

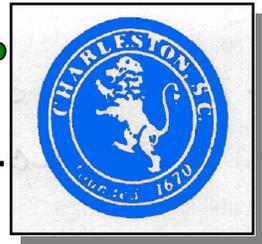
# Charleston Club Tattler

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## Rev. Betty Deas Clark - Pastor of Emanuel

### Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark, New Pastor of Emanuel AME

The Rev. Dr. Betty Deas Clark became the new pastor of historic Emanuel A.M.E. Church on Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Since the shooting, the church had been led by interim pastor Rev. Dr. Norvel Goff, amid controversy. Goff is running for bishop, Clark was appointed by current Bishop Richard Norris, who will retire this summer from his post overseeing the district that spans South Carolina. The Awendaw, SC native preached her first sermon the very next morning (Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>). Late Saturday evening, she was crafting her first sermon for her new congregation, one that has much healing to do. She focused on the message of, "I still have hope," based on a passage from Jeremiah in which God tells the faithful he "plans to give you hope and a future." Clark said she wants to leave the congregation with a simple message: *"In the face of tragedy and uncertain times, we still have a God in whom we can trust."* When the bishop first approached Clark about the widely sought-after post, she was humbled. But when he officially assigned her to Emanuel A.M.E. on Saturday: "It took my breath away." She personally knew five of the nine people killed in the massacre. "It's just an awesome task," she said. "You want to do God proud with whatever you do and approach it with humility."



Rev. Clark comes to Mother Emanuel from Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church in Sumter. She previously was pastor at seven other churches including Greater St. John A.M.E. Church on Johns Island, Charity in Huger and Greater Bethel A.M.E. on James Island. She has served in several capacities, including president, of the Charleston Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. She holds a B.A. Degree from Limestone College, a Master of Divinity Degree from Erskine Seminary and a Doctor of Divinity Degree from Erskine Seminary.

### African American Museum Will Open on Sep 24<sup>th</sup>

It was announced on February 1<sup>st</sup> that The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) will open on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> in Washington. President Barack Obama will lead the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony on the 400,000-square-foot facility on Consti-



tution Ave. There will be a weeklong celebration to follow, including an outdoor festival and a period in which the museum on the National Mall will be open for 24 consecutive hours. The museum has built a collection of 11 exhibits to trace the history of slavery, segregation, civil rights and African-Americans' achievements in the arts, entertainment, sports, the military and the wider culture. Artifacts on loan from other institutions will also be on display, such as two documents signed by President Abraham Lincoln: the 13th Amendment and the Emancipation Proclamation.

### Mt. Pleasant's Laing School – 150 Years Old



Laing School is an ignored part of local Black History. The second oldest formal school for Blacks in the Charleston area, Laing celebrated its sesquicentennial anniversary this year having been

established in January 1866.

For much of its early years, Laing School served its constituents in the shadow of Avery Normal School and Burke School which were the more popular schools for Blacks in the Charleston area after the eradication of legal slavery in the United States. Laing School was the unassuming alternative for formal education to Blacks living east of the Cooper River. From the mouth of the Cooper River up the coast to McClellanville, Laing School represented the first of several area schools for Blacks east of the Cooper River from Charleston in Christ Church Parish, now called Mount Pleasant.

The school has been known by several different names throughout its history. Among those names: The Negro School, Laing Industrial and Normal School and Laing High School. It began in a bombed out church, Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church located at Hibben and Church streets in Mount Pleasant's old village, that had been abandoned after the Civil War.

A young white woman, Cornelia Hancock who had served as a nurse at Gettysburg, Pa., was Laing's founder. According to the story Hancock came to Mount Pleasant on her way to Port Royal in Beaufort County where she was to teach at Penn School, but decided to stay in Charleston. She founded Laing School with 50 students and was its first principal. The school was housed at that original site only a few months before moving to a mansion at Bennett and Venning Streets. In 1866 The Freedmen's Bureau built a two-story school building at Common Street (now

Royall Street) and King Street on land donated by the Town of Mount Pleasant.

The enrollment grew to some 200 students. Known as the Industrial School, it offered classes up to seventh grade in courses that included sewing, cooking, shoemaking and manual trades. The building was destroyed by Charleston's great earthquake of 1886. A new structure was built and remained at the site until 1953. That site would house the school for the next several decades.

Laing School continued to grow as it served Black students east of the Cooper River. By 1945 it needed additional space, and a second facility to house elementary students was built at King and Greenwich Streets. Eight years later as school integration approached, a new facility, Laing High School was built at U.S. Highway 17 and Six Mile Road. The old elementary school and Jennie Moore Elementary school served as its feeder schools until 1970 when Laing Elementary School was closed. Four years later, the old high school became Laing Middle School.

