

The Wellspring

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Inclusion is the Wellspring of Democracy

Summer Youth Institute to be Held Jointly by Winter Institute and Medgar Evers Institute

By Patrick Weems

Twenty-six high school student leaders will this summer come to Oxford to participate in a Summer Youth Institute, the first-ever joint program between the Winter Institute and the Medgar Evers Institute. The Summer Youth Institute will take place on the UM campus in July.

A hand-selected group of Mississippi students will participate in the inaugural program. The activities will include visiting some of the Mississippi's most notorious communities for both historical trauma



Students from high schools around the state will this summer come to UM to participate in a summer youth institute that will focus on community building.



PHOTOS BY DAVE MOLINA

and reconciliation, such as Philadelphia, Miss., where three civil rights workers were murdered in 1964, and Money, Miss., where Emmett Till was murdered in 1955. As they learn of the tragedies in these commu-

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Governor William F. Winter Reflects on Past, Future of Winter Institute

By William F. Winter

It began on a rainy February night in 1998 in the historic Fulton Chapel on the University of Mississippi campus. That building ironically had been near the epicenter of the infamous riot in 1962 when two people were killed and hundreds others were injured, in a tragic confrontation over the admission of a black man to the university.

If that earlier evening was one of tragedy and shame, the evening 36 year later was one that will long be remembered with satisfaction by the 800 of us, almost equally divided by race, who were fortunate enough to be there. The meeting had been organized by UM students and faculty members in connection with a visit to the campus by President Bill Clinton's National Advisory Board on Race of which I was a member. The purpose of the gathering was to conduct an informed, candid and civil discussion on race.

In the weeks before the meeting much effort by the Ole Miss organizers had gone into a consideration of how the issue of race affected all of us in our everyday lives whether we were aware of it or not. Both members of the Ole Miss community and citizens from nearby communities held discussions on the various elements—economic, educational, environmental, political and others—that were involved in and influenced by racial issues. These preliminary discussions helped greatly to inform and broaden the conversation at the forum.

The result was transforming. Many members of the UM community came together to propose that the success of the forum should be seized as the basis for creating a permanent structure that could pursue a continuing effort on the

campus and across the state to help advance the cause.

A few weeks later the concept of an institute for racial reconciliation to be located at UM was embraced at a meeting of students, faculty and community leaders. Since this would be the first such organization of its kind based at a state university, the early years of the institute involved experimentation and trial and error in finding how it could best function.

The immediate challenges had to do with securing effective leadership and developing financial support. Those problems were ultimately resolved with the naming of Susan Glisson as director and with the receipt of two significant challenge grants from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation. Ten years later, the Institute can now look back with satisfaction on a solid record of accomplishments that have justified the vision of its founders.

However, as we observe the tenth anniversary of the Winter Institute, we must recognize how much remains to be done to build

bridges of trust and understanding between people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

If anything, the task today is more daunting than ever because of the increasing racial diversity of our state and country. No longer is it just a matter of black and white. Now with the world getting smaller and people of all races living closer together and with more common interests, we must find new ways to recognize and celebrate our common humanity. That is why the work of the Winter Institute is so important in contributing to the building of a more unified and livable society.



Governor William F. Winter

Summer Youth Institute *continued from front cover*

nities, students will also observe current efforts to address the legacies of those events. Workshops on community building, storytelling, media and fundraising will be taught by Winter Institute staff and interns.

The Summer Youth Institute was formed out of conversations with high school students from the Jackson-area. The Civil Right Civil Liberties club, a high school group from St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Jim Hill High School and Murrah High

School, expressed interest in coming together with other students from around the state who are actively having conversation about social issues and taking direct action in their community.

The Medgar Evers Institute and the Winter Institute hope to use this event to spur youth to take active roles in helping build stronger communities. The Youth Institute will be free for the students participating, thanks to support from the Kellogg Foundation.

Lil' Red Renovations Nearing Completion

By Nick Lockett

From 1910 into the early 1930s, more than 5,300 Rosenwald Schools were constructed in African American communities throughout 15 southern states. Seed money came from Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, CEO of Sears, Roebuck and Company. Blacks and whites from communities would raise the money necessary to complete construction and local school boards agreed to operate the facilities. Today, there are just 11 Rosenwald Schools still standing in Mississippi, from the original 600 Rosenwald structures in the state.

