

If you are interested in nominating someone for the Southern Rural Black Women's Hall of Fame please contact the appropriate SRBWI State office:

SRBWI State Offices:

Federation of Childcare Centers of Alabama (FOCAL) 3703 Rosa Parks Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36105, 800.300.0232 or 334.262.3456, Fax 334.264.5659, www.focalfocal.org, focalfocal@bellsouth.net

Southwest Georgia Project For Community Education
624 West Oglethorpe Blvd., Albany, Georgia 31705, 229.430.9870,
Fax 229.446.9269, smsherrod@mindspring.com

Children's Defense Fund's Southern Regional Office (CDF-SRO),
SRBWI Regional Administrator, P.O. Box 11437, Jackson, Mississippi
39283, 601.321.1966, Fax 601.321.8736

For more information about SRBWI please visit www.srbwi.org



SOUTHERN RURAL BLACK WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

Oleta Garrett Fitzgerald, SRBWI Regional Administrator and
Mississippi State Lead

Sophia Bracy Harris, Alabama State Lead

Shirley Sherrod, Georgia State Lead

Winifred Green, Senior Program Consultant

Sarah Bobrow-Williams, SRBWI Asset and Finance Director

Anthony Knight, Exhibit Curator

Zoila Torres, Graphic Designer

Cultural Heritage Advisors:

Georgette Norman, Director, Troy University Rosa Parks Museum

Alex T. Thomas, TMP, Heritage Trails Program Manager
Mississippi Development Authority-Division of Tourism

Jeanne Cyriague African American Programs Coordinator
Reflections Editor, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia
Department of Natural Resources



Just Stand, Anyhow!

2005

Hall of Fame

Inductee Exhibit

*"Courage is the most hiding thing from your eye
or mind until after it's done. There's some inner
something that tells you what's right.
You know you have to do it to survive as
a human being. You have no choice."*

— Unita Blackwell

Just Stand, Anyhow!

"Just Stand, Anyhow!" is a traveling exhibit showcasing the 2005 Inductees of the Southern Rural Black Women's Hall of Fame. The exhibit's purpose is to affirm the importance of and to educate the public about the lives of the 2005 Hall of Fame Inductees.

The Southern Rural Black Women's Hall of Fame serves to document and preserve Inductees' local legacies and community history in our 77 county target region spanning the Delta of Mississippi and the Alabama and Georgia Black Belt. Inductees are nominated and recognized biannually by public ceremony and will be enshrined in a designated Hall of Fame in their state.

The Southern Rural Black Women's Hall of Fame was established as a result of a Share Your Heritage Workshop sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in October 2004. Inductees are selected by their peers for lifelong

distinguished leadership in their communities and for demonstrating: Dignity, Creativity, Endurance, Courage and, inspiring hope often in the face of extreme adversity.

The Southern Rural Black Women's Hall of Fame and "Just Stand, Anyhow!" are projects of the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative (SRBWI), an organization that works to empower rural black women to advocate for economic and social justice in the south.

"Just Stand Anyhow!" middle school curriculum materials and post cards may be purchased from SRBWI's Regional Administrator, the Children's Defense Fund's Southern Regional Office (CDF-SRO). The Federation of Childcare Centers of Alabama in Montgomery, Alabama and the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education in Albany, Georgia serve as state leads in their states.

The Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative greatly appreciates support from:

Ford Foundation
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Ms. Foundation for Women

Charles M. & Mary D. Grant Foundation
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Sister Fund
Samuel Rubin Foundation

Southern Rural Black Women's 2005 Hall Of Fame Inductees:

ALABAMA

Thelma Onita Roberts Craig
Consuela Lee
Elizabeth Marzette Parrish
Idessa Williams Redden
Laurena Sutton



GEORGIA

Gladys Mae Coley
Mary Young Cummings
Bernice Johnson-Reagon
Josie Miller
Mary Shipp



MISSISSIPPI

Unita Blackwell
Annie Devine
Fannie Lou Hamer
Pauline T. Holmes
Orgireen Carter Romious



Family Reunion:

Fostering Community Leaders
Among Us



Southern Rural Black
Women's Initiative
Semi-Annual State
Convening



November 11 – 12, 2005

Hilton Garden Inn &
Alabama State University
Montgomery, Alabama

Congratulations to Alabama's Inaugural Inductees into the SRGBW Hall of Fame



Thelma Craig



Consuela Lee



Elizabeth Parrish



Idessa Redden



Laurena Sutton

Often we take for granted or diminish the extraordinary lives and efforts of the women among us. Recognizing these women in the Hall of Fame is a way of not only valuing and honoring their contributions to our community, but of providing an opportunity for women to lift up and affirm each other. Too many of our stories are being lost, forgotten and owned by others.

