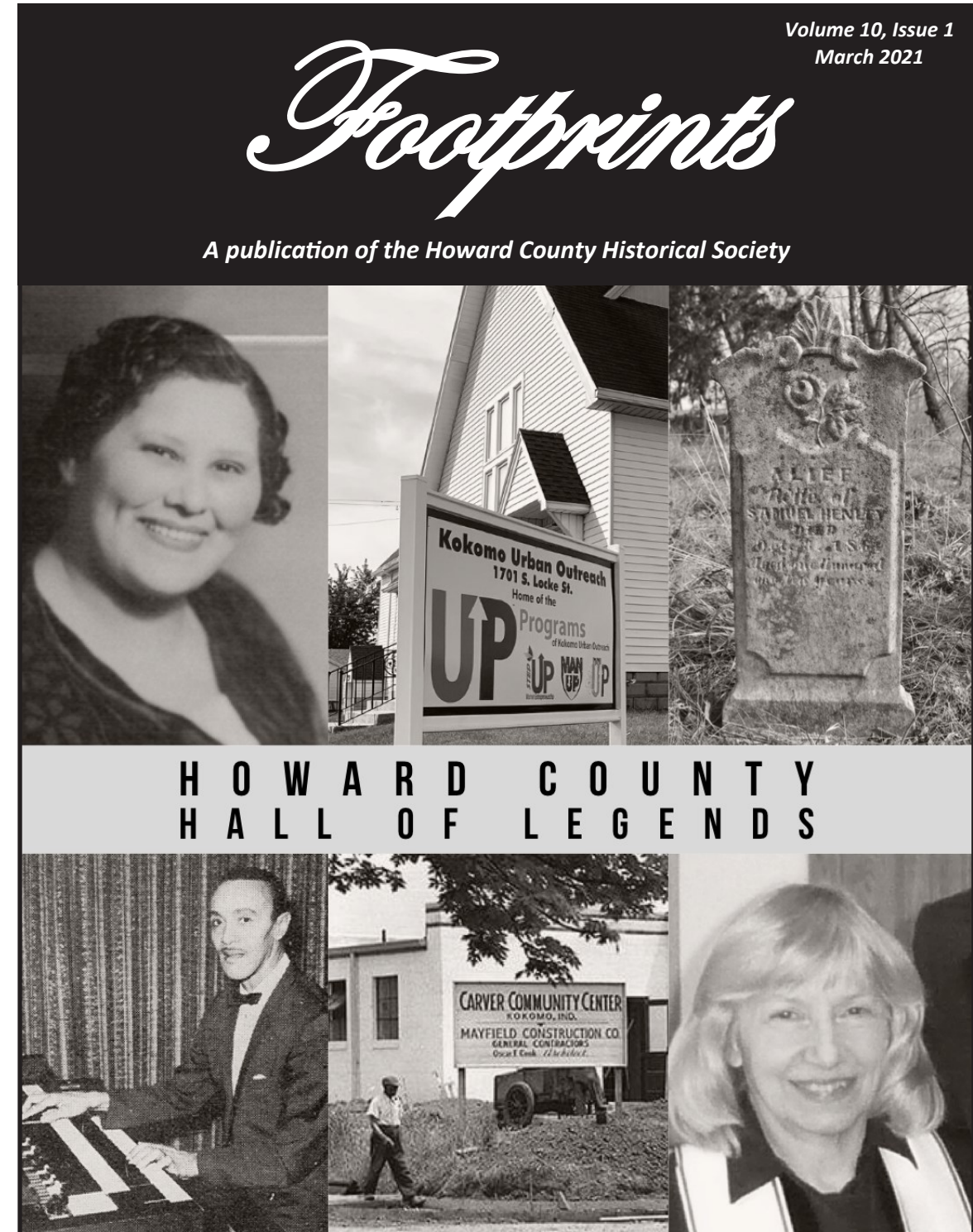


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Historical Society
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From the director

Moving forward with exhibits, and events and looking back at those who inspire

Kicking off 2021 with our annual meeting was a great way to revisit my first months here at the historical society and look forward to my first full year of activities, programs, and exhibits. In addition, doing the budget for the year has a way of really sharpening the focus!

While we remain mired in the pandemic, it feels like there will be light in the latter part of the year. We can begin to think about how to reestablish old norms and organize live events. But for now, we are staying vigilant and safe. I am excited to be working on the video for Hall of Legends with Awry Productions and board member Anne Shaw, premiering at 6 p.m. on March 18 on our Facebook page. It's going to be a great way to honor those selected into this year's Hall of Legends.

We have been very busy putting together the first phase of our new exhibition, *Howard County African American History Revealed*. Stew, Randy, Heather, and I have been researching, writing text labels, creating graphics and arranging exhibit cases, among other tasks. We have worked with an African American advisory group, whose members have informed and guided us as we developed the various pieces of the exhibition. We are rolling it out in four phases, finalizing a year from now in February 2022.

In thinking about our Hall of Legends cohort for 2021, I am struck by their incredible contributions to their communities and beyond. People can shape the world around them in myriad positive ways. While some are doing their good work right

now, some of those selected reach back into our history. There is much we do not know about these individuals, and so we piece together their stories with bits of the historic record. The historical society's job in many ways is to make those individuals come alive through research, writing, exhibits, and programs.

