-9739 and give the archives your information. The archives does not want to look over anyone who played and continues to play a crucial role in "Our Stride Towards Freedom," As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. so eloquently expressed in his 1958 book that chronicled our successful Montgomery bus Boycott.

### *Advertiser 11/16/01* Ceremony to honor civil rights leader

Trenholm State Technical College Archivist Gwendolyn M. Patton requests that all Montgomery Bus Boycott participants and organizers call her office concerning a proposed ceremony honoring civil rights leader Rufus A. Lewis.

The celebration will be held at his former home. Attendees will be witnesses to the name changing of Bolivar Street to Rufus A. Lewis Lane. Patton asks all people who participated in the boycott to call 240-9739 and leave their address and phone number.

Trenholm Archives does not want to overlook anyone who played a role in "Our Stride Towards Freedom," she said.

Trenholm Archives is looking for all Montgomery Bus Boycott bus drivers, Citizens' Club members, Citizenship school teachers and others who significantly contributed. These people will be honored during the upcoming unveiling of the Honorable Rufus A. Lewis historical marker. 240-9739.

*Advertiser 02/05/01*

# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College



Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist  
Division of Library and Archives  
1225 Air Base Boulevard  
Montgomery, Alabama 36108  
(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707  
email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis  
September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and ~~football~~ coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker

Unveiling

9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~order~~ to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this district~~ in the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--

# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College



Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist  
Division of Library and Archives  
1225 Air Base Boulevard  
Montgomery, Alabama 36108  
(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707  
email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



## Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis

September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and football coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker  
Unveiling  
9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~order~~ to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this district in~~ the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--



## H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



### Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and ~~football~~ coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker

Unveiling

9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~order~~ <sup>order</sup> to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this district in~~ the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--



## H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist  
Division of Library and Archives  
1225 Air Base Boulevard  
Montgomery, Alabama 36108  
(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707  
email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



### Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis

September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and football coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker  
Unveiling  
9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~order~~ to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this district in~~ the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--



## H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist  
Division of Library and Archives  
1225 Air Base Boulevard  
Montgomery, Alabama 36108  
(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707  
email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



### Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis

September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and football coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker  
Unveiling  
9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~order~~ to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this district~~ in the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--

October 31, 2000

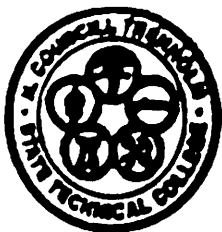
Dear Gwen:

Karen asked for my help<sup>to</sup> provide you the information that you requested

1. Where was Mr. Lewis born? In Montgomery, Al ; don't know but would suspect that a midwife was used. 2. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas. 4. His parents were Jerry and Lula Lewis. 5. Don' know what kind of work his parents did. The Thomas ' did a little gardening and I think they had a cow or two. 6. He had three sisters, Roberta Lewis Mitchell, Janie and Corinne Lewis. He had no brothers. He was the only boy and the youngest of the family. 7. Mr. Lewis was never in the military. 8. He was married to Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935. 9. They had one child, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. 10. The family resided in Patterson Court until they moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the early forties where he remained basically until his death. 11. He attended State Normal School in Montgomery, Al and Fisk University, Nashville, TN graduating in the class of 1929.. Don't know what the major was. He did some post-graduate work at New York University in the mid-forties. 12. He was a charter member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Montgomery, AL ; don't know about the offices held. 13. Don't know about the social organizations other than the Elks Lodge and Shriners. 14. Political /Civic organizations you have better information that I have on that Gwen. 15. He attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and St. John A.M.E. Church. 16. He was a librarian at Alabama State Teachers College (presently Ala, State University); he was football, track and baseball coach , also. Mr. Lewis was very active in voter registration all over middle and south Alabama before it was popular. From that experience came the election to the Alabama State House of Representatives and United States Federal Marshall of the Middle District of Alabama. 17.Mr. Lewis owned and operated the Citizens' Club which was an off-shot of his voter registration activities. In order to be a member of the Citizens' Club, you had to be a registered voter. If you were not a registered voter, you had to fill out the appropriate forms and arrange to become a registered voter as soon as possible. He was also involved in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, Inc. which was founded by his wife's parents and the Ross Family. 18 He was a farmer in his youth. He owned farm land and cattle in Montgomery and Elmore Counties

Gwen, I have given all the answers that I have. Most of this , Karen would not have known, which is why she came to me for help. Hope this helps you with what you are writing and putting together,

PREPARED BY DAUGHTER,  
MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS



# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

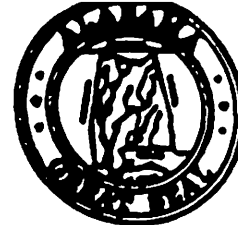
Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

334-240-9739 \*\* FAX 334-240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



October 3, 2000

Dear Karen,

Below are the questions. Can you have the answers by October 31, 2000? Gwen

1. Where was Coach born? In his home? By a mid-wife?
2. What was his boyhood address?
3. Who were his childhood friends?
4. Who were his parents?
5. What line of work did his parents do?
6. Names of brothers and sisters?
7. Was Coach in the military? Branch?
8. What year did he marry and to whom?
9. How many children? Names.
10. Where did the young family reside? Give all addresses.
11. What college(s) did he attend? Years? Major(s)? Degree(s)?
12. What fraternities were he a member? Offices held?
13. What social organizations? Offices held?
14. What political/civic organizations? Offices held?
15. What Church was he a member? Offices held?
16. What jobs/positions did he hold?
17. What businesses did he own or was a partner therein?
18. Was he a farmer? Did he own farming lands? Cattle? Where?

Karen if you think there is any other information I should know about your grandfather, please feel free to

October 31, 2000

Dear Gwen:

Karen asked for my help <sup>to</sup> provide you the information that you requested

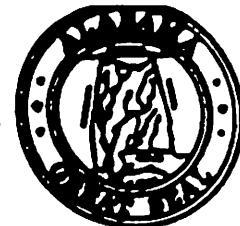
1. Where was Mr. Lewis born? In Montgomery, AL ; don't know but would suspect that a midwife was used. 2. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas. 4. His parents were Jerry and Lula Lewis. 5. Don' know what kind of work his parents did. The Thomas ' did a little gardening and I think they had a cow or two. 6. He had three sisters, Roberta Lewis Mitchell, Janie and Corinne Lewis. He had no brothers. He was the only boy and the youngest of the family. 7. Mr. Lewis was never in the military. 8. He was married to Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935. 9. They had one child, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. 10. The family resided in Patterson Court until they moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the early forties where he remained basically until his death. 11. He attended State Normal School in Montgomery, AL and Fisk University, Nashville, TN graduating in the class of 1929.. Don't know what the major was. He did some post-graduate work at New York University in the mid-forties. 12. He was a charter member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity,

Montgomery, AL ; don't know about the offices held. 13. Don't know about the social organizations other than the Elks Lodge and Shriners. 14. Political /Civic organizations you have better information that I have on that Gwen. 15. He attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and St. John A.M.E. Church. 16. He was a librarian at Alabama State Teachers College (presently Ala, State University); he was football, track and baseball coach , also. Mr. Lewis was very active in voter registration all over middle and south Alabama before it was popular. From that experience came the election to the Alabama State House of Representatives and United States Federal Marshall of the Middle District of Alabama. 17.Mr. Lewis owned and operated the Citizens' Club which was an off-shot of his voter registration activities. In order to be a member of the Citizens' Club, you had to be a registered voter. If you were not a registered voter, you had to fill out the appropriate forms and arrange to become a registered voter as soon as possible. He was also involved in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, Inc. which was founded by his wife's parents and the Ross Family. 18 He was a farmer in his youth. He owned farm land and cattle in Montgomery and Elmore Counties

Gwen, I have given all the answers that I have. Most of this , Karen would not have known, which is why she came to me for help. Hope this helps you with what you are writing and putting together.

