

The Wellspring

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Inclusion is the Wellspring of Democracy

Mississippi Coalition Calls for New Vision for the State

In July, representatives from faith-based organizations and non-profits in Mississippi assembled to begin discerning appropriate ways to follow-up on the positive momentum created by the justice process undertaken by citizens in Neshoba County. Convened by the Winter Institute, the group immediately noted the Philadelphia Coalition's work as its touchstone and took the name "Mississippi Coalition" to honor the multiracial effort to honestly appraise the past in order to move forward together.

*We offer as our touchstone
the experience of Philadelphia.
In order to rebuild, we must
first engage all citizens.*

As the group met over the summer, it reached out to similar organizations and began to identify a common vision of an equitable, inclusive society. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has focused the group's attention on matters of race and poverty. In December, it released its first statement and seeks to identify other partners to join in fashioning a more just and harmonious state. We include the group's statement on the back cover. To find out more information or to join the Mississippi Coalition, please contact the Winter Institute.

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Summer Interns Bring Creativity, Fresh Perspective

Jennifer Sokoler

On my first day as an intern with the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, I traveled to McComb, Mississippi to observe the final meeting of the entire McComb City School District administration with representatives of the Washington D.C.-based not-for-profit organization, Teaching for Change. I had no idea what to expect. Not only was this my first day as an intern, it was my first day in a state south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Growing up in New York, my impressions of the South were largely shaped by my understanding of the South's history before the Civil War and during the Civil Rights Movement. Although I knew that racism was a national phenomenon, the stereotypes of Southerners that I had been fed all of my life made this fact easy to forget. The administrators in McComb exposed my prejudices—these people were the most progressive individuals I have ever met.

With the support of the WWIRR and Teaching for Change, the McComb School District has embarked on the challenging task of developing a Civil Rights Movement curriculum that gives appropriate consideration to the role of local people in the national struggle for equality in the United States. Not only is this kind of curriculum historically accurate, but it is also replete with meaningful messages that our children need to be hearing in school. Specifically, this kind of curriculum provides children with role-models, especially women and young people, who were active in the movement and made a lasting impact on their communities and our democracy.

During their first sessions, the administrators struggled to come to terms with difficult personal histories that were inextricably linked to the Civil Rights Movement. A great deal of violence took place in McComb during the Movement; it was colloquially cited as the “Bombing Capitol of America” due to the high number of church bombings there. At Burgland

High School a student walkout in support of the Movement resulted in the expulsion of a number of students, some of whom were now participating in these workshops.

Both African American and white administrators were concerned about the potential danger of reopening old wounds or exposing deep family secrets in an inappropriate forum. As one woman said during the first session, “I don't

want to expose my children to that kind of violence – that doesn't help anything.” The dialogue reached a turning point when the administrators read a passage written by an ex-Klan member who explained both his initial interest in the KKK as well as the process that ultimately freed him from the organization. The theme that resonated throughout the ensuing conversation was the significance of fear in perpetuating an unjust status quo. The administrators were quick to make the link

between the fear-driven violence that prevailed during the Movement and fear that persists in our society today.

One woman shared a story about her son who had just returned from Iraq. He was particularly troubled by the lack of regard his fellow soldiers had shown for the innocent bystanders because of a general fear of Arabs. To teach about the Civil Rights Movement is to teach about overcoming fear, in all its forms, the administrator argued. We must learn to recognize each other's common humanity.

A few hours with those administrators and teachers forced me to recognize and reevaluate almost all of my assumptions about Southerners. Motivated to take action because of their concern for today's youth, the McComb School District has been willing to take risks that my school district in Albany, New York, would have dismissed as too dangerous. The courage, compassion, and candor that I witnessed in June have inspired me to pursue similar dialogues back in New York. And I now realize that only the important stereotypes are true—the South does have the best fried chicken and sweet tea!



Jen Sokoler gives Akvia Anderson a piggy back ride while exploring the hotel.