As Mount Pleasant has changed and grown, Laing School also has changed to reflect the population and diversity of the community. In 2009 it transitioned to become Laing Middle School of Science and Technology. Now located in a new facility located at 2705 Bulrush Basket Lane in Mount Pleasant, Laing no longer serves a predominantly Black student population, but it continues to serve students east of the Cooper River with distinction.

(The Charleston Chronicle 2-3-2016)

#### 48th Orangeburg Massacre Ceremony

One of the nation's first and most horrific tragedies of the 1960s' Civil Rights Movement occurred nearly 50 years ago at then-South



Carolina State College. The senseless tragedy known as the Orangeburg Massacre took place February 8, 1968 on the campus. On that fateful evening, three young men, Henry Smith, Samuel Hammond Jr., and Delano Middleton were fatally wounded and 28 students were wounded after S.C. Highway Patrolmen fired into a crowd of students and others on the SC State campus. The student activists gathered that evening in protest after three nights of escalating racial tension over efforts to desegregate All Star Bowling Lanes, which was located in downtown Orangeburg.

To honor the legacy of the Orangeburg Massacre, S.C. State University observed the 48th Orangeburg Massacre Commemoration Ceremony on Monday, Feb. 8, 2016 in the Martin Luther King Jr. Auditorium. The Reverend Joseph Darby, presiding elder of the Beaufort District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.), served as keynote speaker. As a minister and civil rights activist, Darby has committed a life of service. A fourth generation minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Darby served four congregations in the midlands of South Caroli-

na, including the historic Morris Brown A.M.E. Church in Charleston. A life-long member of the NAACP, Darby has held statewide leadership roles in the association and currently serves as first vice president of the Charleston Branch NAACP. Darby co-authored the 1999 national NAACP resolution for economic sanctions that led to the removal of the Confederate Battle Flag from the dome and legislative chambers of the S.C. State House.

The program's theme, "Social Change Inspires Freedoms," seeks to empower attendees to courageously stand up against some of the world's greatest injustices to help make positive changes for others, whether locally or globally. In keeping with the event's theme, the university will recognize Dr. Cleveland L. Sellers Jr. and the Orangeburg Chapter of the NAACP as recipients of the 2016 Smith-Hammond-Middleton Social Justice award.

Sellers, president of Voorhees College in Denmark, was acknowledged for his long standing commitment to social justice. The Orangeburg branch of the NAACP was honored for its ongoing work to eradicate racial discrimination for more than a century. The program ended at the Orangeburg Massacre Legacy Plaza with the lighting of the memorial flame, which was lit by family members of the deceased victims.

#### Once an orphan, Nadja Y. West Becomes 3-Star General

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Gen Nadja Y. West was honored in an official ceremony formalizing her promotion to three-star general, making her the first African-American woman to achieve that rank in the United States Army. She is also the highest-ranking woman of any race to have graduated from West Point. The promotion and ceremony follows the 54-year-old's confirmation by the Senate as the new Army Surgeon General and Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) as of December.



"I was once an orphan with an uncertain future," said West of the promotion and the new responsibilities facing her in the future. "And I am incredibly honored and humbled to lead such a distinguished team of dedicated professionals who are entrusted with the care of our nation's sons and daughters, veterans and family members. While our Army and our nation face tough challenges in the future, I am confident that collectively we have the right skills, commitment, and talent to meet those challenges with mission success," she added.

The Washington D.C. area-native holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from West Point and a Doctorate of Medicine from George Washington University School of Medicine.

#### S.C. Tops List of States with the Highest # of Murders

South Carolina ranked first in the nation in the rate of women murdered by men, with a rate of 2.32 per 100,000, according to a recent Violence Policy Center (VPC) study [When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of](#)

[2013 Homicide Data](#). This is the 18th year in a row that South Carolina has ranked in the top 10 states for the rate of women murdered by men.

The study covers homicides involving one female murder victim and one male offender, and uses data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Supplementary Homicide Report. The study found that nationwide, 94 percent of women killed by men were murdered by someone they knew, and the most common weapon used was a gun. "Several states including S.C. have recently taken important steps to keep guns out of the hands of abusers," says VPC Legislative Director Kristen Rand. "Yet in the face of these alarming statistics, more needs to be done at the federal and state levels to protect women from abuse and prevent future tragedies." "Closing the gaps in state and federal gun laws will save women's lives." The list of the top 5 states with the highest rate of females murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents in 2013 are: 1.) South Carolina, 2.) Alaska, 3.) New Mexico, 4.) Louisiana, and 5.) Nevada.

