

The WestSider



Volume VII No. 4
Fall 2013

From the Desk of the President
Greetings Fellow WestSiders

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Greetings to you, Fellow WestSiders. The summer season is rapidly coming to an end. I hope that you were successful in completing all of your summer plans.

My thanks are extended to Joe Hutchison, Don McSwain and Felix Seldon for coordinating the Spring Event that was held at the Detroit Yacht Club on beautiful Belle Isle. Clyde Newman served as Master of Ceremony and Barbara Seldon sang musical renditions of many favorite songs. Thank you Clyde and thank you Barbara. The guest speaker was Karl D. Gregory, Ph.D. Dr. Gregory provided the gathering with the information relative to Detroit's financial economy and the involvement of E.M. Kevyn Orr. Thanks Karl for your expertise.

On July 22, 2013, The Other Big Three (which is made up of The Near EastSiders, Conant Gardeners and WestSiders) sponsored a Jazz Concert that was held on the banks of the Detroit River. George "SAX" Benson plus 4 provided the music. I believe that everyone enjoyed the musical presentation. The concert was funded (in part) by The Michigan Humanities Council and the MotorCity Casino.

With the Fall Season beginning, our regular monthly meetings will start. The first meeting will be held Thursday, September 19, 2013 at 2 P.M. at Tabernacle Baptist Church located at West Grand Boulevard and Grand River. I hope to see you at the meeting.

Remember to VOTE in November

Wallace Craig President

Wallace Craig, President.

The Sun is Shining Brightly

WestSiders, how was your summer? Did you travel? Attend or host a family cook-out? Read the books you vowed to read. If only you had more time? Celebrate a birthday or anniversary? Try a new restaurant? Take dancing lessons? Go to a Tiger's game? See Lee Daniel's "The Butler"? Sail on the Ovation Yacht with the Detroit Renaissance Lions Club to support sight and hearing conservation?

Even if you led a completely unrepentant, non-structured, unscheduled lifestyle this summer, it was simply marvelous, wasn't it?

Joe Barber regretfully reported the passing of Dr. George Logan, long time administrator of the Shabazz Academy in Lansing, Michigan.

With heartfelt sadness, we announce the passing of Bernice Martin McNair, sister of member, Fred Martin.

Felix Seldon is feeling much better now. In his own words, "You can't keep a good man down!"

Thank you so much, Vanetta Goree for sailing on the Ovation Yacht on July 28th to support sight and hearing projects of the Detroit Renaissance Lions Club.

Finally, I'm very pleased to report that the majority of WestSiders remained healthy this summer.

See you in September,
Sunshine Chair, Michael Harper

Madelyn Kendricks
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The Unsung *Andantes*

They rarely toured or appeared on stage yet were important behind the stars of Motown. They were a pitch-perfect trio: Jackie Hicks, Louvain Demps and Marlene Barrow. Whether you have heard of them or not, you have absolutely heard them. They were the pre-eminent studio background vocalists. You can hear them behind Mary Wells, The Four Tops, Marvin Gaye and The Supremes to name a few. They were the sound of young America and were heard on nearly 20,000 recordings.

Jackie grew up on the west side in the shadow of the old Hartford Avenue Baptist Church. She lived on Hartford. She sang in the youth choir and often performed duets with her friend Marlene. They were accompanied by Mildred Doby who christened them The Andantes.

So well matched was this trio that they rarely needed to rehearse. So in demand they became that Motown eventually gave them a small upstairs office a "green room" where they could relax between sessions. You would think that watching your contemporaries performing in concert, selling records and soaring to fame while you remain in studio would give rise to bitterness and envy. To hear Jackie tell it today, "given the gifts of wisdom and healing hindsight their lack of renown was a blessing. We were considered the house band."

The Motown magic ended for the Andantes in 1972, when Gordy packed up and moved to Los Angeles.

The Andantes have experienced blips of post-Motown recognition. They received a Distinguished Achievement Award at the 2006 Music Awards, a HAL (Heroes and Legends) honor in California the year before and, were interviewed for a 2007 biography with the less-than compelling title "Motown From the Background."

