



NORTH END MATTERS

Thank You Local Black History Pioneers

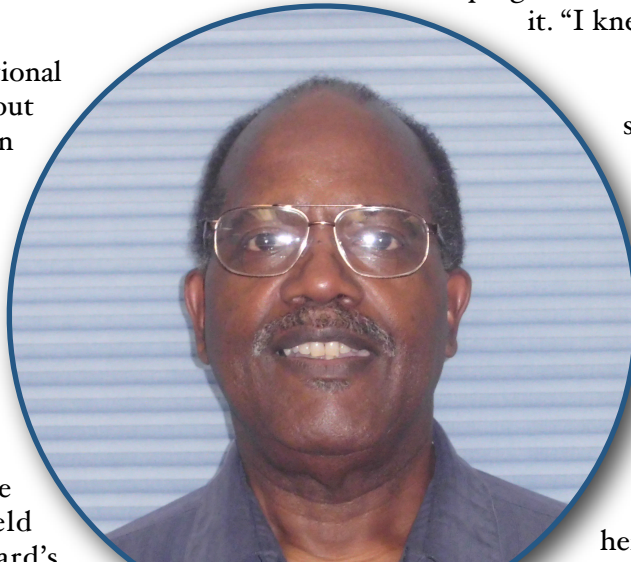
By Angel N. Singleton

The month of February is a national time to celebrate Black History but locally, black history has been celebrated in many ways and over time commemorating the successes of local black people who have made their mark on the area.

Two local residents, Mrs. Loretta Hilliard and Mr. Wayne McDowell have documented the triumphs of local black people through their books on Mansfield African-American history. Hilliard's book, *A History of Notable African-Americans in Richland County*, was written and published in the year 2000. While McDowell's book, *Mansfield's African-American Family: The Bicentennial Edition* was written and published in 2008 as part of the 200th celebration of the city of Mansfield's birthday.

"The Richland County museum had asked me to be a trustee on their board," said Hilliard on why she wanted to write a book on local black history. "They wanted some more history on local Blacks so I went to the Sherman room (at the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library/ MRCPL) and all they had were

programs from (different churches) and that was it. "I knew I had to do something," she said.



North End Resident, Historian, and Civil Rights Activist Wayne McDowell

From there, Hilliard compiled stories - some from the Mansfield News Journal - of the first black person in various fields such as education, medicine, law and athletics. She ran ads in the newspaper, called out to local churches, the ministerial alliance and the community, to include stories of people who were local black pioneers.

Hilliard had much success with her book, selling out of it at different local black history events. If it had not been for these two pioneers, the stories of local African American's in Mansfield would have largely been undocumented.

"After attending a few meetings," said McDowell in his book of the 2008 Bicentennial Celebration Committee, "I recognized that the history and contributions of African-American Mansfielders were not being given adequate consideration. Consequently, I requested and the Bicentennial Celebration Committee graciously approved, the organization of a subcommittee with the objective of making celebration

Continued On Page 2

Local Black History Pioneers Continued From Page 1

of African-American history and contributions an integral part of Mansfield's Bicentennial Celebration."

McDowell a long time local freedom fighter was instrumental in the local National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was a civil and employment rights consultant and a tenacious leader.

McDowell and the Bicentennial subcommittee's work was compiled in a 178 page book dedicated to local black history in the areas of politics, community safety, medicine, music, ministry, education, business/industry, sports and community activism. The book, in McDowell's words, "is a memoir of the rich history and heritage of those African-Americans whose contributions to their contemporaries and posterity deserve to be celebrated."

Also in local black history, a group of local residents wanted to honor slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. with a memorial in downtown Mansfield, on the square. It took from 1997-2007 to raise enough money to have the memorial erected. Local civil rights activists, the late Dr. James and Betty Palmer Harris, architect Norbert and his wife Barbara Pieker and a committee of people were instrumental in making sure the monument came to fruition.

Today, the memorial stands in Central Park as another reminder of the work the national civil rights leader stood for and how it has matriculated down locally to inspire past and hopefully future black leaders.

