

# The Wellspring

Vol. 7 No. 2

*Inclusion is the Wellspring of Democracy*

## Winter Institute Gets \$3 Million Grant from Kellogg Foundation

The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi plans to use a \$3.1 million grant to spur civil equity and community engagement and continue to build communities both locally and globally.

Part of the new three-year award from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation will help develop curricula and directly educate youth, groups and individuals in increasingly disparate locations. The Kellogg Foundation supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.

“We are excited to be a part of the Kellogg Foundation’s commitment to the state of Mississippi and the improvement of children’s lives here,” said

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*Murals of human rights leaders from around the world decorate the Peace Walls that still divide much of Belfast, Northern Ireland, like this one on Falls Road. More on the Winter Institute’s trip to Belfast on page 3.*

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## Kellogg Foundation Grant *continued from front cover*

Susan Glisson, executive director of the Winter Institute. “This grant will permit us to significantly expand our ongoing community work, as well as pursue appropriate regional, national and international partnerships that would benefit our work in Mississippi.”

The institute’s long- and short-range goals for the funds include hiring a director of community outreach, hiring an academic director to help create a minor in civic communications within the College of Liberal Arts and making the temporary youth director’s job into a full-time position.

“Kellogg has funded our Summer Youth Institute and Welcome Table events since 2007,” Glisson said. “During the course of conversations with their board of directors, the Winter Institute was encouraged to consider increasing the amount of funding requested to expand our operational capacity. The expiration of all our initial funding and the need to revisit our strategic plan simultaneously coincided with the application for and approval of this proposal.”

The William Winter Institute is a leader in Mississippi, but also nationally and internationally, in both civil rights and community engagement, said Gail Christopher, Kellogg Foundation vice president for program strategy. “This grant

allows the Institute to expand their proven strategy for racial healing and reconciliation,” Christopher said. “We see their work as integral to our continued efforts to help uproot the myth of racial hierarchies.”

Former Mississippi Gov. William Winter expressed enthusiasm over the Kellogg Foundation’s major support for the Institute and its ongoing activities. “This grant is the confirmation of the credibility that the Winter Institute has achieved, and obviously been recognized by the Kellogg Foundation,” Gov. Winter said.

“There’s still much work to be done, and this grant will enable us to be a major force and continue to make noticeable advances in racial reconciliation in this part of the country.”

Both UM public policy leadership majors and local community leaders had expressed a desire for a more academic approach to civic communications. “Their interests led to the decision to create the minor,” Glisson said. “As for future partnerships, the Winter Institute has already begun negotiations with both Youth Link in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the Apartheid Archives Project at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.”

Others affiliated both directly and indirectly with the Winter Institute were also congratulatory. “This award will allow the Philadelphia Coalition to continue its work to ensure that every child in Neshoba County has an opportunity to not only learn about their local and state history, but to learn about the environment that leads to that history and ways to ensure that the negative lessons learned are never allowed to occur again,” said Leroy Clemons, chair of the Philadelphia Coalition, on the impact of this gift for Mississippi communities. Upon receiving the news, Clemons said, “I felt like the farmer watching the rain fall on his drought-stricken crop for the first time. I just smiled!”

“The W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s very generous grant will enable the William Winter Institute to increase its capacity to support local Mississippi communities as they seek to make the state a better place for all of us,” said Glenn Hopkins, dean of UM’s College of Liberal Arts, to which the Winter Institute is connected.

For more information on the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, go to <http://www.wkkf.org/>.



# A Learning Opportunity: An International Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland

*By Kaitlyn Barnes*

In November of 2011, some staff of the Winter Institute travelled to Belfast, Northern Ireland, as part of the strategic planning process. Their goal was to learn from organizations working with issues concerning the religious struggles between Protestants and Catholics which have plagued Northern Ireland for decades. Their struggles are very similar to the ones which communities in Mississippi have been trying to reconcile. “The Troubles” were marked by violence motivated by religious and political differ-

ences, not unlike the violence, in the form of lynchings and beatings, which took place before and during the American Civil Rights Movement. Also as in Mississippi, there are people and groups in Northern Ireland interested in helping communities reconcile their differences and their violent pasts.