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 94 percent of female victims nationwide were murdered by a male they knew. Of the victims who knew their offenders, 62 percent were wives, common-law wives, ex-wives, or girlfriends of the offenders. Firearms — especially handguns — were the weapons most commonly used by males to murder females in 2013. Nationwide, for homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 53 percent of female victims were shot and killed with a gun. Of the homicides committed with guns, 69 percent were killed with handguns.

The overwhelming majority of these homicides were *not* related to any other felony crime, such as rape or robbery. Nationwide, for homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 85 percent of the homicides were not related to the commission of another felony. Most often, females were killed by males in the course of an argument between the victim and the offender. The study calculates the rate of women murdered by men by dividing the total number of females murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents by the total female population and multiplying the result by 100,000. This is the standard and accepted method of comparing fatal levels of gun violence. The study urges state legislators to adopt laws that enhance enforcement of federal legislation and ensure that guns are surrendered by or removed from the presence of abusers. - *Charleston Chronicle*

### **Cannon St. YMCA All-Stars – Black History Month**

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum hosted a free symposium onboard USS Yorktown (CV-10) to remember the impact of Charleston's Cannon Street YMCA All-Stars team (the only non-white Little League team in South Carolina in 1955) and their journey to the 1955 Little League World Series amidst the struggle for civil rights in South Carolina and throughout the South. The symposium entitled, *Cannon Street YMCA All-Stars in*

*Uniform*, featured a panel of former players from the team - several of whom later served in the military. The panelists included: Leroy Major, Vermont Brown, Augustus Holt and John Rivers. These former players recounted their memories of living in Charleston at a tumultuous time and their feelings when 61 other Little League teams in South Carolina refused to play them because of the color of their skin. As a direct result of this protest, the white teams formed the Dixie Youth Baseball League and abandoned Little League entirely. The Cannon Street YMCA All Stars were able to go watch the Little League World Series that year in Pennsylvania, but were not able to participate since they had not played in the state tournament. The symposium was offered as a part of Black History Month and delved into the pivotal topic of civil rights in the South in the 1950s.

### **ABC's Dungey – 1<sup>st</sup> Black to lead TV Network**

Channing Dungey has been named entertainment president of Disney's ABC television network, becoming the first African American to lead a major broadcast network at a time when lack of diversity in Hollywood has come under increasing scrutiny. Dungey replaced Paul Lee on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, who was widely credited with promoting more prime-time shows with people of color in front of and behind the camera. But Lee tangled with his boss Ben Sherwood, who is co-chairman of Disney Media Networks, and ABC's ratings have tumbled in recent months.



Dungey, 46, who has been a Walt Disney Co. executive for more than a decade, helped develop ABC hits including "Scandal" and "How to Get Away With Murder." In a statement, she said she was "thrilled and humbled that Ben has entrusted me with this tremendous opportunity." The entertainment industry has been under increasing pressure to promote more women and people of color. The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences this year has been consumed by controversy after nominating a slate of 20 white actors for top awards at the Oscars, which was televised on ABC. Television networks in recent years have been more aggressive than movie studios about promoting shows that better reflect America's diversity. ABC has long been a leader on that front, an effort that took on added importance during Lee's tenure. Lee, 55, was a forceful champion of shows with minorities in starring roles including "black-ish" and "Fresh Off the Boat" as well as earlier successes such as "Scandal." The shake-up also comes as ABC has been slipping in the ratings the last few months. ABC's audience has declined 13% this season, but it remains in third place in overall viewers, behind CBS and NBC.

Ms. Dungey, who graduated magna cum laude in 1991 from UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television, is a founding member and current board member of Step Up, a national non-profit membership organization dedicated to helping girls from under-resourced communities fulfill

their potential by empowering them to become confident, college-bound, career-focused, and ready to join the next generation of professional women. She is married and has a daughter.