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't turn on the radio and hear myself sing". Jackie reflects. "You don't know you are making history, you are just having fun enjoying what you're doing and listening to the music."



the demo of a friend's song, everyone within earshot asked her to sing on their songs too. "Everybody played for me," she recalls, laughing. "I thought I was big stuff."

By 19 she had become one of the Rayber Voices. "I would go down to Hitsville every day and sit, just in case somebody needed a voice," she says. "The day Jackie and Marlene's soprano voice couldn't make it, I was there. The best friend, and she was there."

public. Once you were pregnant, you were home. In our exhibit, we show how the different groups changed their lineups, and some of those changes were for that very reason, because people wanted to get married and have children. The Velvelettes stopped performing altogether because they all wanted to start families."

the house band," she says.

The few times the Andantes did appear onstage, "Frankly, we didn't like it," she maintains. "We preferred the background. It worked for us. We saw what the others had to go through as far as learning their routines, buses breaking down, crazy things going

to Los Angeles." Jan. 16, 1972, Marlene sizzles. "I remember it real well. That was the last paycheck. One of the Funk Brothers called me and said, 'Have you girls gone down and gotten your last checks?' I said, 'Nuh? No, he wanted to know if I had...'"

UNDERSTANDING THE VERDICT

A key principle of the American Criminal Justice System is that a verdict of not guilty doesn't mean that a defendant is innocent. It simply means that the prosecution could not meet their burden of proving their case beyond a reasonable doubt. This principle was never more evident than in the trial and acquittal of George Zimmerman.

What exactly happened when Zimmerman and Trayvon met face to face? The answer to this question can only be answered by two people; one of whom can no longer speak for himself. Without the benefit of surveillance video or unbiased witness testimony, Zimmerman was free to craft a statement specifically designed to comport with the letter of the law. Zimmerman's statement was read into evidence. Juries are instructed to base their verdict only upon the evidence presented in court. The prosecutor had no direct testimony to contradict Zimmerman's version as to what exactly happened when he met Trayvon. The prosecutor was forced to rely on Trayvon's friend who could testify as to Trayvon's state of mind just prior to the altercation, but not about his actions upon meeting Zimmerman. The jury only heard Zimmerman's side of the story as to what happened when the two came face to face.



Many people believe that Zimmerman was the aggressor in his confrontation with Trayvon. This conclusion is supported by the evidence that the defendant took a weapon and went looking for an unarmed teenager. However, in a court of law, one's beliefs, unless they come in the form of expert testimony, are not evidence. Remember, a jury is instructed to only consider the evidence. There was no direct evidence (surveillance video or live witness) to support the prosecutor's theory that Zimmerman was the physical aggressor in his confrontation with Trayvon. Without direct evidence, Zimmerman had a distinct tactical and legal advantage.

When the prosecutor has a case in which they are at a tactical and evidentiary disadvantage and they are facing a crack team of skilled defense lawyers, it's not surprising that Zimmerman walked.

For all those asking why didn't the prosecution go for a lesser charge, you should know that self defense is a defense to all homicides; First Degree Murder, Second Degree Murder or Manslaughter. To charge Zimmerman with anything less than a homicide offense would have been outrageous. The prosecution took their best shot, but the evidence presented to the jury just didn't support their theory. As Denzel Washington said in Training Day, "It's not what you know" (what really happened), "It's what you can prove" (via evidence).

It's not the job of a defense attorney to prove your client's innocence. It's the duty of defense counsel to force the Government to prove that your client is guilty as charged. There is a huge difference!! Zimmerman is not innocent, but the State could not meet their burden of proving him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.
Byron H. Pitts, Attorney at Law

Byron H. Pitts has been a practicing trial attorney for 15 years. He specializes in criminal and civil litigation. Attorney Pitts has tried and won cases throughout the country. He works for the Law Offices of Attorney Cornelius Pitts. (To find Attorney Pitts' entire article Google "Byron Pitts, Michigan Chronicle")

President Obama Honors Former Negro League Baseball Players

The meeting took place in the White House Blue Room on August 5, 2013. The Negro League was a haven for African American players who for decades were prevented from competing with white players in professional baseball.