We Are the People We've Been Waiting For

Michael J. Green

From the moment I walked into the door
The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation
Made me think about my own Emancipation
How could I be free? Free enough to free people like me
Restrained and contained. So many slain only to rise
again like a
Phoenix from the ashes of history's shame
To make a brighter way
We need to reconcile the wrongs of yesterday.
And that's what I gained.
It was plain to see that I was in the company of people
Willing to right these wrongs
Willing to bring to the light the forgotten names
Bring to justice the perpetrators of destruction
In order to foster a true community
Their struggle was shown to me
And it was much appreciated
I was glad for the honor
The chance to give back
Educate the youth because they are the future
Learn from the old because they hold the knowledge
Oral histories told, shared across racial lines, across generations
I witnessed this type of magic performed first hand
And some how I became more of a man
When I realized that, *We are the People that We've Been
Waiting For*



Michael Green and Jonah Aloia

With a 3-2 Count, MS goes 41 and 1: Baseball, Race, and a Glimpse of a New America

Kirk Sims

With the red Mississippi clay under foot the kids took to the field. Without regard for skill level, sex, or race, we divided up into two teams in preparation for a pickup game. The most talented players were a group of native Philadelphian boys who had been “hitting around;” both teams coveted their presence. Then the six children from Rome, Mississippi, ranging in ages from seven to eighteen, were selected for play. The Winter Institute staff then picked up gloves and separated ourselves between the teams. An afternoon of baseball was poised to begin. With the sun beating down in punishing heat, the first pitch was thrown.

That Wednesday was not just any Wednesday for the boys and girls who found themselves out on that field. It was June 22, the day after the 41st anniversary of a grim and gruesome event, the murder of three young men who came to Mississippi looking for peace and equality and were instead handed their death sentences. Andy Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner might have even played baseball on a field like the one we played on this day, with one difference, of course. That field certainly would have been segregated. Children in Mississippi would never have dreamed of playing a mixed race baseball game, as innocent as it might have been. So, forty-one years and one day had changed something here, even if it was as minor as one game of America's favorite pastime.

That day held another milestone for Mississippi. It was the day following the conviction of Edgar Ray Killen, an eighty year old Baptist preacher, on manslaughter charges for masterminding the murder of those three boys. In the courtroom, in a moment steeped with emotion, the past collided with the present. The families of the deceased sat silent as the family of the convicted looked on, the roles reversed from years gone by, and the people of this small Mississippi town finally were able to get some relief from the horror of that night.

So we will play baseball. We will join together on teams. We will shake hands after the game, all the while remembering the sacrifices of a few who gave us all this great privilege. We shall overcome indeed.

Mississippi Learning

Annette Hollowell

The morning of June 22, 2005, a contagious buzz circulated a large gathering of Mississippi educators in the cafeteria of Philadelphia High School. A day earlier, a few blocks away in a courthouse in the center of the town square, Edgar Ray Killen was sentenced for his involvement in the 1964 murders of three civil rights workers. The days following the trial provided an additional catalyst for a much-needed conversation on the national status of civil rights education. The first Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Living Memorial Civil Rights Education Summit commenced with a dynamic opening panel consisting of Lawrence Guyot, a veteran civil rights activist and the former chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democrat Party, veteran activist and educator Maggie Donovan, Dr. Jenice View of Teaching for Change, Philadelphia Coalition member Fenton Deweese, and the then-State Superintendent of Education Dr. Henry Johnson.

This rousing opening panel inspired the members of the audience as they expressed their concerns about the necessity and benefits of, as well as the sensitivities around, teaching children and educators about America's struggles with race, class, and our shared inheritance of racism. The workshops ranged from strategies on how to teach civil rights to young children and junior high students, to the effective use of archived media and records, to using oral histories, to teaching in the wake of public trauma. Additional

accounts of the movement. At the close of the summit many of the participants sealed this experience with tours of Philadelphia's civil rights sites.

In a state with a bounty of local civil rights history and thousands of unsung heroes, it is a disservice to every Mississippian



The opening panel consisted of (from left to right) Dr. Jenice View, Maggie Donovan, Lawrence Guyot, and Dr. Henry Johnson.

when these stories remain buried under a veil of fear and misinformation that has plagued this nation's past and impeded its future. Learning about the movement teaches all people about the power of community, and, as Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi encouraged, our individual responsibility to be the change we want to see in the world. A major premise of the summit was that students should not be taught what to think so much as how to think. Young people must be given tools that will enable them to think critically about all of the world's influences vying for their attention. Critical thinking helps protect the minds and bodies of a generation under attack, enabling them to make better decisions, to live healthier lives, and to work towards healing a troubled world, one person at a time.

The Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Living Memorial Civil Rights Education Summit was sponsored by the Neshoba Education Foundation, the Philadelphia Coalition, Philadelphia High School, UNESCO's Breaking the Silence Project, and the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation. The 2nd annual summit will be held in McComb, Mississippi, on June 21-23, 2006. If you would like to participate next year as a presenter, or if you would like additional information, please contact the William Winter Institute at (662) 915-6734 or wwirr@olemiss.edu.



