

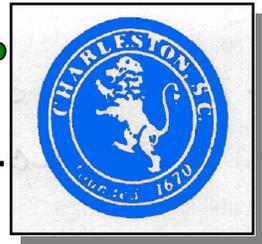
Charleston Club Tattler

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Happy New Year - 2018!

Chief Justice Ernest A. Finney Dead at 86 years old

Ernest Adolphus Finney, Jr., the first Black American to serve as Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court died on December 3rd, he was 86 years old. Ernest Finney, Jr. moved with his family to Orangeburg, SC at a young age. He graduated from Wilkerson High School before attending Claflin College for his undergraduate studies. He graduated from Claflin in 1952 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He enrolled in the South Carolina State College School of Law, earning his law degree in 1954.



Armed with a law degree but unable to find work as a lawyer, Finney moved to Conway and became a teacher at Whittemore High School. He would also supplement his income by waiting tables and teaching veterans it read. Ultimately, Finney Jr. didn't see much future in Conway. After five years he moved his family, which included his wife Frances and their three children (Chip, Jerry and Nikki) to Sumter.

In 1960 Finney Jr. set up his law practice in Sumter. He was also able to find a position at Morris College teaching one course a week to supplement his income. He got involved in the civil rights movement, gaining a reputation as an outstanding defense attorney and civil rights advocate. He and his good friend Matthew Perry, who was Chief Council of the NAACP in the 1960s, estimated that they represented as many as 6,000 clients who were ensnared in the legal system as a result of their actions in support of civil rights initiatives. Ernest A. Finney, Jr. said "I have never known abject poverty, but I have known segregation in its worst form. I therefore believe the Law is absolutely necessary to protect the rights of all citizens."

In 1963 Finney served as chairman of the SC Commission on Civil Rights, serving in the vanguard of the movement to advance the cause of racial justice. After the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 65 passed through Congress, it looked to Finney that folks in this state were finally ready to do some business. He felt that Black folks needed to be involved in politics, and that he was crazy enough to think that he might be the man to make a run (and win) for a seat in the SC House of Representatives. Subsequently he was appointed to be a member of the House Judiciary Committee, becoming the first Black on this key committee in modern times. He was a charter member of the Legislative Black Caucus, and served as its Chairperson from 1972 thru 1975. He was elected judge of the Third Judicial Circuit in 1976, becoming South Car-

olina's first Black circuit court judge.

In 1985 Ernest A. Finney, Jr. was elected as an associate justice of SC Supreme Court ~ becoming the first Black American to sit on the state's highest court in the Twentieth Century. The "crowning jewel" of his political career occurred on May 11, 1994, when Ernest Adolphus Finney, Jr. was elected Chief Justice of the SC Supreme Court ~ the first Black to serve as Chief Justice in the state's history. Judge Finney retired from the court in 2000.

After retiring, Finney served one year as the interim president of South Carolina State University in 2002 before returning to his private practice. In retrospect the Judge states, "I didn't have any idea that the people of this state would have been so kind and considerate to me or afforded me the opportunity," said Finney. "I had lots of people who questioned my ability to do something because nobody that looked like me had ever done it before."

J. Arthur Brown-2018 SC African-American History Calendar



J. Arthur Brown is the January honoree on the AT&T 2018 South Carolina African American History Calendar. Brown was born in Charleston in 1914 where he grew up and went to Avery Institute, graduating in the Class of 1932. He continued his education at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg and graduated in 1937.

While at SCSC, Brown met his future wife MaeDe Esperanza Myers and they married in 1940. When Mr. Brown moved back to Charleston he became a businessman working as a real estate and insurance broker. As a businessman in Charleston, he became affiliated with the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Brown worked his way to becoming the president of the Charleston chapter of the NAACP in 1955. As president of the local chapter of the NAACP, Mr. Brown led a concerted effort to fight segregation in the public sphere. Through his work in the African American Civil Rights movement, Mr. Brown became president of the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP in 1960-1965 where he continued his work towards equal rights for African Americans throughout South Carolina. His accomplishments as president of the NAACP in SC include the desegregation of Edisto State Park and others in the late 1950's, desegregation of the Charleston Municipal Golf Course in 1961, desegregation of Charleston School District in 1963, as well as organizer and leader of multiple social movements such as sit-ins, and boycotts as well as participating in crucial court cases throughout the state of South Carolina.