Some of these, like Flossie Bailey, seem to be without flaws, but no one is all good or bad, and we do those who came before us a disservice to present them as such. People were and are more complicated. While it might be hard to avoid mythmaking when it comes to someone as passionate and honorable as Bailey, she was a woman who surely lived as we do today, struggling to make sense of the world, who expressed doubt, frustration, and fear. We need to be able to relate to these figures of the past, so that we can see ourselves in them, or them in us. We can contrast and compare. What would I have done in Flossie's situation? Would I have been as brave? How is my world like the one she inhabited? In doing so, we might resonate with pieces of her story and learn about ourselves.

Thank you for your continued support of the historical society. We will be moving forward with the repair of the porte cochere at the mansion. That will take a lot of resources, but we are pleased to be moving forward to ensure the Seiberling's architectural integrity.

Let's hope the snow stops soon with warmer days ahead.

Catherine Hughes
HCHS Executive Director

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thought he looked more like Ken Jennings, the current show's guest host, who is much closer to Peter's age.

Taking the role of contestants were Howard County Commissioner Paul Wyman; Tom Tolen of the City of Kokomo Department of Development and member of the Kokomo Historic Review Board, and Cheryl Graham of United Way of Howard County, who graciously substituted for originally scheduled local radio personality Tammy Lively, who was unable to attend.

Everything was perfectly duplicated from the television show including the game board and sound effects, with the well-known "thinking music" playing during Final Jeopardy. Each category and all questions were about Howard County history, carefully created by assistant curator Randy Smith.

The "show" even included a mid-point break for the contestants, filled by a video of an interview with Ruth Temoney, an organizer of the Black Women of the Midwest Project (BWMW) in the 1980s. During its 35th anniversary year, "BWMW Revisited" updated the project chronicling the lives of black women in Indiana. A retrospective

display of the project was celebrated in an event last March in the Seiberling Mansion coordinated by Reed and the HCHS Oral History Committee.

The Jeopardy competition returned, featuring a lot of ups and downs in the scoring. Tom Tolen was in the lead going into Final Jeopardy. The clue: "She became a minor pin-up sensation during WWII when a picture of her with Old Ben was sent to some Kokomo GIs." The ever-humorous Tom speculated aloud, "Who is Mary Ellen Har-nish?" Mary Ellen, a longtime "senior" member of the board and well-known retired local teacher, was in the audience and joined in the laughter that followed. When the written answers were revealed, only Tom answered correctly with "Who is Phyllis (Hartzell) Talbert?" and handily won the contest. What fun and what great sports!

As an added fund raiser, the historical society worked with Windmill Grill to offer meals for HCHS members to order as part of the annual meeting with HCHS receiving \$460 as its share of the proceeds.

A recording of the live broadcast is available at <https://www.facebook.com/HCHistory>.

In memoriam

Fred Odiet, 95, passed away Feb. 16. He was a former Howard County historian and long-time member and volunteer at the Howard County Historical Society, most recently serving on the Collections Management Committee.

Membership		
Our new and renewed memberships		
Friedemann Arnold	Janet Gunning	Tyler and Ann Moore
Evan Barker	Harry and Roberta Hanson	Larry and Marleta Newberg
Andrew Barker	Joan Hardesty	David and Melody Rayl
Harold and Elizabeth Beal	Larry and Judy Ingle	Beth Rider
Matthew Behnke	Gloyd Johnson	John and Marie Roberts
Bob and Janis Bergman	Mike and Kelly Karickhoff	Michael W. Rodgers
Carol Brock Cameron	David and Janice Kellar	Darrell and Tonia Sherrod
Sandra L. Cross	Medora Kennedy	Thomas Tolen
Dorothy Dague	Suzanne King	Douglas and Lynn Vaughn
Dean and Judy Despinoy	Jim and Judy Kruggel	Michael Whiteman
Janet Duchateau	Chuck and Doris Lingelbaugh	Christopher and Allison Wisler
Dan and Carol Estle	William Maple	Kori Wood
Ken and Linda Ferries	Don and Gloria Martin	Donald and Marilyn Wooldridge
David and Jennifer Foster	Eugene and Nancy McGarvey	Pamela Yohn
Tammy Greene	Thomas and Linda Miklik	Jeff and Kathy Young

'Jeopardy' game, first African-American county landowner history highlight HCHS annual meeting

By Dean Despinoy
HCHS Publications Committee Member

At a time when the postponement of major events has become almost expected, it was no surprise that the Howard County Historical Society's 2020 annual meeting could not take place in the normally scheduled month of October.

Board member Marsha Santen and her committee, charged with the meeting planning, were well justified in thinking that by January 2021 the pandemic would be under control. That wasn't to be; changes were needed and the result was the most creative and unusual annual meeting in the society's history, a blend of face-to-face and virtual.

On the evening of Jan. 12, the cavernous main chapel of Kokomo's First Church of the Nazarene sported a colorfully lit stage with high tech backdrops befitting a television sound stage.

In the sea of seats, which normally accommodate hundreds of people, several dozen historical society board members and guests were well spaced in recognition of pandemic safety protocols.