Enthusiastic educators from school districts all around the State were in attendance.

roundtable discussions focused on the role of education in civic empowerment and the creation of a regional network of educators committed to teaching locally inclusive, grassroots

Bradley Arant Establishes Scholarship for UM Law Students at the Institute

Bradley Arant Rose & White LLP is pleased to announce the establishment of the Bradley Arant Rose & White LLP/William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation Scholarship in Law, an endowed fund at the University of Mississippi Foundation to benefit students in the University of Mississippi School of Law.

The Bradley Arant/Winter Institute Scholarship fund will assist deserving men and women who are pursuing a degree in the UM School of Law and who have demonstrated a commitment to racial reconciliation and community development. Recipients will be selected from among the entering class of full-time law students with at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average, who have submitted an essay on the importance of racial reconciliation and their personal interest in that cause. During the course of their law study, each recipient will serve in an internship program with the Winter Institute. Recipients may receive the scholarship award each year for three years, contingent on their maintaining a cumulative 3.0 GPA.

On hand recently in Bradley Arant's One Jackson Place offices for the formal announcement were former Mississippi Governor William Winter, Ole Miss Law School Dean Sam Davis, and Winter Institute Director Dr. Susan Glisson, surrounded by a host of Bradley Arant lawyers.

"The Institute for Racial Reconciliation was established to build bridges between people of different races, to enhance education and economic development for people in this area, and to work together around the common causes that unite us as human beings," said former Governor Winter. "The scholarship that Bradley Arant is endowing is the Institute's first, and this is a very special milestone. I don't know of any other scholarship identified with a public university in America that is designated specifically for those who have demonstrated an interest in racial reconciliation."

"The fact that this scholarship is being set up at the Ole Miss School of Law seems very fitting, given the unrest that occurred when the University of Mississippi was desegregat-

ed in 1962," the former governor added. "I think that says a lot about how far our state has come and I am hopeful that Bradley Arant's very generous commitment will encourage others to make similar contributions to the future well-being of Mississippi and all her citizens."

"I am personally very grateful to the members of the Bradley Arant firm with whom I am acquainted and who have a long-standing commitment to racial reconciliation as individuals," Gov. Winter continued. "Not only is the law firm itself contributing to this new scholarship, but individual members of the firm are also making significant personal contributions over a period of years."

Dr. Glisson, who has directed the Institute's activities and programs since November 2002, noted, "It's always been at the heart of our work that we reach out to students and have them

become involved in our programs. For Bradley Arant Rose & White to reinforce that approach with a scholarship for law students really underscores the importance for us of building a new generation of leaders." She also offered high praise for former Governor Winter, saying, "He sets the standard for service to others, and if we accomplish only half of what he has accomplished in his

distinguished career, we will be doing very well indeed."

"We are extremely excited to support education and this opportunity for up and coming law students," said Cory Wilson, the attorney in Bradley Arant's Jackson office who spearheaded the firm's involvement in establishing the scholarship. "We believe it's important for the firm to do our part to foster a better Mississippi and a better America by continuing Governor Winter's legacy of racial healing and progress."

Governor Winter paid tribute to a number of individuals who have played key roles in creating and implementing the Institute. "University of Mississippi Chancellor Dr. Robert Khayat has been totally supportive of this effort and has put his imprimatur on it. Dean Sam Davis of the Ole Miss Law School has also been involved every step of the



Bradley Arant Scholarship announcement.

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Philadelphia Coalition presented C.C. Bryant

Edwin Smith

OXFORD, Miss. – The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at The University of Mississippi honored the Philadelphia Coalition on October 25, for its work in the civil rights movement.

The first C.C. Bryant Award for Community Organizing was presented during a standing-room-only ceremony in the Johnson Commons Ballroom. The award is named to honor Bryant, 88, of McComb, said Susan Glisson, director of the institute.

“I find it so fitting that we present Mr. Bryant this award at this time,” said Glisson. “As we remember Miss Rosa, we pay tribute to those still with us who helped topple segregation and injustice in Mississippi.” Glisson was referring to civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, who died the day before the event.

As a result of the Coalition’s push for justice, earlier this year Edgar Ray Killen was brought to trial and convicted for his role in the murders of the three civil rights workers in Neshoba County in 1964.