Both books are available at the MRCPL in the Sherman Room



Author and Historian Loretta Hilliard

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Letter From The Director

Happy February!

Last year, the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, states, cities and organizations across America formally and finally acknowledged that systemic racism has created conditions that so many Black Americans experience. This admission is a huge step in the right direction. It means, at the very least, that we see and acknowledge it, and we need to fix it. That is what I celebrate this month!

As we celebrate Black History Month, we acknowledge that the journey for Black people in America has been a long, embarrassing, difficult, and bloody one, however, Black history is American History. America could not have become the prosperous country that it is today, had there not been four centuries of free labor, to jump start it. Imagine how wealthy each of us would be if we could build entire, cities, states, and indeed a nation, on free labor...for four hundred years!

Although slavery, as an institution in America ended in the mid 1800s, its stench continues to plague our nation creating division where there should be unity, and injustice where justice should be. The slavery era, Jim Crow Era, Civil Rights Era, etc. are only labels for the struggles that our ancestors dealt with *at a certain time*. We too, will one day have an “era,” and be historical figures for our descendants. My parents were of the Civil Rights Era, my grandparents lived through Jim Crow, and my great grandparents lived through Reconstruction. To get an idea of how recent that history is, my great grandmother died when I was a teenager, and her parents were slaves. It happened too recently to forget or to ignore.

Fortunately, many Black Americans have enjoyed opportunities to achieve tremendous success in a variety of areas, however, it is a miniscule number compared to the millions who continue to experience the inequitable legacy of the past. It is certainly not widespread enough to think it is the norm and that all playing fields are level because they are not. The remnants of history left by all of our ancestors will forever play out in pervasively disparate conditions in health, education, criminal justice, and wealth until they are acknowledged and intentionally corrected by all of us, their descendants...Americans.

As we celebrate Black History Month, may we never forget those who survived unspeakable horrors of the past, so that we could continue to move this nation toward a *more perfect union --with liberty and justice for all*.

Deanna West-Torrence
Executive Director NECIC



Deanna West-Torrence
Executive Director NECIC



McDowell Remembered For The Freedom Fighter He Was

By Marie C.

Relentless, loving and determined are just some of the words that describe the late civil rights advocate and educator Wayne McDowell.

On January 15, McDowell was remembered at a private funeral at Providence Baptist Church. The service was closed to the public because of the Covid-19 pandemic. McDowell passed away on January 6 at his home. He was 78.

McDowell was eulogized as a Voice for the Voiceless in our community. He fought to help put an end to racial, and sexual discrimination in the penal and civil community of Mansfield. He dedicated his life to fighting for the rights of all humanity, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. His passion came from a genuine concern for people.

Wayne's Pastor Elder Scott Logan said, "Wayne believed in the equity of man that goes beyond the equality of man. He spoke to the people in power for respect and dignity of others in the community."

McDowell was a giant in our community. He was courageous and had unshakable faith. He never wanted attention, or accolades; he wanted equality for all people.

McDowell's last call to action was helping to create the Code of Conduct Agreement between the Black/Brown Community and the Mansfield Police Department. The 5-page Code of Conduct was created to improve police and community relations.

McDowell answered the call to action by serving our community and making a positive difference. Our community will continue his legacy to be a voice for the voiceless.

Synopsis Of The Life Of A Freedom Fighter

By Angel N. Singleton

Born in 1942 and raised in Mansfield, Wayne McDowell was the eighth of 10 children and graduated from Mansfield Senior High School. He attended college and received a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in education from The Ohio State University.

In his autobiography, in the book, *Mansfield's African-American Family: The Bicentennial Edition*, McDowell said two events primarily shaped his life:

- 1- "the extreme, overt racism to which I witnessed African-American inmates being subjected to shortly after becoming employed by the Ohio State Reformatory in 1967, and
- 2- "the discrimination to which I was personally subjected upon receiving my M.A. degree in 1972."

