

The Wellspring

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Inclusion is the Wellspring of Democracy

William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation Welcomes Major Gift from Namesake's Law Firm

Deidra Jackson

Long before the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi began its ambitious work of fostering racial progress through civic renewal projects, the Institute's namesake already had garnered a universal reputation for his respected contributions to racial equity.

The Institute, which in 2003 was renamed for William F. Winter, a UM alumnus in private law practice in Jackson and the state's former governor from 1980 to 1984, now picks up more momentum for its grass-roots work. An inaugural \$50,000 gift from Winter's Jackson law firm, Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis, P.A., creates an endowment that ensures the Institute can accomplish its mission in perpetuity.

"Our gift to the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation Endowment is in honor of William's lifelong service to the firm, community and racial reconciliation," said Tommy Shepherd, chief executive officer at Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis, P.A. and a UM alumnus. "We wish to help the Institute in its activities, while focusing on the life and service of William Winter."

Chancellor Robert Khayat said the law firm's gift is exceptional and is consistent with the practice's rich legacy of community involvement.

"By providing leadership and committing time and energy through its own thoughtful community outreach initiatives, Watkins Ludlam

continued on Back Cover

In this issue:

- 2 First Year Match Met for Hearin Grant
Revisiting Freedom Summer
- 4 On Race, Criminal Justice and Education
- 5 On Truth and Freedom
- 6 Children's Project Sheds New Light on the Past
- 7 Handbook of Best Practices Now Available
- 8 Winter Institute Donors
- 9 My Thoughts on the Winter Institute
Civil Rights Summit Sends Teachers Back to School
- 10 Embracing Yesterday
- 11 Coming Home to Tell a Story



First Year Match Met for Hearin Grant—Strategic Planning Underway

Susan M. Glisson

Last year's challenge grant from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation greatly increased the resources of the Institute and offered an opportunity for further funding through a match program. For every annual pledge of \$125,000 that donors are able to match, the Hearin Foundation will provide an additional \$125,000 a year in operational funds to the



Institute. We are pleased to note that we have met this first year's challenge.

Alan Moore, chairman of the Institute's advisory board, oversaw a funding drive over the last year that culminated in the match. "We are pleased with the number of private individuals who have invested in the mission of the Institute," said Moore, a Jackson-based attorney. "We are excited about the opportunities ahead to match the Hearin grant each year."

With this new funding comes a responsibility to plan its use carefully. Institute staff and its board have undertaken a strategic planning process over the course of the next six to eight months in order to be thoughtful in growing the work of the Institute. Primary needs exist now for additional staff and the planning process will help support that process.

For more information on how to contribute to the Hearin match program, please contact the Institute at wwirr@olemiss.edu or call us at 662-915-6734. You may also contribute on the web at: <https://www.umf.olemiss.edu:444/makeagift/creditcard.asp>.

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Revisiting Freedom

Jeannetta Craigwell-Graham

I had big shoes to fill. Freedom Summer was more than an internship, it was about fulfilling a promise. It was a promise to the young, inexperienced activists of 1964, who had no example to follow, so they chose to follow their hearts. I attempted to do the same in Oxford, Mississippi. I resisted the urge to fill the cast already set for me and settle into a corporate office.



Jeannetta Craigwell-Graham teaches children in Rome to conduct oral histories.

The University of Mississippi has made several attempts to reconcile its bloody past; the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation is one of the best of those efforts. The black residents of Rome, Mississippi, lived without a sewer system, seemingly throwing their cries of protest to the wind, because the white members of their community initially chose to ignore them. It was the Institute's first project and the demonstration of the staff's passion for social justice inspired me.

We got the unique opportunity to work on three different projects dealing with social justice. Working with the Institute we helped to commemorate the slain civil rights workers of 1964 in Philadelphia, Mississippi. It was a monumental moment for a community that seemed would be forever scarred by hatred. The event spearheaded a campaign to reopen the case and finally allow justice to be served. Hundreds of civil rights leaders were in attendance, allowing us to meet amazing individuals like Rep. John Lewis. We initiated a similar heal-

Summer: An Intern's Perspective

ing process for McComb, a place where over 25 homes and churches were bombed and burned during Freedom Summer of 1964. The community shared a reluctance to reopen its painful wounds, and we stepped in to assure them that their efforts were courageous. Confrontation with the past, they learned, is often necessary to carry on with the future.

