

The Valley Weekly

Volume 1, No. 4

Friday, September 26, 2014

“Good music is good no matter what kind of music it is.”

- Miles Davis

Portrait of “Dynamic Musical Duo” Unveiled at AAMU

The musical legacy of Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr., and Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford was further immortalized Sunday, September 21, in a portrait by artist Alex Roberts that delighted former students and friends gathered on the Alabama A&M University campus.

“I give to you a profile of a woman who gave birth to two children but mothered thousands,” said Stinson, speaking on the gifts from Mrs. Bradford. “A virtuous woman whose wings of love are so



The Bradfords, legendary faculty retirees whose lives are synonymous with a golden age of music and music education at AAMU, were devoted to a higher education career that spanned from the 1940s through the 1980s.

Dr. Annie M. Payton presided over a program that highlighted the couple’s musical legacy as well as focused on their impact on the lives of their many students.

That impact was capsulized by Dr. Anthony B. Stinson, a 1980 alumnus and assistant professor at Clayton State University, who also directs the Nell Lane Bradford Legacy Choir.

In providing a profile on the Bradfords, Stinson spoke of their many “Gifts of Love” spanning several decades.



Dr. Anthony B. Stinson

massive that they cover all of us and make each of us feel her love. Thank you, Mother, for the love and thank you for the gifts.”



DYNAMIC DUO: Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr., and Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford join artist Alex Roberts (r) following the unveiling of a portrait in their honor during a recent ceremony held in the J.F. Drake Memorial Learning Resources Center on the campus of Alabama A&M University. Photo submitted by Jerome Saintjones

He also spoke of the many gifts received from Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr.

“Dr. Bradford told each of us to brighten the corner of the world where we are, and he talked about those who hear, remember; those who remember, practice; and those who practice, become.

Stinson went on: “Today, I give you the profile of a servant of God, who is the light for thousands and from him we have

gotten our lights so that we can brighten our corner of the world where we are. A man, a preacher, a teacher who is so eloquent in speech and stalwart in character and gracious in love that I am here today ... to tell you that during chapel, in class, in church and in the hallways of the music building, we did hear, we do remember, we do practice and we have become. Look around the room today to see all of us and how we have become.”

In addition to Drs. Payton and Stinson, other program participants included Rev. Dr. Homer McCall, retired pastor, St. John AME Church, Huntsville, Ala.; Alex Roberts, artist; Dr. Barbara Anthony, retired professor, Alabama A&M University; and, on behalf of the honorees, Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr.

For additional photos from the unveiling, see Page 6.

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Huntsville Happenings!

by Gary T. Whitley, Jr.

Summer is winding down here in Huntsville with the official start of Autumn slated for Tuesday, September 23. Most often, the unofficial end of summer is marked by Labor Day. Here in the South, we are fortunate to still have summer-like weather, and we take advantage of it.

This year, Huntsville welcomed visionary leadership to Downtown Huntsville, Inc., that has already made its presence known in downtown. In conjunction with Mayor Battle's vision of growing our downtown footprint, the staff of Downtown Huntsville offer new and exciting activities for our diverse Huntsville population. A few examples of recent family-friendly events follow:

Downtown Huntsville Jam Session is set for Thursday, September 25, on the Westside of the Square, hosts various local

artists from different genres of music. Attendees can bring their favorite bag chair and enjoy time with family and friends while listening to music.

Fight Night Live will be held Friday, September 26, on the Northside Square Downtown. Back by popular demand are the food trucks! Since the inception this summer, Huntsvillians have been talking about the food trucks and the delicious food available for sale. This event will draw residents from around Madison County to enjoy food and friends as the weekend begins.

If you haven't already, get out and attend a Downtown Huntsville, Inc., event and bring your family and friends to enjoy and live! Look for me downtown to see the latest Huntsville Happenings.

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The Valley Weekly

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From the Editor

Recapitulating Excellence!

*“Those of us
who have time
and interest
should desire to
recapitulate ...
the excellence
among us.”*

There are people in our lives who pursue, live and breath excellence. How do you recapitulate excellence when you find it in its purest form--within the very essence of individuals? Simply review and carefully follow their lives, and you surely will be placed on a path toward excellence. Five such individuals are Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr., Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford, Dr. Barbara Anthony, Mr. Alex Roberts and Dr. Delia Black. Those of us who have the honor of knowing them are blessed indeed.

Some of us had the opportunity to attend the unveiling of a portrait at the Alabama A&M University J.F. Drake Memorial Learning Resources Center on Sunday, September 21, 2014. The artist was Mr. Alex Roberts, a hometown hero and idol in Monroeville, Ala. By now, our readers know that I grew up in Monroeville, the literary capital of the state. I knew him as one of the town's best photographers; however, I never knew he was an artist--a gifted painter. When I arrived at the library and perused the program, I noticed the name *Alex Roberts*. I thought, “I knew someone growing up by that name.” Interesting.