Representatives from the Winter Institute met with those from a variety of groups working to make a positive difference in the lives of those people affected by The Troubles. The Winter Institute met with Jim McDowell and John Peacock of Youth Link, a group that trains youth workers to work across religious divides and creates cross-cultural experiences for youth. The Institute also met with faculty members from the Human Rights Center at Queen’s University and the Center for Transitional Justice at the University of Ulster. The Queen’s University group worked with the transitional government to include legal protection for all religious and ethnic groups. They also met Rebecca Dudley, the human rights trainer for Police

Services of Northern Ireland, and workers from WAVE Trauma Center, which supports widows, widowers, and all other people traumatized by The Troubles.

The meeting in Belfast also brought together leaders from the United States and South Africa who work with issues of racial healing, public policy, peace work and academia to discuss strategic planning for the Winter Institute. The purpose of these meetings with Belfast organizations and leaders from outside Northern Ireland was to discuss the future of the Winter Institute and how to improve our work. Dr. Glisson said one new suggestion that struck her was the idea that single-identity group work can be important. “I had always asserted that everyone, no matter his or her race or background, should work together as a diverse unit. But,” Glisson acknowledged, “I have realized that by giving people the opportunity to work out some things in a single-identity group, where they may feel more comfortable, people tend to learn more about themselves and bring less baggage to the large group.”



*The meeting in Belfast included leaders from around the United States and South Africa.*

“The most powerful part of the trip was a political tour of Belfast by the organization Coiste,” said Elliot Long, the Institute’s Senior Secretary. The event began with a discussion with two former combatants on opposing sides who participated in the violence that marked The Troubles. “They told personal stories about how they became involved in the violence and about their time spent in prison,” said Long. “They also discussed how they have taken up the reconciliation process, meeting with many former political prisoners across the political and religious divide so that they never repeat their old mistakes.” Another former combatant led the group on a tour of Falls Road, one of the biggest sites of conflict, and Milltown cemetery, where many deceased combatants and other victims of The Troubles are buried. Participants were shown the Peace Walls, which still divide much of the city of Belfast. Coiste tries to prevent a return to The Troubles and to break down the divides that still exist through education and discussion, work which is not unlike that of the Winter Institute.

# Returning a Favor: The Winter Institute Visits Hawaii

By Kaitlyn Barnes

Last June, four people joined us for the Summer Youth Institute from the Kalihi Valley in Hawaii. We were all pleasantly surprised to discover our many similarities, considering how different our cultures seem. In January, the Winter Institute and some of its key partners and Kokua Kalihi Valley reunited in Honolulu, where KKV is located. KKV promotes health and wellness in every aspect of life—physical, mental, and emotional. They provide numerous services: medical and dental care; behavioral health; services for mothers, youth, and seniors; and enabling services.

Most unique is KKV's one-hundred acre nature preserve, where they cultivate a community garden and work to restore the natural

community as a whole, connecting people to each other and to the land.

Institute director Susan Glisson noted the value which the workers at KKV give to cultural knowledge. "It is important to them and to their work that lessons from the indigenous culture not be lost, even when other groups are always emphasizing progress," said Glisson. Also, KKV works hard to promote their beliefs not only while working with community members but also while working with each other, as in staff meetings. The Winter Institute will similarly incorporate Welcome Table practices like the Touch Stones into the work done within the office itself.



*Stephanie Clemons and Scotty Garlough work with pre-schoolers in the garden.*



*Charles Tucker and Leroy Clemons work with volunteers in KKV's Pasifika garden on a volunteer day.*

forest and remove destructive invasive species. In fact, the Winter Institute workers helped remove invasive seaweed growing in an traditional fish pond. The weeds were then composted for use as fertilizer in the nature reserve. Youth organizer Patrick Weems said, "I found the work with the pond a wonderful way to connect with local folks and to learn about the land and our inextricable connections to it. It made me think about ways we can bring this kind of work back to Mississippi." KKV, working organically through volunteer power, also emphasizes the development of the com-



*Susan Glisson and Charles Tucker with the staff of KKV.*

In addition to the experiential learning at KKV, a great deal of time was dedicated to strategic planning and developing an operational plan for the Winter Institute's work over the next three years. Key Mississippi partners helped Institute staff plan a deepened and more intensive presence in the state.