“I believe that when we all care about the hardships of those around us the world would really be equal for everyone.”

The second project we worked on was the *This Little Light Project*. It was a program modeled on work by former civil rights activists to preserve the oral histories of the many unrecognized civil rights leaders in their communities. The project targeted junior/high school students in three different areas of Mississippi: Greenwood, Batesville, and Rome. Even though all the kids were taught to operate the media equipment and properly interview, every site was different. We saw ordinary people emerge as extraordinary heroes of the civil rights era. We also observed the glimmer of possibility for many of the participants in the program. Kids in the poorest region of the United States, who had never considered anything beyond what each day brought them, realized they could be extraordinary as well.

Finally, working directly with the AMOS Network, an Industrial Areas Foundation affiliate in Mississippi, we immersed ourselves in the concerns of the Oxford community. The AMOS Network is a network of faith-based institutions that are in search of social justice in their communities. I was given the County and City Planning Committee and helped them to obtain a concrete definition of affordable housing. Most city employees of Oxford were left outside the actual community because of the city accommodation for students and retirees. Hopefully, it will be my report that will allow a new family or single mother to purchase an affordable home in Oxford, Mississippi.

Of course my summer taught me that the ways to achieve social justice are numerous and possible. But I think what my internship has allowed me to acquire is more



UM students and Winter Summer interns volunteer at the June Philadelphia Coalition event.



2004 Summer interns greet Gov. Winter in Philadelphia.

important. I have gained consciousness. Yes, I knew about poverty and unemployment, but I can say that I never noticed the struggle of those all around me. I believe that when we all care about the hardships of those around us the world will really be equal for everyone. My Freedom Summer experience has meant that I can go beyond the charity of volunteer service and actually help the oppressed people I never noticed.

The Institute and the Department of English co-sponsor a creative writing program at the correctional facility in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Mr. Inman won the first creative writing contest for inmates and we are pleased to present his winning essay.

On Race, Criminal Justice and Education

Tim Inman

While observers across America have begun calling for an “open dialogue” regarding race relations and affirmative action, Mississippi, always a straggler when it comes to matters of race, is finally broaching the topic of reconciliation. We’ve made a lot of headway since the Sixties, when our schools, restaurants and public transit systems were segregated. To a child of the Information Age, that such an institution as segregation was extant just a few decades prior to my own time is difficult to comprehend. We of America and of the South in particular have made progress and made it relatively quickly, that much is certain.

But we’re not there yet—not where we want to be or where we ought to be. There are still judges who sentence criminal offenders according to their skin color. As a white person convicted of arson (of an *occupied* dwelling) I was given far less time to serve than a host nonviolent, first-time offenders I’ve come to know these last two years. Many were black, some charged with mere possession. Such discrepancies are legal, of course, so long as compliance to sentencing guidelines is met. These statutes afford racist and/or self-righteous judges surprising discretion.

This trend, however, can extend to whites as well as blacks. It seems to be rooted in consciousness of socioeconomic status: if you’ve got money, it’s likely you won’t serve as long a sentence as someone who committed a comparable crime but lacks your financial standing or social status. (And I’m not complaining; Mom and Dad bought me a top-notch lawyer.) This won’t come as a surprise to most people, but does that make it right? Where’s the justice in a young black—a small-time loser, thief of \$46.08 from the corner Mapco—doing 15 mandatory years of hard time at Parchman and a white-collar CEO serving 11 months, 29 days at a federal country-club-prison for embezzling Junior’s college savings?

It’s easy when you’re incarcerated, to fall into the “there’s something broke: fix it” trap. Legislation, as tempting as it is to push for, won’t ever provide a satisfactory solution. The matter of criminal justice reform is gradually creeping into the public’s agenda as burgeoning prison populations aggravate growing state budget deficits and funds become increasingly insufficient to meet the needs for adequate healthcare for the elderly, educational initiatives, etc. But will legislation fix the real problem here? We have to ask ourselves

what’s really going on. Why are so many Americans—whites and Hispanics as well as blacks—getting locked up?

I turn once again to race relations for a possible answer. Among the first things I noticed on entering the Mississippi penal system was how well (relatively speaking) white inmates get along with blacks. It seemed to me that, on the whole, convicts were color-blind. I’m not saying there aren’t occasional snide comments or behind-your-back racial slurs. There are. But it’s usually nothing serious or out in the open. The modern prison is divided along party lines—gang affiliations—not strictly racial ones. In general, everyone manages to put ethnic differences aside for the sake of maintaining tolerable living conditions. Mississippi’s worst, some of the most uneducated fellows you’ll ever meet, are able to steer clear of one of the basest yet most common forms of ignorance: fear and hatred of those who are different.