In the rear of the auditorium, a professional video staff, hired by the society, worked lighting and sound boards.

A few seconds before 6 p.m., the countdown started for the live broadcast over the internet. Board member Dave Dubois stood behind a podium and, with a cue from the broadcast director, welcomed everyone – those in the auditorium and those online – to the Howard County Historical Society Annual Meeting.

Dubois began with opening remarks from board president Sharon Reed, who was unable to attend, followed by standard annual meeting business. Minutes from the Oct. 17, 2019, annual meeting were read by Secretary Linda Ferries. Randy Rusch presented the HCHS Board Development Committee's recommendation to retain Dubois, Lynn Smith, Chris Wisler and Rusch for additional three-year terms and the nominations

of Judy Brown, the Rev. Michael Carson and Kori Wood to fill open seats on the board. All were approved unanimously.

Randy also presented the Board Development Committee's slate of officers for 2021: Sharon Reed, president; Dave Dubois, vice president; Linda Ferries, secretary; Chris Wisler, treasurer; and Larry Hayes, member-at-large. The slate was accepted unanimously by voice vote. On behalf of the organization, Dubois thanked outgoing members Nita Campbell, Linda Clark, Dana Osburn and Marsha Santen for their service. He adjourned the official meeting and opened the entertainment portion by introducing Dr. Catherine Hughes, who became the HCHS executive director last spring.

Dr. Hughes presented the annual report for 2020 and highlighted the events and accomplishments of the year, which was drastically impacted by COVID-19 but still finished "in the black." She noted the *Kokomo Tribune* named the Seiberling Mansion the 2020 Best Local Landmark as part of its Best of Kokomo edition. Major projects for 2021 will include repair of the Seiberling's porte cochere and an exhibition on local African American history.

The work of resident historian and *Footprints* contributor Gil Porter was featured in a presentation on his research on the first African-American landowner in Howard County. Filling in for Porter, who was unable to attend, Jia Hardman-Eddington, a member of the HCHS African American Advisory Group and a descendant of one of the first area pioneers, and Michael Carson, one of the newest HCHS board members, shared the fascinating story of Aliff Henley, who had been freed from slavery in North Carolina and travelled north to become the first African American to buy land in Howard County in the 1844.

The evening turned to "fun with history" as local lawyer and HCHS board member Peter Inman hosted "Howard County Historical Society Jeopardy." In his introduction, Peter said he was playing Alex Trebek, the longtime host of the popular game show, but Jeopardy fans in the audience

HCHS opens first phase of new exhibition

Howard County African American History Revealed

The first phase of a new exhibit focusing on local African American history opened Feb. 26 at the Howard County Museum.

The public is invited to visit the Seiberling Mansion and Museum to discover the long history of African Americans in the area.

Who was the first African American pioneer? Who fought in World War I? Who made a positive impact on children's lives today?

The HCHS will be rolling out this exhibition in



four phases over the next year. A community-based group of shareholders have informed and provided guidance for HCHS staff regarding the creation of various pieces of the exhibition.

This project is by no means comprehensive, but a positive start toward equitable representation of people of color in Howard County history. The goal is to find ways to incorporate new information and objects into the story of Howard County throughout the museum, so that it is seen as not separate, but an integral part of our history.

Major repairs needed for museum porte cochere

The historical society is raising funds to match a grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to repair the Seiberling Mansion's porte cochere.

The capital campaign began in 2020 and continues this year. The goal is to raise \$50,000 from individuals, foundations, and granting organizations.

The repairs will include replacing major beams inside the roof and repointing and replacing masonry, all to maintain the integrity of the structure. The project requires specialist contractors capable of working on such an historic structure, which increases the cost of repair.



Recent donors to the porte cochere project

In memory of Jim Aikman, from Paula Saul and Danyce Saul
Judy Brown
P.A. Conwell
Rosalie Gollner
Larry Hayes
Charles and Patricia Hinders

Robert Hoch
Medora Kennedy
Wayne and Jane Kincaid
Tom and Marsha Maple
Ron Metz
Kyle Rayl
Sharon Reed

Marsha Santen
Brian and Laura Sheets
Dave Shirley
Lynn Smith
Greg and Melody Sumpter

Pandemic couldn't stop Santa and Christmas

By Linda Ferries
HCHS Publications Committee Chair

Masks may have been the order of the day and jovial hugs replaced by social distancing, but nothing deterred Santa Claus from making his appointed rounds – including Christmas at the Seiberling 2020.

The Howard County Historical Society staff and volunteers met the challenges of a pandemic to create another successful holiday season in the beautiful Seiberling Mansion – both in person and virtually. Images of the jolly old gent filled the mansion in keeping with

2020's Santa theme – and Santa himself showed up to keep the spirit alive!

While in-person visits were limited, thousands of online visitors took advantage of a virtual video tour made by Awry Productions, funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Howard County. It captured Santa chatting with decorators and sponsors as he made sure Christmas came to the Seiberling. And come it did. Thanks to sponsors, ticket sales and voting donations, the month-long annual event raised nearly \$12,000 for the historical society. "Christmas this year was, of course, very dif-



The Grinch-themed Walnut Room was winner of the People's Choice Award, receiving the most votes through donations.

homeless established by the Center Township Trustee. Using an automotive metaphor, CAM would serve as the "cam" linking the parts of an "engine" with the power to make things happen for the community's needy.

