SPECIAL EDITION: 2021 Annual Meeting Report

The 2021 Wrap-up is being presented in this special edition of the Sojourner newsletter, in lieu of an in-person membership meeting. This format, also used for the 2020 annual report, was well-received by our members. We recognize it is not a replacement for the annual meetings of the past that included dinner, live music, and PowerPoint presentations by Board Members. It did serve the purpose, however, of keeping our members informed, connected and safe! We plan to continue issuing our annual report in this manner throughout the pandemic.

This Issue is Dedicated to Our Friend, Liz

We proudly dedicate “The 2021 Annual Report” to our dear friend, mentor and angel in heaven, Elizabeth Geraldine Tinsley Banks Alexander, 1940 - 2022.

As we worked to put together this special edition of the Sojourner, “The 2021 Annual Report” we were reminded with heavy hearts that just last year Elizabeth was on our team. Her flare for words, design, photography and organizing was an exceptional gift, which she generously shared.

We were so blessed to have known this lovely lady and miss her so much. We send our most heartfelt condolences to her husband, Steve and her family.

The Membership Committee
Kevia Maloney
Jenni Dahl
Sue Massie


**Letter from the President**

Dear Museum Supporters:

It is an honor to serve as President of the Board of Directors of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum (AAHM). Over the past 9 years the museum has grown and become a premiere organization in the community. The outstanding Board of Directors, museum members, and volunteers work tirelessly to inform and educate. We strive to address the mission of the museum, “To tell authentic stories about African American life in Springfield and Central Illinois through exhibitions, education, collections and programs to preserve, interpret and celebrate African American history and culture”.

To address this mission, we have taken on many projects. During the year of COVID, the museum was closed to visitors but not to telling the stories of African American history and culture. The museum launched a 7 program webinar series starting in November 2020. All programs are available on the museum website, [www.spiaahm.org](http://www.spiaahm.org).

Services and programs are offered to schools such as the High School Black History Bowl, traveling exhibits and virtual tour of the museum exhibits. The Museum reopened in March 2021 with new exhibits on the “Oldest African American Churches in Springfield” and the complete story of the 1908 Race Riot in “Something So Horrible”. To tell contemporary stories, a photographic exhibit by Ramona Boston on the ‘Protest of 2020’, tells Springfield’s reaction to the George Floyd Murder opened in July. Throughout the summer many visitors came to the museum for the ‘History Comes Alive’ series offered in cooperation with Springfield Tourist and Convention Bureau.

Our flagship exhibit for 2021 was the Negro Leagues Baseball Exhibit: Beisbol, a traveling exhibit of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Kansas City, MO. The exhibit explores the Afro-American and Afro-Latino connection which was an important aspect of the Negro Leagues and is for today’s Major League. Over 600 people toured this outstanding exhibit.

Besides the generous donations and memberships, the Museum received grants from the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, Illinois Humanities, and the IL Department of Economic Development.

Thank you to all our supporters. Please become a benefactor, a member and volunteer when and where you can. The AAHM can only continue to offer quality exhibits and programs with your support.

See you soon at the Museum!

Carolyn Farrar, President
Board of Directors, AAHM
Great news! After months of being closed due to the pandemic the Museum cautiously reopened on March 4, 2021, on Tuesdays through Saturdays from noon until 4 PM. During 2021 we continued to closely monitor the everchanging COVID-19 federal, state, and local guidelines to keep our staff, volunteers, and visitors safe. We posted information about social distancing and mask requirements on our front door. We asked all visitors to wear a mask while in the Museum. Here is a glimpse of the 2021 events.

March: Black History Bowl Finals

"We are pleased to announce that we had another very successful Black History Bowl this year. The 'Rudy Davenport Traveling Trophy' is now in the hands of 2022’s winner, Lanphier High School. Congratulations!"

Gail Simpson, AAHM Board Member and Black History Bowl Coordinator

March: The Big Read

AAHM took part in a city-wide Big Read, contributing numerous interviews with African-American science leaders in Central Illinois, available at https://spiaahm.org/bigread

April: The Four Oldest African American Churches in Springfield, IL

Zion Missionary Baptist Church, founded in 1838

St. Paul’s AME, established in 1843

St. John AME, established in 1876

Union Baptist Church, established in 1871
May: Something So Horrible . . .
The 1908 Springfield Race Riot

Beverly Peters discusses the 1908 Springfield Race Riot

June: The Juneteenth Experience

“News of the Emancipation Proclamation arrived in Galveston, TX on June 19th, 1865 nearly two years after its 1863 enactment.” The day is more than a day of parades, BBQ’s, and family gatherings, but rather it is a day to reflect on our achievements and accomplishments in this nation. This event included an exhibit and handouts about Juneteenth.

July: Protest, A Photographic Exhibit

As we all witnessed the public killing of George Floyd, a contemporary lynching, over and over in the media from a phone video of the event created by a young bystander, the heartbreak and outrage were overwhelming and many of us took to the streets in protest. I vaguely knew the history of racism in this country and in particular here in Lincoln’s home town that had also experienced a “race riot” and felt strongly the ties to that history. Only this time white people were coming out in protest of the grotesque mistreatment of this man by police, openly, brazenly, much like the public lynchings of before.