The key word here is *uneducated*. See, it’s not quite accurate. Convicts are educated—everybody’s educated, in his or her own way. John Dewey said the primary function of education is to aid the individual’s adjustment to his or her environment. A convict’s education consists of adapting to life in the prison system. He naturally undertakes to make the best of this life, and this usually entails “keeping the heat off” the common living area and keeping the peace. Members of the Aryan Brotherhood coexist peaceably with Gangster Disciples, because otherwise everybody would be in the hole or looking at more time. And there aren’t many who actually thrive off the tension in the air prior to a “banging” or a riot. Older convicts teach these basic principles to neophytes or they learn the hard way, and the cycle perpetuates. So education—convict’s education—predicates more desirable race relations than might be expected.

Imagine what a real education is capable of.

It seems to me there’s only one long-term solution to ignorance, the driving force behind racism and racial injustice. Without it, we can’t realistically hope for reconciliation or inclusion or open dialogue or any other efforts involving race in Mississippi, or wherever. Reasoned open-mindedness is the product of education: nobody’s born a racist, nor is anyone inherently knowledgeable of the peculiarities of culture, race and religion. True tolerance (as opposed to fear) of those distinctions hinges on the unbiased accumulation of knowledge. Furthermore, studies have shown that the more

On Truth and Freedom

Susan M. Glisson

In the coming months, the state of Mississippi will hold the first murder trial in the 1964 civil rights case in Neshoba County. This momentous event is, in no small measure, the result of the work of the Philadelphia Coalition, a multiracial group of Neshoba County citizens who came together last year to denounce the murders, to call for justice, and to begin to heal.

But this trial also has other antecedents. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “The church is not meant to be the master of the state, nor the servant of the state, but is meant to be the conscience of the state.”

In the 1950s, on the eve of the civil rights revolution, Rev. Will D. Campbell was a chaplain at the University of Mississippi. After the 1954 *Brown* decision outlawing segregation in public schools, Campbell advocated passionately for integration and didn’t long keep his job at Ole Miss for his troubles. As the nation faced the demands of a too-long oppressed minority, prophetic voices like Campbell’s pushed the boundaries of prejudice.

“The church is not meant to be the master of the state, nor the servant of the state, but is meant to be the conscience of the state.”

—Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Significantly, Campbell did not only lobby for equal treatment of African Americans. He also instructed a largely deaf generation of the travails of the white working-class, warning that, “until [recalcitrant white southerners] are made a party to the truce there will be no settlement.” The truce to which he referred was one in which middle and upper income groups ended segregation because it was no longer good for business; not, he suggested, because they had been converted to some new belief in a beloved community. Campbell argued that this truce further economically and socially isolated poor whites, beyond how very little it actually changed the material circumstances of many blacks.

Thus, Campbell suggested a bold measure in 1966. “Society has learned painfully, to reject the murder but not the murderer...” he said. “We dare to reject racism but not the racist.” As Edgar Ray Killen filed into the Neshoba County Courthouse in January, Campbell’s words haunted me. Those responsible for

the murders of three young men in Philadelphia in 1964 should be held accountable. But Killen’s impending trial begs the question of the climate in which the murders occurred. In 1964, the Ku Klux Klan were members of the local and state police and received information from the state-sponsored Sovereignty Commission, which spied on civil rights activists and provided information to harass them both to the Klan and the White Citizens’ Council. In 1964, the state of Mississippi and many of its white citizens condoned such behavior.

And what happened to those voices that preached moderation, or more boldly called for equality? Campbell was run out of the state, as were the Heffners of McComb, and civil rights leaders like Medgar Evers were assassinated.

We have come far in the South, but still there is pain associated with acknowledging those dark days. Partly that pain exists because many of these issues remain unresolved and operational in current policies and daily interactions. So we must frankly confront that past for those wounds to heal, so we can begin to understand the legacy of racism that contin-

ues to harm us today in education, health care, housing, and other indicators. For much of our history, churches were in cultural captivity—not the conscience of the state as King admonished they should be, but subservient to its needs. What do our churches tell us today about race? Who will confess

the wrongs that have been done? Who are our philosophers today telling us the uncomfortable truths? Might they be in Philadelphia or McComb or Greenwood? And will they remind us that all of us must sit at the table of brotherhood, not just those with wealth or education or status?

In Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, the philosopher asserts that, “in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort.” This confrontation with the past, this necessary search for truth will not be easy, but it is the only way our state, our region, and our nation will fulfill its promise of democracy. As in ending the trans-Atlantic slave trade and beginning the civil rights movement, anthropologist Margaret Mead reminds us that “a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” It can even persuade a majority to see things they initially cannot or do not want to see. We call on citizens of courage to lead the way.

Children's Project Sheds New Light on the

Annette Hollowell

Throughout the past year the *This Little Light Oral History Project* has worked with youth across the state in collecting the stories of the elders in their churches and the surrounding community. Learning the stories of an experienced and wiser generation exposes the youth to a more rounded look at American history and sociology. Additionally, these histories encourage young people to explore and consider career and educational paths they might not have known. This past summer we brought together two of the youth groups with whom we had conducted these histories.



Children from Rome and Batesville visit UM for a field trip in July 2004.

On July 23rd-24th, thirty-one children and seven parents from Silver Star M.B. Church in Rome and Concord M.B. Church in Batesville, were invited to stay at the University for two days filled with educational projects, technology, and art activities. We ran a pretty tight ship that weekend, all of which would not have been possible without the support of our skilled volunteers and parents.

Arnold Aprill, the founder of Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE), brought with him a deep commitment to helping young people express themselves creatively. In addition to documenting all of the weekend activities on film, he also led a great mural project that was heavy on parent participation and involvement. Arnold also arranged for

half of our students to sit in on an actual human figure drawing class where each child had an art student as their instructor. Things started out looking rough, as each student struggled to capture the movements of the model posing in the center of the studio. However, after two hours, all frustration and doubt had left the room, leaving in its place a beautiful wall of portraits of each field tripper and their student teacher.

Amy Evans is a painter, photographer, and art educator involved in several community based public art projects across the state. She conducted a photogram workshop in the darkroom, and each child left with the image they had captured. Amy also led a story quilt project where each participant visualized a place they would like to visit and then recreated that place on a denim patch. For her final activity, Amy conducted a workshop on the artists and writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

Jennifer Ford and Jennifer Abrams in the Department of Archives and Special Collections showed a new Freedom Rider documentary recently produced by the WWIRR and PieceWorks Arts Collective entitled *The Children Shall Lead*. After viewing the film the group examined letters and pictures written by actual freedom riders to their families from jail. They then wrote their own letters imagining that they too had been jailed for their participation in the movement.

Brenda Roberson, the head of the Writing Center, was instrumental in letting us use the library for art, food, and movies. She was present throughout the whole weekend and did an ACT Prep writing session for our seniors, graded their essays, and gave tips on ACT preparation.

Tiffany Stewart, an Engineering graduate student, introduced the group to the basics for creating websites using their collected histories. We also attended a play put on by the Sunflower Freedom School that dealt with race and the desegregation of public schools in America. It was an outstanding production by an exceptional group of hardworking young people.

The time spent at the University's Turner Center playing basketball and swimming was definitely a highlight for our

Past

kids. Considering the tight schedule, I had not planned on getting in the pool and going through the ordeal of fixing hair, wet clothing, towels and etc. However, many out of the group could not swim and I soon found myself giving lessons on doggy paddling and Marco Polo while Jeannetta, one of our Freedom Summer interns, taught actual strokes and techniques. If we had the weekend to do all over again, I think everyone would agree that the Turner Center was worthy of a few more visits. Overall, this whirlwind of a weekend was a great success not only because we made it through, but because it encouraged interaction, critical thinking, and artistic expression among two wonderful church youth groups from the Mississippi Delta. For the Silver Star M.B. crowd, this was the only summer activity available for their young people to participate in due to a lack of resources and diminishing funding in that area. There are no playgrounds, basketball courts, or baseball diamonds for the kids in Rome.

In an effort to help counter this, the WWIRR is presently working to raise money for the erection of playgrounds in Drew at the Lil' Red School, Rome at their Youth Resource Center, and in Philadelphia at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. It is our hope that through collaborating with the parents and children of these communities we can design affordable play spaces to meet the physical activity needs of our upcoming generations. If you are interested in learning more about this playground initiative or supporting it with your donations please contact us at (662) 915-6734.