As a result of his work of taking on the system legally through discrimination lawsuits, McDowell worked with The United States Commission on Civil Rights to investigate racial discrimination in the penal system related to segregated housing, job assignments, disciplinary action for (alleged) rule violations, beatings by correctional officers, racial disparity in granting paroles and the disproportionately low percentage of African-American staff (less than 4% at the time) in relation to the African-American inmate population of approximately of 51.5%. The Commission reported its findings and made recommendations in a report entitled, *Protecting Inmate Rights: Prison Reform or Prison Replacement*, for eradication of the aforementioned discrimination.

In 1977, McDowell courageously took on the system again by being named the primary plaintiff named on a class action race and sex discrimination lawsuit, McDowell, et. al. v Celeste, et. al. He was being paid \$.83 less than his white counterpart who had less time and experience at the penal institution than he had. After speaking with others, 16 people were listed in the lawsuit with ten of those people being local. The sex discrimination part of the lawsuit was settled in 1987.

It wasn't until the year 1990, that the race discrimination part of the lawsuit was settled. McDowell was instrumental to getting the old Ohio State Reformatory closed and Mansfield Correctional Institution opened. He never let anyone stand in his way in the name of justice.

"I overcame these obstacles by challenging the system via every appropriate means I knew, filing complaints every time I was the victim of discrimination and *via extreme persistence* in getting others to do likewise," McDowell said in his autobiography.

In addition to his freedom fighting, McDowell was also an educator in the penal system. And in life.

The life, legacy and work of McDowell still prevails. A Facebook page called, Mansfield's Black History, was published in 2019, with McDowell's approval, with edited versions of the stories told in his book. With the creation of the Facebook page, local black history can have a place in our digital world.

Rest in Power Mr. McDowell

North End Upbringing Breeds Greatness

By Angel N. Singleton

Ashley Jordan has a deep appreciation for growing up on Mansfield's north end of town.

"My upbringing in Mansfield is important because growing up on the North End, I lived on Lida Street," she said. "It was very much so a 'front porch' community."

Jordan described a front porch community as welcoming and inviting versus a back porch or private porch that would be more closed off. "With the upbringing I had, I felt like I could always go over to such-n-such's house. Their front porch was a welcome stomping ground and everybody played a part in raising each other's children.



"Some of my best memories were on Lida Street, like up the street we had Ms. Field's candy store and just going to the candy store was an adventure."

Jordan, who is the Senior Director of Development at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, was born and raised in Mansfield's North End and graduated from Lexington High School. There was not an extensive learning of black history at the school. This is where her interest peaked to become a historian by earning a Ph.D. in United States history.

"My formative education lacked those resources (of black history education)," she said. "It was almost in a sense recycled (history). I knew early on that there was more to our history. And just to always focus on these people always had me seeking out more information about African-American people."

In her undergraduate studies, Jordan spent time at Kent State University and that's where she really started to learn about herself through the black history studies of the university's Pan African Studies department.

"The quote that really resonates with me is Marcus Garvey's quote about a tree, speaking to the fords of understanding your history and your knowledge without your roots," she said. "How will you know where you come from? And for me, basically it was about connecting the dots, in my history, in my lineage and exploring the (knowledge) that does encompass this great body of African American history."

While national black history is important, so is state and local black history, Jordan said. "I feel that it's important for students to learn not just about American history and Ohio history," she said. "But African American history and Native American history. We have to take a deep dive into the fact that we're this great society of diverse people but rarely do we hear about these people and I know for me, in fourth grade, that's where I had my first Ohio history course, so there's a specialized time in our educational system where kids learn about Ohio history but they gloss over the Native American presence...Ohio history definitely needs to be expanded upon to include African-American history."

Since she did not see any African-American teachers or students at her school, Jordan said she began to connect with historical black figures through books. "Until my sister came. We were the only minorities at Lexington," she

Continued On Page 7

Dr. Ashley Jordan Continued From Page 6

said. “So I would say the reason why history matters for our young people, it is because representation matters. When you get to see other people doing it. It inspires you.”