PREPARED BY DAUGHTER,

MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS



# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

334-240-9739 •• FAX 334-240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com

October 3, 2000

Dear Karen,

Below are the questions. Can you have the answers by October 31, 2000? Gwen

1. Where was Coach born? In his home? By a mid-wife?
2. What was his boyhood address?
3. Who were his childhood friends?
4. Who were his parents?
5. What line of work did his parents do?
6. Names of brothers and sisters?
7. Was Coach in the military? Branch?
8. What year did he marry and to whom?
9. How many children? Names.
10. Where did the young family reside? Give all addresses.
11. What college(s) did he attend? Years? Major(s)? Degree(s)?
12. What fraternities were he a member? Offices held?
13. What social organizations? Offices held?
14. What political/civic organizations? Offices held?
15. What Church was he a member? Offices held?
16. What jobs/positions did he hold?
17. What businesses did he own or was a partner therein?
18. Was he a farmer? Did he own farming lands? Cattle? Where?

Karen if you think there is any other information I should know about your grandfather, please feel free to

October 31, 2000

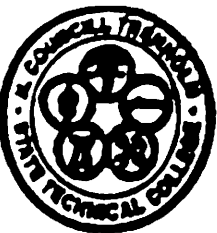
Dear Gwen:

Karen asked for my help <sup>to</sup> provide you the information that you requested

1. Where was Mr. Lewis born? In Montgomery, AL ; don't know but would suspect that a midwife was used. 2. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas. 4. His parents were Jerry and Lula Lewis. 5. Don't know what kind of work his parents did. The Thomas ' did a little gardening and I think they had a cow or two. 6. He had three sisters, Roberta Lewis Mitchell, Janie and Corinne Lewis. He had no brothers. He was the only boy and the youngest of the family. 7. Mr. Lewis was never in the military. 8. He was married to Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935. 9. They had one child, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. 10. The family resided in Patterson Court until they moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the early forties where he remained basically until his death. 11. He attended State Normal School in Montgomery, AL and Fisk University, Nashville, TN graduating in the class of 1929.. Don't know what the major was. He did some post-graduate work at New York University in the mid-forties. 12. He was a charter member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Montgomery, AL ; don't know about the offices held. 13. Don't know about the social organizations other than the Elks Lodge and Shriners. 14. Political /Civic organizations you have better information that I have on that Gwen. 15. He attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and St. John A.M.E. Church. 16. He was a librarian at Alabama State Teachers College (presently Ala, State University); he was football, track and baseball coach , also. Mr. Lewis was very active in voter registration all over middle and south Alabama before it was popular. From that experience came the election to the Alabama State House of Representatives and United States Federal Marshall of the Middle District of Alabama. 17. Mr. Lewis owned and operated the Citizens' Club which was an off-shot of his voter registration activities. In order to be a member of the Citizens' Club, you had to be a registered voter. If you were not a registered voter, you had to fill out the appropriate forms and arrange to become a registered voter as soon as possible. He was also involved in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, Inc. which was founded by his wife's parents and the Ross Family. 18 He was a farmer in his youth. He owned farm land and cattle in Montgomery and Elmore Counties

Gwen, I have given all the answers that I have. Most of this , Karen would not have known, which is why she came to me for help. Hope this helps you with what you are writing and putting together,

PREPARED BY DAUGHTER,  
MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS



# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

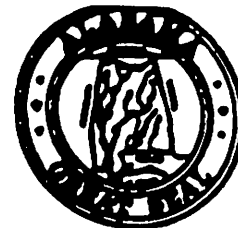
Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

334-240-9739 •• FAX 334-240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



October 3, 2000

Dear Karen,

Below are the questions. Can you have the answers by October 31, 2000? Gwen

1. Where was Coach born? In his home? By a mid-wife?
2. What was his boyhood address?
3. Who were his childhood friends?
4. Who were his parents?
5. What line of work did his parents do?
6. Names of brothers and sisters?
7. Was Coach in the military? Branch?
8. What year did he marry and to whom?
9. How many children? Names.
10. Where did the young family reside? Give all addresses.
11. What college(s) did he attend? Years? Major(s)? Degree(s)?
12. What fraternities were he a member? Offices held?
13. What social organizations? Offices held?
14. What political/civic organizations? Offices held?
15. What Church was he a member? Offices held?
16. What jobs/positions did he hold?
17. What businesses did he own or was a partner therein?
18. Was he a farmer? Did he own farming lands? Cattle? Where?

Karen if you think there is any other information I should know about your grandfather, please feel free to

H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

## **Biography**

Rufus Andrew Lewis was born on November 30, 1906, to the late Lula and Jerry Lewis in Montgomery, Alabama. He was the youngest of four children. His sisters, Roberta, Janie and Corrine preceded him in death. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas, who were farmers.

His early education was in Montgomery County, where he attended Alabama State Laboratory High School and Alabama State Teachers' Junior College. He was a graduate of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, where he earned an A. B. Degree in Business Administration in 1931.

Lewis taught 1 year at Conecuh County Training School in Evergreen, Alabama and 1 year at People's Village School in Mt. Meigs, Alabama.

Lewis joined the faculty at Alabama State Teachers' College, now Alabama State University, in 1933. There he served as athletic coach and as assistant librarian. Lewis was promoted to Head Coach for Football and Track in 1934 and respectfully and affectionately called "Coach Lewis" for his outstanding winning records.

In 1943, Lewis was called to serve in World War II; however, due to an injury sustained from a previous automobile accident, Lewis was ineligible for military/combat service. To demonstrate his patriotism, Lewis worked as a civilian with the National Defense Project for 2 years.

Lewis married Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935, and they had one daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. The young family resided in Patterson Court until they had a home built and moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the late 1940s. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis met with a fatal automobile in 1958 while in route to the University of Wisconsin to receive

H, Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

her Master's Degree in Education. The home-house is now the residence of the grand-daughter, Ms. Karen Dawkins.

Lewis was always concerned about Black people having the right to vote. The franchise to Lewis was the essence of what it meant to be a first-class citizen. He was especially disturbed that Black people who earned college degrees and those who fought in World Wars to "save democracy and to make the world safe for democracy" could not obtain the right to vote. When the franchise was continually denied to Black citizens, Lewis launched an earnest and consistent voting rights drive. He established a "Citizenship Club" for students at Alabama State Teachers' College. By the early "1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis...is the reason they first voted." (U.S. News Report, 10/8/95).

Lewis set up "citizenship schools," especially for veterans and educators, as clinics to teach prospective voters how to fill out the so-called "literacy test," the pre-requisite to become a registered voter. Lewis believed that if a man could go to war and fight for his country, he should be entitled to vote. The Veterans' Schools were at St. Jude and Booker T. Washington High Schools. Teachers and ordinary people attended "citizenship schools" in the homes of people who had been trained by Lewis in "voting clinics." Lewis was an incredible and detailed organizer. Precision, efficiency and thoroughness were his calling cards. Indeed, he kept voting registration organizing forms in the trunk of his car, and at every opportunity he would attempt to get people to join up for citizenship school. He organized neighborhoods block by block, each with a "block captain."

Already a business associate, serving as secretary-treasure, in his

H. Council Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton

wife's family business, Ross and Clayton Funeral Home, Lewis opened the "Citizens' Club" in 1952, a social nightclub where members were registered voters or enrolled in "citizenship schools." Lewis was, also, a chartered member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, a member of Southern Pride Lodge #431, A. A. Peters Masonic Lodge #900 and the National Urban League.

Lewis was a member of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, now designated as the Historic King Memorial Baptist Church. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., age 26, was the pastor during the early and mid 1950s.

Lewis' expert organizing skills and his insight to human leadership potential prompted him to nominate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be the spokesman for the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the organization that spearheaded the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-57). Lewis became Chair of the Transportation Committee that operated with military precision (JoAnn Robinson's The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It) and the Chair of the Voter Registration Committee. He served on the Board and the Executive Committee of the MIA.

His political acumen was awesome. He co-founded (1960) the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC), the Black caucus of the Democratic Party and was the first president of the Montgomery County Democratic Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of the Democratic Conference. He, also, co-founded the East Montgomery Branch of the NAACP and the New Southland Corporation, a group whose purpose was to help save land for Black landowners and to help with the proper utilization and management of that land.