The White House said President Obama invited about a dozen players to the White House to mark their contributions to American history, civil rights and athletics. The players competed for teams like the Philadelphia Stars, New York Black Yankees, Indianapolis Clowns and Boston Blues.

The Negro league thrived in the early part of the 20th century. Its decline started after Jackie Robinson in 1947 became the first African American to play The Major League Baseball in modern times, clearing the way for other black players to compete in major leagues. The Negro League disbanded a few years later.

One of the most celebrated players is our own Leader and Legend, Ronald Teasley whose wife, Marie, accompanied him to Washington for the honor. They were housed in the elegant Embassy Suites in the Washington, D.C. Convention Center.

Heard Across the Boulevard

That Dr. Don Godbold has published a book "A Career in Community College Administration: The Challenge, Successes and Pitfalls of a first African American Chancellor of an Urban Multi-College Community College District" This book is available on Amazon if you want to purchase it.

Wayne State University's colleges of health professions are recruiting interested seniors to become a teacher of healthcare students. You can be assessed in your home. During a 60 minute visit, students ask questions about daily living activities, nutrition, medications, family health and other social supports.

For more information please contact:

Jennifer Mendez, Ph. D. 313-577-2125 or mendez@med.wayne.edu.

Our Videographer for the Jazz Concert on the River is Dr. Therison Bradshaw. He filled in for Felix Seldon, at the last minute. Thanks so much.

Photos from the Jazz on the River are available by email. Cynthia Johnson must have photographed every moment we were there. Our grant funders were impressed and pleased.

Marie Pinkston Jackson recently fell at home and injured her foot and ankle.

The Woods Family had their first Family Reunion. That is Life Member Warren, Sr. his brother, Harry along with their wives, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Ask James Berry about Idlewilde and he cannot be stopped with the good information.

Doris Dillard Hall won a Golf Trophy along with Suesetta. Doris' trophy was in the First Flight while Suesetta's was in the 4th Flight.

Charles Boyce does a good job of avoiding us. We have tried to reach him by telephone to no avail.

First Episcopal Church in Detroit Established by and for African Americans Celebrates 95 Years

You are invited to the Celebration on Sunday, September 15, 2013. Worship service begins at 10:30 A.M. Fellowship and refreshments will follow the service.

St Cyprian's was born in its mission stage, and the proud congregation of African Americans moved into the Mission building on October 1, 1919.

The first confirmation service was held in April, 1920. The first Baptism was of infant Catherine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Burrell Carter. Significantly, the first baptismal font was made by the proud father. This infant is today's outstanding educator, Catherine Blackwell.

Reverend Canon Malcolm Dade was installed as Deacon-in-charge of St Cyprian's Mission in 1936 and ordained a priest in 1938. In 1940 St Cyprian's Mission became the first African American Mission to become an independent, self sustaining parish. Father Dade helped the church to become one of the most politically and community active churches in Detroit.

The church still serves as a beacon of hope in the same west side community. Members continue to serve the community by providing social ministries like providing support to Crossroads food and clothing program and providing a meeting place for United Block Club.

The spiritual growth of the members is tremendous and the commitment is evident by the work that is done. The church is a praying church and members have seen miracles. See the website www.scypriansdet.org.

JAZZ ON THE DETROIT RIVER

The Other Big Three invited our supporters to an Appreciation Jazz Concert on Monday, July 22nd. Revelers brought their picnic baskets and lawn chairs as directed, to the beautiful Milliken State Park. We were greeted on Atwater and Orleans by gentlemen from the 3 organizations with directions for parking.

Then a short walk to the riverfront to tables protected by permanent awnings. I saw Kentucky Fried Chicken, ribs, sandwiches, salads, fruit and desserts as folks offered to share their eats.

After a great time of socializing and reminiscing, the clock moved to 5 o'clock and the music began. On saxophone was the group leader, George Benson, on keyboard was George Shermetaro, on bass, Marion Hayden and George Davidson on drums. Then came Shahidah Nurullah with her fine vocals from the traditional songs of jazz to the low down blues she does so well.