# Winter Institute Nears Completion on New Strategic Plan

By Nathaniel Weathersby

In April of 2011, the staff and advisory board of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation met to discuss the organization's direction for the next three years. Through many strategic planning sessions involving many stakeholders, an updated course of action for the Institute has been in the works over the past year. This updated plan is expected to lead the Institute to its goal of becoming a nationally recognized leader in applied research and reconciliation.

"Our main focus is to keep doing what we've been doing and do it better," said Elliot Long, Senior Secretary for the Winter Institute, "but also to become more involved with the academics of The University of Mississippi and to work more closely with the Welcome Table communities."

Those projections are a couple out of many proposed staffing and infrastructural changes to be implemented within the Winter Institute. To better aid the already life-changing work in which it is already engaged, the Winter Institute has looked to the structures of other leading organizations in reconciliation. With the knowledge gathered from these nationally recognized organizations, the Winter Institute plans to extend their reconciliatory efforts outside of just "black and white" issues.

"Prior to this strategic planning process, our primary mission was to support people wherever they have been discriminated against based on race," said Susan Glisson, executive director of the Winter Institute. "Our new mission statement says that we will support people wherever they suf-

fer, as a result of racism or any other discrimination based on human difference."

With this new vision for the Institute comes a new staffing plan. "We've now grown to where we have six full-time staff, but that's still not enough capacity to respond to the requests we are getting throughout the state," Glisson said.

To alleviate this imbalance, the Institute will be hiring a full-time Director of Fieldwork, an Academic Director and, once the funding is secured, ten new staff members to support community work around Mississippi.

"Once we have a larger, more effective staff, we hope to create a culture of professional development for all of our staff so that we're constantly learning and getting better at what we do. We also hope to initiate the creation of an academic minor so that we can more formally educate our student body so they can do what students do best ... bring new imagination to the work," said

Glisson describing the future of the Winter Institute.

With an updated mission and vision, the Winter Institute brings in a new tier of reconciliatory efforts that will connect with community leaders. This new tier also includes thinking about the way the Institute talks about change. The Winter Institute is beginning to use a more organic language when talking about what they do. This shift in communication tactics is reflected in the soon-to-be-released new Winter Institute logo and slogan, "Cultivating our humanity for the common good." The William Winter Institute is scheduled to unveil the entirety of its new plan along with its new website by December 2012.



*The new Winter Institute logo captures the shift to using more organic language to describe the Winter Institute's work.*

# Summer Youth Institute 2012 in the Works

By Patrick Weems

The Summer Youth Institute (SYI), on its third year now, brings together some of the best and brightest high school students in Mississippi and engages them in a two-week transformative experience. This year's SYI is shaping up to be the best yet. SYI begins in Oxford, Mississippi, on the campus of the University of Mississippi on June 10th. The Winter Institute staff and 24 students will explore ways we can engage our communities under the belief that active communities improve everyone's quality of living.

This year, SYI is hoping to bring three or four students each from several communities across the state so that they can support each other when they return home. These communities include Indianola, Meridian, Greenwood, Oxford, McComb, Philadelphia and the Jackson Metro area. We are no longer accepting applications for this summer, but

SYI has given me tremendous hope for the future." Jake has taken last year's experience with him to Oxford, England, where he is furthering his studies. Hope Owens-Wilson, a sophomore at the University of Mississippi, will be joining us again. "I love working with SYI," said Hope, "because it gives a glimpse of what the future holds for Mississippi." Along with an amazing staff and counselors from



SYI 2011 students with Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette.

we hope to bring in students who demonstrate the greatest desire to start or continue a community project at home.

The staff this year will be as diverse and eager to learn as the youth. SYI has been lucky in the past to have an amazing group of counselors and staff who ensured the program's success. Jake McGraw, one of last year's counselors, reflected on SYI: "I cherished the opportunity to work with this group of young leaders who share a passion for improving their communities and state. Seeing their growth over the course of

*This year, the Winter Institute also unveiled a new website for SYI. You can find us at <http://youth.winterinstitute.org>.*

Mississippi, SYI is excited to have two guests from Northern Ireland join us this summer. John Peacock and Jimbo McDowell work for Youth Link, a group that enables "young people and youth practitioners to be agents of transformation in a divided society."

While SYI is focused on problems of Mississippi, we hope Jimbo and John will help broaden the conversation and show the commonalities between Mississippi and the world.