An integral part of the community, CAM provides a place where the homeless can come in to shower, wash their clothes, have computer access and friendship. It also can serve as their "payee representative" to help them manage their income properly and pay their bills.

A key to its success has been the tradition of clients giving to others. During the intake process, CAM asks if the new client, having been helped, would be willing to come back and help others.

Ruth served as CAM executive director for 26 years, always adding services to meet new needs. In 2007, the Bill Hudson Project was launched, with six beds available for homeless men to rent for \$5 a night. In 2009, the Family Hope Center was started to provide an emergency shelter for intact families. In 2011, Ruth started a permanent housing program, making trailers and homes available to families who are homeless and near homeless. Serena House provided a shelter for young women for several years.

Today, CAM still sees more than 1,000 people a year through the drop-in shelter, serves as a payee for more than 50 households, houses 30 people nightly, and assists the ill and elderly as guardians.

In 2019, Ruth turned the reins over to a new executive director, remaining on the CAM staff as director of church relations. She is proud of the program she nurtured, but she says CAM's success is the product of a supportive community and clients who continue to help the nonprofit long after they have been helped.

As Ruth has written: "Luke 12:48b says, 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.' The privilege and blessing of working at CAM are a wonderful gift from God."

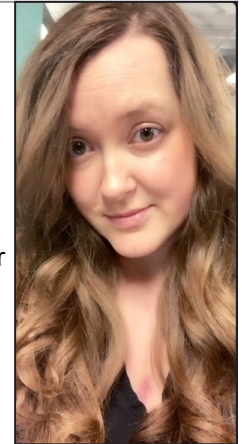
New HCHS board members begin terms

Kori Wood and the Rev. Dr. William J. Smith Jr. are the newest members of the HCHS Board of Trustees.

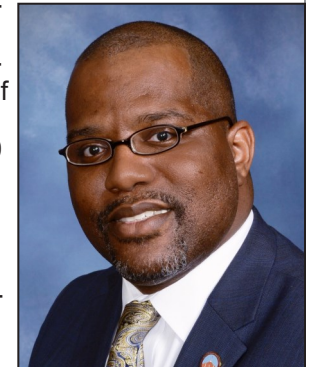
Wood is currently studying for her bachelor degree in social science, focusing on anthropology with a minor in history. She is deputy director of Howard County EMA, a single mother, and a heart transplant recipient. She has a passion for learning about what makes us who we are and different cultures from around the world. She says she's excited to be a part of the Howard County Historical Society and can't wait to share its history with the community.

The Rev. Smith is a native of Mathews County, Va., and has served as pastor of Second Missionary Baptist Church in Kokomo since 2015. Before coming to Kokomo, Smith pastored churches in Virginia and North Carolina and was an active leader in the communities he served.

He is also president of Embracing Hope of Howard County, a community development corporation that is overseeing the restoration of long vacant Douglass School, opened in 1920 as a segregated school for Kokomo's African American children. The group seeks to make this a community cultural center to "Celebrate History, Knowledge, and Success!"



Kori Wood



The Rev. Dr. William Smith

improved; hope for the future has been instilled. For the older participants, the UP programs offer an opportunity to learn how to work while also learning what it means to be paid for the work. Work crews “hired” by homeowners pull weeds, clean gutters, lay mulch, rake leaves. Donations and grants provide the funding to pay the workers. An UP woodshop and the UP Makers Space offer opportunity to learn skills while making products they then market in the UP boutique. Young people learn how to save money, budget and set goals for the money they are earning.

KUO began with the support of Trinity United Methodist Church as an outreach to the neighborhood near the southside church at Home Avenue and South Locke Street. Since the church closed a few years ago and turned the building over to KUO, the nonprofit has created a community center where young people can study for classes, learn new skills, and enjoy sports and recreation. KUO also has operated a northside satellite location at a former church at Taylor and Purdum streets.

The adage “start while you’re young” is clearly imbedded in all the programs offered by Kokomo Urban Outreach. Learning life’s lessons as soon as possible gives kids confidence and security and starts them on the path to becoming responsible adults. The dedicated staff and volunteers’ efforts are crucial in making each participant a better person and our community a better place to live.

The Rev. Ruth Lawson

To honor Ruth Lawson is to honor her faith. To honor her faith is to honor its greatest manifestation, Kokomo’s CAM, Inc.

For more than 28 years, CAM (Coordinated Associated Ministries) has served the homeless and the needy, and kept their stories in front of those more fortunate. But the story started long before CAM was created.

Ruth Lawson was born in Kentucky in 1948, and, as she has written, grew up with a loving and secure family of a mother, a father, a brother and a sister. Her father was a minister who started churches; his calling took him, and

his family, to churches in Kentucky, Florida, and Michigan. Ruth was raised that life was lived on this belief: “only that which is eternal shall last.” There were always extra people living in their home. Loving and ministry, she says, were as natural as breathing.