These women have helped motivate and develop others. They were and are willing to confront the powers that be and challenge the system. These Hall of Fame women have championed the rights and futures of children. Their efforts, ideas and acts of courage have made our communities better places to live.



Lorraine Johnson-Coleman

Lorraine Johnson-Coleman is a nationally respected consultant in the areas of cultural preservation and community programming who counts among her clients, The Kellogg Foundation, National Parks Service and National Trust for Historic Preservation. Known for her "down-home wisdom" Lorraine is enjoyed by millions annually as a regular contributor to NPR Morning Edition. In addition to her consulting work, Lorraine

is a sought-after speaker in the field of heritage preservation as well.

JOURNEYS HOME™ — An African American Heritage and Cultural Arts Initiative developed by Ms. Johnson-Coleman has been recognized as a national model for cultural preservation and heritage tourism development. This initiative has been implemented in Battle Creek, Michigan and Lorraine has recently worked with 15 counties in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas as part of the Kellogg Foundation Mid-south Delta Initiative.

Lorraine has been contracted by Portland State University to conduct a workshop for community residents on the contributions of African Americans to American theater and develop a plan, incorporating input from community-based partnering organizations. The project would allow community residents to be trained to participate in an original theatrical production, which would be part of the 2003 Portland International Performance Festival. She has also recently received the honor of being the first ever Distinguished Scholar of Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. In addition to her consulting and writing, Lorraine also tours nationally, a one-woman show of comedy, storytelling and poetic narrative based on her work.

Idessa Williams Redden

MONTGOMERY



Mrs. Idessa Williams Redden is a civil rights activist who helped change the Jim Crow hiring practices in 1950s Alabama. She advocated against discriminatory hiring and succeeded in desegregating both the Continental Glass Company and H. L. Green grocery store. Mrs. Redden was personally asked by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Montgomery Improvement Association to work with the voter education and registration campaign. This program trained numerous high school students to register voters. She attended every mass meeting of the Montgomery bus boycott and ran for public office in the 1960s.

Mrs. Redden herself first registered to vote in 1949, after four attempts and humiliating insults. She immediately became a "block captain" in Coach Rufus Lewis' crusade for voting rights, encouraging people to sign up for a voting rights clinic. She also taught prospective black voters how to fill out the literacy test required for registering to vote. As a fearless crusader for first-class citizenship rights for blacks, Ms. Redden particularly inspired youth. She was in fact identified by the Montgomery Police Department as one who should not be arrested and thrown in jail. It was feared that her arrest would further encourage the growth of the movement.

The desegregation of public schools was another of Mrs. Redden's passions. She traveled to Jackson, Mississippi to march with James Meredith into the University of Mississippi, and she played a role locally in the integration of Sidney Lanier High School, transporting the first two black students and family members to and from the school for nine months.

"Working in the civil/voting rights movement was the greatest challenge of my life," said Mrs. Redden in 1998. "I was in the movement to help my people. I have dedicated my life to help uplift all human beings."



Laurena Sutton

SELMA

Mrs. Sutton was born and raised in Uniontown, Alabama in 1909. She graduated from Knoxville University during the middle of the Great Depression. Mrs. Sutton completed post-graduate work as well, with enough credits for two master of arts degrees. She was a life-long educator across several Alabama counties, working first as a teacher and then as an assistant principal. Even after her retirement, she continued to teach and tutor adults and children in her community.

In the second half of her life, Mrs. Sutton also extended her educational philosophy into child care. A friend of Mrs. Sutton witnessed a day care center in operation in Baltimore and brought the idea back to Mrs. Sutton in Selma. Mrs. Sutton gained permission from her church to proceed with the plan, and at age 66 she opened one of Selma's first child care centers. She worked there for fourteen years.

Through her fourteen years of work with this center, Mrs. Sutton emerged as a child care advocacy leader, contributing to the organizational strength of the Alabama child care community. Mrs. Sutton conceived the idea of establishing of a sliding fee scale for families enrolled in the child care subsidy program. The idea was adopted by the state of Alabama as one of the components of the program.