On Race, Criminal Justice and Education *continued from Page 4*

a person is educated, the less likely are his chances of going to prison. There have also been surveys indicating a reciprocal correlation between the acquisition of post-secondary education and recidivism rates.

Until America intensifies its dedication to educating the masses, issues ranging from race relations to crime prevention and drug abuse will be difficult, if not impossible, to resolve.

Open dialogue rightly begins in the classroom, and the failure of many schools, for whatever reasons, to provide a thorough, balanced and exacting liberal education is the root cause of many of the problems facing America.

Handbook of Best Practices Now Available

Laura Shearon Rosenquest

The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation is now offering the first edition of a handbook for community organizing entitled *We Are the People We've Been Waiting for: Equipping Communities for Change*. In the process of working with communities across Mississippi, we have found that while there are many well-intentioned leaders in the state who have wonderful ideas for change, there is no resource available which compiles all of the best and most successful practices used by other communities around the country. The Winter Institute aims to change that.

The handbook is designed for leaders who wish to deal with issues of racial reconciliation in their community. It contains seven steps that will help leaders identify the resources, goals and obstacles to community change particular to their area. The handbook also includes synopses of successful community projects in which the Winter Institute is involved across Mississippi. Finally, the handbook has several pages of resources for community organizers. These resources include contact information for the following: other successful projects around the country, foundations and institutes that support community programs, various approaches to community development, student curriculum, faith organizations, relevant academic journals, art and music, career development, and much more.

While we feel that the first edition of our handbook encompasses many of the best practices available right now, we would welcome suggestions from readers of *The Wellspring* about resources they feel should be included in the next edition. The handbook is available as a download from the Winter Institute website at www.olemiss.edu/winterinstitute. For information about obtaining a hard copy of the handbook or if you have a suggestion, please contact the Winter Institute at (662) 915-6734, or e-mail us at wwirr@olemiss.edu.

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My Thoughts on the Winter Institute

Dr. Gregory Braggs Sr., Executive Director of Rome Community Development Organization

When I think about the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, I think of an entity that has a vision to bring about the rebirth of a culture that gives all people it touches an opportunity for growth, development, change and advancement. Since the relationship between Rome Community Development Organization and the William Winter Institute began in January of 2000, many changes and developments have taken place in the community of Rome, MS, which is located at the north end of Sunflower County.

The William Winter Institute has assisted RCDO with different initiatives from a Waste Treatment System to an After School Program, with so many other ventures in between. Dr. Susan Glisson, director of the William Winter Institute, has played a major role in helping RCDO to reach many of its goals. A well-developed staff, dedicated student workers, along with all available resources are provided when the Institute assists a community as they fulfill their dreams.

Our experience with the Institute is that they have never

attempted to sway us away from our purpose, change our vision or goals, or misrepresent themselves in what they stand for in bringing about change that impacts the lives of others. Instead they have listened and encouraged, given of their time and resources, and provided a platform for the youth of our community to experience some of the good things that life has to offer.

The Institute also helped RCDO establish a small library that is located at our Youth Resource Center in Rome, by providing hundreds of books, book shelves, and the organization of those books, which has given our youth valuable educational materials in its local community. The institute also gave our youth the opportunity to visit and stay on the campus of the University of Mississippi and experience a taste of what this institution of higher learning has to offer. So those of us at the Rome Community Development Organization would like to give a shout out to the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, for their kindness and gracious support of our community and youth.

Civil Rights Summit Sends Teachers Back to School

Kirk Sims

This summer, teachers from across Mississippi will convene in Philadelphia, MS for the first convention aimed at educating teachers on the civil rights movement of the 1960's. The goal is to put in their hands the tools they need to teach their students about the movement, since so many locations around the state played a vital role, including many people who will never reach fame or notoriety for their contributions to the movement for equality.

It is no accident that the summit will take place in Philadelphia, a mid-Mississippi town known for the murders of three civil rights workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner, during Freedom Summer, 1964. The world watched in January, 2005, as the state of Mississippi indicted its first suspect, Edgar Ray Killen, for the murders forty years ago. Leroy Clemens, Philadelphia Coalition member and president of the Neshoba County NAACP, hopes that the Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Living Memorial Civil Rights Education Summit will inspire more dialogue around the state. Clemens stated, "I hope this summit will have a positive impact on the education process in Neshoba. I hope they will be able to feel what the experience was like—to feel the movement for themselves—because

when you feel it, it is easier to teach it."

