



**Newsletter of the
SPRINGFIELD AND CENTRAL ILLINOIS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM**

VOLUME 3, NO.3

FALL 2019

**INSIDE
LOOK**



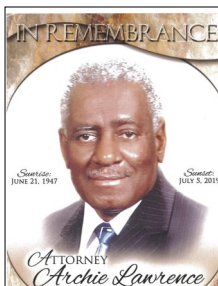
**Richard Hart
Remembrance Day
Presenter**

PAGE 5



SpringFest 2019

PAGE 4



**In Remembrance of
Archie Lawrence**

PAGE 7

AAHM Announces Gala Honorees
Organizations That Support Central Illinois Black Communities

The Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum (AAHM) will hold its 8th Annual Fundraising Gala, **Honoring Our Heritage**, on Thursday October 10, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62703. A Reception and Silent Auction will begin at 6 pm, and dinner will be served at 7 pm.

The theme for this event is, **"Celebrating Organizations That Support and Empower The Black Community by Paying It Forward."** In the past the Board of Directors of the Museum has recognized individuals who have made significant contributions to our commu-

nity. This year, the Board will recognize organizations that have made significant contributions to Central Illinois, the African American Community in particular and/or the African American History Museum. The 2019 special honorees will be recognized for their many contributions.

Congratulations 2019 Gala Honorees

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Illinois

Lincoln Home National Historic Site

Union Baptist Church

Frontiers International, Springfield Club

See page 3 for details.



Musician, volunteer, and board member spouse, Steve Alexander explains, "attendance at the Museum's 8th Annual Gala will not only support the AAHM in its efforts to highlight the many contributions of African Americans, but will also demonstrate to the nominees that you support the valuable work they

are doing for our community."

Tickets (adult \$60, student \$30) and sponsorship information may be obtained by contacting the Museum at 217-391-6323, by going to our website at www.spiaahm.org, logging onto the Illinois *Times Calendar of Events*, or by contacting any board member.



OUR MISSION

* We will tell authentic stories about African American life in Central Illinois, past and present, celebrating and sharing our history and culture while planning our future.

* We will do this through scholarship, oral history, exhibits, partnerships, our board of directors, our supporters and our friends. We are and will continue to be community builders.

* We recognize that our stories are unique but connected to those of other communities and we will support those interconnections. We will be integral to the cultural life of our area. We will partner with like-minded organizations. We will be proactive in our community. We will study and apply best practices in business, scholarship and communication.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nell Clay, President

Elizabeth Alexander,
Recording Secretary

Minnie Gillespie, Treasurer
Lacey Brown

Vincent "June" Chappelle

Carolyn Farrar

Kathryn Harris

Douglas Holt

Ocheng Jany

Ann Joseph, PhD

Ernestine Lawrence

James Lewis

Aaron Pearl-Cropp

Gail Simpson

Kevia Maloney, Museum Coordinator

AAHM website: spiaahm.org

Email: siaahf@yahoo.com

Address: 1440 Monument Ave.,
Springfield, IL 62702

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 301,
Springfield, IL 62705

Telephone: 217-391-6323

Follow us on Facebook

Letter from the President

Hello Museum Friends:

On behalf of the Springfield & Central Illinois African American History Museum's Board of Directors, I want to thank each of you for an exceptionally tremendous, productive year. Many dedicated volunteers have donated countless hours making sure that everyone who visits the Museum has an awesome experience.

This is an exciting and busy time for the Board of Directors and volunteers of the Museum. We are diligently working to plan the Museum's 8th Annual Fundraising Gala. Hats off to all our Gala Committee Chairs and everyone working on the Committees to make sure every detail associated with the Gala is meticulously planned. We are also excited about our exceptional honorees this year and their contributions to our community. You will learn more about them in this newsletter.

I salute the businesses, organizations and individuals that support our fundraising efforts by purchasing a sponsorship, advertisement, tickets, or donating a silent auction item. Since we are a non-profit organization, we do not receive any subsidized funds, therefore, we are completely supported by our community and we appreciate you.