The Summer Youth Institute has proven to be a major part of the Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation's mission, and we hope to continue providing this wonderful opportunity. This summer will be a success thanks to the amazing energy of the young participants and the wisdom and hard work of our staff.

# Now Let the Stories Be Told: Moving the Mississippi Truth Project Forward

By Rhondalyn Peairs

The Mississippi Truth Project (MTP) conducted its inaugural oral history interviews on February 15, 2012, in Meridian, Mississippi. MTP-Meridian is a joint effort between the William Winter Institute and Freedom 64, a Meridian based civil rights, education and historic preservation non-profit. Freedom 64 has secured a long-term lease and funds to stabilize the Fielder-Brooks Pharmacy Building, which housed



*The Fielder-Brooks Building, located at 2505 5th Street in Meridian's historic black business district, was built in 1879 and housed the Fielder-Brooks pharmacy for many years. The Meridian COFO office was located on the second floor of the building. Funds have been made available through the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to stabilize and restore the building as well as transform it into a museum and cultural center.*

the Meridian COFO office during the Civil Rights era. It was from this office on 5th Street in Meridian that civil rights workers Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were dispatched to Philadelphia, MS, where they met their untimely deaths. They plan to create a collection of oral histories from the perspectives of local citizens/activists and Freedom Summer volunteers alike.

The first two interviewees, A.C. Henderson and Gail Falk, provide this dichotomy of perspectives—one from a local activist and another from a Northern volunteer during Freedom Summer. Henderson, a union plasterer born in 1928, was active in the local NAACP, COFO, MFDP and CDGM throughout

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## Amazing Times at the University of Mississippi's OMazing Race

By Hope Owens-Wilson

On March 23rd and 24th, 2012, something amazing will be happening on the Ole Miss campus, and that something is the 5th annual Ole Miss OMazing Race. During this Amazing Race-inspired scavenger hunt with clues based on the history of the University, students of differing ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations and religious backgrounds will work together in groups in the hopes of winning \$1000 grand prize. The goal of program is to allow participants to:

- Learn to be respectful and appreciative of characteristics which make people seem different from one another.
- Experience personal growth at a level which inspires them to step outside of their comfort zones and make themselves available to experience relationships with people from different backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures.
- Feel compelled to share their experience with friends and family, helping to educate those who did not participate.

Co-Sponsored by the William Winter Institute, this race has created new relationships and friendships among people of different backgrounds and is one of the many things that the University has done to help students have mind-opening experiences. "I loved it," said Nathaniel Weathersby who participated in the program his freshman year. "The clues about the history of the University of Mississippi were intriguing. I got to meet so many new and interesting people, and because we were together for almost a whole day, we all began to know and understand each other." Hopefully, this year's OMazing Race will prove just as or even more remarkable.



# PBS Series *Not in Our Town* Profiles One Mississippi

By Elliot Long

A recent episode of PBS's series *Not in Our Town* featured the work of the University of Mississippi student group One Mississippi to combat hate. "Not In Our Town: Class Actions" profiles students and community members from around the nation who are creating change in the wake of racism, anti-Semitism and the traumatic consequences of bullying. Narrated by *Survivor: Cook Islands* winner Yul Kwon, the film aired nationwide on PBS, including MPB on February 13, 2012.

The episode follows the conflict at the University of Mississippi in 2010 around the chanting of "The South will

and a South California school district.

Toran Dean, a member of One Mississippi, said, "Watching the show allowed me to go back and reflect on that time when our campus was really divided on an issue. It



PHOTO BY WILLIAM BENDER

*Student group One Mississippi leads the Ole Miss community in a "Turn Your Back On Hate" counter demonstration when the Ku Klux Klan came to campus.*



PHOTO BY GARY MERCER

*Student leaders of One Mississippi Jake McGraw and Melissa Cole and Associated Student Body President Artair Rogers.*

rise again" at football games and the efforts of students the Chancellor to put an end to it. When the Ku Klux Klan came to campus to protest the change, UM students gathered in a counter rally they called "Turn your back on hate." The episode also includes incidents at Indiana University

just goes to show that student leadership on an issue that separates us speaks volumes on the character of the people who were able to lead at that time."