The Rosenwald School building in Drew, Miss.,—known affectionately by residents as Lil' Red—is one such building. The dilapidated Lil' Red was purchased in 1996 by Holly Grove Community Development Corporation, a community based organization created by members of the Holly Grove Missionary Baptist Church. The Winter Institute has worked with local people to secure grants for the building since 2001.

Renovations to the original structure began in 2001. In a first phase of restoration, contractors replaced the roof of the 28,000 square foot structure, repointed the bricks and stabilized the building.

Thanks to grants from Lowe's, the Alice Rosenwald Flexible Fund, the Mississippi Arts Commission and the Department of History and Archives, the original portion of the structure has finally been restored, which includes an auditorium, a classroom and bathrooms, and completes phase two of restorations. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has also supported the project.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN GLISSON



Renovations to the Lil' Red School House in Drew, Miss., are nearing completion. The building, built in 1928, was originally a Rosenwald School, where blacks were educated in the early 1900s.

“I’m excited that we will finally be able to get inside the building,” said Jesse Gresham, Reverend of the Holly Grove Missionary Baptist Church. “The completion of the renovation means progress for the entire community. Lil’ Red will provide a structure to facilitate educational support programs for students and possibly some education programs to the general public. Also the auditorium can be used as a place to support art and drama in the community.”

The Holly Grove Community Development Corporation will continue to renovate the remainder of the Lil’ Red building, which includes two wings added in the 1950s. The wings provided a cafeteria and more classrooms. The community hopes the renovation of these wings will allow for more programs to better the lives of the residents of Drew.

Check us out on the web!

Visit www.mississippitruithproject.org to learn more about the Mississippi Truth Project.

Welcome Table Retreat Series Continues

By Patrick Weems

“We stand on the cusp of change. Leadership will make the difference. We can be better together than we were apart. We can build a beloved south.”

Community members from Greenwood, Philadelphia, Oxford and McComb participated in this year’s Welcome Table retreat series. Fifteen to 25 community leaders, ranging from political officials to young adults, came together over the two and a half day retreats to discuss ways to strengthen their communities.

idea that each person needs to listen to their own story before they can change the story of Mississippi. The introspection done on the retreats has better prepared the community leaders to go back to their communities and be effective agents of change.

“There is no way for anyone can go on a Welcome Table Retreat and not be affected,” said Leroy Clemmons, a retreat moderator from Philadelphia.

Winter Institute Executive Director Susan Glisson added, “The Welcome Table has offered tools for building trust and communicating more effectively to communities hoping to create inclusive and equitable opportunities for all. As each community



“I was apprehensive at first, I didn’t know what to expect and frankly when I saw that I was the only teen there I wanted to go home, but I had to open up my mind and heart to new things. I am very glad I did,” said Ann-Marie Herod, a student at Lafayette High School. “I got to meet new people that I didn’t even know lived in Oxford. I thought I knew everyone! Hearing other people’s stories about their experiences in Mississippi and how they adjusted and learned from it and knowing that our story is also a part of history and even though it may not be in a textbook it is still very important because often times history is a cycle that repeats itself. I truly believe that this retreat should be continued because it gives a voice to the people.”

The retreats focused on the work before work – the



Philadelphia residents gather at the Cabot Lodge at Millsaps in Jackson on March 5 – 7 for a Welcome Table Retreat.

identifies its next steps, we will offer a retreat next year to statewide leaders. We hope to support efforts to improving Mississippi by planning for the next ten years.”

PHOTOS BY CHARLES H. TUCKER

Winter Institute Visiting Faculty Complete Course on Restorative Justice

By staff report

Winter Institute visiting faculty members, Rita Bender and Bill Bender have completed their year in residence at the University of Mississippi for the 2009-2010 academic year. Their work was sponsored under a grant from the Kellogg Foundation. Rita and Bill prepared and taught a year long course on restorative justice as it applies to the deliberate denial of public education in Mississippi. Law students, other graduate students and students in the Public Policy Leadership and Education departments participated.

During the first semester, students studied state and federal legal cases, along with texts and original historical documents, to trace the intentional denial of education for black children from slavery to the present.