My term as president of the Board of Directors ends this year so this will be the last Gala over which I will preside. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with such dedicated and caring individuals. We have developed partnerships with so many like-minded organizations. Our membership has increased, visitors from all over the U.S., as well as other countries, have visited the Museum, and we are excited about programs and exhibits being planned for 2020.

Finally, on behalf of the entire AAHM family, I offer condolences to Ernestine Lawrence and her family for the loss of Archie Lawrence. He was a quiet, dynamic force on our Board of Directors who was respected, loved and is already missed.

Look forward to seeing you at the Gala.

Sincerely,

Nell R. Clay, President
Board of Directors, AAHM



is the quarterly newsletter of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield, Illinois. Sue Massie, editor

2019 Gala Honorees . . . Thank you for all you do.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Illinois

For more than sixty years, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois (BGCCIL) has provided educational and recreational support to low-income and minority youth throughout Springfield. Its their mission to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need the most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens.

The Club serves over 1,200 youth members, ages 6 to 17, each year through out-of-school time programming. The Club has a Central Unit location and eight after school site locations at local elementary and middle schools. Additionally, the Boys and Girls Club offers an eight-week summer camp that is supported by academic components, caring adult staff, and a robust field trip schedule at an affordable cost.

Union Baptist Church Springfield, IL

Union Baptist Church is the second oldest Black Baptist Church in Springfield, IL. Union Baptist Church has established itself as an instrument for promoting Christian living, leadership, and fellowship. Union has been a leader in the community for promoting racial justice and economic empowerment since its inception. In the past, it has offered day care services, a soup kitchen, and a food and clothing pantry. Union has participated in the **Stop the Violence** initiatives and **Health Fairs**, and has opened its doors to other churches to provide space for funerals and other activities. They are a member of the **Faith Coalition for the Common Good**.

Union Baptist Church has collaborated with the Museum in presenting the Rosenwald film, providing space for the Museum programs, participating in Museum programs, and supporting the Museum by purchasing ads for our Fundraising Gala. Union recently collaborated with the Museum and others to present the documentary **"Strange Fruit."**

Lincoln Home National Historic Site

The staff at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site develops programs to tell the complete and compelling stories of Abraham Lincoln. They have also developed the **Spirit of Lincoln Youth Leadership Academy** that inspires youth with the message of empowerment to overcome challenges.

The **Journey to Greatness: Character Lessons from the Past** is an interactive program that helps students discover how some of our great leaders overcame challenges. Leaders include Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Lincoln. **The Illinois Freedom Project** presents stories of everyday people in Illinois who struggled against slavery and prejudice – covering 200 years of history. The site's program, the **Fiftieth Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act**, presented a series of events to commemorate the anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Other programs include the **Things Will Get Better** music video and the **Jameson Jenkins Underground Railroad Conductor** initiatives. The staff has assisted with the Museum's Summer Camp by providing staff assistance, presenting programs and collaborating with planning and implementation. They have loaned the Museum exhibits, i.e. **The Illinois From Slavery to Freedom** and **The Illinois Freedom Project** which is currently on exhibit.

Frontiers International, Springfield Club

Frontiers International was founded in 1936 in Akron, Ohio with a commitment to the principle of "advancement through service." They have fulfilled that commitment by hosting the **Annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Commemorative Breakfast**, making charitable donations to various organizations and causes, providing scholarships to young people and providing **mentoring programs for young Black males** in the sixth through twelfth grades. This mentoring program stresses Leadership Skills, Educational Excellence, Civic Engagement and Community Evolvment. The Frontiers International, Springfield Club has also supported the AAHM via donations, purchasing ads for our annual fundraising gala and attending Museum programs.