During his tenure the local NAACP membership increased from 100 to 1,000 persons. Locally, Brown focused on desegregation of public facilities and public education. Using his persuasive tactics, he convinced the City of Charleston to allow African American high schools to use Johnson Hagood Stadium in 1959. In addition, Brown organized, led and advised through service to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, St. John's Episcopal Mission, Voorhees College and Charleston County Human Services Commission, among others. In 1962, he served as Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson's consultant on race relations, an extension of Brown's active participation in all levels of the Democratic Party. He was also a fervent supporter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. J. Arthur Brown was the proud father of three daughters and a son. He was married to Maede Myers Brown for 48 years, and the two were partners in a wide array of social, civic and religious organizations. When he died in 1988, he was working as a community relations specialist for the City of Charleston.

Harvard Introduces Gullah Language in Classes

The native Lowcountry language is now one of 45 taught at the African Language Program. A renewed interest in Gullah has propelled the language to one of the highest rungs in academia. Charleston native and performance artist Sunn m'Cheaux spent the fall semester (2017) at Harvard teaching an introductory version of a course on Gullah: A language indigenous to the Lowcountry region often described as a combination of English and Central and West African languages. The pidgin language originally allowed enslaved African people from various tribes to communicate with each other and with their overseers, and is still spoken by African-American communities across coastal regions of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The Gullah class is the first of its kind at the Ivy League school. It's part of the African Language Program within the Department of African and African American Studies. Sunn m'Cheaux, who graduated from Goose Creek High School and didn't go to college, found that Dr. Mugane was impressed with how quickly m'Cheaux was able to teach him some Gullah basics.



"He starts talking about getting my information and taking a picture for the website, and I'm thinking to myself, 'Wait a minute ~ did I just get hired?'" m'Cheaux said in a phone interview with *CP*. Mugane argues that offering Gullah, along with the 44 other languages taught in the program, increases students' chances of accurately portraying different communities. "To engage in intellectual and professional work in the Gullah community, we deem it necessary even critical that scholars be literate in Gullah whose basic demonstration is an ability to hold non-trivial conversations with the people they write about, including (and especially) in Gullah, the language of the people they

write about," Dr. Mugane said in an e-mail to *CP*. m'Cheaux says that his time bouncing between Charleston, Los Angeles, and New York as an artist and activist influenced his teaching methods. "Ultimately, my arts and entertainment career kind of dovetailed into social activism and commentary, and in a sense, I feel like this is an extension of that as well," m'Cheaux said. "How to use literal and figurative language to communicate with people and teach people how to make it their own."

m'Cheaux uses the few Gullah reference books and literature available as course materials, but has largely stuck to developing his own curriculum throughout the semester, which includes video chats between students and native speakers. Alphonso Brown has been teaching Charleston's tourists and locals about Gullah since he first got his touring license in 1985. He operates Gullah Tours from an office downtown. Brown has noticed a recent surge of interest in Gullah, and he finds the continuing legitimization of Gullah to be of utmost importance, especially at a place like Harvard. Brown struggled with English as a young student in Charleston district schools, where Gullah was not recognized within curricula.

Earlier this year, the Charleston County School District announced plans to train teachers to recognize Gullah and Geechee speech patterns, according to *The Post & Courier*. m'Cheaux maintains that there are variations in accents within Gullah speakers. He also points out that his pronunciation in the video was adapted for the purpose of encouraging English-speaking college students to take the course. "I fully expect criticism and skepticism of that nature," m'Cheaux said. "Any time I hear anything about Gullah being done, I'm immediately skeptical, because we're all protective of our culture."

USS Ralph Johnson Commissioning

The **USS Ralph Johnson** Commissioning Ceremony will be on March 24, 2018 in Charleston. To receive tickets you should have registered by the end of the year. Use these instructions to register:

- 1) Go to www.navyleaguecharleston.org
- 2) Select "go to the ship's page" on the picture of the ship
- 3) Once you get to the ship's page, click on the tab under the picture labeled "Invitations"
- 4) At the bottom of the "Invitations" page fill in the required fields and click submit.



16th Honda Battle of the Bands Returns to Atlanta

Honda's Battle of the Bands (HBOB) will make its highly-anticipated return to Atlanta on January 27, 2018 when eight (8) marching bands from the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) take the field to dazzle fans with their music, choreography and pageantry. The polls are now open for the public to vote for their favorite marching bands to perform in the 16th annual HBOB Invitational Showcase. "For more than 15 years,

Honda Battle of the Bands has provided a stage for exceptional marching bands ~ a hallmark of HBCU culture,” said Stephan Morikawa, Vice President, Corporate Relations & Social Responsibility for Honda. “Honda is honored to celebrate these student musicians and their teamwork, and we look forward to their dynamic performances.”