Mrs. Sutton is a collector of books and a poet herself. She hopes to publish her collection of children's poetry. She is also a talented seamstress, particularly fond of making hats. Her words of advice are to love and appreciate one another, and "A winner never quits and a quitter never wins."

Alabama Hall of Fame Banquet & Induction Ceremony

Presider	Dr. Billie Jean Young, Poet/Actress, The Drama Project, Pennington
Welcome & Greetings	
Invocation	Rev. Dorinda Broadnax, Community Congregational Church, Montgomery
Dinner	
Musical Selection	Dr. Dorothy Riggins, Montgomery
Introduction of Speaker	
Banquet Speaker	Lorraine Johnson-Coleman, Author, Historian, Storyteller, Chandler, Arizona
Presentation of Awards	Sophia Bracy Harris, SRBWL, Alabama State Director, Montgomery; Georgette Norman, Troy University, Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery
Musical Selection	
Closing Remarks	



Elizabeth Marzette Parrish

1919-1994, CAMDEN

Elizabeth Parrish was a pioneer in child care in the state of Alabama. She helped establish the first child care center in Wilcox County. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama, she championed quality child care services and state responsibility

for supporting low-income families who could not afford the full cost of child care. She advocated for those beliefs at the State House and the Department of Human Resources.

Mrs. Parrish was sensitive to the voice of black women. During the early 1980s, when FOCAL first explored a program for black women, she took to the floor and vocally endorsed the importance of women supporting each other. Her Camden-based child care center hosted the first black women's support group.

Mrs. Parrish's teaching career spanned 41 years. During that time she responded to the inequities of the public education system by recognizing promising students in difficult circumstances and offering them personal tutoring. She mentored many young women, bringing them into her home, buying clothing for them, and assisting them with their college preparation.

During the 1960s, Mrs. Parrish and her husband worked diligently with the voter's registration drive, often providing transportation and housing for civil rights workers. As a result, she and her husband were fired from their teaching positions in Wilcox County. Seven years later Judge Frank Johnson ordered that she be reinstated and awarded back pay.

Congratulations

to Alabama's Inaugural Inductees into the SRBWI Hall of Fame!

This is the inaugural year for the Southern Rural Black Women's Hall of Fame. Notable women from Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia are being inducted into the Hall of Fame this fall in ceremonies in their individual states.

The SRBWI Hall of Fame was designed with these goals in mind:

- Promote a sense of pride among southern rural black women, their families, and their communities;
- Document and preserve the inductee's local legacies, community history, and traditions;
- Recognize inductees publicly and preserve their collective accomplishments in a designated Hall of Fame in their state;
- Create new economic opportunities in 11 counties of the Black Belt of Alabama and Georgia and the Mississippi Delta.

A Regional Hall of Fame Ceremony on December 5 will recognize the inductees from all three states. The ceremony will be held at Troy University Rosa Parks Museum, during the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

A unique feature of the Hall of Fame is a traveling exhibit by K-12 school children from each inductee's community. The exhibit explores the process of affecting change: thinking, decision making, and action. This year's exhibit, *From Your Hands to Ours*, will premier at the Rosa Parks Museum December 5-9, 2005.



Thelma Onita Roberts Craig

1920-2002, LISMAN

As a resident of Choctaw County, Mrs. Craig helped to enable the education and care of children and adolescents in her surrounding community with the establishment of M & M Day Care Center. She demonstrated her passion for learning by receiving her high school diploma while attending school with seven of her twelve children. Eleven of her children

have undergraduate and post-graduate degrees. Mrs. Craig was the first woman and first African-American elected to the Choctaw County Board of Education where she served for twelve years.

Her passion for the advancement of blacks in society was clearly visible in her efforts as an activist in the civil rights movement. She was one of the earliest registered black voters in Alabama, registering in 1952 during perilous times for blacks claiming their rights in the democratic process. Mrs. Craig named M & M Day Care Center for a local youth who was killed in a sit-in demonstration and for a local civil rights leader.

Mrs. Craig's quiet demeanor and soft-spoken voice camouflaged this "Steel Magnolia" who was bold, courageous and determined to do what she set out to do. Her leadership expanded beyond the boundaries of Alabama where she served her church as a leader of the Women's Missionary Society of the national and regional bodies of Baptist Convention.

Mrs. Craig was a founding member of the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL), which continues to recognize and address social, political, and economic issues that affect blacks statewide.