H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

He was still considered the Dean of Black Politics and was sought for advice by both Black and White politicians and political aspirants.

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis passed on August 19, 1999. He was 93 years old. The Lewis Collection of more than 40,000 papers, manuscripts and small artifacts is housed in the archives at the H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College in Montgomery, Alabama

## **THE HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS COLLECTION**

Division of Library and Archives

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis, born November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County, began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U.S. NEWS REPORT, the article states: "Back in the '40s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. "Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS IS THE FATHER OF MONTGOMERY'S VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT," said Archivist Gwen Patton.

Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama Stat University. He, also, was a partner in the Ross and Clayton Funeral Home business. In 1952, he opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans. The primary purpose of the night club was to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. Most members were already registered voters, and their continuing membership in the Club was to help other become registered voters. Many member held "Citizenship Schools" in their homes, where Black people learned how to fill out the literacy test, the pre-requisite to becoming a registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). In 1976, U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis to serve as an United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

Below is a listing of Lewis' holdings in the College's Archives:

Call Number	Title	Barcode
AR 001 LEW Com Sto	Parks and Recreation Board	402920
AR 001 LEW Com Sto	U.S. Presidents, Senators, G	402918
AR 001 LEW Com Sto	Organizations	402919
AR 001 LEW DB 4	Correspondences	402911
AR 001 LEW DB 1	Voters' Registration	402907
AR 001 LEW DB 2	Voters' Registration	402908
AR 001 LEW DB 3	Voters' Registration/Political	402909
AR 001 LEW DB 4	Correspondences	402910
AR 001 LEW Drop-fro	Books, Magazines, Reel Tapes	402916
AR 001 LEW Drop-fro	Scrapbook	402917
AR 001 LEW News Bo	Newspapers	402915
AR 001 LEW Post B	Poster, Newspapers, Organizations	402912

H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

## **Biography**

Rufus Andrew Lewis was born on November 30, 1906, to the late Lula and Jerry Lewis in Montgomery, Alabama. He was the youngest of four children. His sisters, Roberta, Janie and Corrine preceded him in death. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas, who were farmers.

His early education was in Montgomery County, where he attended Alabama State Laboratory High School and Alabama State Teachers' Junior College. He was a graduate of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, where he earned an A. B. Degree in Business Administration in 1931.

Lewis taught 1 year at Conecuh County Training School in Evergreen, Alabama and 1 year at People's Village School in Mt. Meigs, Alabama.

Lewis joined the faculty at Alabama State Teachers' College, now Alabama State University, in 1933. There he served as athletic coach and as assistant librarian. Lewis was promoted to Head Coach for Football and Track in 1934 and respectfully and affectionately called "Coach Lewis" for his outstanding winning records.

In 1943, Lewis was called to serve in World War II; however, due to an injury sustained from a previous automobile accident, Lewis was ineligible for military/combat service. To demonstrate his patriotism, Lewis worked as a civilian with the National Defense Project for 2 years.

Lewis married Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935, and they had one daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. The young family resided in Patterson Court until they had a home built and moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the late 1940s. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis met with a fatal automobile in 1958 while in route to the University of Wisconsin to receive

H, Council Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

her Master's Degree in Education. The home-house is now the residence of the grand-daughter, Ms. Karen Dawkins.

Lewis was always concerned about Black people having the right to vote. The franchise to Lewis was the essence of what it meant to be a first-class citizen. He was especially disturbed that Black people who earned college degrees and those who fought in World Wars to "save democracy and to make the world safe for democracy" could not obtain the right to vote. When the franchise was continually denied to Black citizens, Lewis launched an earnest and consistent voting rights drive. He established a "Citizenship Club" for students at Alabama State Teachers' College. By the early "1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis...is the reason they first voted." (U.S. News Report, 10/8/95).

Lewis set up "citizenship schools," especially for veterans and educators, as clinics to teach prospective voters how to fill out the so-called "literacy test," the pre-requisite to become a registered voter. Lewis believed that if a man could go to war and fight for his country, he should be entitled to vote. The Veterans' Schools were at St. Jude and Booker T. Washington High Schools. Teachers and ordinary people attended "citizenship schools" in the homes of people who had been trained by Lewis in "voting clinics." Lewis was an incredible and detailed organizer. Precision, efficiency and thoroughness were his calling cards. Indeed, he kept voting registration organizing forms in the truck of his car, and at every opportunity he would attempt to get people to join up for citizenship school. He organized neighborhoods block by block, each with a "block captain."

Already a business associate, serving as secretary-treasure, in his

H. Council Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton

wife's family business, Ross and Clayton Funeral Home, Lewis opened the "Citizens' Club" in 1952, a social nightclub where members were registered voters or enrolled in "citizenship schools." Lewis was, also, a chartered member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, a member of Southern Pride Lodge #431, A. A. Peters Masonic Lodge #900 and the National Urban League.

Lewis was a member of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, now designated as the Historic King Memorial Baptist Church. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., age 26, was the pastor during the early and mid 1950s.

Lewis' expert organizing skills and his insight to human leadership potential prompted him to nominate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be the spokesman for the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the organization that spearheaded the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-57). Lewis became Chair of the Transportation Committee that operated with military precision (JoAnn Robinson's The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It) and the Chair of the Voter Registration Committee. He served on the Board and the Executive Committee of the MIA.

His political acumen was awesome. He co-founded (1960) the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC), the Black caucus of the Democratic Party and was the first president of the Montgomery County Democratic Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of the Democratic Conference. He, also, co-founded the East Montgomery Branch of the NAACP and the New Southland Corporation, a group whose purpose was to help save land for Black landowners and to help with the proper utilization and management of that land.

H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

White political candidates curried Rufus' favor. Rufus through his relentless efforts had harnessed the "Black Bloc" using the strategies of "screening committees" and passing out a "yellow ballot" as a guide for Black voters. "Many (W)hites think they know Lewis," said Joe Azbell in a 3/7/74 issue of The Montgomery Independent. "But, that's where they are fooled. Lewis has a poker face when he talks with (W)hites. He is oriented 100% toward the (B)lack community," Azbell continued.

As a result of Lewis political prowess, he was appointed to the Montgomery Parks and Recreation Board and served on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery Community Action Committee. He was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1976, and resigned from that position when U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed him as U.S. Marshal, the first Black ever from the Middle District of Alabama.

Lewis not only had shrewd insight, but also a keen foresight. Lewis predicted after the signing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, where he was in attendance in the Rose Garden of the White House, by President Lyndon B. Johnson, that Blacks would exercise political muscle and get themselves elected, particularly in local elections. Another foresight is that Lewis lobbied to change the name of Jackson Avenue to that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. While this has yet to occur, it is a reality that the Lewis' residence address has changed from 801 Bolivar Street to that of Rufus A. Lewis Lane. A public library in Montgomery was named in his honor in 1994.

Lewis in 1974 was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives, District 77. United States President Jimmy Carter appointed Lewis in 1977 to become the first Black U.S. Marshal of the Middle District of Alabama. Lewis' tenure in this position ended in 1981.

Lewis returned to his life of business, farming and cattle-raising.

H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
compiled by: Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

He was still considered the Dean of Black Politics and was sought for advice by both Black and White politicians and political aspirants.

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis passed on August 19, 1999. He was 93 years old. The Lewis Collection of more than 40,000 papers, manuscripts and small artifacts is housed in the archives at the H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College in Montgomery, Alabama



### **The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis**

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis, (1906 - 1999), began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995 issue of U.S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the '40s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted."

Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University. He was a partner in the Ross Clayton Funeral Home business and opened the "Citizens' Club", a night club for African Americans which he also used to help register black to vote. He was also one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). Mr. Lewis was elected to the Alabama State Legislature, but resigned in 1976 when U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed him to serve as a United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

**Source:** Rufus Lewis Collection, TSTC Library & Archives. Dr. Gwen Patton, Archivist.

October 31, 2000

Dear Gwen:

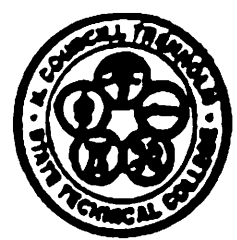
Karen asked for my help<sup>to</sup> provide you the information that you requested

1. Where was Mr. Lewis born? In Montgomery, Al ; don't know but would suspect that a midwife was used. 2. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas. 4. His parents were Jerry and Lula Lewis. 5. Don' know what kind of work his parents did. The Thomas ' did a little gardening and I think they had a cow or two. 6. He had three sisters, Roberta Lewis Mitchell, Janie and Corinne Lewis. He had no brothers. He was the only boy and the youngest of the family. 7. Mr. Lewis was never in the military. 8. He was married to Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935. 9. They had one child, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. 10. The family resided in Patterson Court until they moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the early forties where he remained basically until his death. 11. He attended State Normal School in Montgomery, Al and Fisk University, Nashville, TN graduating in the class of 1929.. Don't know what the major was. He did some post-graduate work at New York University in the mid-forties. 12. He was a charter member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Montgomery, AL ; don't know about the offices held. 13. Don't know about the social organizations other than the Elks Lodge and Shriners. 14. Political /Civic organizations you have better information that I have on that Gwen. 15. He attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and St. John A.M.E. Church. 16. He was a librarian at Alabama State Teachers College (presently Ala, State University); he was football, track and baseball coach , also. Mr. Lewis was very active in voter registration all over middle and south Alabama before it was popular. From that experience came the election to the Alabama State House of Representatives and United States Federal Marshall of the Middle District of Alabama. 17.Mr. Lewis owned and operated the Citizens' Club which was an off-shot of his voter registration activities. In order to be a member of the Citizens' Club, you had to be a registered voter. If you were not a registered voter, you had to fill out the appropriate forms and arrange to become a registered voter as soon as possible. He was also involved in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, Inc. which was founded by his wife's parents and the Ross Family. 18 He was a farmer in his youth. He owned farm land and cattle in Montgomery and Elmore Counties

Gwen, I have given all the answers that I have. Most of this , Karen would not have known, which is why she came to me for help. Hope this helps you with what you are writing and putting together.

PREPARED BY DAUGHTER,

MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS



# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

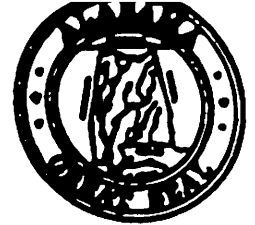
Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

334-240-9739 \*\* FAX 334-240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



October 3, 2000

Dear Karen,

Below are the questions. Can you have the answers by October 31, 2000? Gwen

1. Where was Coach born? In his home? By a mid-wife?
2. What was his boyhood address?
3. Who were his childhood friends?
4. Who were his parents?
5. What line of work did his parents do?
6. Names of brothers and sisters?
7. Was Coach in the military? Branch?
8. What year did he marry and to whom?
9. How many children? Names.
10. Where did the young family reside? Give all addresses.
11. What college(s) did he attend? Years? Major(s)? Degree(s)?
12. What fraternities were he a member? Offices held?
13. What social organizations? Offices held?
14. What political/civic organizations? Offices held?
15. What Church was he a member? Offices held?
16. What jobs/positions did he hold?
17. What businesses did he own or was a partner therein?
18. Was he a farmer? Did he own farming lands? Cattle? Where?

Karen if you think there is any other information I should know about your grandfather, please feel free to

## **THE HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS COLLECTION**

Division of Library and Archives

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis, born November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County, began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U.S. NEWS REPORT, the article states: "Back in the '40s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. "Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS IS THE FATHER OF MONTGOMERY'S VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT," said Archivist Gwen Patton.

Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama Stat University. He, also, was a partner in the Ross and Clayton Funeral Home business. In 1952, he opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans. The primary purpose of the night club was to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. Most members were already registered voters, and their continuing membership in the Club was to help other become registered voters. Many member held "Citizenship Schools" in their homes, where Black people learned how to fill out the literacy test, the pre-requisite to becoming a registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). In 1976, U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis to serve as an United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

(Over)

Below is a listing of Lewis' holdings in the College's Archives:

Call Number	Title	Barcode
AR 001 LEW Com Sto	Parks and Recreation Board	402920
AR 001 LEW Com Sto	U.S. Presidents, Senators, G	402918
AR 001 LEW Com Sto	Organizations	402919
AR 001 LEW DB 4	Correspondences	402911
AR 001 LEW DB 1	Voters' Registration	402907
AR 001 LEW DB 2	Voters' Registration	402908
AR 001 LEW DB 3	Voters' Registration/Political	402909
AR 001 LEW DB 4	Correspondences	402910
AR 001 LEW Drop-fro	Books, Magazines, Reel Tapes	402916
AR 001 LEW Drop-fro	Scrapbook	402917
AR 001 LEW News Bo	Newspapers	402915
AR 001 LEW Post B	Poster, Newspapers, Organizations	402912

Contact: Dr. Gwen Patton  
(334) 240-9739/288-5754

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**You are cordially  
invited to the  
Unveiling of Historic  
Marker in Honor of  
Rufus A. Lewis**

**Father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's  
Voting Rights Movement**

**Thursday, September 20, 2001  
11:00 A. M.**

**801 Bolivar Street (near High Street off of  
Jackson Street)**

**Sponsors: H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College Archives  
Montgomery Friends of the Historic Voting Rights Trail**

## THE HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS COLLECTION

### Division of Library and Archives

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis, born November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County, began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U.S. NEWS REPORT, the article states: "Back in the '40s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. "Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS IS THE FATHER OF MONTGOMERY'S VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT," said Archivist Gwen Patton.

Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University. He, also, was a partner in the Ross and Clayton Funeral Home business. In 1952, he opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans. The primary purpose of the night club was to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. Most members were already registered voters, and their continuing membership in the Club was to help <sup>thems</sup> become registered voters. Many members held "Citizenship Schools" in their homes, where Black people learned how to fill out the literacy test, the pre-requisite to becoming a registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). In 1976, U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis to serve as an United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in the Middle District of Alabama.

**FRIDAY**  
 Sept. 21, 2001  
 Montgomery  
 Edition  
 50 cents

# Alabama

## MARKING HISTORY



Karen S. Doerr Staff

Eleanor Lewis Dawkins, daughter of Rufus A. Lewis, unveils a new historical marker in his honor Thursday at 801 Bolivar St., which has been renamed Rufus A. Lewis Place.

## Monument honors activist

# MEMO

**To:** Mrs. Jacqueline Dickerson, Instructional Support Division Director  
**From:** Zenobia L. Blackmon, Librarian *ZB*  
**Date:** September 17, 2001  
**Re:** Dr. Gwendolyn Patton's Working Hours

Today, Dr. Patton informed me she would no longer perform circulation desk duty until her time had been prorated 75% to equal her contracted working hours. She also stated that she would not increase her working hours to the full thirty hours per week; leaving daily at 1:00 p.m. instead of 1:30 p.m.

I told her that the BOE Policy# 606.01 does not indicate time off for lunch, so I must ask her to perform the full thirty hours of work. She refused. This is just notification of this morning's conversation. I have had no clarification as to my responsibility in this matter from the Administration to this date. However, I have requested a conference.

cc: Dean Gail Taylor, Academic Dean  
Dr. Gwendolyn Patton

vist at H. Council Trenholm State Technical College, and others have led the effort in getting the marker, which stands in front of Lewis' home. The college's archives holds a collection of more than 20,000 documents provided by Lewis. He died in 1999.

"He saved everything because he knew we were going to continue his dream and his work," Patton said. She called Lewis "the father of Montgomery's and central Alabama's voting rights movement."

Dawkins said although her father did not brag about his work and is not

later established "citizenship schools," which tutored potential black voters. Students learned how to fill out literacy tests, which were often designed to keep blacks from voting.

Various community and political leaders attended the outdoor ceremony.

Rep. Thad McClammy, D-Montgomery, said one of the first role models he sought as a young man was Lewis.