It was hard to keep our seats when the group played "Honky Tonk". However, we knew we could not move the way we did when we first heard this classic

We were awarded grants from the MotorCity Casino and The Michigan Humanities Council. These funds paid for the musicians.

2013: A Year of Commemoration for WestSiders

Esther Meyers Coleman, Ph.D.

In 2013 commemorations were held for several highly significant events in the lives of African Americans. One historic event is the Centennial Celebration of *Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.*, a service organization founded in 1913 by 22 African American women at Howard University. *Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.*, the nation's largest Black women's sorority of more than 250,000 members with 950 chapters worldwide, participated in the first Women's Suffrage March held 1914 in Washington, D.C. The Detroit Alumnae Chapter, of which many WestSiders are members, opened a yearlong exhibit at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History; "Delta Sigma Theta Sorority: Century of Sisterhood, Scholarship & Service 1913-2013. WestSider Esther Coleman served on the Committee to develop the exhibit. Suesetta Talbert McCree's aunt, Florence Cole Talbert, is featured as composer of the official Delta Hymn.

Two other historic events impacting WestSiders occurred here in Detroit and in our Nation's capital during 1963. Many WestSiders happily recall and celebrate their participation in Detroit's *Walk to Freedom*. On Sunday June 23, 1963. More than 125,000 people joined in what was reported at that time as "the largest civil rights demonstration in the nation's history

The *Walk to Freedom* had two main purposes. The first and primary "... was to speak out against segregation and the brutality that met civil rights activists in the South. As well to address concerns of African Americans in the urban North: inequality in hiring practices, wages, education, and housing." Secondly, the March was to raise funds and awareness for the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), that was a civil rights organization in the South. Perhaps few of us knew at the time, that the date selected for the June 23 *March* was to honor the 20th anniversary of the 1943 Detroit Race Riot in which 25 African Americans were killed, 970 arrested and many more injured. The *March* idea is credited for its origin with Rev. C. L. Franklin and Rev. Albert Cleage. These two prominent ministers and Civil Rights leaders, who, although they differed philosophically in viewpoints and means of tackling injustice, came together to propose the idea. The local Detroit Branch of the NAACP and other organizers formed the *Detroit Council for Human Rights*, which became responsible to organize the Walk. The Council's director was Benjamin McFall, and its chairman, Rev. Clarence L. Franklin. Initially Rev. Cleage wanted the *March* to include only Blacks and Black leaders. When the NAACP objected and threatened not to support the event, or even to boycott it unless local white leaders were included, concession was made by the *DCHR* and the *March* was opened to all. Although majority participants were African-Americans, Detroit's Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh, former Governor John B. Swainson, Walter Reuther, *UAW*, and Billie S. Farnum, State Auditor General, walked alongside Dr. King to lead the *March* down Woodward.

Governor George Romney did not attend the event because Sunday participation conflicted with his religious practice, but to demonstrate his full support, he sent representatives to walk in his place and officially declared the day "Freedom March Day in Michigan".

Regardless of which title is used, those who participated in the *March*, tend to agree unilaterally that being able to participate in this historic event was significant in our lives as African American Detroiters in our ongoing struggle for social and economic equality rights.

On that Sunday many churches dismissed morning worship services early in order for congregations to be in the March. The March formed about 3 P.M. on Woodward at Adelaide and lasted about an hour and a half. The throng of marchers carried banners and signs while singing "We Shall Overcome" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The tremendous crowd moved south to the foot of Woodward, then west onto Jefferson and finally ending at Cobo Hall & Arena.

Because the number of marchers was estimated at more than 125,000, many marchers were so far back in line that when they finally reached Cobo Hall & Arena, the buildings were full. It seemed that the marchers outside were as many as those who were seated inside. On the day after the March, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that only 25,000 were seated. Other marchers had to sit or stand on the lawn near the Veteran's Memorial Building and on the Detroit River side. Speeches given by leaders of the March: Rev. Cleage, Walter Reuther, Mayor Cavanaugh, former Governor Swainson, Governor Romney's representative, and Congressman Charles Diggs were heard on outside speakers.

