

Montgomery -

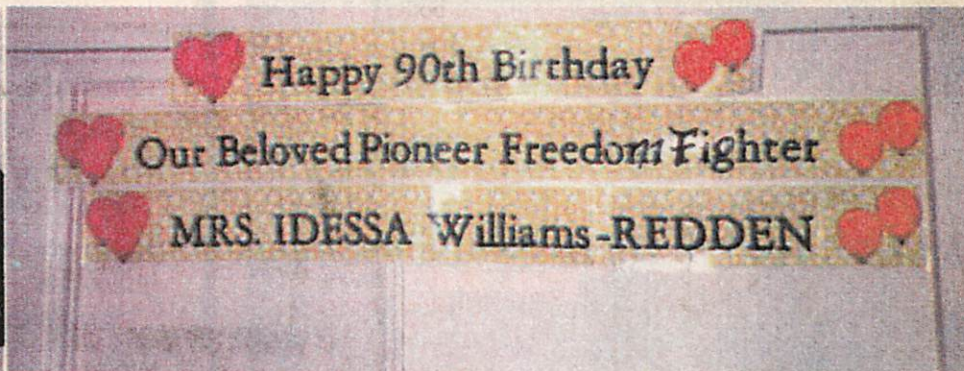
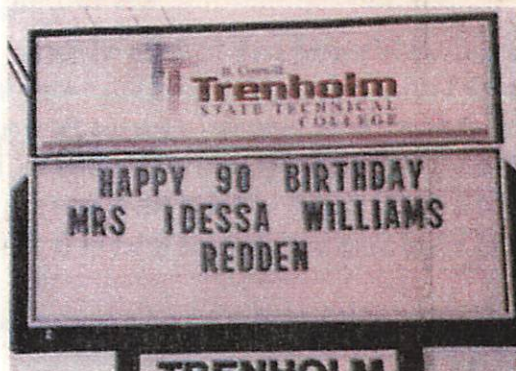
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Keeping the Black Community informed

Tuskegee Times

ed of issues affecting its survival 50 December 12-18, 2002

Happy 90th Birthday Mrs. Idessa Williams-Redden...by: Dr. Gwen Patton



Picture #1 Trenholm Tech Salutes Idessa Williams-Redden, Picture #2 - Banner in her honor.



Picture #3 - Well Wishers, Picture #4 - (Front row: Roderick Crittenden, Honoree Idessa Redden, son, John Redden, Jr. (back row: St. Sen. - elect Quinton Ross, Gwen Patton, Ella Bell and Trenholm Tech President Anthony Molina). Picture #5 - Mrs. Idessa Redden thanks guess from the bottom of her heart.

Trenholm Tech Division of Library/Archives and Friends hosted a gala birthday party for Mrs. Redden held at the Joseph

Dickerson Culinary Arts Centre on its Campus. Over 150 well wishers showered appreciation upon Mrs. Redden for her

undaunted and ongoing struggle to fight for 1st class citizenship rights for Blacks and all Americans.

On hand to salute Mrs. Redden for her untiring efforts were her pastor, Fr. James Holden and her
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St. Jude Catholic Church Family; Rev. Tom Gardner and the Montgomery Community action agency; Mrs. Essie Smith and the St. Judge Ladies of Charity; historian Dr. Richard Bailey; Quinn Brisben of Chicago, author Willy Leventhal; Trenholm Tech President Dr. Anthony Molina, faculty and staff; St. School Board Member Ella Bell; and State Senate-elect Quinton Ross, District 26. Singing birthday greetings were Leroy Barrow with Resurrection Catholic Church and Bobby Jackson with the Heritage Museum. Resolutions were presented on behalf of Georgette Norman with the Rosa Parks Museum and Alabama St. Rep. John Knight, Jr.

College prepares to honor Redden

By Jannell McGrew
Montgomery Advertiser

A Montgomery woman described as one of the pioneers of the voting rights and civil rights movements in Alabama will be honored for her works today, eight days before her 90th birthday.

Idessa Williams Redden will be recognized by H. Council Trenholm State Technical College during a special birthday celebration at 11:30 a.m. at the college's Culinary Arts Centre on Mobile Highway.



Redden

Redden "is a pillar in our community," said Gwendolyn Patton, head archivist at Trenholm.

"She has, since her teenage days, vowed to fight for first-class citizenship for African-Americans and she has been consistent ever since."

Patton said Redden was known for her courage and straightforwardness as she defied pressure from segregationists and sought to convince blacks to register to vote.

Redden said she felt honored by the college's gesture.

"I really think it's a good idea, and I appreciate it very much," she said.

In characteristic fashion, she added with a chuckle, "I hate to say it, but I think I deserved it because of my hard work in the community."

Born Nov. 27, 1912, she became a registered voter in 1949, when most blacks weren't registered to vote. As a block captain, she worked with voting rights icon "Coach" Rufus Lewis in the crusade for full voting rights for blacks. Her job was to encourage blacks to sign up for voting rights clinics.

"She would visit people at night on dark roads while vigilantes and Klansmen were laying in wait," Patton said. "She's had several scary encounters as she went about organizing black people to fight for their voting rights."

Redden also worked with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and served as an organizer with Lewis on the Montgomery Improvement Association's Voter Registration Committee.

Redden has a collection of papers and various other materials at Trenholm State Technical College Archives.

Jannell McGrew, who covers race relations and religion