"He was a person who didn't do a lot of bragging and boasting about what he did," McClammy said. "But he was a person who was

1974 but resigned in 1975 when President Carter appointed him to serve as a U.S. marshal.

respected throughout this community, throughout this state and throughout this nation."

Jerome Gray, state field coordinator for the Alabama Democratic Conference, said he owes his success and career to Lewis.

"You can't go anywhere in this state ... where old-timers don't know and respect Mr. Lewis and his work," he said.

The street just outside

ability to get blacks in the military registered. Lewis would know before anyone else when black troops were coming home, he said.

"He contacted everybody who had returned to get them to register to vote," said Langford. "He has had a great influence on my life."

**Jannell McGrew, who covers religion and race relations for the Montgomery Advertiser, can be reached at 240-0121 or by fax at 261-1521 or by e-mail at [jmcgrew@montgomeryadvertiser.com](mailto:jmcgrew@montgomeryadvertiser.com).**

Eleanor Lewis Dawkins, daughter of Rufus A. Lewis, unveils a new historical marker in his honor Thursday at 801 Bolivar St., which has been renamed Rufus A. Lewis Place.

Karen S. Doerr Staff



MARKING HISTORY

# Alabama

FRIDAY  
Sept. 21, 2001  
Montgomery  
Edition  
50 cents

**FRIDAY**  
Sept. 21, 2001  
Montgomery  
Edition  
50 cents

# Alabama

## MARKING HISTORY



Karen S. Doerr Staff

Eleanor Lewis Dawkins, daughter of Rufus A. Lewis, unveils a new historical marker in his honor Thursday at 801 Bolivar St., which has been renamed Rufus A. Lewis Place.

## Monument honors activist

By Jannell McGrew  
Montgomery Advertiser

Everybody called him "Coach," and he was known the state over for ensuring blacks registered to vote at a time when they were denied the right.

Rufus A. "Coach" Lewis received a recognition Thursday that many who honored the late civil rights pioneer believe was long overdue. About 50 people applauded as his daughter, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins, unveiled a marker in honor of her father.

as well-known as other civil rights icons, "he worked very, very hard to make sure that we had rights."

"Having this historic monument erected ... is truly, truly an honor," she said.



Lewis

Lewis began his voting rights drive in the early 1940s and is credited with registering

more than four generations

### RUFUS A. LEWIS

Civil rights pioneer Rufus A. Lewis (1906-1999) was born in Montgomery County. Lewis was a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University. Lewis was a partner with the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home. He was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter president for the Alabama Democratic Conference, the oldest black political organization in the state. He was elected to the

Lewis' home has also been named after Lewis. The house contains many original items, including Lewis' old office space. Lewis also served as football coach at Alabama State University.

Larry Armstead, administrative assistant to Mayor Bobby Bright, paid tribute to Lewis on a personal note.

"I am here as a proud black man thanking Mr. Lewis for what he has contributed," he said. "He was a positive thinking individual who saw darkness and tried to shed light."

Sen. Charles Langford, D-

October 31, 2000

Dear Gwen:

Karen asked for my help<sup>to</sup> provide you the information that you requested

1. Where was Mr. Lewis born? In Montgomery, AL ; don't know but would suspect that a midwife was used. 2. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas. 4. His parents were Jerry and Lula Lewis. 5. Don' know what kind of work his parents did. The Thomas ' did a little gardening and I think they had a cow or two. 6. He had three sisters, Roberta Lewis Mitchell, Janie and Corinne Lewis. He had no brothers. He was the only boy and the youngest of the family. 7. Mr. Lewis was never in the military. 8. He was married to Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935. 9. They had one child, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. 10. The family resided in Patterson Court until they moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the early forties where he remained basically until his death. 11. He attended State Normal School in Montgomery, AL and Fisk University, Nashville, TN graduating in the class of 1929.. Don't know what the major was. He did some post-graduate work at New York University in the mid-forties. 12. He was a charter member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity,

Montgomery, AL ; don't know about the offices held. 13. Don't know about the social organizations other than the Elks Lodge and Shriners. 14. Political /Civic organizations you have better information that I have on that Gwen. 15. He attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and St. John A.M.E. Church. 16. He was a librarian at Alabama State Teachers College (presently Ala, State University); he was football, track and baseball coach , also. Mr. Lewis was very active in voter registration all over middle and south Alabama before it was popular. From that experience came the election to the Alabama State House of Representatives and United States Federal Marshall of the Middle District of Alabama. 17. Mr. Lewis owned and operated the Citizens' Club which was an off-shot of his voter registration activities. In order to be a member of the Citizens' Club, you had to be a registered voter. If you were not a registered voter, you had to fill out the appropriate forms and arrange to become a registered voter as soon as possible. He was also involved in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, Inc. which was founded by his wife's parents and the Ross Family. 18 He was a farmer in his youth. He owned farm land and cattle in Montgomery and Elmore Counties

Gwen, I have given all the answers that I have. Most of this , Karen would not have known, which is why she came to me for help. Hope this helps you with what you are writing and putting together,

PREPARED BY DAUGHTER,  
MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS

## **Add to TSTC Archives, The Hon. Rufus A. Lewis Collection**

**There are over 10,000 items in the Hon. Rufus A. Lewis Collection, to include original filled out citizenship/literacy forms, affidavits, organizing tools and correspondences signed by A. Phillip Randolph, W. C. Patton and other distinguished giants in the Voting Rights Movement, and original photographs, pamphlets, leaflets, posters and banners from the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott Movement, the 1963 March on Washington and the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March and Movement.**

Author	Lewis, Rufus A.
Title	Artifacts.
Notes	<p>The Hon. Rufus A. Lewis (1906-1999) began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. He is known as the "Father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement." He established Citizenship Schools <del>throughout the 2nd Congressional District</del> that tutored prospective Black voters how to fill out the literacy test, a pre-requisite barrier before the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University in Montgomery.</p> <p>— He was a partner in the Ross Clayton (his predeceased wife's family) Funeral Home business and opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans who were registered voters and who helped others to become registered voters. He was also one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of 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 U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed him to serve as a U.S. Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.</p>
Publisher	Montgomery, AL 1940s--
Phys Desc	1 Check-making/adding machine, circa 1940. 1 Camera, circa 1940. 2 pair of eyeglasses belonging to the late Commissioner Frank Bray, Sr.

15 lines  
53 Characters per line  
Carr 2 1/2 - 4/363 x 258  
\$1,501.00

Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 4
Newspapers.	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW News Box 2
Board Positions with Community Organizations and Commissions.	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW ComStoBox 18
Institutional Archives.	
Patton, Gwendolyn.	AR 005 TRE VC 4
Voting Rights Movement Organizers.	
Lewis, Rufus a.	AR 002 LEW ComStoBox 18
Newspaper clippings.	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW NewsBox 2
Parks and Recreation Board.	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Artifacts.	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Voting Rights Movement.	
Lewis, Rufus A. (1906-1999).	AR 001 LEW Poster Box 5
Voting Patterns of African Americans.	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 002 LEW ComStoBox 19
Photo Collage.	
Lewis, Rufus.	AR 002 LEW Collage 4
US Marshal Nameplate.	
Lewis, Rufus.	AR 002 LEW Artifact 20
Books, Magazines, Reel Tapes, Reading Glasses, Post Cards, 1996 Guest Book, 33-1	
Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Drop-front B
Personal Papers, Photographs.	
Lewis, Rufus	AR 001 LEW ComStoBox 17

Artifacts		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Organizations.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Voters' Registration.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 2
Correspondences.		
	Lewis, Rufus .	AR 001 LEW DB 5
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.		
	Lewis, Rufus and Gwen Patton.	AR 001 LEW DB 35
Organizing Tools, Voter's Registration.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 35
Fezs.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Correspondences, Commentaries (Radio).		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 36
Newspaper Clippings.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW NewsBox 1
Poster, Newspapers, Organizational Charts, Maps.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Post B 1
U.S. Presidents, Senators, Governors and U.S. Representatives.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Voters' Registration/Political Organizations.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 3
Voters' Registration.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 1
Scrapbook.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Drop-front B
Voters' Registration.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	
LP Records.		
	Lewis, Rufus.	AR 001 LEW LP Box 1
78 Phonographs.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Phono Box 4
Books.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Artifacts.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 002 LEW Artifact Box
Newspaper Clippings.		
	Lewis, Rufus A.	