At the age of 11, Ruth began playing piano and organ in church. By 13, she was playing piano for a Spanish mission in a condemned building in Detroit. At age 16, she read “The Cross and the Switchblade” and knew, she says, that someday the Lord would call her to a city ministry.

She and Bob Lawson, married in 1967. The couple lived in Tennessee, Nebraska, Kentucky and Sullivan and Jeffersonville, Indiana, before moving to Kokomo in 1983. Ruth earned a degree from the University of Louisville School of Music



The Rev. Ruth Lawson

and, with her husband, began a career in ministry. Ruth’s ordination is with American Baptist Churches USA. After serving in music ministries at First Baptist Church in Jeffersonville, First Baptist in Kokomo, and Market Street Methodist Church in Logansport, Bob and Ruth were

co-pastors of Liberty Baptist Church in Tipton County from 1991 to 2017. In 1983, Bob began a counseling practice, which continues today.

The Lawsons have three sons and, over the years, helped raise some 34 kids (mostly teenagers). But opening their home to create family for people was just the start for Ruth.

In 1976, she helped found the Ministerial Jail Visitation Committee in Jeffersonville, and in 1984, the MUFF – Ministerial Utility Fuel Fund in Howard County. In May 1993, Ruth became founder of CAM with a simple mission: to meet the needs not being met. The acronym CAM developed from a task force of Howard County church leaders who took up the challenge to replace and expand on a drop-in center for the

ferent from past years,” said event chair Peggy Hobson. “But the decorators were the same go-getter, get-it-done creative people they’ve always been. From the gorgeous foyer to the Grinch-themed Walnut Room to the third floor and its festival of trees, decorators worked tirelessly to make it beautiful despite everything.”

Special thanks go to board member Teresa Fields and HCHS custodian Bill Baldwin for their efforts to meet the extra challenges posed by the pandemic.

Teresa extends her thanks to Heather Fouts, Jill Snyder, and Dana Osburn for 3rd floor decorations; Beth Martin and Donnie Fields for packing up; and Barbara Bothast for loaning decorations.

And even if Santa was the focus, the Grinch stole visitor hearts, winning this year’s “People’s Choice” by gaining the most “votes” in contributions. Congratulations to Julie Epp, Mary Tetrick and Symposium for creating this colorful and fanciful tribute to the Christmas anti-hero.

And in case you missed it, or just need a bit of a holiday spirit boost, the video is still available through the howardcounty-museum.org website at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2766507616970651>

The event was supported by these sponsors: The Wyman Group; Community First Bank of Indiana; Ivy Tech Community College-Kokomo; Coca Cola Bottling Co. of Kokomo; Indiana University-Kokomo; Financial Builders Credit Union; First Farmers Bank & Trust; and Duke Energy.

From the president

2021 Legends dedicated their lives to improving residents’ quality of life

History bears witness to each of us in many ways, and we bear the responsibility of accurately compiling its record.

When reconciliation is needed, it gracefully reveals itself in unusual ways that spark excitement of new discovery for some and disappointment for others.

Breadcrumbs lead us through conversation, revealed objects and rummaging through attics and basements to ask a different question or find a new answer to a long-evaluated one. History has no biases, is unapologetic, touches every life and every community — and keeps marching on.

Every community’s history is compelling and continues to unfold in various crevices and corners. When community members leave and return, they learn of new wrinkles that have been uncovered. Some are drawn back to what they knew only to find it has been revised, updated or expanded. Each life changes position within the context of history as new generations are added and the perspective we now have on our historical timeline shifts.

The discovery of the story of Aliff Henley, the first African American to purchase land in Howard County, has opened the door to many little veins of history branching out in different directions. While none of those branches have personally connected to me, just learning of Aliff’s story has provoked me to examine my own family history, and I have begun sharing more of what I know with my children and grandchildren.

Legends sometimes are legends just because of the discovery of their existence. While coming from different times and different life experiences, this year’s inductees into the Howard County Hall of Legends shared a common thread. All loved their communities so much that they dedicated their lives to improving the quality of life for all residents and, in some cases, impacting the state and entire nation. Let’s keep marching on with the history of Howard County!

**Sharon Reed, President
HCHS Board of Trustees**

2021 Hall of Legends inductees announced

Watch on March 18 at 6 p.m. on <https://www.facebook.com/HCHistory>

Flossie Bailey

It is a challenge to do justice to the memory of someone like Flossie Bailey, one of those selected to the 2021 Howard County Hall of Legends.

By all reports, she was brave, smart, full of energy, tireless in her pursuit of justice, a keen organizer and leader, even stylish and poised. It would be easy to paint her a saint, but she would probably object. She might point out that while she fought for justice, she failed in her effort to see anyone in Marion, Ind., held to account for the lynching deaths of two black teenagers, Abram Smith and Thomas Shipp.



Flossie Bailey

In fact, she had tried in vain to prevent the lynching but was met with dissembling and evasion from the sheriff, the mayor and even the governor's office. According to James Madison's detailed account of Bailey's life in *Traces Magazine* (2000), she remained frustrated by her failure to stop these murders.

Regardless of hindsight, what is known is that she stayed busy in her Marion home the night of Aug. 7, 1930, calling for calm in the wake of this terrible, shameful event, when a mob dragged and attacked three young men accused of rape and murder from the Marion jail. James Cameron was spared by someone's plea from the crowd, but Smith and Shipp were lynched.