When Dr. Barbara Anthony introduced the artist and he entered the room, it was a surreal moment. Although both of us have matured in aged over the past two decades or so since I have seen him, I knew the moment he emerged that it was the person I knew and admired during my childhood. Fate would have it that Dr. Barbara Anthony would connect with Mr. Alex Roberts and, with the AAMU Learning Resources Center, a lifetime tribute to our beloved Dr. and Mrs. Henry Bradford, Jr. would be born. For the few of us who had the opportunity to attend the unveiling and reception, it was a perfect pre-fall evening with the result being a beautiful portrait of the Bradford's that will be enjoyed many generations forward.

A dear and special friend, the late Charles Ray, Jr., introduced me to another local icon over 15 years ago, Dr. Delia Black. At that time, Mr. Ray was Chairman of the Board at Redstone Federal Credit Union and I was Vice President for Research and Development at AAMU. Via an invitation to join the Supervisory Committee of RFCU, which I accepted, he introduced me to Dr. Delia Black. I never calculated that Delia was one of those individuals who have pursued, lived and breathed excellence throughout her journey. Like the Bradfords, the lives she has touched and influenced are countless. On August 26, 2014, Dr. Black was inducted into the Defense Council of Credit Union's Hall of Honor. This is the highest honor that a defense credit union volunteer can receive on a national level. At the local reception honoring Dr. Black on September 11, 2014, family, friends and colleagues of Dr. Black travelled from near and far to congratulate Dr. Black on her signal honor.

Those of us who still have time and interest should desire to recapitulate excellence as we live, work and breathe. We should strive to recapitulate the excellence among us!

Until next week,

Dorothy



The BlAnglican

by Jerome Saintjones

Of all the awe-inspiring African Americans throughout the history of this continent, there are few whose names alone stir within me a deep sense of pride and admiration as do the names of John Henrik Clarke and James Baldwin. The two are perhaps worlds apart yet uniquely alike on a number of levels.

Of all the combinations of religions and ethnicities, imperialism and indoctrination, and any combination a spin of the wheel yields to captive people of sun, sand and ice—perhaps there are few paradoxical amalgamations as the mixture of people of African descent with the theology stemming from the Anglican tradition. A modernization of this anomaly would end squarely at the feet of blacks within the Episcopal Church of the United States.

If the very origins of so many religious denominations are not enough to give one pause, then what can be made of the gifts of belief systems from cooler lands that in effect reinforce a sense of entitlement to those who dominate the world's first people? In addition to accepting our inheritance of gold from previous generations, we often unknowingly accept a set of passed-around incongruences that our parents left to settle in the bottom of the pot.

Incongruences? Yes. Like, why African Americans know so darn little about African spirituality. Like, how much African history—and mystery—in southern Egypt and northern Sudan was flooded in connection with the Aswan Dam. Or, like, why such

groundbreaking communications technology has had so little impact on the uniting of Africans throughout the diaspora.

And, finally, is it possible to reconcile within a single human frame an African being and the pain, stain and drain of the Anglican faith?

A staunch pan-Africanist, Dr. John Henrik Clarke, once said: "It is unfortunate that so much of the history of Africa has been written by conquerors, foreigners, missionaries and adventurers." In one of his many speeches specifically to an African American audience, Clarke boldly asserted, "You have no friends." And yet the role of African Americans is so interwoven into the fabric and the very DNA of American and neo-European society that attempting to separate blacks—if for observation only—from the religious belief systems obtained from their colonizers is a daunting task.

Simply put, if stripped of his religion, could the black man in America find solace in his American-ness? Surely by now he has all the benefits owed to one who has been in the United States for more than 400 years as a distinctive non-immigrant. Or, if not America, could he find solace in his African-ness? Could he connect with distant relatives, claim inheritances, and forge a future in his homeland? And, if neither, should not his chances to the treasures missed in this life be tied to a belief system that at the very least does not relegate him to the status of a lesser being?

Like bad foliage wrapped deep within a healthy bunch of col-

lards, these internal inquiries and others must surely stir within the hearts and minds of those of African descent who tie themselves to the Episcopal Church, an offshoot of the Church of England, a product of a king who wanted to divorce his wife, who ruled over a national mindset that would almost gut the entire world while only serving its own poor a heaping dose of pride and occasional exile.



Further, what psychological defect, pray tell, would permit any person of African descent to seek comfort through worship with such a historically damaged denomination? *There's the rub.* But it is also here that the puss-filled conundrum defiantly grinds to a halt before the piercing needle. The brakes appear, owing to the mesmerizing people who bring new insight to a hopeless situation, to those beautiful brown souls who have persevered, and to the ingenious neo-Nubians who have succeeded despite following a different, perhaps more rhythmic, drummer.

Religiously speaking, for African Americans generally, the Episco-

pal Church can be safely deemed as the road less traveled. There has even been one report by a priest that the black Episcopal church is in crisis mode. The report is dire, but it is not without its blueprint to self-preservation. If my literary hero James Baldwin was alive, no doubt he would likely and rightly declare that the entire Episcopal Church in America and the larger Anglican Communion are indeed enriched by the existence of this small, fragile group. Perhaps this wee and anemic body needs an infusion of history, a reverse and eastern voyage, if you will, that extends far beyond the rugged shores of Charleston. Perhaps, too, it needs to see the success of kindred men and women who have overcome the conundrum to reclaim a peculiar faith as their own and to lead others to it.