They examined the interrelationship of the denial of the franchise and the denial of education. They explored the many myths which were deliberately perpetrated and taught to school children to perpetuate the core principles of white supremacy - the diminished intelligence of African Americans, and their consequent inability to learn.

The class also examined the direct relationship between educational denial and preservation of white supremacy for the purpose of maintaining a large, uneducated, cheap labor force for a cotton economy which required great numbers of workers.

"I learned more from the Benders' course than any that I have taken at the university. Bill and Rita's enthusiasm for the issues of public education and restorative justice was infectious, and our discussions were always challenging and engrossing," said student Jake McGraw. "I often found myself thinking and reading about the issues raised during our discussions outside of the classroom, and—looking back at this semester—I can see how much my approach to the issues of education, justice, and public policy has matured as a result of their class."

By utilizing original source documents, most available in the special collections of the UM libraries, the students were able to examine the evidence themselves, and thereby reach an understanding of the deliberate nature of the state action. This exploration of the history, a reaching back to reconstruct truth, led to discussion as to the obligation of the state, and its citizenry, to remedy the harm done; that is, to wrestled with the complex questions of meaningful restoration of the society.

The second semester turned to the issues of education reform, mechanisms for assuring high quality educational

opportunity for all of the state's children, focusing on the work to be done to provide societal restoration.

The students continuously wrestled with the questions of what is meant by quality education, and can the changes necessary be accomplished if there is not a frank and honest acknowledgement of the deliberate injury which was done, and the legacy which that deliberate action left on the society? How may the many communities which comprise the state of Mississippi reach for remedies of restoration without coming to terms with the truth of the past?



Rita Schwerner Bender



Bill Bender

In addition to co-teaching this course, the Benders have been working with communities and teachers in discussions of the need to uncover the history of the state. They have been working with the Winter Institute youth organizer Patrick Weems on a pilot project in Charleston, Miss., in which a number of young people will be taught how to do oral histories, and will then interview adults in their community who experienced the Jim Crow schools of the 1950s as students, teachers, or principals. This involvement is part of the Winter Institute's Mississippi truth initiatives, and the work with adults and youth in the acquisition of tools which enable them to become participants in their communities' efforts at racial equality.

Rita and Bill are both graduates of Rutgers University School of Law, and have each been civil rights advocates throughout their adult lives. They said they welcomed the opportunity to come to the Winter Institute and work with students to explore the difficult and practical questions of what restorative justice can mean in addressing a critical unfinished agenda of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement – the deliberate denial of public education.

Civil Rights Curriculum Work Continues

By Patrick Weems

Mississippi Senate Bill 2718, a civil and human rights curriculum bill drafted by William Winter Institute in 2006, continues to be implemented in Mississippi public schools. With the help of the Mississippi Department of Education and the Winter Institute, teachers, students and community members are providing leadership to ensure the bill is enacted in Mississippi classrooms.

Over the last academic year, six workshops to train Mississippi K-12 teachers were held throughout the state. The largest workshop, which had 25 school districts participating, was taught by the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy at Jackson State University. Teaching for Change, an educational non-profit in Washington, D.C., then offered five more workshops around the state.

Donna King, a history teacher at Brookhaven High school, attended one of the workshops led by Teaching for Change, and observed, "Teaching for Change presented lesson plans and information on the Civil Rights Movement that will be very useful for our school district. I look forward to other

opportunities to attend workshops with this organization."

The new curriculum also aims to tell the stories of local community history. In fall of 2009 and the spring of 2010 the William Winter Institute partnered with Oxford High School to provide oral history training for students. The students worked with Winter Institute staff and interns to produce their own oral history interviews. The project helped students gain a broader understanding of the civil rights movement to show them that historic events happened not just in Selma or Montgomery, but right in their own backyards.



PHOTOS BY DEBORAH MENKART



The curriculum will continue its pilot phase in the coming school year, as the Department of Education revises the social studies assessment. The success of the bill is contingent on community implementation and support, so if you are interested in participating, please contact wwirr@olemiss.edu.

Mississippi public school teachers participate in a civil rights curriculum training program taught by Teaching for Change, an educational non-profit in Washington, D.C.