An iconic photograph captured a crowd of

white spectators surrounding their hanging bodies.

Flossie appealed to the governor for the state militia to help quell the ensuing violence threatening all black residents in the area. She organized, which was one of her most valuable traits.

As the Grant County head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, she was known as a force to be reckoned with. She was successful in preventing further bloodshed in the following days. She was also clearly brave, evident from her continued work in the face of threats of violence to she and her family.

Many of her accomplishments are a matter of the public record. Flossie Bailey fought for racial equality. She and her husband sued a movie theatre for being denied entrance because of their race. She became Indiana leader of the NAACP. Significantly, she led a grassroots campaign to get an anti-lynching law passed in Indiana. The 1931 law called for the dismissal of any sheriff from whose jail a prisoner was taken and lynched. This law was essential in defusing the constant threat of vigilante violence to black Hoosiers.

While most people knew of Katherine "Flossie" Bailey from her time living in Marion, she was born in Kokomo in 1894 to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Harvey. She was raised in the city and graduated from Kokomo High School. She married Dr. Walter T. Bailey in 1917 and moved to Marion, where he had established his practice. They had one son, Walter Charles. Flossie soon began her involvement with the recently founded civil rights organization, the NAACP. She formed the Marion branch working diligently for years to gain support and membership. At points, when she feared her phone line was being tapped in Marion, she returned to Kokomo to continue her organizing.

birth to be around 1765, making her closer to 95 or 96 when she died. Aliff Henley's life is a tribute to the enduring human spirit and perseverance spanning an epoch of American history.

What better symbol to her memory than the decoration on her tombstone — a rose in full bloom.

Kokomo Urban Outreach

In 2017, the Hall of Legends Selection Committee decided to not only honor individuals, but also organizations that have had profound and lasting impact on the Howard County community. In this historic moment of economic hardship for so many, the committee immediately considered selecting Kokomo Urban Outreach — and the team that has spent the last 15 years changing lives for the better — for the honor.

At the center of Kokomo Urban Outreach are the 4 Rs — "Respectful, Responsible, Reliable and Ready to work, to lead, to speak up and to solve problems in a positive way." Its mission is to ensure that every young person in Howard County has the education, work ethics, and life skills needed to transition successfully into a self-reliant adult. Over its 15 years, Kokomo Urban Outreach has continued to evolve to meet community needs and improve the future for hundreds of local children.

After founding KUO in 2006, organizers quickly discovered that little could be done to realize these goals without first addressing the problem of hunger. Various programs, including a food bank, were created to make sure the young people of Kokomo had enough to eat.

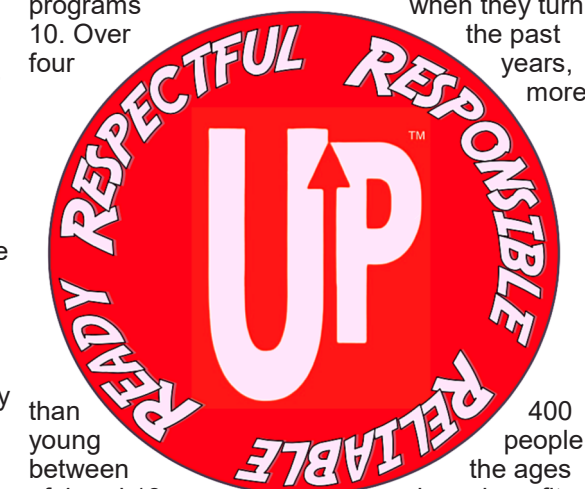
For years, the food programs represented Kokomo Urban Outreach's most visible impact on the community — from the 800,000 community meals served each year throughout the city to the Buddy Bags that provided food for low-income schoolchildren to eat over the weekend. More recently, KUO has worked to reshape its connection with the community, changing the conversation really. Rather than simply providing handouts to people in need, the organization began programs to help people

become self-sustaining.

The evolution continued, as Kokomo Urban Outreach Executive Director Jeff Newton described in a 2016 *Kokomo Tribune* article. The program added an advisory board, made up of members of the program, designed to guide the effort.

"We're trying to help people out of economic despair instead of helping people through it," Newton said. So, KUO stopped serving the weekly dinners and took the funding used for the pantry and moved it to funding a food co-op, where, for a \$10 fee, people learned to prepare meals to cook throughout the week from ingredients KUO provided.

Most significantly, Urban Outreach started new programs under the "UP" logo (for "Unlimited Potential") to help empower young people to work for themselves. First came ManUP in 2016 followed by StepUP4Girls; both are geared toward teens and provide mentoring and tutoring as well as an opportunity for young people to earn gift cards for working in the community. Soon younger siblings of participants wanted to participate and MiniUP was created to prepare boys and girls ages 4 to 9 years to enter regular ManUP or StepUP programs. Over the past four years, more



than young people between the ages of 4 and 18 have benefited from the UP programs.

The changes in the community have been noticeable, Newton said in another interview with the *Tribune*. Attitudes and grades have

County.