In other words, where you find the first people on earth is very likely where you should also find the very first story. The bane of subsequent human existence? The myriad attempts aimed at destroying the original.

According to the Anglican Holy Trinity Church in New Zealand, the perception of the Anglican Church as a mere group of upper middle class white English-speaking people is becoming far-fetched. In fact, notes the church's website, there

are more black Anglicans than white Anglicans, more in "Third World" countries than in the West, and far more who worship in structures different from the stone, "traditional buildings of the English countryside."

Thus, Black Episcopalians in America might find it necessary to reach out to the African Diaspora, to the African continent, the Caribbean, to Brazil and other areas. Perhaps, like some of their African American forefathers, they might dare to move beyond the limits of Dioceses to form bonds with African churches—which now have a consistent and proven track record of success. Maybe therein will be some common ground, a oneness, a freedom earned from boldly seeking assistance from the Mother.

And, just as both Clarke and Baldwin found that blacks in America suffer from a lack of a sense of history needed to more effectively build a future, so too must black Episcopalians embrace their past successes and exemplary groundbreakers. It is in a sense of self that a spirit of forgiveness thrives, along with self-pride and the view that the so-called Anglican tradition is but another delicacy on a large, delectable African plate called the world, filled with everything under the sun.



A Pearl in the Alley

The first four years of my life were spent in a housing community known as Binford Court. My mother told me that it was especially built for African American military men returning from World War II.

In the household were my parents, five siblings and Aunt Pearl, who was already in her 60s. Between each row of houses was a sidewalk that ran the length of the row. What I thought was the front door (I would learn later from my sister) was actually the alley for the houses.

The family across from us had three boys, and we had a household of six girls. My age mate was Ronnie. Now Ronnie was important to me because he had this red peddle car that I loved to



ride. My rides were not long because always in the background was my mother calling to me to get out of Ronnie's car. This day was no different.

I was standing in the yard with a clear view of Aunt Pearl coming

toward the house as she exited the bus. She had worked as a domestic all her life. I could never figure out how she--being dressed in a white dress, white apron and white shoes--was still as pristine as she was when she left that morning.

As Pearl made her way, a Montgomery Ward delivery truck pulled up to the house (you see, even at four I loved to read, so I knew my alphabet). I don't remember the next few seconds other than that the most awesome pedal car, gleaming with gold and green, was placed in front of me.

Without hesitation or introduction I got into the car as soon as it hit the ground. The timing was all in sequence as I began to pedal. That familiar command was heard from my mother at the door.

"Get out of Ronnie's car."

But this time a reply came from Aunt Pearl, who still walking up the sidewalk and hearing the

command, said, "That's *her* car."

Aunt Pearl was like that. This was not Christmas and it was not my birthday.

This was simply Aunt Pearl caring.

She was one of the few of her generation remaining in our family that would sit down and tell me about my ancestors. I loved it when she would tell you something no one else had ever shared, like the time she told me I looked like my mother's older sister, who had died as a teenager.

Although she developed dementia, Aunt Pearl lived well into her nineties. How I miss her stories.

by Linda Burruss

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Bradford Portrait Unveiling

Sunday, September 21, 2014



Defense Credit Union Council Hall of Fame Inducts Dr. Delia Black (RFCU)

Dr. Delia Black was inducted into the Defense Credit Union Council (DCUC) Hall of Honor in Dallas, Tex., recently. This award is the highest honor bestowed on a credit union volunteer annually. These are photos from the local reception at Redstone Federal Credit Union. Dr. Black has been a volunteer at RFCU for over 35 years, providing for the members some of the best financial services in the nation. During her tenure as a volunteer, RFCU has grown to over 370,000 members and she has always been an advocate for providing financial services to the members of our military and their families. She spent her career on Redstone Arsenal as Director of the Military Training Office with MICOM, now known as AMCOM. During her tenure, our soldiers had access to many training opportunities and she ensured quality, academic training to meet their advancement criteria. DCUC is the voice of 200 credit union around the nation, that collectively serve over 18 million credit union members.





Tennessee Valley

Diversity Leadership Colloquium

Vision:

The Diversity Leadership Colloquium (DLC) advances leadership excellence by advocating and progressing the affirmation and inclusion of diversity in strategic markets and communities of interest for competitive intelligence.

Mission:

DLC's mission is to a premier provider of diversity training for inspiring and experienced leaders throughout the lifecycle.

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DLC offers inspiring and experienced leaders with opportunities to benefit from qualified and seasoned trainers, scholars, and business professionals who share and discuss research and best practices regarding obtaining excellence through diversity.

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Spring	April 7 – May 26 - Deadline to register (March 7, 2015)
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