Recent Events at the AAHM

PROGRAMS, EXHIBITS, SPECIAL EVENTS

AAHM HOSTS AAUW

The American Association of University Women gathered at the Museum for their Diversity Program and branch meeting on May 9. Event chair Lynne Slighon presided. Dr. Ann Joseph, AAHM board member, reviewed the history of the Museum and founder and former board member Dr. Victoria Nichols-

Johnson discussed the lead-up and move to the Museum's current Monument Avenue location.

Other participating board members were Kathryn Harris who reviewed Museum activities and programs, Nell Clay who discussed the Museum's capital campaign, and June Chappelle who provided a tour of the Museum.

Left to right, June Chappelle, Dr. Ann Joseph, Nell Clay, and Kathryn Harris.



The weather was fine. On May 10 families played lawn games, board games, and made paper windmills. Hot dogs were grilled and a cookout supper was served. The first Museum SpringFest was a fun-filled prelude to the Grand Opening of the Pioneer Family Exhibit later that evening. Adding to the seven families that were featured in 2018, are six additional families: the Osbys, the Neals, the Woodsons, the Hubbards, the Cummings, and the Johnsons. Their family histories are now on exhibit.

SpringFest 2019



A Day of Remembrance

The Museum hosted Remembrance Day of the early African American residents of Springfield, many who have descendants still living in the community. Richard Hart, local historian and a founder of the AAHM Foundation, talked about many of the individuals who are buried in the historic "Colored Section" of Oak Ridge Cemetery. The article that appeared in the Springfield State Journal Register on July 29, 2019, follows.

A Little 'gem' of land

By Steven Spearie, Staff Writer, SJR

Early Sunday, Myra Weir of Springfield had wrapped up another Hubbard family reunion in the city with a church service at Pleasant Grove Baptist and a luncheon.

That afternoon, she stood in a grove of grave markers at Oak Ridge Cemetery highlighting one of the earliest African-American families to arrive in Springfield.

"I don't come out here that often," Weir admitted, "but it's really emotional. It's an honor to see these stones out here."

Mary Yokem, a lifelong resident of Springfield began genealogy work on the Hubbard family several years ago. Yokem's great-grandmother was married to James Edward Hubbard Jr. and she pointed out that several graves of ancestors dot the Colored Section, in the northwest part of the original Oak Ridge.

"I was stunned to learn (several years ago) that this block was even back there," Yokem said. "It was amazing.

(James Edward Hubbard Sr.) purchased the plots in Oak Ridge. It makes me feel proud that he was looking out for his family."

Sunday's public presentation on the graves in the Colored Section of the cemetery, led by Sangamon County historian and attorney Richard Hart, brought out family descendants but also history buffs and supporters of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, the sponsor of the talk.



Hart said he led an informal tour of the section about a month ago and it hatched an idea for a more formal presentation. Hart, who wrote a book on the section in 2009, said 357 people are buried there, but that there are only 117 grave markers identifying some 170 people.

"I'm struck with awe," Hart said, in an interview after the presentation, "by the people who are buried here. You have people who were very close to Abraham Lincoln. You have Underground Railroad conductors. It's poignant, what they did and what came out of it. It's almost like a sacred place."

Among the most famous is William K.H. Donnegan, a shoemaker whose business on the north side of Adams Street wasn't far from the law offices of Lincoln & William Herndon.

Hart recalled a story of how Donnegan took in a runaway slave girl at his home and outwitted and outran slave catchers who became wise to her presence.

Donnegan, who made a small fortune bringing southern blacks to Springfield to find jobs, was killed in the Springfield Race Riot of 1908 when mobsters broke into his home, slit his throat and hung him from a tree. He was still alive when the national guard troops cut is body down, but he died the next day.

Otha Davis of Springfield is Donnegan's great-great nephew on his father's side. Davis grew up in Carbondale and said he never learned about the Race Riot in school, though he learned about it – and Donnegan – by visiting Springfield and talking to family members.

"My aunt (Lizzie Davis) made sure we had information about family connections," Davis said.