Jordan has also been inspired by the family from which she comes. In addition to being raised on the North End, her family has a legacy and a history on the north end of town. Her father, the Rev. William “Jake” Jordan, was a former fourth ward councilman and currently pastors at Faith Temple on Daisy Street.

“(Former Mansfield councilman and local black history figure) Ocie Hill and (Mansfield’s first black mayor) Don Culliver came to our house to talk with my dad about running for Mr. Hill’s seat and for me, as a young girl, just seeing that mantle being passed to my dad, that’s just another wonderful example of the kinships of the community basically nurturing the next generation. (and) Just the symbolism for Mr. Hill to pave the way not just for my dad, but for Mr. Culliver to be our city’s first African American mayor.”

Jordan is also proud of the fact that Faith Temple spearheaded and partnered with several area churches in 2014 to provide over 5,000 cases of bottled water to churches in Flint, Michigan to help with the water contamination issue in that city.

“The best way that we can make an impact is together,” she said. “It was just us working with fellow churches. We were the drop-off site and everybody responded to the need.”

But this type of response has always been typical of the members of the North End community.

“My roots as far as the North End, it’s through and through,” she said. “The community was a breeding ground where I saw greatness around me early on.”



Faith Temple and Partners Water Drive For Flint Michigan



Oasis Charities Still Giving Back In Jordan's Spirit

By Angel N. Singleton

Even though Oasis Charities non-profit organization is Richland County based, much of their work has been completed in the North End.

"First of all, to me, I have a passion for that area because that's where I'm from," said the Rev. Pernell Allen, co-founder of Oasis Charities. "(I was) born and raised there, so it has a special place in my heart. Even at the Ocie Hill building where our former office was, I went to school there from kindergarten to the sixth grade. So the north side has a special place in my heart, so I definitely want to be there on the north side in the thick of things, because I know there's a want and a need there."

The Oasis Charities organization started in 2016 under the leadership of the late Dr. Walter Jordan II of Oasis of Love Church. After Jordan's passing in early 2020, Allen and his wife, Keisha, decided to carry on the mission in Jordan's spirit of community service and giving back to the people of the North End and in the community.

"He expressed to me his vision and the things he wanted to do," said Allen, "and his vision was the community. He not only talked about the north side but Richland County as a whole, but you still have to start at home first so that is the north side."

The first event by Oasis Charities was Jordan's idea of a Community Block Party in which a portion of Bowman Street was closed down to feature community vendors, entertainment and a back-to-school bash. The event caught on and has commenced for the past five years, with the exception of 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"We wanted to do more for the community and the kids for that summer and all that stuff with the bookbags going back to school," he said. "So after that it just took off. We started collaborating with different agencies and NECIC was one of the first ones, matter of fact."

Other than the annual Community Block Party the organization hosts, there have been a myriad of other service projects the couple has organized. There was a free clothes closet at the Ocie Hill building when it was open and a subsequent giveaway when the building closed. They have hosted a harvest festival, blanket drive, given away hygiene purses for women and most recently the distribution of food boxes to community members.

Collaboration is important for the organization, said Allen. "We collaborated with Buckeye Health to bring turkeys and hams (to the community) for Thanksgiving and Christmas. But, this year we took on the project ourselves and we gave them away at the UMADAOP building."

They have also worked with the youth of the IMAC school which is housed at the UMADAOP building. They are working under a program called Creating Lasting Family Connections. "It was a nice group where we got with the teenagers and collaborated with UMADOAP and worked with males and females and we're looking forward to doing something virtual with them this year," he said.

Continued On Page 9

Oasis Charities Continued From Page 8

Also under the Oasis Charities umbrella, Keisha is part of a community service group of women called C.H.A.R.M.S. (Changing Hearts and Restoring Minds Spiritually), who are all committed to helping young women realize their self worth.

“Self esteem building, proper etiquette, how to be a lady, and how to love the person that you see in the mirror,” she said are examples of values they would like to teach local young ladies. “We just have to put it together and get it going, so that’s my vision, that’s what I would like to do. I’m not sure when it’s going to start but we’re definitely discussing it.”