## **THE HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS COLLECTION**

### **Division of Library and Archives**

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis, born November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County, began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U.S. NEWS REPORT, the article states: "Back in the '40s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. "Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS IS THE FATHER OF MONTGOMERY'S VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT," said Archivist Gwen Patton.

Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama Stat University. He, also, was a partner in the Ross and Clayton Funeral Home business. In 1952, he opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans. The primary purpose of the night club was to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. Most members were already registered voters, and their continuing membership in the Club was to help other become registered voters. Many member held "Citizenship Schools" in their homes, where Black people learned how to fill out the literacy test, the pre-requisite to becoming a registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). In 1976, U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis to serve as an United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

Correspondence. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 4
Newspapers. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW News Box 2
Board Positions with Community Organizations and Commissions. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW ComStoBox 18
Institutional Archives. Patton, Gwendolyn.	AR 005 TRE VC 4
Voting Rights Movement Organizers. Lewis, Rufus a.	AR 002 LEW ComStoBox 18
Newspaper clippings. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW NewsBox 2
Parks and Recreation Board. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Artifacts. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Voting Rights Movement. Lewis, Rufus A. (1906-1999).	AR 001 LEW Poster Box 5
Voting Patterns of African Americans. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 002 LEW ComStoBox 19
Photo Collage. Lewis, Rufus.	AR 002 LEW Collage 4
US Marshal Nameplate. Lewis, Rufus.	AR 002 LEW Artifact 20
Books, Magazines, Reel Tapes, Reading Glasses, Post Cards, 1996 Guest Book, 33-1 Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Drop-front B
Personal Papers, Photographs. Lewis, Rufus	AR 001 LEW ComStoBox 17

Artifacts. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Organizations. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Voters' Registration. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 2
Correspondences. Lewis, Rufus .	AR 001 LEW DB 5
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lewis, Rufus and Gwen Patton.	AR 001 LEW DB 35
Organizing Tools, Voter's Registration. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 35
Fezs. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Correspondences, Commentaries (Radio). Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 36
Newspaper Clippings. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW NewsBox 1
Poster, Newspapers, Organizational Charts, Maps. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Post B 1
U.S. Presidents, Senators, Governors and U.S. Representatives. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Voters' Registration/Political Organizations. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 3
Voters' Registration. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 1
Scrapbook. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Drop-front B
Voters' Registration. Lewis, Rufus A.	
LP Records. Lewis, Rufus.	AR 001 LEW LP Box 1
78 Phonographs. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Phono Box 4
Books. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Artifacts. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 002 LEW Artifact Box
Newspaper Clippings. Lewis, Rufus A.	

## **THE HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS COLLECTION**

Division of Library and Archives

The Honorable Rufus A. Lewis, born November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County, began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U.S. NEWS REPORT, the article states: "Back in the '40s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. "Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HONORABLE RUFUS A. LEWIS IS THE FATHER OF MONTGOMERY'S VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT," said Archivist Gwen Patton.

Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Fisk University and served as football coach at Alabama State University. He, also, was a partner in the Ross and Clayton Funeral Home business. In 1952, he opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African Americans. The primary purpose of the night club was to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. Most members were already registered voters, and their continuing membership in the Club was to help other become registered voters. Many members held "Citizenship Schools" in their homes, where Black people learned how to fill out the literacy test, the pre-requisite to becoming a registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter President of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC). In 1976, U.S. President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis to serve as an United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

Artifacts		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Organizations.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Voters' Registration.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW DB 2
Correspondences.		
Lewis, Rufus .		AR 001 LEW DB 5
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.		
Lewis, Rufus and Gwen Patton.		AR 001 LEW DB 35
Organizing Tools, Voter's Registration.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW DB 35
Fezs.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Correspondences, Commentaries (Radio).		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW DB 36
Newspaper Clippings.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW NewsBox 1
Poster, Newspapers, Organizational Charts, Maps.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Post B 1
U.S. Presidents, Senators, Governors and U.S. Representatives.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Voters' Registration/Political Organizations.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW DB 3
Voters' Registration.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW DB 1
Scrapbook.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Drop-front B
Voters' Registration.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		
LP Records.		
Lewis, Rufus.		AR 001 LEW LP Box 1
78 Phonographs.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Phono Box 4
Books.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Artifacts.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		AR 002 LEW Artifact Box
Newspaper Clippings.		
Lewis, Rufus A.		

Correspondences. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW DB 4
Newspapers. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW News Box 2
Board Positions with Community Organizations and Commissions. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW ComStoBox 18
Institutional Archives. Patton, Gwendolyn.	AR 005 TRE VC 4
Voting Rights Movement Organizers. Lewis, Rufus a.	AR 002 LEW ComStoBox 18
Newspaper clippings. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW NewsBox 2
Parks and Recreation Board. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Com Sto Box
Artifacts. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Artifact Box
Voting Rights Movement. Lewis, Rufus A. (1906-1999).	AR 001 LEW Poster Box 5
Voting Patterns of African Americans. Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 002 LEW ComStoBox 19
Photo Collage. Lewis, Rufus.	AR 002 LEW Collage 4
US Marshal Nameplate. Lewis, Rufus.	AR 002 LEW Artifact 20
Books, Magazines, Reel Tapes, Reading Glasses, Post Cards, 1996 Guest Book, 33-1 Lewis, Rufus A.	AR 001 LEW Drop-front B
Personal Papers, Photographs. Lewis, Rufus	AR 001 LEW ComStoBox 17

October 31, 2000

Dear Gwen:

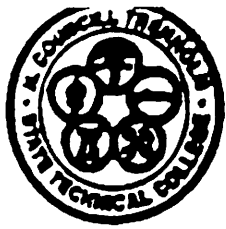
Karen asked for my help<sup>to</sup> provide you the information that you requested

1. Where was Mr. Lewis born? In Montgomery, AL ; don't know but would suspect that a midwife was used. 2. He grew up on the west side of Montgomery and was raised by Mr. & Mrs. Obe Thomas. 4. His parents were Jerry and Lula Lewis. 5. Don' know what kind of work his parents did. The Thomas ' did a little gardening and I think they had a cow or two. 6. He had three sisters, Roberta Lewis Mitchell, Janie and Corinne Lewis. He had no brothers. He was the only boy and the youngest of the family. 7. Mr. Lewis was never in the military. 8. He was married to Jule Adelaide Clayton in 1935. 9. They had one child, Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. 10. The family resided in Patterson Court until they moved to 801 Bolivar Street in the early forties where he remained basically until his death. 11. He attended State Normal School in Montgomery, AL and Fisk University, Nashville, TN graduating in the class of 1929.. Don't know what the major was. He did some post-graduate work at New York University in the mid-forties. 12. He was a charter member of the graduate chapter of Alpha Upsilon Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Montgomery, AL ; don't know about the offices held. 13. Don't know about the social organizations other than the Elks Lodge and Shriners. 14. Political /Civic organizations you have better information that I have on that Gwen. 15. He attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and St. John A.M.E. Church. 16. He was a librarian at Alabama State Teachers College (presently Ala, State University); he was football, track and baseball coach , also. Mr. Lewis was very active in voter registration all over middle and south Alabama before it was popular. From that experience came the election to the Alabama State House of Representatives and United States Federal Marshall of the Middle District of Alabama. 17. Mr. Lewis owned and operated the Citizens' Club which was an off-shot of his voter registration activities. In order to be a member of the Citizens' Club, you had to be a registered voter. If you were not a registered voter, you had to fill out the appropriate forms and arrange to become a registered voter as soon as possible. He was also involved in the Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, Inc. which was founded by his wife's parents and the Ross Family. 18 He was a farmer in his youth. He owned farm land and cattle in Montgomery and Elmore Counties

Gwen, I have given all the answers that I have. Most of this , Karen would not have known, which is why she came to me for help. Hope this helps you with what you are writing and putting together.