Clark Duncan, Hart said, was a Civil War veteran who later worked at the Leland Hotel as a porter and is buried in the section. His son, Otis Beverly Duncan, became the highest-ranking

African-American commissioned officer in the World War I American Expeditionary Force. American Legion Post 809 in Springfield is named in Otis Duncan's honor.

The Rev. Henry Brown, an itinerant African Methodist Episcopal preacher who is buried there, was one of "at least four Underground Railroad conductors in Springfield (that Lincoln personally knew)," Hart pointed out. Joseph Faro Jr., a farmer who has a modest marker in the section, was the grandfather of Ruth Ellis who survived the Race Riot and went on to be an early advocate for the rights of gays and lesbians after moving to Detroit.

One of the graves that stands out belongs to Phoebe Rountree Florville,



the wife of William Florville, another friend of Lincoln's known as "Billy the barber." (William Florville, a Roman Catholic, is buried in Calvary Cemetery.)

The "broken tree" grave of Phoebe Florville was a popular style of the time, Hart said. She was born a slave but was granted freedom and the certificate of freedom she had to file for is archived at the

University of Illinois Springfield.

She was a great woman herself," Kathryn Harris, who has portrayed Phoebe Florville, "and her grave marker is quite striking and you can't but wonder, who is that?"

Hart said he became interested in the section of the cemetery as a Lincoln enthusiast. But it grew into an admiration for many stories of people buried there, especially those who risked their own lives working for movements like the Underground Railroad.

"They stood up for their own people," Hart said. "They stood up to the law. It's a gem, that little piece of land."

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The Life Reflections of Attorney Archie Lawrence

Archie Lawrence was born on June 21, 1947 to Charlie and Addie (Gilbert) Lawrence. Archie was raised in the Russ City neighborhood of East St. Louis, Illinois, along with his eleven siblings. Growing up in the segregated days of East St. Louis, Illinois, Archie felt the constant stings of racism and inequality. He decided at a young age that when facing any system of inequality or oppression, he would be the catalyst for change.

Archie graduated from Lincoln Senior High School in East St. Louis and went on to Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, Illinois. As a student at SIU, Archie fought for change as he vehemently protested against the Vietnam War. Ironically, after earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in government from SIU Carbondale, Archie was drafted into the United States Army for the Vietnam War.

Following his service in the Army, Archie went on to earn a Juris Doctorate Degree from St. Louis University Law School, believing that as an attorney, he could be of more impact. Archie then moved to Springfield, Illinois to commence his law career. As an attorney, Archie worked for the Internal Revenue Service and as a State's Attorney for the State of Illinois in the Attorney General's Office. Though Archie worked for the government, he saw a need for legal services in the community. Therefore, throughout his career, Archie gave free legal advice and services to many.

In the community, Archie was indeed a change agent. As the President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Archie was named one of the plaintiffs in the Springfield, Illinois voting rights lawsuit of 1980. The lawsuit claimed that the structure of Springfield's government resulted in the denial of voting rights based on race. As a result of this lawsuit, Springfield went to a Mayor-Aldermanic form of government, which resulted in better representation for the Black community. Archie was President of the NAACP for two terms and also the legal redress chairman for several terms. Under Archie's second term as NAACP President, he participated in building a commemorative statue of the 1908 Race Riots of Springfield, Illinois. He was also awarded the Webster Plaque Award in 2005 and the Medgar Evers Award in 2016 from the NAACP. Archie's service in the community spread far and wide. Representing District 20, he served on the Sangamon County Board from 1984 to 1990.

Archie mentored youth at McClelland Elementary School and Jefferson Middle School. He was a moderator and reader for the Jefferson Middle School Black History Program and also conducted moot trials with youth in District 186. Archie was an instructor for the University of Illinois Principal Scholars Program and a board member for the Springfield Ball Charter School. He was a Life Member of the NAACP, member of the Otis B. Duncan American Legion Post 809, and he proudly served with the Frontiers International Organization for more than two decades. Seeing a need for the stories of Blacks to be told, Archie was a founder and once Vice President of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum. Archie also formerly served as a board member of the Illinois Innocence Project and as Legal Counsel for the Emma L. Wilson King Foundation, Inc.