Also with the couple having a background in the correctional field, they also have a passion for re-entry work, which helps reintroduce inmates to society.

“What we really want to do and really our dream is, is to have a re-entry center here in Mansfield,” said Allen. “I just love missions and outreach, period. We love people and we both love serving.”

Rev. Allen said he just feels blessed to be able to serve the community from which he comes. “But we can’t do it alone,” he said. “Pastor Jordan would always say, ‘teamwork makes the dreams work,’ and ten voices are louder than one. It takes a team to do this. We’re all in this together to make it work and collaboration is a big thing. If we could get Mansfield to come together, it would be wonderful.”

NECIC Microbusiness Development Course

**Always wanted to start a business?
Need funding to kickstart your idea?**

You've always wanted to start your own business, but you don't know where to start. Maybe you're a farmer that wants to start a business to grow and sell food in Mansfield. You might be scared, though, that your idea isn't good enough or that you don't have what it takes to make it a success.

If you are serious about starting your own business and being your own boss then our Microbusiness Development Course is perfect for you. This program is made possible by the generous support from the Ohio Community Development Corporation Association (OCDCA).

Registration is open for 2021! Register quickly before spots fill up! We will run seven cohorts in 2021, so don't worry if you missed enrollment for one cohort, you can always register for another one. We did this in order to give more people the opportunity to participate. Classes scheduled to begin in January, March, April, June, August, September, and November.

There will be two classes per week, Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:30-6pm, with each class lasting 90 minutes. **The fee to register is \$10.** Questions? Please contact Edward Akinyemi at 419-522-1611, extension 127 or edward@necic-ohio.org.

What Is Community Opportunity?

CommunityOpportunity.com is your local employment resource. It's a comprehensive website for students, job seekers and area businesses to connect, network, and find/share employment opportunities within the community. What sets it apart from other job posting websites is that it is hyper-local. **Local talent. Local businesses. Local opportunities!**

For Businesses:

Businesses will use it to create visibility, share information about who they are, what they do, and connect with students, job seekers, and other businesses. Businesses can also post and promote job postings, browse resumes, find interns, and support job shadowing.

For Job Seekers:

For Job Seekers it is a resource for them in our communities. We believe Richland County is an excellent place to work and live, and this site is our dedicated resource to connect local employers with local talent. A job seeker can create a profile with an option to upload a resume or download the app and watch local job postings in areas that they are interested in.

For Schools & Students:

This site has an educational element to it for schools to use to collect data, find linkages between interests and local careers, provide a solution to connect students and recent graduates for internships, and share community service opportunities. supports our students to find gainful employment that will provide for them and support their long-term goals. In addition, our county's businesses can access to local talent to support their needs of job placement and lasting employment.

Let's get started! Meet our Community Opportunities Coordinator, Cheyla Bradley

What's my role?

1. Get you started on this new web-based platform, keep you informed of all the benefits and connect you to resources that will help you grow.
2. Supply you with contacts, create visibility, share information. connect you with funding/grant sources and secure business contracts.
3. Keep your web-based profile page updated (sales, events, job openings etc.)

For more questions, contact Cheyla at (419) 522-1611 ext. 126 or cheyla@necic-ohio.org



Cheyla Bradley
Community
Opportunities
Coordinator, NECIC

Opportunity Awaits!

Faith In Action:

Pastor Aaron Williams And Maddox Memorial

By Cheyla Bradley

Pastor Williams is serving in his 17th year in the ministry and his 4th year as Pastor of Maddox Memorial. He is the 3rd Pastor of this ministry (formally Temple Of Faith) since 1945.

Currently, Williams serves on two boards. Advantage Credit Union and the North End Community Improvement Collaborative (NECIC). He is a proud member of the Black and Brown Coalition that came together with law enforcement in the City of Mansfield to draft a Code of Conduct. This is a step toward building a positive relationship between the community and the police sworn to protect it.

Pastor Williams also works in the Mansfield City Schools. A byproduct of his employment with City Schools has been the opportunity for Maddox Memorial to help to students within the district with supplies for school. There are other endeavors in the plans for the future.