This year’s theme, *March On: Dream Together*, highlights the distinctive culture of HBCUs ~ both on and off the field. In addition to music education, HBOB celebrates everything from the rich history and traditions of HBCUs to the life-long connections that fuel future leaders. In the last two years, the HBOB Invitational Showcase has attracted a combined audience of nearly 120,000 fans via the live show and online live-stream. In addition to the marching bands, the 2018 Invitational Showcase will also feature the fourth-annual HBCU Power of Dreams Award. Honda established the award to honor extraordinary individuals who are positively affecting the lives of others and moving the HBCU community forward. Members of the HBCU community had the opportunity to nominate an exceptional individual who is making a difference in their community. Honda will recognize the winner in a ceremony during the event.

Marlene O’Bryant-Seabrook, PhD

Dr. Marlene Linton O’Bryant-Seabrook, a third generation educator, held a B.S. from South Carolina State College, MAT from The Citadel, and Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina. She was a classroom teacher, central staff administrator, and in 1975, became the first African American and one of only two women on The Citadel’s permanent faculty.

Dr. O’Bryant-Seabrook had no familial quilters, took an eight week quilting class in the 1980s and became a nationally exhibited quilter in 1992. Certified by the SC State Department in Elementary Education, she approached quilting from the dual focus of an educator and an artist. She substituted fabric and thread for canvas and oils to create original art quilts. The educator in her, either subtly or overtly, slips “lessons” into her quilts: love of God, family, children; pride in heritage; respect for accomplishments.

She lectured nationally, including American Folk Art Museum (NYC) and Cleveland Museum of Art (OH). Her work, shown in several magazines and thirteen books, has been exhibited across the U.S., including twice at The Smithsonian; and internationally in the Republics of South Africa and Namibia, France, and Japan. She was one of 44 nationally recognized fiber artists invited to create a quilt honoring President Obama for an Inaugural exhibition at the Washington Historic Society.

Active in community affairs, she was a past Junior Warden of Calvary Episcopal Church and a Life/Golden member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She served long terms on the Boards of Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture, Hospice of Charleston, and Voorhees



College. Present Boards included the International African-American Museum, Twenty Pearls Foundation of Charleston, and Avery Research Center.

Dr. O’Bryant-Seabrook was the mother of four, grandmother of ten, and great-grandmother of two. The Avery Research Center honored her and her loss as one of our giants – educator, lecturer, fiber artist and all around wonderful person, Marlene Linton O’Bryant-Seabrook, PhD. Dr. Seabrook transitioned on December 4, 2017. She was 84 years old.

3-D "Port City" Reunion Party 2017

On Saturday, Dec. 23rd, the 3-D DJs of Charleston hosted its second area-wide reunion party at the Charleston Area Convention Center in North Charleston. Charleston Club member, **Mignon L. Clyburn** was presented an “Impact Award” for her numerous contributions to the community. This year’s Party Theme was...“*A Funkadelic Affair!*” Dress attire for the evening could have been Funkadelic-Style, 70’s-Style or Christmas-Fly-Style. The invited schools this year were; Burke, Charleston, C.A. Brown, Bishop England, I.C.S., Wando, James Island, Ft. Johnson, St. Andrews, Middleton, Porter Guard, St. Johns, Baptist Hill, Summerville, Goose Creek, Cainhoy, Hanahan, Bonds Wilson, North Charleston, Stall, Berkeley and all others!



“America’s Got Talent” at Burke High

The Burke High School Foundation’s Annual After Christmas Gathering was held on December 26th. This year, they celebrated with a talent show of alumni, current students, and friends of Burke displaying their talents in a competitive, “*America’s Got Talent*” style. The public was welcome to compete and attend this entertaining event where money prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. Friends and family were invited to get their acts together highlighting the Motown sounds of the ‘60s, ‘70s, ‘80s, along with gospel music, stand-up comedy, dance renditions, magical shows...you name it, the school would find a category for placing you to compete. The public was invited to attend and have a great time!

"1,000 Sandwiches" for Martha’s Table

A special thank you goes out to Michelle & Tony Gaston, and the friends who showed up and assisted in preparing "1,000 Sandwiches" for Martha’s Table on Sunday, Dec. 17th. *Our help was welcomed by Trinity Episcopal Church in Upper Marlboro, MD who coordinated this effort. Supporting the homeless and less fortunate families during the holiday season demonstrates the true spirit of the Charleston Club. Again, thank you!* ~ Rose Randall

Charleston Club’s Holiday Party – 2017 ... BIG HIT!!!