The crowd waited impatiently with eager anticipation for Dr. King to speak and clearly was not disappointed. Because, on this day at this site, Dr. King gave the initial version of his impassioned "I Have A Dream" speech that was to be given later on the Washington Mall. Perhaps this *March* itself was, to Dr. King and his supporters, merely a precursor and a practice run for the *March on Washington*. (cont.)

Dr. King's Washington speech of August 28, 1963 became famous as his "I Have A Dream" speech. Undeniably it was a defining moment in the American Civil Rights Movement. Yet, the seeds of his dream speech were planted when Detroit's June 23 Freedom Walk ended at Cobo Hall where many WestSiders and other Detroiters had first heard it given.

After The March

The Detroit Free Press labeled *The March* "the largest civil rights demonstration in the nation's history." The Detroit *March* was only surpassed by the *March on Washington* two months later August 28, 1963. However, in comparison to the *March on Washington*, *The Walk to Freedom* did not have a huge impact on Detroit and local civil rights issues. The Detroit Council for Human Rights (*DCHR*) did not last. The *DCHR* attempted to start a Northern Christian Leadership Conference as a companion to the *SCLC*, but disagreements, particularly between Franklin and Cleage, kept the idea from fruition.

Regardless to reported results of *The March*, individuals who marched with Dr. King in Detroit's "Walk to Freedom" 50 years ago; still speak about the spirit of pride, unity, purpose, and hope that permeated the crowd of 125,000 marchers as they made their way through Detroit.

Gloria Mills serves as a voter registrar in part because of the impression the Detroit March made on her at age 14. She, along with other members of Delta Sigma Theta's Social Action Committee, volunteer to register voters because of the Sorority's continued commitment to civil rights.

On June 22, 2013, at 9 a.m., again hundreds of Detroiters assembled to "*Take a Step*" for a 50th Anniversary March in honor of the 1963 *Walk to Freedom* led in Detroit by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The UAW-Ford and the Detroit NAACP Branch co-sponsored the 2013 event to serve as a reminder of the 1963 *March* legacy and its pivotal role in the City's transition from that of isolation to one of inclusion. It is also hoped that it will be viewed as a need for further progress.

Gloria Mills, as a *veteran of the '63 March*, says she hopes this year's commemoration sparks an historical awareness among young people. "Young people need to know that many things they take for granted didn't just happen". "People risked their lives to make it happen. This is how you keep history alive, by sharing remembrances and letting people know how it was."

2013 Spring Celebration

The annual WestSiders Spring Celebration coincided almost to the day with the summer solstice. Once again the beautiful Detroit Yacht Club with its expansive view of the Detroit River was the setting on a sunny day.

Co-chairs Joseph Hutchison, Felix Seldon and Donald McSwain ably as usual provided the large group of members and guests with an interesting program, Clyde Newman was the competent M.C.; and the yacht club staff complemented the program with a tasty and efficiently served meal.

Highlights of the program were vocal selections by Honorary WestSider Barbara Seldon and an informative presentation by Professor and Economist Dr. Karl Gregory on the current city of Detroit economic crisis. A special highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of the 2013 WestSider Dr. Charles A. Green Scholarship awardees. Accepting scholarships were Markess Cole, who has been accepted at Marygrove College and Jhane Kierra Marion, who will attend Michigan State University. Both appreciative awardees are graduates of Northwestern High School.

Concluding the afternoon's program were surprise presentations of Honorary Membership pins to Rosa Craig and James McCree.

James McCree, Guest Columnist

MEMBERSHIP-MARILYN GREEN

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Millard J. Brooks, Linda A. Causey, Ph.D,
Larry Reynolds,

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Richarad R. Bryan

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Elizabeth W. and James E. Foster, Sr.,
Ruth White, Warren D. Woods

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

Rosa Craig & James McCree

IN REMEMBRANCE

Chester Stewart

Please send your comments and additions
before December 1st, 2013 for the
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