Eleven members of the coalition—eight black and three white—were present for the ceremony.

“This truly is an honor for us,” said Leroy Clemmons, co-chairman of the coalition, in his acceptance speech. “We are deeply thankful for the help of the William Winter Institute for its assistance in our endeavors. Like Mr. Bryant and his family, we plan to keep on going until the system of racism is ultimately dismantled.”

Rita Bender, widow of Mickey Schwerner—one of the three murdered civil rights workers—delivered the keynote address before the awards ceremony. In her lecture, “The Legacy of Slavery,” the Seattle attorney spoke about racism as a legacy this country must settle.



Rita Bender, widow of Mickey Schwerner, delivered the keynote address before the awards ceremony.



C.C. Bryant (right) and family

“We are still a racist society and will be so as long as we fail to confront the legacy of slavery,” said Bender, “We must have truth before we can have reconciliation.”

nt Award by the Winter Institute



Philadelphia Coalition members

of violence against African-Americans.

“Mississippi has never apologized for its governmental conduct. Each and every one of you is entitled to an apology,” she added.

The speaker urged the audience to continue challenging the system, knowing that persistence will eventually pay off.

“The Philadelphia Coalition is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when, despite intimidation and violence people courageously stand for what is right,” she said.



Leroy Clemmons, Coalition co-chair, accepts the award.

Citing numerous atrocities committed by the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, Bender blasted the state’s government for legalizing the obstruction of justice, withholding economic empowerment, and committing acts

“The Philadelphia Coalition is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when...people courageously stand for what is right.”

—Rita Bender

Bryant echoed Bender’s sentiments in remarks afterwards.

“This is your opportunity. Stand up. Speak up. Make your voices heard,” he said.

A brief video biography of Bryant’s life also was shown. Bryant’s granddaughter, Judith Barlow, a Southern Studies graduate student at UM, created the short video and is working on a full-length documentary about her grandfather and the Mississippi civil rights movement.

Save These Dates!

March 17-19, 2006

We invite individuals and organizations from across the South to gather and imagine new forms of responding to the legacies of racial violence in their communities. The three-day conference, to be held March 17-19, 2006, at the University of Mississippi, emerges from the initial work of three groups interested in exploring the potential of a regional coalition focused on racial reconciliation: The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi (Oxford, MS), The Birmingham Pledge (Birmingham, AL), and Southern Truth and Reconciliation (Atlanta, GA).

The conference aims to introduce attendees to the idea of an alliance and then enact a process to create a regional collaboration capable of supporting local community groups in their reconciliation efforts.

Drawing explicitly on the diverse experiences and responses of participants, plenary and break-out sessions will begin with “best practices” from a range of existing community groups. By highlighting these practices, and the larger community stories in which they are embedded, the conference will offer participants multiple points for connecting their own stories and practices to the work of others. In addition, the World Café conversation model, to be used throughout the conference, will facilitate focused reflection on how these connections might be best served through a regional organizational structure.

The conference will culminate in the creation of structures for carrying forward a regional collaboration, including:

- Selecting an appropriate name
- Identifying leadership
- Formalizing the relationship between local community groups and regional organizations
- Drafting recommendations for the content of future meetings

Please feel free to invite members of your governor’s policy staff and state legislators who may be interested in this work. The conference is free and open to the public. To register, you may visit us on the web at: www.olemiss.edu/winterinstitute. To learn more, you may contact the Winter Institute at 662-915-6734 or wwirr@olemiss.edu.

Washington, D.C., Event Honors Gov. Winter

An event in the nation’s capital raised more than \$50,000 this past June. Combined with other support over the last six months, the Institute was able to meet the second year match of the challenge grant from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation.

We are indebted to the more than 50 co-hosts of the event, who honored Gov. William Winter with their financial support. They included congressional and civil rights leaders, as well as friends and family of the governor.

This Washington, D.C., event at the Army and Navy

Club attracted more than 160 guests. The gala was the first resource development activity held for the Winter Institute outside the state of Mississippi.

“The institute has been supported by an effective external resource advisory board, which has organized several events around the state,” said Susan Glisson, director. “The D.C. event signals the institute’s growing national reputation and support.”

For more information on the event and to see photographs from the event, please visit the Institute’s web site: www.olemiss.edu/winterinstitute.

Institute Supports Research in Economics

Elaine Pugh

Research that investigates the economic consequences of minority discrimination is under way by the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation and the Department of Economics. The institute is providing financial support to economics faculty to explore an econometric model of race on a statewide level.