Consuela Lee

SNOW HILL



Consuela Lee is an accomplished jazz musician, educator, and activist. She is the granddaughter of the founder of Snow Hill Institute and member of an exceptional musical family. After studying piano at both Fisk and Northwestern, Mrs. Lee spent the first half of her life teaching music theory and composition at an assortment of historically black colleges and universities around the country, including Alabama State University, Hampton University, Miles College, Norfolk State, and Talladega College.

As a 12-year-old child growing up in Snow Hill, Mrs. Lee vowed, "One day I am going to come home and be a teacher, right here in Snow Hill." After 40 years, she did return to Alabama and started Spring Tree/Snow Hill Institute of Cultural Arts and Heritage and the Little Children's School. She renovated one classroom at a time, with donated labor, instruments, and funds.

In 1993, Snow Hill was registered as a national landmark and two years later was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

She is recognized and respected by many accomplished jazz musicians, male or female, as a serious musician. Her dedication to the craft of music composition, performance, improvisation, and most of all, to practice, is a reflection of the best of the community in which she was raised. Mrs. Lee was inducted into the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame in 1992.

As a woman, she is willing to lend her voice to numerous justice causes, whether they are workers' rights or the anti-war movement. Ms. Lee is willing to make political stands in areas that are often hostile to her; she is willing to stand alone and also play the role of organizer. This historical concern for her community, and her willingness to both nurture and defend it, reveals much about the type of woman she is and the value of her character as a contribution to the community.

THE SOUTHERN RURAL BLACK
WOMEN'S INITIATIVE FOR ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (SRBWI)

"Often we take for granted or diminish the extraordinary lives and efforts of the women among us. Recognizing these women in a Hall of Fame is a way of not only valuing and honoring their contributions to our community, but of providing an opportunity for women to lift up and affirm each other. Too many of our stories are being lost, forgotten, and owned by others."

Sophia Bracy Harris
Alabama State Director, SRBWI
Executive Director, FOCAL

The Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice is funded by the Ford Foundation, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, the Ms. Foundation for Women, the Charles and Mary Grant Foundation, and Sister Fund.

The Alabama Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative is made up of women from 17 Black Belt counties who are concerned about the economic development and prosperity of the communities in which they live.

SRBWI is designed to increase the capacity of black women to improve the quality of their lives and to create coalitions and networks of black women who work on public policy, the delivery of human services, education and economic development, spiritual and emotional development for the individuals, and preservation and appreciation of African-American and African cultures.

SRBWI seeks to inspire, motivate, educate and empower rural black women in their communities.

SRBWI seeks to bring together women to express their ideas and concerns and the interests of their community.

SRBWI will network with other organizations and individuals to help inform, train and mobilize rural black women to change themselves as well as their communities.

SRBWI will bring public awareness to the needs and issues that impact the lives of rural black women and their communities.

SRBWI will open the way for women to identify and affirm their strengths, and to join and support others involved in the empowering process of change.

ALABAMA STATE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

ELIA BELL, Montgomery County

MAXINE ERVIN, Montgomery County

FLORENCE GATES, Conecuh County

ETHEL GILES, Greene County

CALLIE GREER, Montgomery County

SONYA JOHNSON, Clarke County

MARY JONES, Jefferson County

CAROLYN MCKINSTRY, Jefferson County

MARY MONCREASE, Conecuh County

SHERYL THREADGILL-MATTHEWS, Wilcox
County

GLENDA WILLIAMS, Tuscaloosa County

BILLIE JEAN YOUNG, Choctaw County

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL OF THE 2005 SRBWI
HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

A L A B A M A

Helma Craig
Constela Lee
Elizabeth Parrish
Idessa Williams Redden
Laurena Sutton

G E O R G I A

Gladys Mae Spencer Coley
Mary Young-Cummings
Josie Miller
Bernice Reagon
Mary Shipp

M I S S I S S I P P I

Unita Blackwell
Annie Devine
Fannie Lou Hamer
Pauline Holmes
Verna Kemp

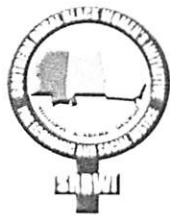


2005 SRBWI

Hall of Fame Alabama Induction Ceremony

Southern Rural Black
Women's Initiative
November 11, 2005

Hilton Garden Inn
Montgomery, Alabama



SRBWI
Alabama Lead Organization
Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama
PO Box 214
Montgomery, AL 36101
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