The episode was screened at the University of Mississippi on January 31, 2012, and was followed by a panel with Dan Jones, Chancellor of the University of Mississippi; Susan Glisson, executive director of the Winter Institute; and Taylor McGraw and Toran Dean, members of One Mississippi. A 30-second promo and purchasing information for the DVD of "Not In Our Town: Class Actions" can be found at <http://www.niot.org/classactions/dvd>. The 26-minute video can also be viewed online at <http://www.pbs.org/programs/not-in-our-town/>.



# Welcome Table Community Leaders Continue Good Work

By Susan M. Glisson

Community leaders who are participating in the Welcome Table initiative are continuing to do exciting work in their communities. The Welcome Table: An Era of Dialogue on Race is a core program of the Winter Institute which involves phases of reflection, education and training with community leaders in order to build relationships for positive social change. We are currently working with community leaders in Greenwood, McComb, Oxford and Philadelphia. Their work has inspired the Winter Institute to expand the capacity of the initiative through new staff positions to support community leaders and to add more intentional educational and training opportunities to insure a good foundation for local work.

In Oxford, Kathleen Sullivan came back from a retreat for the Welcome Table to immerse herself in helping to create an Excel by 5 program for Lafayette County. Excel by 5 is “community-based certification designed to improve a child’s overall well-being by age five.” Currently being implemented in thirty Mississippi communities, the “program emphasizes the important roles communities play in educating their children during their most formative years—birth to five,” and is a first-of-its-kind program in the United States.

The program works to set standards in a number of areas including, “parent training, community participation, child care and health to help communities focus on supporting young children and their families.” Sullivan credits her involvement to her participation in the Welcome Table, “I think the Welcome Table discussions that made a difference for me were the ones that revealed life experiences that helped shape some of the people in my community. Those stories, shared in a setting that valued honest and respectful discourse, made some subtle changes in the way I view people of all persuasions. Every now and then I notice the difference in myself.”

For more information on the program, visit its web site: [www.Excelby5.com/](http://www.Excelby5.com/).

In Greenwood, Bill Clay created a youth mentoring program located in Baptist Town, a predominantly black neighborhood with severe poverty rates and which serves a ten- to fifteen-block area of young people. Clay serves on the steering committee of The Bridge, a biracial group that is working to “build trust and relationships across ethnic and cultural lines in the Mississippi Delta.” He began the organization in August 2005 and opened the center in October 2010.

The mentoring center is an after-school program that helps

six to thirteen year olds with their homework. Clay emphasizes that the staff “try to understand the children’s total environment. Every child doesn’t go home to a warm meal and a warm bed, and we take all of that into consideration.” Clay says the group serves an average of twenty children every day and works to provide a safe environment with lots of love and discipline in order to try “to change the lives of the children.”

Timeshia Green, an alumna of the 2011 Summer Youth Institute, invested her newly-honed skills into an organization she created called Achieving Excellence with Rising Opportunities (AERO) in her hometown of McComb. AERO’s mission is to mentor young people. “The purpose of AERO is to help at-risk children better themselves,” Green says. “I mentor them in self-confidence, responsibility, leadership and manners.”

The program focuses on children from the first to the sixth grade and provides them with healthy teen mentors who can listen to what they have to say and help with any situations



*Timeshia Green’s group AERO KIDS gets ready for the Christmas Parade in McComb in December 2011.*

going on in their lives. Mentors are trained and supervised by adults to ensure the best possible experience for mentees.

Timeshia started her program immediately after she left the Summer Youth Institute, which incorporates many Welcome Table elements. “I learned a lot from SYI. The main thing I learned was that we had to make a change in Mississippi. This made me want to come back to my community and make a difference,” Green says.

She contacted a youth pastor and began the operations of her organization. “In the future, I plan for AERO to be held all over the county and maybe even the state. I plan to change Mississippi one step at a time,” Green says.

Since the birth of AERO in July 2011, the organization has grown and continues to develop into a system of change for the youth of McComb, MS.

# Planting Seeds of Hope

By Susan M. Glisson

Throughout our recent strategic planning process, we began to notice an interesting thing. Much of the language that we practitioners of racial healing use is borrowed heavily from military campaigns. We “wage war” against racism. We “plan campaigns to end poverty.” We began to wonder if all of this martial terminology had somehow seeped into our consciousness in ways that make it difficult to imagine that “enemies” can become friends.