An improbable, yet amazing, journey for a remarkable woman who Indiana State Archive records show is the first African American to buy land here. Furthermore, research through the Howard County Historical Society, the Kokomo Early History Learning Center, and the Genealogy and Local History department at the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library has revealed powerful and inspiring details about this matriarch of Howard County.

Though we don't know precisely when she left North Carolina, she and her family were in Indiana sometime around 1835. Marriage records show Henley's daughter, Lucinda, married the Rev. David Rush in Rush County in 1837.

The family ultimately was part of a group of African Americans who migrated from Marion County north to the new Richardville (Howard) County. Also in the group were the pioneers Lewis Clark and John Hardiman. They bought land and began farming around 1844 to 1845 in what would eventually be Ervin and Clay townships, and this cluster of families became the Rush Colored Settlement, some six miles northwest of the county seat of Kokomo.

A brief published history says the settlement was named for the Rev. Rush, who led the church there. Archival accounts say the Rush and the later Bassett Colored settlements each had a school and they shared a Baptist church. Rush also served over the Methodist church and a cemetery. There we find "Alief Henley," whose striking gravestone contains the following inscription: Wife of Samuel Henley. Died Oct. 3, 1861. Aged One Hundred and Ten Years.



Tombstone of first African-American landowner in Howard County, Aliff Henley.

Mysteries remain in Mrs. Henley's story. An apparent marriage to Samuel is undocumented beyond her tombstone. Also, Alief spelled with an "e" has confused researchers for at least 150 years. Archivists attempting to sync the name with other records then and now apparently couldn't decide if it was a man or a woman. The name Alif Henly appears twice in an early county history book, though amazingly not with the descriptions of "Colored" people, churches or schools. First reference is among a list of early settlers, all white men, and Alif Henly. It's impressive that the name was recalled and recorded (with the white guys, no less!). That someone at least remembered her suggests she was notable in meaningful ways.

Like other Indiana pioneers, they came to buy land and help build a community. As the small settlement grew, the Rev. Rush and Case Henley (the same son liberated with his mother in 1801) are two of the individuals entrusted on an 1851 deed to ensure three-quarters of an acre of land in Ervin Township would be used to "Erect or cause to be Built thereon a house or place of Worship," which would be the first African Methodist Episcopal Church – and precursor to today's Wayman Chapel A.M.E. The grantor of land was Mrs. Henley, making the start of the A.M.E. church part of her legacy to Howard County.

She was a woman liberated from slavery in Virginia and North Carolina, who did not read or write, who bought and paid for 80 acres of land with cash money on Nov. 11, 1844 — the earliest date we've found of an African American in Howard County. But how old was she then? A more plausible interpretation of slave records and census schedules presumes her

On the basis of all her accomplishments and the strength of this connection to her hometown, the nominating committee honors Bailey as a Howard County legend.

Sources

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Carver Community Center

For well over 70 years, Carver Community Center has been an integral part of the Kokomo community, promoting wellness for the body, mind and spirit, but its founding in 1947 to provide a recreational facility for African American youth was a long time coming.

The need for such a center grew in a time of institutional segregation in Kokomo. As principal of Kokomo's Douglass School, the Rev. Henry A. Perry Sr. recognized the need for a recreation center for the city's Black young people and began working toward its creation in 1929.

Douglass had opened in 1920 to serve as the city's elementary school for African Americans; its students were not allowed to use the pools, gyms and facilities that young white people took for granted.

It took a March 1940 visit to Douglass School by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to create the needed momentum, and eight years later, in June 1948, Carver Community Center was opened to all the people of Kokomo. Perry had suggested naming it in honor of the eminent Black

scientist and inventor Dr. George Washington Carver, Perry's mentor when he was a student at the Tuskegee Institute.

Carver Center still emulates its original vision of community and organizational collaboration to benefit students of all ethnic backgrounds, and it has continued to evolve to meet changing needs. Today's programs include basketball, mentoring, tutoring, drama, art, games, boxing, drug and abuse prevention, and a myriad of after-school activities.

Carver Community Center leaders and volunteers take pride in the fact that their programs not only support the area's youth, but their entire families. Events at the center bring generations together in a fun and social environment designed to nurture the best qualities of each individual.

The center has also become a major location for pickleball. Almost every square inch of the basketball courts now bears the lines and portable nets for the game that is all the rage for local senior citizens.

Donta Rogers, the current director of the cen-



In a historic photo, children try out a trampoline at Carver Community Center.

ter, is a perfect example of how “Carver” has spanned generations. People who came to the center as kids now bring their kids. In a 2018 newspaper interview, Rogers explained: “[Growing up] I got to come and experience actually playing with other kids in the community,” he said. “I was here every day – we have this game room, and I thought our game room was just the best thing ever. It had pool, ping pong, board games ... and then we had the basketball court. Especially if it was bad outside, we had some place to go that was inside.”

Of course, for decades, Carver Community Center has been most well-known for its tradition of basketball. Youth and adults of all ages travel from miles around to watch and participate in Carver’s camps, clubs and teams. Carver’s basketball programs range from kindergarten and up through adults, offering this most Hoosier of sports to boys and girls, men and women.