Facts gleaned from the work should help promote the institute's mission to educate communities about the harmful effects of racism and its legacies so that, armed with good information, they can begin to create more vibrant, healthy communities for everyone, said Susan Glisson, director.

"We believe that, while many people may engage in the work of reconciliation because it is the right thing to do, others may be prodded to join us because of pragmatic reasons or those reasons that appeal to self-interest," Glisson said.

Projects include research by Jon Moen, associate professor, which addresses the question "What would per capita income in Mississippi have been if economic growth had continued after 1880 in the absence of economic discrimination and exclusion for a significant part of the population?"

"This gives a counterfactual estimate of lost economic opportunities arising from limiting a large share of the population from full access to the economy," Moen said. "I got interested in this issue from a study I did a number of years ago comparing agricultural productivity in cotton production before and after the Civil War." Moen says he expects to have a rough draft of the research by end of January and the project completed by end of spring.

In other related collaboration, Johnny Ducking, a sec-

ond-year graduate student in economics, attended the American Economic Association Summer Program and Minority Scholarship Program at Duke University, held jointly with North Carolina A&T University.

There he teamed with Marquise McGraw of Cornell University to explore an econometric model of black/white wage differential in the eastern half of the country. Using U.S. Census figures for 1980, 1990, and 2000 and dividing the area into sections, they applied mathematical and statistical methods and found evidence that the black/white wage gap varies from area to area.

When taking the nation as a whole, research shows that the overall wage difference between blacks and whites is decreasing, "but for someone in an area where this seems not to be true, we want to get a better picture of what's going on," Ducking said. If discrimination factors seem to be causing the black/white wage differential to increase, then it might make sense to continue such programs as affirmative action in certain areas, he added.

While his summer research was not an in-depth analysis because of time constraints and other factors, Ducking said he came away with ideas for more work. He is to receive a graduate assistantship from the Winter Institute to continue his research, working under Dr. Anthony Young. The ultimate aim, says Young, is "to put aside misperceptions about race and poverty in Mississippi and gain a constructive understanding of the problem."

When both studies are completed, the Winter Institute will make them available to the public.



Chancellor Robert Khayat speaks with co-host Senator Thad Cochran.



Several guests enjoy the Institute's Washington, D.C., event.

An Experience of a Lifetime

Elaineia Braggs

It was the final few weeks of the school year when Dr. Glisson and a few from the University of Mississippi came down to a very small town by the name of Rome, MS. As we all sat together in conversation about what we were going to accomplish during our summer break, one of the employees suggested that we take a trip to Philadelphia, MS.

“Philadelphia, MS, you’ve got to be kidding me,” was the statement I made to myself. I definitely wasn’t interested in going there after I found out that it was the place where three Civil Rights activists were killed in the 60s and no one was convicted for it.

After listening to Dr. Glisson and the other employees, I learned that in June the state was planning on having a trial for the murders of the three Civil Rights activists. Finding out this, I was overjoyed that justice would finally be served.

As time passed I watched interviews of people who were young when the murders occurred. Some of the people who were teens or younger at the time expressed how they felt during that time and how they feel now. I started to feel the

pain that they experienced, and it was a feeling of injustice.

On June 21, 2005, we traveled to Philadelphia, MS, where the trial for Mr. Edgar Ray Killen was in session, and they were about to give the verdict. On the second day of our trip, we attended the education summit where we participated in interviews about the trial, what we thought about civil rights, and our plans for the future after attending this event. I was pleased with the summit, and I met a lot of Civil Rights activists (like Mr. Leroy Clemons, Mr. Lawrence Guyot, and Reverend Clinton Collier) and enjoyed their time, encouragement, and experiences that they shared with us. We were also a part of a “Youth Teach Youth” workshop presented by Annette Hollowell from the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

I feel that this summer was a great experience not only for my peers and myself but for many adults as well. I would like to thank Dr. Susan Glisson and the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi and also Mr. Leroy Clemons for welcoming us with open arms.



Collier Mars Civil Rights Collection Dedication

(Left to Right) Elaineia Braggs and Brionna Knighten announce the dedication of the Collier Mars Civil Rights Collection for Children housed at the Philadelphia Public Library. The collection is named in honor of Rev. Clinton Collier and Florence Mars, Philadelphia residents recognized for their civil rights leadership.