And so we have decided to use more peaceful language in our work, more expressions that reflect the organic and often seasonal nature of our work, of the cultivation we undertake of our own humanity in order to serve others and to seek the common good.

To that end, I simply want to acknowledge all those who planted seeds of hope and peace in me. My mother and father especially but also the church home that raised me. In the nineteen sixties, the First Baptist Church of Evans, Georgia, the church that baptized me at the age of twelve, was ahead of its time. It insisted on interracial Vacation Bible Schools in the summer, earning our pastor, Dr. John Miller, death threats. It ordained women as deacons in the early nineteen seventies, including my mother, receiving much opprobrium from other Baptist churches. And when the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention began in 1985, my church protested its maneuvers.

You can imagine, perhaps, the rich environment such a church created for me. Amazing church members like Stella Hennis, Earl and Kathy Williams, Tom and Kay Shepherd, John and Eloise Miller, Charles and Helen Crews, and Mary Watts as well as my own family members like Uncle Virgil and Aunt Virginia, Aunt Joann and Uncle Tom nurtured me

and encouraged all of my impertinent questions. There was no one prouder than my home church when I returned home at the age of sixteen from the Baptist camp, Ridgecrest, one summer to declare that I had been called to be a missionary. And none more supportive when I could not in good conscience attend a Southern Baptist Seminary, as had been my plan after college, because I refused to sign “an inerrancy” clause that was a prerequisite to admission.

In countless and important ways, my home church taught me compassion, showed me the importance of inclusion and justice, and demonstrated for me how to speak truth to power, even at personal costs. So, imagine my delight at being asked to speak on a Wednesday night last December to that same church about the work of the Winter Institute. And fathom my gratitude when that same group, along with a new pastor, Rev. Chip Reeves and the minister of music, Philip Hedgecoth, recommended to the full church body in January that, beginning in 2012, the church offering on the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King’s holiday be collected to support the work of the Winter Institute. And to top it off, my childhood church has named me a missionary, a title I could not claim long ago because of church politics.

Last week, the church sent a check for \$343.15 to the Winter Institute. The awarding of a significant grant from the Kellogg Foundation to the Winter Institute is incredible, and we appreciate Kellogg’s investment in this work. But no gift has been more meaningful to me this year than that of the continuing seed planting and nurturing of my work and soul as that which I continue to receive from my fellow church members in Evans. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

## Mississippi Truth Project *continued from Page 7*

the 1960s and beyond. He credits his professional independence as central to his high degree of personal activism during the movement. Falk, a native of Pennsylvania, came to Mississippi and taught at the Freedom School in Meridian. She continued to live in the South off and on for the next three years as a journalist, even covering the initial trial for the murders of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner.

Roscoe Jones, a student leader during Freedom Summer

and CEO of Freedom 64, describes this oral history initiative as the “springboard to move our (preservation) project forward.” MTP-Meridian will continue to train community interviewers and conduct oral histories throughout the spring and summer of 2012. Other communities throughout the state are in the interest and planning stages of their local projects. MTP-Como hopes to be the second community to fully engage in the gathering of oral histories this spring.

# Repairing the Legacies of Racial Violence: Newnan to Host April 20-22 “Gathering”

By Rich Rusk

In a gathering of Southern communities scarred by lynchings and racial violence, grass roots commemorative groups and reconciliation organizations from across the South and Nation will meet April 20-22, 2012 in Newnan, Georgia, to share strategies and tell their stories.

Hosted by the Alliance for Truth and Racial Reconciliation (ATTR), The Gathering’s three-day event will begin on Friday evening, April 20, with dinner and a social. On Saturday at the historic train depot in downtown Newnan, speakers and pan-

elists will focus on their communal stories. Presentations include the retelling of histories and sessions on memorials to the slain, racial healing, restorative justice, education initiatives, reparations and restitution, the role of the arts in rec-

onciliation work, prosecutions of “cold case” civil rights murders and more. In addition to the focus on lynching and racial violence, several groups working to cross racial divides for progressive change will be participating. Presenters include community organizers from Valdosta, GA; Monroe, GA; Atlanta, GA; Duluth, MN; Wilmington, NC; Chattanooga, TN; and Rosewood, FL.