In August 2017, the 70th anniversary of the Carver Community Center was celebrated for an entire weekend with a homecoming, dinner and worship service. More than 350 people attended the recognition dinner that Saturday, including 25 family members of the Rev. Perry, the center’s founder. It was a clear demonstration of how many lives have been positively impacted by the center over the years.

As with all organizations, money is never in great enough supply to meet the needs for building upkeep and improvement along with programming costs. Support has come through donations and grants from the City of Kokomo, the Community Foundation of Howard County, Center Township and the United Way, along with many generous individuals. In recent years, Community Development Block Grant funding by the City of Kokomo has gone to a variety of improvements, including replacing roofs, windows, downspouts and gutters and cleaning and tuckpointing the bricks.

Carver is here to stay, with plans to continue to grow and serve the community.

“We want to do more things for kindergarten and up, so that would mean more tutoring, more after-school programs, nutrition programs

– where we can teach kids more about how to eat, how to prepare food and how to set up a table, more reading programs so kids can be ready to go back to school and more activities for kids like field trips,” Rogers said.

Paraphrasing a story in the *Kokomo Tribune*, more than 70 years after its founding, Carver Community Center serves as a pillar of the community. For some, it has been a home away from home. For others, it was the happening place to be after school. But for all, it has been a safe place to gather, be active and socialize in Kokomo. An apt description of a facility and program that has nurtured hundreds of people over several generations.

Baggie Hardimon

He was a true renaissance man. His accomplishments were extraordinary. He performed with the biggest names in popular music, and a dozen or so of his own band’s recordings from the 1940s are searchable online. His name appears in notable mid-20th-century jazz anthologies.

Closer to home in a second career phase, he supported his community as a local labor leader, while still performing at venues ranging from Kokomo dinner clubs to Indiana Pacers home games in Indianapolis.

Family members say he “moved mountains.” Yet this Kokomo native who played high school basketball and later played guitar at the famed and fabled Apollo Theatre in New York City, never lost his sense of humility.

He got down on his knees and prayed. Every night of his life.

Orval Chester Hardimon, later known professionally and affectionately as “Baggie,” was born in Kokomo on May 25, 1913, the son of Pearl and Carrie Hardimon. He started playing music in high school as a drummer, then switched to guitar. The first appearance of his name as a performer is as an instrumentalist in a 1937 musical program at Wayman Chapel A.M.E. Church (he was a lifelong member). Switching to the secular scene in the late 1930s, “Baggie Hardimon and his swingsters” had gigs at the Izaak Walton Club and the D. &

D. Tavern on East Markland Avenue.

By 1940 he was performing in Indianapolis and the February 1941 obituary for his grandfather indicated he had moved to Buffalo, New York. He had made it to the East Coast, and the big time.

Accomplished and dignified, he was an electrifying entertainer who mingled easily with other musicians and dazzled sophisticated East Coast audiences. During the 1940s and 1950s, various incarnations of his jazz band recorded at least 15 tracks issued by several record labels at the time. The group backed everyone from Louis Armstrong to Ella Fitzgerald. Hardimon performed with Pearl Bailey and Billie Holliday. He jammed with orchestral jazz lead-



Orval Chester “Baggie” Hardimon

er Stan Kenton and studied with Jimmy Smith, who revolutionized the use of the Hammond B-3 organ as a jazz and soul instrument.

Hardimon continued that tradition. For years after leaving the East Coast for the gentler rhythms of Indiana, he taught guitar and organ to area youth and continued to perform locally almost to the end of his life. Jet Magazine ran a picture of him in 1971 accepting an award for the longest engagement at the Grissom Air Force Base Officers’ Club. He regularly accompanied local singers at area venues, and even

judged a beauty contest or two. For his “day job” back home, Hardimon started as a janitor at the General Motors Corporation’s Delco plant in Kokomo, ultimately rising to the role of civil rights chairperson for the area union local. He knew people and knew what was important, and was always available to help a fellow union member and never too busy to call on an elderly shut-in.

A fascinating recent addition to his story was found in records relating to a remarkable family history. Research shows Hardimon is a direct descendant of John Hardiman from Virginia, born around 1792. Ancestor John is listed in the 1840 census schedules in Indiana, and a few years later he and a group of other African Americans from Marion County headed north. Their land purchases in Ervin and Clay townships from 1844 to 1847 place them among the original African American pioneers in Howard County, with John Hardiman among the area’s early farmers.

Descendant Orval Chester died on March 31, 1999, at the age of 85 (his wife Marian had preceded him in death). His zest for people, his love of family and friends, and a sense of purpose in the way he applied his extraordinary talent throughout a long and eventful life ensures a lasting legacy for the man named Baggie Hardimon.

Aliff Henley

In Aug. 12, 1779, in Princess Anne County, Virginia, an elderly white woman named Mary Fentress paid property tax for an enslaved human being – the “negro Aliff.”

On Nov. 2, 1801, in Randolph County, North Carolina, Edward Fentress presented a manumission petition to the court on behalf of his brother George, requesting that one Aliff Henley and her child Case be liberated from the shackles of slavery.

On Nov. 11, 1844, the very same Mrs. Aliff Henley, 500 miles and 43 years from bondage, was first in line that day at the land office in Delphi, Ind., where she paid \$280 “in full” for 80 acres of farmland in northwestern Howard