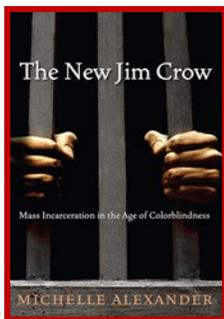
### 106 Y.O. White House Visitor's Video Goes Viral

Mrs. Virginia L. McLaurin finally got her dream fulfilled of visiting the White House and meeting President Barack Obama. But that isn't the best part. It's her reaction that's so priceless. The 106-year-old was so happy during the meeting, she just couldn't stop dancing. According to a video posted Sunday (Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>) on the White House Facebook page, McLaurin started doing a two-step, and just kept on dancing after meeting the president. "Oh, it's so nice to see you," Obama said to McLaurin in the video. "It's an honor, it's an honor," McLaurin responded. The White House video featuring McLaurin has gone viral, receiving over 10 million views on the White House's Facebook page just hours after it was posted. Many of those commenting expressed their joy overseeing the 106-year-old woman dance during the meeting. Asked if she wanted to meet the first lady, McLaurin answered with an excited "yes!" before dancing her way over to the First Lady. "Slow down now," the president warned her, laughing. "Don't go too quick!" Mrs. Obama, towering over the short, but surprisingly sprightly centenarian, leaned in to give her a hug. "I never thought I'd live to see the White House," McLaurin told the first couple, who respond by telling her how happy they are to have her there. Mrs. McLaurin who was born on March 12, 1909 in South Carolina and now lives in D.C., filed a White House petition in 2014 saying she would like to meet President Obama and his family. The bubbly lady said, "I'm here to celebrate Black History."



### Black History Event in Oxon Hill with Jerry Ravenell

Charleston Club member Jerry Ravenell served as the moderator of another year's Black History Month Community Discussion at the Oxon Hill Branch Library. This year Ravenell, an Adjunct Professor at Springfield College School of Professional and Continuing Studies in Delaware, hosted a well attended event on February 20<sup>th</sup> of Michelle Alexander's 2010 book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The book has received literary attention of late, and much discussion during the past few Black History months. Last year he moderated a similar community discussion at the same venue on the Oscar-winning 2013 film *12 Years a Slave*. Based on the 1853 memoir and slave narrative of Solomon Northup.



Jerry has been an Adjunct Professor teaching a variety of Social Science courses at the Wilmington College for the

past 18 years. Most of his teaching course work includes African American History, Africans in the Diaspora, International Affairs, and Local & State Governments. He still enjoys the classroom environment, and has also taught several courses at the Graduate level.

### Charleston Club Tattler ~ One liners ...

- It has been 30 years...at about 11:30 AM, Eastern Time, January 28, 1986, the **Shuttle Challenger** was launched from Cape Kennedy, FL. Aboard the ship were its Commander, Francis R. "Dick" Scobee, its pilot, Michael J. Smith, and its crew, Christa McAuliffe (the first Teacher in Space), Mission Specialists Ellison S. Onizuka, Judith A. Resnick and Ronald E. McNair (N.C. A&T), along with Payload Specialist Gregory B. Jarvis. Seventy-three seconds into the mission, the Challenger exploded and fell into the sea. On April 29, 1986 the identified remains that had been located were turned over to their families for burial. However, there were number of unidentified remains. These remains were buried at Arlington National Cemetery on May 20, 1986. Two of the crewmembers, Scobee and Smith, were buried in Arlington National Cemetery as well. There is a Shuttle Challenger Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.
- The **Morris Sokol Furniture** building at 510 King St. in Charleston has a new owner. In one of the biggest local real estate deals of 2016, an investment firm purchased the Morris Sokol Furniture building on February 3<sup>rd</sup> for \$22.5M. The new owner is a Greenwich, Conn.- based Wexford Capital, via a company called Vanderking 510 LLC. To date, there are no plans for the vacant building at King and Reid streets, saying more information would be released later...“We are evaluating our alternatives.” Joe Sokol, the seller, said he was not aware of any plans for the site. “It wasn’t the highest offer, but we felt it was the best offer for us,” Sokol said. The 37,000-square-foot retail store closed last fall after 94 years in business when Sokol, 83, decided to retire and no family members wanted to take over the business. The furniture store included a 10,000-square-foot storage room attached to the two-story showroom.
- The next **Charleston Club** meeting is March 12<sup>th</sup> at 2 o'clock p.m. at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church on Allentown Road. Your host for the meeting are: Gilbert Knowles, Carolyn Knowles, Bernice Brooks, Mimi MacBeth, and Norma McKay.

**Happy Birthdays!**

### Charleston Club's March Birthdays:

Sandra McNeill ~ March 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Mary Wade ~ March 10<sup>th</sup>  
 ~ Ethel Bouthel ~ March 18<sup>th</sup> ~ James Gilliard ~ March  
 20<sup>th</sup> ~ Mignon Clyburn ~ March 22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Kenneth Brown ~  
 March 23<sup>rd</sup>.  
 ~ *The Fly on The Wall!*