The Gathering will end on Sunday, April 21, with a march and memorial event focusing on the Sam Hose lynching of April 23, 1899, in Newnan and the “Palmetto Massacre” one month earlier. Hose, Elijah Strickland, other African Americans killed at Palmetto, and Alfred Cranford—Hose’s Newnan employer and alleged victim—will all be remembered at that service.

“Hundreds of Georgians boarded special trains in Atlanta to attend the spectacle lynching of Sam Hose in 1899,” said Gathering organizer Rich Rusk. “On April 21, our conference attendees will again head for Newnan and that same train depot. But we are coming for different reasons.”

The Gathering is the fourth national conference in a series. A 2001 conference in Atlanta, Georgia—Lifting the Veil of Silence: Workshop on Racial Violence and Reconciliation—was the first gathering. Two more conferences were held in

2006 and 2007 at the University of Mississippi. The ATTR was created at the University of Mississippi in 2005 to help hundreds of communities in the U.S. heal from their own legacies of injustice and racial violence.

“In Newnan, we hope to renew friendships and recommit to shared work in making the region better for everyone,” said Susan Glisson, Director of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation and a Gathering organizer. “In a climate where many Americans claim that we’re post-racial, that we’re



*The last Alliance for Truth and Racial Reconciliation Gathering was at the University of Mississippi in 2007.*

beyond the legacies of racism, it’s important now more than ever to be honest with ourselves about the way our past continues to prohibit equal opportunity and access for everyone.”

“In more than thirty years working in African American history

and culture, I have not come across an issue that has greater capacity to enable white Americans to understand the reality of racism in this country than does a head-on encounter with the lynchings that took place throughout the nation,” said Randall Burkett, Emory University curator at the 2001 conference. “The interracial groups gathered around these tragedies offer clear evidence that whites and blacks can draw together towards mutual respect and understanding by facing our history together.”

“Newnan residents—including students, clergy, and community leaders—are especially welcome at The Gathering,” said Susan Minarcine who is chairing the event. “Witnessing once again these powerful stories of truth-telling and redemption can help our community. It has certainly helped others.”

Joining with Minarcine, Gathering organizers include Blair Rothstein, Theophus Smith, and Susan Tate of Southern Truth and Reconciliation (STAR); Waymond Mundy, Kirklyn Dixon, Penny Young, and Rich Rusk of the Moore’s Ford Memorial Committee; and Susan Glisson and Charles Tucker of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

For information and/or to reserve seats for April 21, visit [www.attr.org/](http://www.attr.org/) or contact Suzanne Minarcine at [drsuzannem@gmail.com](mailto:drsuzannem@gmail.com).



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# Mississippi Civil Rights Project Website Expands

By Hope Owens-Wilson

The Mississippi Civil Rights Project website has recently had a makeover. In 2006, the Winter Institute started the Mississippi Civil Rights Project website as a resource for teachers and students about the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi. The resource was created to aid in the implementation of Senate Bill 2718, the Civil Rights education bill that passed in 2006.

Winter Institute interns have been working hard over the past year to digitize and label oral histories gathered over the last ten years from across the state. These oral histories from Pike County, Neshoba County and Tallahatchie County are available to the public on the website. One can now not only read about civil rights history in Mississippi but also can see and hear the stories coming from the men and women who witnessed them. Elliot Long, Senior Secretary of the Institute, said, "Making oral histories available on the site is significant because they can serve as a primary source material for students. The interviews provide personal accounts of important events during the civil rights movement as well as everyday experiences." In addition to the oral histories, several civil rights lectures at the University of Mississippi, including one from the International Conference on Race in 2003 and two by Dr. John Hope Franklin, are available under Lafayette County events.

With the help of Lacey Loftin, the Institute's webmaster, the website's functionality has also greatly improved. The site

now boasts a better interface that makes searches for civil rights information go much quicker and allows for the posting of different types of media.

The staff at the Winter Institute hope to continue with



*The Mississippi Civil Rights Project site now includes many oral histories of people who lived through the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi.*

the improvements by posting more articles, documents, videos and pictures that add depth to Mississippi Civil Rights history already known and shed light on Civil Rights history currently unknown by many. The new and improved website can be viewed at <http://mscivilrightsproject.org>.