PREPARED BY DAUGHTER,

MRS. ELEANOR LEWIS DAWKINS



# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College

Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist

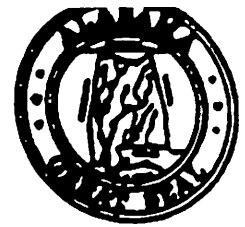
Division of Library and Archives

1225 Air Base Boulevard

Montgomery, Alabama 36108

334-240-9739 •• FAX 334-240-9707

email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



October 3, 2000

Dear Karen,

Below are the questions. Can you have the answers by October 31, 2000? Gwen

1. Where was Coach born? In his home? By a mid-wife?
2. What was his boyhood address?
3. Who were his childhood friends?
4. Who were his parents?
5. What line of work did his parents do?
6. Names of brothers and sisters?
7. Was Coach in the military? Branch?
8. What year did he marry and to whom?
9. How many children? Names.
10. Where did the young family reside? Give all addresses.
11. What college(s) did he attend? Years? Major(s)? Degree(s)?
12. What fraternities were he a member? Offices held?
13. What social organizations? Offices held?
14. What political/civic organizations? Offices held?
15. What Church was he a member? Offices held?
16. What jobs/positions did he hold?
17. What businesses did he own or was a partner therein?
18. Was he a farmer? Did he own farming lands? Cattle? Where?

Karen if you think there is any other information I should know about your grandfather, please feel free to

# H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College



Dr. Gwendolyn M. Patton, Archivist  
Division of Library and Archives  
1225 Air Base Boulevard  
Montgomery, Alabama 36108  
(334) 240-9739\*\*Fax (334) 240-9707  
email gwenpatton\_tstc@yahoo.com



Unveiling of Historic Marker in Honor of Rufus A. Lewis  
September 20, 2001

Remarks by Dr. Gwen Patton, TSTC Archivist

The Hon. Rufus Andrew Lewis, "a devoted husband, father and statesman" as inscribed on his final resting place by his daughter, Eleanor, was born on November 30, 1906, in Montgomery County. He began an earnest and consistent Voting Rights Drive in the early 1940s. In an October 8, 1995, issue of U. S. News Report, the article states: "Back in the 1940s, Rufus Lewis became obsessed with voting rights. An entire generation of Montgomery (B)lacks say that Lewis, who is barely known today, is the reason they first voted." We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College are turning this around as we sought to establish our Voting Rights Archives with the Lewis' papers and artifacts being our first collection. Today's generation and those to come hereafter will know that the HON. RUFUS A. LEWIS is the father of Montgomery and Central Alabama's Voting Rights Movement.

Lewis was a 1929, graduate of Fisk University. He married Jule Adelaide Clayton, and to this union was born 1 daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Lewis Dawkins. Mrs. Jule Clayton Lewis preceased her husband in 1958. Lewis joined the Alabama State Teachers College (now ASU) in 1936, and served as assistant librarian and athletic coach. Soon afterwards, Lewis was respectfully and affectionately known as "Coach Lewis" for his successful strategies as football, track and ~~football~~ coach.

baseball

Page 2

Remarks by Patton on the Rufus A. Lewis Historic Marker

Unveiling

9/20/01

Lewis in 1952, opened the "Citizens' Club," a night club for African-Americans. In ~~other~~<sup>order</sup> to be a member of the Club, you had to be a registered voter. Many members, after attending Lewis' Voting Clinics, held citizenship schools in their homes. Others served as block captains and community organizers to help other Black citizens to become registered voters. Lewis was a consummate "organization-man" who left no detail unattended.

In 1960, Lewis was one of the founders and the first Montgomery County Chapter Presidents of the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC).

In 1976, Lewis resigned as an elected Alabama State Representative to accept the appointment by U. S. President Jimmy Carter to serve as an United States Marshal. Lewis was the first African-American to be appointed to ~~this district in~~<sup>the</sup> the Middle District of Alabama.

We at H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College invite you to visit our archives to review, peruse and to research the profound Rufus A. Lewis Collection of over 20,000 documents and small artifacts.

-- Thank you--

# Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis

## LEWIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
with students, scholars and the general public, is considered one of our most precious resources."

On hand to celebrate with Coach Lewis were family members Mr. and Mrs. James Hall, The Hon. and Mrs. Joseph Dickerson, LaRue Pringle, Maxine Kimbrough, elected officials, Hons. Charles Conley, Herman (Barbara) Harris, John Knight, Mark Gilmore, Leu Hammonds, Sidney Williams James Brown; community activists Idessa Redden, Zeccozy Williams, Johnnie Carr, Dot Moore, Ella Bell, Diane Ward, Jerome Gray, Darryl Sinkfield, Richard Bailey, Michael King; and Joseph Knight, Peurel Johnson, Lulander King, Ross-Clayton Funeral Home staff, Janice Franklin, Juanita Owes, Mary Wilhaite and Edwin Bridges with the State Achi ves.



From left to right are: Library Staff, Dr. Nina Beauchamp and Ms. Yvonne Williams, sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Gwen Patton. Photo by Diane Ward



Enjoying Honorable Lewis' birthday celebration from left to right back row, Vice President, Peggy Tatum, Ms. Yvonne Williams, Dr. Gwen Patton and Dr. Nina Beauchamp. Sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President).-Photo by Diane Ward



# The Montgomery-Tuskegee Times

VOLUME 20 NO. 10

KEEPING THE BLACK COMMUNITY INFORMED OF ISSUES AFFECTING ITS SURVIVAL

JAN. 30-FEB. 5, 1997

## Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis



From left to right: Daughter Eleanor Dawkins, Honorable Rufus Lewis and Granddaughter Karen Dawkins. Standing Left to right are: Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President) and V.P. Peggy Tatum of Trenholm State Technical College. Photos By Diane Ward. See other photo page 10.

Family, friends and colleagues were on hand to wish Hon. Lewis "Happy Birthday."

Affectionately called "Coach," Rufus Lewis was born November 30,

1906, in Montgomery County. Coach Lewis began an earnest, consistent and persistent voting rights drive in the early 1940s.

A graduate of Fisk University, and

Alabama State College football coach and partner in Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, he opened the Citizens Club (a night club for Blacks) in 1952. The primary purpose of the night club was

to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. The club was also a "citizenship school" where patrons learned how to fill out the literacy test, the prerequisite for be-

coming registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first county president of the Alabama Democratic conference, the Black caucus of the State Democratic Party. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis as a United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

"This is the first in our archival collection to be preserved for public access," said TSTC archivist Gwen Patton. "It is a joy processing the Lewis papers because much is already categorized. Coach Lewis drew up his library science skills in maintaining a prodigious voting rights record of struggle."

Dr. Leroy Bell, TSTC interim president, said, "We are delighted that Hon. Lewis has entrusted his invaluable papers within our College. They will be housed in our state-of-the-art Library/Learning-Resource Tower. His collection, to be shared  
**SEE LEWIS PAGE 11**

# Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis

## LEWIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with students, scholars and the general public is considered one of our most precious resources."

On hand to celebrate with Coach Lewis were family members Mr. and Mrs. James Hall, The Hon. and Mrs. Joseph Dickerson, LaRue Pringle, Maxine Kimbrough, elected officials, Hons. Charles Conley, Herman (Barbara) Harris, John Knight, Mark Gilmore, Leu Hammonds, Sidney Williams James Brown; community activists Idessa Redden, Zecoz Williams, Johnnie Carr, Dot Moore, Ella Bell, Diane Ward, Jerome Gray, Darryl Sinkfield, Richard Bailey, Michael King; and Joseph Knight, Peurel Johnson, Lulander King, Ross-Clayton Funeral Home staff, Janice Franklin, Juanita Owes, Mary Wilhaite and Edwin Bridges with the State Achi ves.