Fellow coalition member Nettie Cox Moore echoed Clemens's goals for the summit, saying, "We want to bring these educators together. To do this summit will be beneficial for all and will be the foundation for a new history for Mississippi's students." Deborah Owens, a local educator and coalition member, envisions the summit as a pivotal event in Neshoba County's history, particularly in light of recent proceedings. "Educators," according to Owens, "need to be empowered to teach civil rights history. Teachers do not have to teach children and young adults what to think. They just need to teach history; truth is embedded in the history." "What teachers need to understand is that we don't teach the students what to think, but just to teach the history," said Owens.

Moore, Owens, and Clemens all fervently believe that educating the students of Mississippi today is the key to a brighter future. Maybe Moore said it best, "They have to know where they came from to know where they are going."

For more information on the summit, which will be held June 22-24, 2005 in Philadelphia, contact the Institute at 662-915-6734 or wwirr@olemiss.edu.

Embracing Yesterday

Annette Hollowell

The steps taken in Philadelphia have created a ripple that reaches across this state and speaks to the nation. While some southerners have jumped on the defensive, questioning the point of reexamining history and revisiting old wounds, many communities have stepped forward in good faith to say that we, too, need to do some truth telling. Some question the possible gains that can come from this, unable to pinpoint concrete benefits for their generation and the up and coming ones. In January, the City of McComb held a series of commemorations to celebrate the MLK holiday and to honor their own history. The theme from the program held at McComb High School reads, “Embracing yesterday, celebrating today, moving toward the victorious potential of the future.”

January 17th began with the well attended Martin Luther King prayer breakfast which was sponsored by the NAACP, Mission Pike County, and the City of McComb. Dr. Dolphus Weary, the Director of Mission Mississippi, was a phenomenal guest speaker for the event as

he communicated his message of reconciliation, urging the community to forge ahead responsibly. The ceremony then moved to the McComb High School auditorium where two versions of one history quickly emerged. During a panel discussion of “Where we were, where we are, where we are going” Curtis Muhammad invited members of the community that were in some way involved with the Civil Rights Movement to share their stories, thoughts, and reactions to the previous presentation given by a panel of white former city officials. The dialogue that occurred on this day pointed to the great chasm that still exists between the races in many communities around the nation, this lack of a shared experience.

I witnessed this chasm once again upon meeting with the school administrators for McComb public schools to discuss the enhancement of curriculum and the importance of a rounded civil rights education. The WWIRR is cur-



Deborah Menkhart and Jenice View conduct an educational workshop in McComb.



McComb educators learn a freedom song.

rently working with Teaching for Change, an organization based out of Washington, D.C., that has published an excellent K-12 resource guide *Putting the Movement back into Civil Rights Teaching*. But before beginning any conversations about curriculum, this mixed group of white and black, male and female, younger and slightly older, first had to share their own personal stories of coming of age in



Mr. C.C. Bryant, outside of his personal archive at his home in McComb.

Coming Home to Tell a Story

Judith Barlow

McComb. What came out of these stories was nothing short of shocking as these individuals that had grown up knowing and living with each other shared completely opposite accounts of the movement, Freedom Summer, and the integration of the public schools. From sharing what was at times very painful accounts of hate and injustice, it was obvious that each person's view of "where we were" needed some fine tuning.

Why should we reopen old wounds; what is there to gain from this? For starters, we can all stand to gain a greater



(L to R) Susan Glisson, Ashleigh Lawrence, Ms. Emogene Bryant, Julian Barlow, Ashley Drakes, Jackie Martin, and Judith Barlow after another satisfying meal at the Dinner Bell.

and truer understanding of the places we live in and the experiences of our co-workers, neighbors, and classmates. Furthermore, if there is no consensus or commonality in a community about what occurred there, if there is not an honest account of what has transpired on one's own soil, we cannot begin to measure where we are and where we are going. If learning and listening to the experiences of their neighbors is enough to prod grown people to better understand what has transpired here, then the benefit of this knowledge would move young people to think critically about right and wrong, justice and injustice, and their interconnectedness to others as citizens of their towns and of this world. What we stand to gain is an informed population of future leaders who recognize their civic responsibilities and the price of indifference and intolerance.