I have been a photographer most of my life so I had a camera with me at that first protest and began taking photographs as event after event the crowds grew through the month of June. When I had the time to look back over those photographs, I saw the collection that had formed and felt strongly of the history in the making. I bundled them together, had them printed in a book and offered it to Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum for their collection. They were pleased with the book and offered me the opportunity to exhibit some of the images from the book. That became the Protest Exhibit.

Ramona Boston,
Photographer of the exhibit, “Protest”
September-October: Negro Leagues Beisbol Exhibit

On loan from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, MO, this exhibit honored and explored “the connections of African American Baseball history to Hispanic cultures, communities, and countries”. Included were “profiles of players and a timeline of baseball history”.

The exhibit proved to be one of our most popular ever. Throughout the nearly 2 months it was on display, the Museum experienced a constant flow of visitors from near and far. All the efforts of the Museum Board, staff and volunteers to publicize the event, including a billboard, an interview by Mark McDonald, host of the PBS series “Illinois Stories,” Facebook posts, SJ-R and Illinois Times articles, eblasts and more truly paid off.

In addition to the display of jerseys and panels with the information about the most beloved baseball players of the time, there were captivating videos shown on our newly acquired monitor and a DVD player. We also had a raffle of jerseys as a grand finale!
2021 Gala Honorees

Joshua West, Pastor, Zion Missionary Baptist Church

John Crisp, Founder of the Garvey-Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center

Martha Jordan, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Sigma Zeta Chapter

Teresa Haley, President of the Springfield Branch of the NAACP

End of the Year: 2021 Financial Report

Income

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Public Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Income</td>
<td>$21,577.71</td>
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<td>Sales</td>
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**Total Income**  $77,757.34

Expenses

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<tr>
<td>Business Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities and Equipment</td>
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<td>Program Event Expenses</td>
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<td>Fundraising Expenses</td>
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<td>Reconciliation Discrepancies</td>
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**Total Expenses**  $(49,712.81)

**Net Operating Income**  $28,044.53

Kwanzaa: Downtown Window

Sonya Perkins decorated this downtown window for the AAHM as part of the Downtown Festival of Trees.
Free-ish

Free-ish means a white man’s discomfort can censor your rights and your words. A petty rendition of objective and descriptive verbs.
I may not speak the message in my spirit.
‘Cuz that ole boss man don’t want you to hear it.
Making authoritative declarations with Fire, Noose and stone.
Ascertaining an assumption like he is the throne.

My, my how my chains don’t feel the same.
Still you don’t put respect on the narration of my name.
My ancestors are very proud this day
Because we have come such a long way

Free-ish Means: say what you are told to say
Free-ish Means: Accept a plaque now go away
Free-ish Means: separation with red lines
Free-ish Means: Concentration of negative media time
Free-ish Means: Stand in line and don’t ask questions
Free-ish Means: We are listening but we don’t want your suggestions Free-ish Means: take what you can get and say yes suh
Free-ish Means: Black bullets for black bodies that happenstancelly occur Free-ish Means: Your black attitude will get you fired
Free-ish Means: You probably won’t even get hired
Free-ish Means: There are still consequences of being black
Free-ish Means: you are on trial under hatreds attack.

My, my how my chains don’t feel the same.
Still you don’t put respect on the narration of my ancestors name. My ancestors are very proud this day
Because we have come such a long way.

The mission has never changed
We are still free-ish one and the same.
My, my we have come such a mighty long way.
Thank you Museum Volunteers
Upcoming Events

MUSEUM HOURS: TUESDAY THRU SATURDAY, NOON TO 4 P.M.;
MASK WEARING SUGGESTED

January 15 - Grand opening of School District #186 Art Exhibit and
“Follow the Recipe” Cookbook Exhibit

February 1 at 10 am - High School Black History Bowl, Preliminary Round

February 27 at 1 pm - High School Black History Bowl, Final Round at SHS

March - Celebrating National Women’s History Month

April - National Poetry Month - Celebrating Creative Writings of Local Poets

May - Music at the Museum: Exploring African American Genres

June - History Summer Camp

June – August - “History Comes Alive” presentations, Saturdays, 1:30 PM

July - Opening of Colored Section of Oak Ridge Cemetery Exhibit

September - Opening of US Colored Troops IL 29th Infantry Exhibit

October - AAHM Annual Fundraising Gala

December - Kwanzaa Celebration

NOTE: Some dates are pending, visit www.spiaahm.org for updated info.

AAHM Past Webinars Still Available for Viewing

“Eva Monroe and the Colored Children’s Home”, a film based on Mary Francis’s book
Patricia James Davis Portrays Sojourner Truth
Robert Davis Portrays Frederick Douglass
Driving the Green Book, authors Alvin Hall and Janee Woods-Weber discuss their book
The Woman’s Fight, author Dr. Thavolia Glymph discusses her book
U.G.L.Y., several of the authors discuss their book
“African American Science Leaders Serving Central Illinois”, a program

To view past Webinars, go to WWW.spiaahm.org

Newsflash: The AAHM has received a $662,545 grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The funds will be used to expand the exhibit space including two galleries for digitized exhibits, a community meeting room, climatized storage space and overall improvements. The City of Springfield owns the building and is the museum's fiscal partner in this project.
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**

- Individual $25
- Family $50
- Youth/student $15
- Senior $20
- Supporting $100-$199
- Sustaining $200-$499
- Advancing $500-$999
- 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 ____________________________
City, state, zip ____________________________
Telephone number __________________________
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