From left to right are: Library Staff, Dr. Nina Beauchamp and Ms. Yvonne Williams, sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Gwen Patton. Photo by Diane Ward



Enjoying Honorable Lewis' birthday celebration from left to right back row, Vice President, Peggy Tatum, Ms. Yvonne Williams, Dr. Gwen Patton and Dr. Nina Beauchamp. Sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President). Photo by Diane Ward



# The Montgomery-Tuskegee Times

VOLUME 20 NO. 10

KEEPING THE BLACK COMMUNITY INFORMED OF ISSUES AFFECTING ITS SURVIVAL

JAN. 30-FEB. 5, 1997

## Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis



From left to right: Daughter Eleanor Dawkins, Honorable Rufus Lewis and Granddaughter Karen Dawkins. Standing Left to right are: Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President) and V.P. Peggy Tatum of Trenholm State Technical College. Photos By Diane Ward. See other photo page 10.

Family, friends and colleagues were on hand to wish Hon. Lewis "Happy Birthday."

Affectionately called "Coach," Rufus Lewis was born November 30,

1906, in Montgomery County. Coach Lewis began an earnest, consistent and persistent voting rights drive in the early 1940s.

A graduate of Fisk University, and

Alabama State College football coach and partner in Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, he opened the Citizens Club (a night club for Blacks) in 1952. The primary purpose of the night club was

to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. The club was also a "citizenship school" where patrons learned how to fill out the literacy test, the prerequisite for be-

coming registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first county president of the Alabama Democratic conference, the Black caucus of the State Democratic Party. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis as a United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

"This is the first in our archival collection to be preserved for public access," said TSTC archivist Gwen Patton. "It is a joy processing the Lewis papers because much is already categorized. Coach Lewis drew up his library science skills in maintaining a prodigious voting rights record of struggle."

Dr. Leroy Bell, TSTC interim president, said, "We are delighted that Hon. Lewis has entrusted his invaluable papers within our College. They will be housed in our state-of-the-art Library/Learning-Resource Tower. His collection, to be shared  
**SEE LEWIS PAGE 11**

# Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis

## LEWIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with students, scholars and the general public is considered one of our most precious resources."

On hand to celebrate with Coach Lewis were family members Mr. and Mrs. James Hall, The Hon. and Mrs. Joseph Dickerson, LaRue Pringle, Maxine Kimbrough, elected officials, Hons. Charles Conley, Herman (Barbara) Harris, John Knight, Mark Gilmore, Leu Hammonds, Sidney Williams James Brown; community activists Idessa Redden, Zecoz Williams, Johnnie Carr, Dot Moore, Ella Bell, Diane Ward, Jerome Gray, Darryl Sinkfield, Richard Bailey, Michael King; and Joseph Knight, Peurel Johnson, Lulander King, Ross-Clayton Funeral Home staff, Janice Franklin, Juanita Owes, Mary Wilhaite and Edwin Bridges with the State Achi ves.



From left to right are: Library Staff, Dr. Nina Beauchamp and Ms. Yvonne Williams, sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Gwen Patton. Photo by Diane Ward



Enjoying Honorable Lewis' birthday celebration from left to right back row, Vice President, Peggy Tatum, Ms. Yvonne Williams, Dr. Gwen Patton and Dr. Nina Beauchamp. Sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President). Photo by Diane Ward



# The Montgomery-Tuskegee Times

VOLUME 20 NO. 10

KEEPING THE BLACK COMMUNITY INFORMED OF ISSUES AFFECTING ITS SURVIVAL

JAN. 30-FEB. 5, 1997

## Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis



From left to right: Daughter Eleanor Dawkins, Honorable Rufus Lewis and Granddaughter Karen Dawkins. Standing Left to right are: Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President) and V.P. Peggy Tatum of Trenholm State Technical College. Photos By Diane Ward. See other photo page 10.

Family, friends and colleagues were on hand to wish Hon. Lewis "Happy Birthday."

Affectionately called "Coach," Rufus Lewis was born November 30,

1906, in Montgomery County. Coach Lewis began an earnest, consistent and persistent voting rights drive in the early 1940s.

A graduate of Fisk University, and

Alabama State College football coach and partner in Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, he opened the Citizens Club (a night club for Blacks) in 1952. The primary purpose of the night club was

to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. The club was also a "citizenship school" where patrons learned how to fill out the literacy test, the prerequisite for be-

coming registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first county president of the Alabama Democratic conference, the Black caucus of the State Democratic Party. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis as a United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

"This is the first in our archival collection to be preserved for public access," said TSTC archivist Gwen Patton. "It is a joy processing the Lewis papers because much is already categorized. Coach Lewis drew up his library science skills in maintaining a prodigious voting rights record of struggle."

Dr. Leroy Bell, TSTC interim president, said, "We are delighted that Hon. Lewis has entrusted his invaluable papers within our College. They will be housed in our state-of-the-art Library/Learning-Resource Tower. His collection, to be shared  
**SEE LEWIS PAGE 11**

# Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis

## LEWIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with students, scholars and the general public is considered one of our most precious resources."

On hand to celebrate with Coach Lewis were family members Mr. and Mrs. James Hall, The Hon. and Mrs. Joseph Dickerson, LaRue Pringle, Maxine Kimbrough, elected officials, Hons. Charles Conley, Herman (Barbara) Harris, John Knight, Mark Gilmore, Leu Hammonds, Sidney Williams James Brown; community activists Idessa Redden, Zecozzy Williams, Johnnie Carr, Dot Moore, Ella Bell, Diane Ward, Jerome Gray, Darryl Sinkfield, Richard Bailey, Michael King; and Joseph Knight, Peurel Johnson, Lulander King, Ross-Clayton Funeral Home staff, Janice Franklin, Juanita Owes, Mary Wilhaite and Edwin Bridges with the State Achi ves.



From left to right are: Library Staff, Dr. Nina Beauchamp and Ms. Yvonne Williams, sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Gwen Patton. Photo by Diane Ward



Enjoying Honorable Lewis' birthday celebration from left to right back row, Vice President, Peggy Tatum, Ms. Yvonne Williams, Dr. Gwen Patton and Dr. Nina Beauchamp. Sitting with Hon. Lewis, Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President).-Photo by Diane Ward



# The Montgomery-Tuskegee Times

VOLUME 20 NO. 10

KEEPING THE BLACK COMMUNITY INFORMED OF ISSUES AFFECTING ITS SURVIVAL

JAN. 30-FEB. 5, 1997

## Trenholm State Technical College (TSTC) Hosts 90th Birthday Party for the Honorable Rufus Lewis



From left to right: Daughter Eleanor Dawkins, Honorable Rufus Lewis and Granddaughter Karen Dawkins. Standing Left to right are: Dr. Leroy Bell, (TSTC Interim President) and V.P. Peggy Tatum of Trenholm State Technical College. Photos By Diane Ward. See other photo page 10.

Family, friends and colleagues were on hand to wish Hon. Lewis "Happy Birthday."

Affectionately called "Coach," Rufus Lewis was born November 30,

1906, in Montgomery County. Coach Lewis began an earnest, consistent and persistent voting rights drive in the early 1940s.

A graduate of Fisk University, and

Alabama State College football coach and partner in Ross-Clayton Funeral Home, he opened the Citizens Club (a night club for Blacks) in 1952. The primary purpose of the night club was

to motivate Black citizens in a social setting to register to vote. The club was also a "citizenship school" where patrons learned how to fill out the literacy test, the prerequisite for be-

coming registered voter.

In 1960, Mr. Lewis was one of the founders and the first county president of the Alabama Democratic conference, the Black caucus of the State Democratic Party. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed Mr. Lewis as a United States Marshal, the first Black marshal ever in Alabama.

"This is the first in our archival collection to be preserved for public access," said TSTC archivist Gwen Patton. "It is a joy processing the Lewis papers because much is already categorized. Coach Lewis drew up his library science skills in maintaining a prodigious voting rights record of struggle."

Dr. Leroy Bell, TSTC interim president, said, "We are delighted that Hon. Lewis has entrusted his invaluable papers within our College. They will be housed in our state-of-the-art Library/Learning-Resource Tower. His collection, to be shared SEE LEWIS PAGE 11