A year ago, I would have never thought I would be attending graduate school at the University of Mississippi. I had just accepted a new position with a Connecticut-based company that wasn't right for me. Around this same time I started to seriously consider what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I had recently ended my marriage and was raising my young son as a single parent. After many years out of college, I decided to go back as an adult student to complete my bachelors of science degree at Springfield College in Massachusetts.

During my undergraduate studies, I interviewed my grandfather for an oral history assignment. My grandfather, C.C. Bryant, a lifelong veteran of the Mississippi Civil Rights movement, had a story to tell—his story. My grandfather was an important activist in dismantling segregationist policies. The interview awakened me to the importance of preserving my grandfather's legacy. It is his desire to have his story written. But in order to bring my grandfather's dream to fruition, I knew I needed to be physically closer to him to continue my work.

I visited the University's website and learned of different programs that the school offered. I became familiar with the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation and was intrigued by their commitment to recognize and empower communities to preserve their history.

At the time, the Institute was working in my grandfather's hometown of McComb, Mississippi on its This Little Light project. During a casual conversation with my grandmother she mentioned that someone named Annette Hollowell had been there to interview my grandfather. A few phone calls later I discovered Annette was on staff for McComb through the William Winter Institute. I immediately contacted Dr. Susan Glisson, introduced myself and discussed my plans to write my grandfather's story. That call changed my life.

My grandfather recently celebrated his 88th birthday, and I am in the process of writing and researching his contribution to history. I am excited to say that I am a full-time graduate student here with my son Julian at the University of Mississippi, where I am pursuing a masters degree in Southern Studies. I greatly appreciate the generous support and understanding Dr. Glisson and the staff at the William Winter Institute have provided me as I move forward in achieving my goal.

Winter Institute Welcomes Major Gift *continued from Front Cover*

Winter & Stennis, P.A. has demonstrated an enthusiastic commitment to bring people together for a common good," he said. "The embracing of such activities honors William Winter, one of Mississippi's great leaders, and helps further the admirable goals of the Institute for Racial Reconciliation."

Susan Glisson, Institute director, described the gift as a wonderful tribute to Winter, whom she considers a mentor.

"We have long hoped to create perpetual support for the Institute and it is appropriate that William Winter's law firm would take the lead in honoring Winter this way, so his legacy can continue. We thank each and every one of the members of the firm for their generous support and commitment to the Institute's work in addressing meaningful racial reconciliation."

Since its founding in 1999, the Institute has operated on private funds, working in some 17 communities to promote better communication and understanding among people of all races, while spurring community development across the state. The law firm's gift, as well as additional substantial grants from the Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation of Jackson and the Walton Foundation of Bentonville, Ark., will enable the Institute to expand its exceptional outreach.

"We're going through a strategic planning process to identify ways we need to grow," Glisson said. "We want to be focused, thoughtful and effective. This endowment will help us attain our goals as we continue to grow our services to communities."

The Institute's reputable work throughout Mississippi has attracted the interest of community leaders around the region who seek guidance from Glisson and her staff in initiating their own projects which aspire to bring together residents for the purpose of civic renewal.

Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis, P.A., which celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding this year, has a rich history in community involvement, from participating in neighborhood and school improvement projects to contributing to

worthy causes and charitable organizations. The firm employs more than 80 lawyers who are licensed in 10 states, and is one of the largest and most well-established full-service law firms in Mississippi, with offices in Jackson, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Memphis metropolitan area and New Orleans.

Winter, who served as Mississippi's 58th governor, also served as state treasurer and lieutenant governor. Winter has devoted his energies to the issues of racial reconciliation in the South and nation since leaving the governor's office in 1984. Passage of the groundbreaking Education Reform Act of 1982 is widely recognized as one of his administration's most significant achievements, but his long-held belief in racial equity has been a leading factor in accomplishments throughout his personal and public life. After leaving office, Winter assumed an extraordinary role as a progressive "conscience of the South," traveling widely in the region to inspire leaders to speak to the persistent need for closing racial and economic gaps, and to continue making the case for educational progress.

He has chaired numerous boards, including the Commission on the Future of the South, Southern Regional Education Board and the Southern Growth Policies Board, and was a member of President Clinton's National Advisory Board on Race.

Winter, who has been called the "First Citizen of the South," received UM law and bachelor's degrees in 1949 and 1943, respectively. He is married to the former Elise Varner and they have three daughters and five grandchildren.

For more information about the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation Endowment or the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi, contact Susan Glisson at 662-915-6734 or glisson@olemiss.edu.



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