It is their goal at Maddox Memorial to affect change in the lives of people throughout our community and even beyond. They want to see our community thrive as time yields new opportunity for our residents. Young people deserve the opportunity to be successful and to realize the benefits of a good education and a good support system. Williams said, "One can hope that what they do and what they stand for serves to help make a difference. I realize that there is always something to be done. I work on self improvement and being a good to others continually." The community appreciates leadership like Williams', who is open to new and/or different ways to be a blessing to the community that he cares for.



Mansfield Art Center To Feature Braxton Daniels Exhibit

Story Courtesy of The Mansfield Art Center, Reprinted by Permission



Braxton C. Daniels III is the first artist to have an exhibition in the Mansfield Art Center's new small space gallery on the foundation floor, known as the Reach Gallery. His solo exhibition is entitled "Atypical". As Braxton explains, "The photographs are not typical, but irregular in relation to my work." Daniels goes on to say that these photographs are his true form of expression, the type of work that is not typically seen by others. "These works are expressions of thoughts, feelings and emotions, still me, but the other side--the side I keep hidden from the public." In this intriguing exhibition Braxton is drawn to the dark and misunderstood. "We have this side that no one knows. The side of us that we hold sacred to ourselves." Braxton continues with "how well do you know someone? Do you really know your spouse, best friend, relatives, your children? If you know me, what side did you get to know?" He advises us to not be afraid to visit that side of you that makes you who you are. As for Braxton, "There is a

Continued On Page 12

Braxton Daniels Continued From Page 11

place I go to where no one knows me. It's a place I made up to find out what I'm made of. The nights are stayed up, counting stars and fighting sleep....."

Braxton C. Daniels III has been impactful in the cultural growth of Downtown Mansfield through his photography, often partnering with surrounding companies & organizations and promoting events to enhance and engage others. He has received many accolades for his work as a landscape, commercial, portraiture, & wedding photographer, including OSU Mansfield's prestigious Art Area 2018 Book Award. Braxton uses modern day technology to create distinct images and continues to grow and evolve as technology changes. He is a board member of NECIC and an active member of the community who strives to bring life, art and culture to Mansfield and beyond.

New Pavilion Coming To The Blust Avenue Teaching Garden

By Angel N. Singleton

A new covered shelter for classes, gatherings and workshops will soon be erected at the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden, this spring, thanks to unrestricted funds from the Warren Rupp IDEX Corporation.

"As a company, they take action in creating innovative support to better the community they reside in," said Crystal Weese, NECIC Recruitment Coordinator.

Weese recently met with Dave Lewwllyn, the general manager of Warren Rupp the IDEX Corp., to speak with him about NECIC's AALI (African American Leadership Initiative) and workforce development initiative.

"Through conversation with Mr. Lewellyn, we discussed a flexible support incentive to address barriers to full-time employment that many in our community workforce face," said Weese.

This incentive additionally opened up conversations to help the workforce development project with:

- Professional business-to-business mentoring and workshops for small and minority owners in finance, HR, etc.
- Virtual platform /software and equipment to deliver more interactive web-based content.
- The sheltered pavilion for the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden for community gatherings, Farmers Market, and a shaded area for on-site farmers and visitors. and
- Volunteers at the Urban Farm and/or the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden.

The new 20x30 foot space will be located on the north side of the shed at the teaching garden, said Mona Kneuss, NECIC Teaching Garden Coordinator.

"If it's raining or something we can still do activities or still have meetings and it won't be interrupted, she said. "It's a respite from the sun, obviously when you're working it's nice to get in the shade."

Kneuss says she hopes the pavilion will be an open style with at least a storage room for tables and chairs.

Although things are still in the beginning stages, local resident Doug Versaw who is a master gardener volunteer is helping Kneuss with all the logistics of a building permit, etc.

"He knows this is a really good way to involve children," she said. "And we're also going to try to have all the garden clubs in Mansfield to have their meetings there and let that be an outlet for them to teach children and just partner with the other garden clubs in Mansfield and Richland county."