My Summer

Brionna Knighten

This was one of the busiest summers I've ever had. The first part of the summer I worked, then I took off a few days to go to Philadelphia, MS, and then I went to a summer program at Mississippi Valley State University. Although my summer was busy, I wished it would have never ended.

Working in a summer program is the only job I would have liked to have had while in high school. My request was granted this summer. I worked for Twenty-First Century at

observed how to teach and mold the lives of young people. On a scale from one to ten, this job was an eleven.

While working, I took off three days to have the experience of a lifetime. Dr. Susan Glisson and her staff arranged for the youth of RCDO (Rome Community Development Organization) Youth Resource Center to take a trip to Philadelphia, MS. While there we learned more about the murders of the three civil rights workers, the Choctaw Nation, and how to have "good old fun." We interviewed civil rights activists who were Philadelphia residents that were around during the murders of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner, and three of us had a chance to be on the local news and to be interviewed by BBC. It was so exciting. To top it off, we played baseball with a local team, ate dinner with a local church, and explored the Golden Moon and the Silver Star hotels. I wish I could do it all over again.

The last part of my summer I went to the HBCU-UP Summer Science Program at MVSU. I learned so much, especially in math, which was one of my weaker subjects. Although it was only a three-week program, I learned how to socialize better with people and how to balance my time properly. This was also

an experience I will never forget.

This summer seemed to fly by in days, but I enjoyed every minute. I only had about 15 days to relax, but everything I did made a positive impact on my life in more ways than anyone can imagine. This summer's events were pillars to support and influence my life forever.



RCDO youth interviewing Jewel McDonald. (Front Row) Gregory Braggs, Jewel McDonald, Akvia Anderson. (Back Row) Elaineia Braggs, Showanda Pigue, Brionna Knighten, and Sherika Pigue.

West Tallahatchie High School for approximately a month. Shaping the lives of kids younger than I am has been my passion for a while. In this program I had a chance to do that. Although I didn't interact with the students all of the time because I was an assistant to the site coordinator, I often visited classes and tried to set a good example for them. I also

Bradley Arant *continued from Page 5*

way, and Institute Director Susan Glisson has been busy doing the Institute's very good work. The credit should go to these folks who have really been putting all this together and I can't say enough good things about them," he said.

The Bradley Arant/Winter Institute Scholarship program is being established as an academic scholarship under

accepted guidelines of the Department of Financial Aid at the University of Mississippi. A committee consisting of representatives from Bradley Arant Rose & White LLP and the Winter Institute will select the scholarship recipients.

For more information on Bradley Arant Rose & White LLP, please visit the firm's website at www.bradleyarant.com.

Statement of the Mississippi Coalition on Hurricane Katrina

In June, 2004, the community of Philadelphia, Mississippi, witnessed a rebirth. That positive renewal grew from a courageous commitment on the part of a multiracial group of community leaders to honestly appraise their past and its legacy of racism. They showed us that such explorations, however painful, can be positive and productive and can establish a more inclusive, sustainable foundation for community development.

It was this inspiring and instructive event that drew us, the Mississippi Coalition, together over the summer. Representing many of the major faith-based and non-profit groups throughout our state, we came together to build on the model of Philadelphia.

Hurricane Katrina has now laid bare for many of us the illusion that we have always cared adequately for others. For too many Americans who have no safety net, the catastrophe of the storm was exceeded only by the inability of officials to respond quickly and efficiently to their needs. While the wrath of the storm affected all in its path, many suffered disproportionately because we, as a nation, have long been indifferent to their anguish.

As affected areas in the state are rebuilt, the Coalition hopes now to also offer a long-term vision, one that engages the harder but deeper questions of creating communities that raise the quality of life, i.e. affordable housing, schools, health care, child care, jobs, and transportation, for all residents, regardless of income level.

We offer as our touchstone the experience of Philadelphia. In order to rebuild, we must first engage all citizens. We must be mindful of racial and economic dynamics that have both disproportionately handicapped many people in dealing with this catastrophe and which, if not attended to, will render them invisible in the rebuilding process, thus re-entrenching inequities we would all like to erase.

We offer our energies, resources, and insight as partners in the rebuilding process. We hope that the Governor's Commission for Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal and its subcommittees will reflect these concerns both in their personnel and operations. Such an inclusive process will insure the credibility of the work that is to be done. We stand ready to help identify a common vision and to implement that vision for the good of all Mississippians.



The University of Mississippi



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