Mississippi Truth Project Enters New Phase

By Charles H. Tucker

The Mississippi Truth Project, which seeks to create a culture of historical and contemporary truth-telling in Mississippi, has entered a new phase of work. Following the advice of Reverend Peter Storey, a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the work will center in its first phase on collecting oral histories, the stories of the people who have lived through what has happened, and conducting academic research of the same period. The fruits of this research can be used to help develop a civil rights education curriculum as well as a more complete Mississippi history high school education curriculum. As Reverend Storey said, "Unless the work gets deeply into communities, it will not succeed."

Regional organizers are working with University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage (COHCH) to provide training in oral history around the state. Training sessions have taken place on the Gulf Coast, the Delta, and in southwest Mississippi and will continue around the state throughout the summer. Scheduled trainings can be found at www.mississippitruth.org.

Collecting oral histories will support the Truth Project in many ways. Collecting stories will bring new people into the work and will expand the general body of historical knowledge of the state. Those histories will then help populate the new civil rights curricula being taught in Mississippi's public schools. And finally, gathering stories in each community will help to identify community groups ready to do more inten-

Archives and History in Jackson and made available to researchers and the general public.

"As I travel across our state's varied landscape meeting



PHOTOS BY CHARLES H. TUCKER

The Reverend Peter Storey, a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, speaks to participants in the Mississippi Truth Project.

"Unless the work gets deeply into communities, it will not succeed."

—Rev. Peter Storey

sive work to make their communities better for everyone.

In addition to this oral history phase, the project is working closely with academics from across the country. Their work, coupled with oral histories, will provide a fuller picture of Mississippi's racial past as well as offering clues to its lingering inequities today. All oral histories will be indexed and housed at the Mississippi Department of

with young and old of different genders and race, I am convinced of the valuable role of oral history in the Mississippi Truth Project mission," said Linda Van Zandt, managing editor of USM's COHCH. "In a world seemingly consumed by technology and quick bites (both sound and otherwise), it allows a quiet space for a powerful exchange between those who are otherwise strangers in each other's world. It offers a rare chance to connect, extend compassion, and reflect and act with a new understanding. In the trainings we explore not just interview technique, but more importantly, how to become the most effective co-creators in making and presenting history. As one bright-eyed seventh-grade trainee from McComb expressed after our workshop, 'I'm excited to get started!' Me, too!"

As this phase of work continues, organizers will continue to explore the possibility of creating a truth and reconciliation commission. Oral histories collected will be inventoried to be used by a potential commission.



Reconciliation Panel Hosted by Winter Institute

By Sonia Thompson

Global reconciliation issues were examined during a University of Mississippi panel discussion on April 7 in the Overby Center Auditorium on the Ole Miss campus. The discussion was part of UM Chancellor Dan Jones' week of inauguration activities centered around service.

The program, "Ole Miss and the People of the World: A Symposium on Reconciliation," was sponsored by the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

The panelists included Desaix Anderson, Ralph Eubanks and Rob Springs, whose expertise stretches from North Korea to the Mississippi Delta. Chancellor Jones moderated the discussion.

"The University of Mississippi desires to be a leading force for reconciliation around the world," Jones said. "We offer ourselves not as experts, but as fellow pilgrims on the pathway of reconciliation."

Anderson, a 35-year veteran of the U.S. Foreign Service, spent most of his career working on Asian issues. He was the first envoy to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, following establishment of diplomatic relations, serving as charge d'affaires from August 1995, when the embassy opened, until

1997. He was appointed as executive director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization in 1997, implementing, in part, the United States' 1994 agreement with North Korea to freeze that country's nuclear activities.

Eubanks, a UM alumnus, is author of "Ever is a Long Time: A Journey into Mississippi's Dark Past" (Basic Books, 2003) and "The House at the End of the Road: The Story of Three Generations of an Interracial Family in the American South" (Smithsonian, 2009). He was awarded a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship and has been a fellow at the New America Foundation.

He is director of publishing at the Library of Congress.

Springs is president and CEO of Global Resource Services, an international humanitarian aid and development organization.

Springs founded the company in 1997 in response to the complex natural disasters in North Korea. GRS, which began as a way to advance the efforts of private sector humanitarian organizations in an effort to facilitate a unified approach, works in regions challenged by conflict to bring about reconciliation.