The **Charleston Club’s Annual Holiday Party** was Saturday, Dec. 9th at the Potomac Club Clubhouse in Woodbridge, VA. If you missed the club’s holiday party you really missed a treat, it might have been snowing outside, but everyone inside was having FUN! Special thanks goes out



to Karen C h a m - paign and the Planning Committee for a job well done. As

you may have heard, the venue, food, music, games and door prizes were great and we had an awesome time. Our guest enjoyed themselves and we even had several to join the club. Again, thank you for making this event a great success.

Charleston Club Tattler ~ One liners . . .

♦ **The Carolina Group's 2017 Holiday Reunion Dinner** was Friday, Dec. 22nd at the Rifle Club; and Yes...it was a **Big Success!** The guys have lived up to their expectations, the party is the place to be during the holiday season. There were alumni from each of the schools at this year's event. And everyone had "a damn good time!"



I.C.H.S. Class of 1960/61 at the Carolina Group Party!

♦ There is a new "ole-group" in Charleston, they are called **"The Ballers."** They started in 1992, when a small group of 1960s former Burke football and basketball players decided to get together and "talk" ole school sports. The group is now 25 years old and have expanded to include Avery, Bonds-Wilson, C.A. Brown and I.C.S.; they recently met at the Golden Corral in North Charleston to celebrate the holidays. Benjamin "Ben" Mitchell (Burke '60) and his wife Mildred are going to provide the Tattler with additional info for a newsletter article next month.



♦ **Charleston Club's 2018 70th Grand Reunion July 19-21** is 6 months away. The club's website has registration information <http://charlestonclub.org/>. Need people to continue signing up and registering for their hotel rooms. Committees are finalizing respective plans for

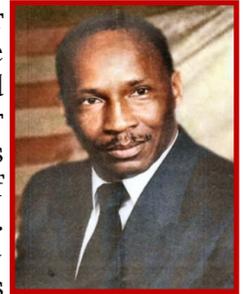
club's reunion!

- Need everyone to sign-up now for reunion and hotel reservations.
- A letter/memo will be going out soon about Ads for our Souvenir Journal and the prices of each type.
- **Take picture for the Souvenir Journal** or send your own picture in by March DEADLINE!
- Arrangements are being made to set-up for pictures to be taken at our January meeting . . . be ready!

♦ **Burke's Class of 1963's 55th Anniversary Reunion** is on schedule for the Washington area June 13-17, 2018. Their host hotel, The Harborside Hotel is in Oxon Hill, MD. Charleston Club members, **Reggie Russell** and **Marion Rhodes** are your local Points of Contacts. Visit their website: www.Classof1963burkereunion.com.



Stanley Randall, a former member of the Army's Medical Corps and the retired Charleston Naval Shipyard electronic technician died October 23rd in Charleston. He was 75 years old. Stanley was a 1st cousin of Charleston Club member **Ben Randall**. He was an honors graduate of Immaculate Conception High School's Class of 1961. Since his early years (elementary grades) as an I.C.S. Lion, Stanley enjoyed sports and going to the movies, to see his favorite; Westerns...he loved ole western movies. Stanley and his family moved across the Cooper to Mt. Pleasant in the late 1970s/early '80s. Stanley was not known as a socialite, he was a quiet, **smart** "all around good guy!" He loved sports and his family, especially his daughter Karen and grand-daughters; Eva and Erin. Home-Going Services for Mr. Stanley Randall were held October 27th at The Palmetto Memorial Chapel on Morrison Drive in the North Charleston. Interment was at Mount Pleasant Memorial Gardens on Mathis Ferry Road.



Happy Birthdays!

January 2018

Juanita Wilder - Jan. 2nd ~ **Carl White** - Jan. 4th ~ **Aurelia Carr-Olverson** - Jan. 5th ~ **Karen D. Champaign** - Jan. 8th ~ **Carolyn Griffin-Russell** - Jan. 9th ~ **Marion Rhodes** - Jan. 10th ~ **Doris Burton** - Jan. 11th ~ **Herbert Pittman** - Jan. 12th ~ **Erie Rambert** - Jan. 16th ~ **Njeena D. Washington** - Jan. 17th ~ **Kenneth Devine** - Jan. 19th ~ **Tony Gaston** - Jan. 25th ~ **Carolyn Young** - Jan. 25th ~ **Earle C. Regan** - Jan. 26th ~ **Charles Fields** - Jan. 29th ~ **Mildred Green** - Jan. 30th.

- The Fly on The Wall !