A man of great faith, Archie was an active member at Union Baptist Church. He served as a trustee, Sunday School Teacher and enjoyed playing the drums with the choir. Finally, Archie was a proud "Omega Man," having been a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. for fifty-one years.

Though Archie was an active community man, his greatest joy was his family. He sustained a loving relationship with his wife, Ernestine, for almost forty-three years. Together they raised three daughters, ChieStine, Crystal and Candace. While growing up, Archie was involved in all of his daughters' activities. Not only did he help them with their homework and papers, but he was also active in their extracurricular programs as well. Archie supported their high school bands by being a chaperone on their local and out of state trips. In addition, Archie was a grandfather who delighted in his grandchildren. He enjoyed his weekly vocabulary word review with his eldest grandchild, Joshua. Makayla, his eldest granddaughter, named Archie her "birthday twin," because their birthdays are one day apart, both of them are left-handed and they both loved to talk. He looked forward to reading stories to his youngest grandbaby, Madison. In July 2007, Archie was the recipient of the Real Fathers, Real Men Award given by the Tom Joyner Morning Show.

Archie transitioned on July 5, 2019 after a courageous battle with cancer. He is preceded in death by his parents, Charlie and Addie (Gilbert) Lawrence; his sister, Mildred Lane and his brother, James Lawrence.

Archie leaves behind his wife, Ernestine; three children, ChieStine, Crystal and Candace Howell (John); sisters, Alma Jackson (James), JoAnn Statum (Joseph), Janice Jennings, Charlene Mason, Helen Victoria Fields (Ross) and Charlotte Petty (Sylvester); brothers, Terry Lawrence (Shirley), Larry G. Lawrence, Darnell Lawrence and Frederick Lawrence; and a host of other relatives and friends.

2019 Calendar of Events

MUSEUM HOURS: TUESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, NOON TO 4 P.M.; SATURDAYS 10A.M. TO 5 P.M.

All events will be held at the Museum unless otherwise noted.

October 6, 2019, 12-4 p.m., **A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery**
The Museum takes part in this Sangamon County Historical Society annual event

October 10, 2019, 6 p.m. reception, 7 pm. dinner, **ANNUAL AAHM GALA**
Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield

April 11 to June 30, 2020, **The Traveling Exhibit: Negro Leagues Baseball**



The Springfield and Central Illinois
African American History Museum Presents

The Traveling Exhibit: Negro Leagues Baseball

**A Production of The Negro Leagues
Baseball Museum, Kansas City, MO**

The exhibit honors and explores the connections of African American baseball history to Hispanic cultures, communities and countries. Includes profiles of players and a timeline of baseball history.



April 11 to June 23, 2020
AAHM, 1440 Monument Ave., Springfield, IL

SUMMER DAY CAMP 2019



African American History Museum
Springfield and Central Illinois
P.O. Box 301
Springfield, IL 62705-0301



MEMBERSHIP

Members receive membership cards, the *Sojourner* newsletter and museum communications. Members at the Sustaining level and above also receive invitations to previews, grand openings and special VIP events.

Membership Categories

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$ 100-\$ 199 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$ 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$ 200-\$ 499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth/student \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing \$ 500-\$ 999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1,000 |
- ☐ Business Member \$500-\$999 (includes business listing at museum events)
- ☐ I would like to pay now for three years of membership . AMOUNT enclosed \$ _____
- ☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Name _____

Street address _____

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Email address _____

Your check should be made payable and sent to the African American History Museum of Springfield and Central Illinois (AAHM) , P.O. Box 301, Springfield, IL 62705-0301