



Judge Fielding Receives Award

Judge Bernard Fielding Receives Heirs Property Award



Former Charleston County Probate Court Judge Bernard R. Fielding was the guest honoree on March 8th at the Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston, became the eighth recipient of the Center for Heirs Property Preservation's 'Commitment to Justice Award'. Fielding, a Charleston attorney, was described as "A remarkable humanitarian and standard bearer of justice for all".

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation serves 15 counties: Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Orangeburg, Sumter and Williamsburg. Among its missions is to; prevent the growth of heirs' property (HP) by conducting education seminars on HP issues and resolution and forest management; provide the full array of legal services to help HP clients resolve their HP landownership issues to clear title to family land; and to provide sustainable forestry education, technical assistance and resources to HP and non-HP landowners who own a minimum of 10 forested acres.

In 1976, Fielding was appointed an associate probate judge in Charleston County, becoming the first African American to hold that position in the state. He again stepped into history as the first African American elected Charleston County Probate Judge in 1990. Probate courts undertake issues related to wills and testaments, decedents' estates, trusts and conservatorships, including guardianships and adoptions.

Fielding's family owns one of the state's largest and oldest Black-owned funeral home businesses, proudly notes he literally grew up in the family business. At 14, he knew he wanted to be a funeral director, but he also had grown up in an environment that emphasized hard work and public service. In addition to working in the family business, Fielding chose to serve the community as a lawyer.

He graduated Hampton Institute in 1953, spent two years in the U.S. Army and while stationed in Boston, MA

completed law school at Boston University in 1958. He recalls while a law student nearing graduation, he applied for a job as an insurance adjuster. The white man who interviewed him eventually told Fielding the company wouldn't hire a colored insurance adjuster. "I was about to graduate from one of the finest institutions in the country and I wasn't good enough to be an insurance adjuster," he related. That was among many experiences that compelled Fielding to use his skills for the cause of civil rights.

During the 1960s and '70s, Fielding served as general counsel for a variety of organizations, including the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association. For more than fifty years he offered free services to the YWCA of Greater Charleston, which his grandmother co-founded. In 1969, he became the first black president of the Young Democrats of Charleston County. He has also taught extensively about the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and what he refers to as "the most powerful legislation," the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 1976, with some backroom maneuvering, Fielding was appointed associate probate judge by Charleston County Council. Fielding served as associate probate judge for 14 years. In 1990, when the longtime probate judge for Charleston County chose not to seek re-election, Fielding decided to run for the seat. Fielding won the election, but his opponent appealed the results. When Fielding finally took office in 1991, he received just 60 percent of his predecessor's salary—in fact, a \$10,000 pay cut from his associate judge salary.

Fielding lost his bid for a second term four years later and went back to practicing law and helping out at the funeral home. Since 1984 he has been president and CEO of the business. And he became one of the center's earliest and most ardent supporters. He calls the loss of heir's property 'larceny' – land taken from Blacks throughout America's history.

"That's why the work of the center is so important. The taking of land is exploding all over again. People need help. They need the center's help," he said. In presenting the Commitment to Justice Award, the center responded, saying, "Thank you for your call to action, Judge Fielding. We will do our best to answer it – as you always have."

- The Charleston Chronicle

Installation of NCCU's New President

Three Charleston Club members, Michelle & Tony Gaston and Leroy C. Latten (and his wife, Helen), attended the investiture of North Carolina Central University Chancellor Johnson O. Akinleye on Thursday, July 19th to the normal pomp and circumstance befitting such an occasion. Michelle Gaston is not only a graduate of the university, she is also the reigning Ms. NCCU Alumni (2017-

2018). Leroy C. Latten, also a graduate has served as a board-member of NCCU's Foundation, Inc.; administrating charitable gifts/awards to the school.

Dr. Akinleye was selected as the 12th Chancellor in June 2017 as the school's new president. He was Interim Chancellor since 2017 after serving in the role of Acting Chancellor since August 2016. In these positions, Dr. Akinleye worked to expand the university's academic partnerships, including new agreements with community colleges, as well as introduced to the campus a robust online, distance-education program, NCCU Online. He also created K-12 initiatives and implemented a security strategy to increase safety for campus constituents.



Meet Deborah Walker Joseph - "Ms. Finance"



Meet Deborah Walker Joseph, the June honoree for Community Service in the 2018 South Carolina State University Stellar Alumni calendar. She was born in Charleston to very proud parents, the late Lucinda and Edward ("Finance") Walker. Her mother did domestic work in downtown Charleston and her father worked at the Naval Shipyard and as a Longshoreman with the ILA Local 1422 International Longshoreman's Association.

Debbie had three older sisters, all Burke graduates; Marilyn Walker (1959), Annette Walker (1966) and Edwina Walker (1967). The family lived at 10 Larnes Street, (3 blocks from Burke, off Fishburne St. between Ashley and Rutledge Avenues). This was the family's homestead for over 60 years and Debbie lived there until she got married in 1972. She attended A. B. Rhett Elementary School through the 7th grade and Burke H.S. from 8th through graduation in 1970. Debbie considers herself a proud member of the Burke High School Class of 1970.

Upon graduating from Burke, she attended South Carolina State College where she majored in Sociology and minored in Social Work; receiving her Bachelor's Degree in May 1974. While at State Debbie sang in the school's choir as she received a choir scholarship upon graduating from Burke. A significant event would be her decision to get married during the summer of her sophomore year at State. Her fiancé was not a student at State, he was in the U.S. Navy. They married in 1972 and Debbie returned to State to complete her education as that was her father's requirement and condition for giving permission for the marriage. On June 3, 1972, she married Jerald T. Joseph, a native of New Orleans, LA. The couple waited several years before having children, allowing her time to complete college and gain employment. Debbie is proud to say that this summer (2018) they will celebrate 46 years of

marriage. They have two beautiful daughters; Shontelle Joseph Eason and Jerilyn T. Joseph and four grandchildren, their oldest will graduate from high school in June 2018.

Debbie has lived in Charleston all of her life; however, she does enjoy traveling with family and friends. She frequently travels to many of the South Carolina State football "away games" with fellow Bulldogs, cheering and supporting the team! She has travelled to (at least) 20 of the 50 states and enjoys family leisure travels via cruise ships.

Her community service involvement began in 1979 when she joined the Charleston Alumni Chapter of South Carolina State University. We worked hard to recruit students for the school and alumni to join the chapter. In recruiting students she is known for her many fundraisers to raise money for SCSU student scholarships. In 1982 she became involved in Girl Scouting as a Parent Helper with the Morris Street Baptist Church Scout Troops under the Leadership of Mrs. Joe Ethel Moore. Later, Debbie became a Troop Leader and served for nearly 13 years.

In 2004, her friends and classmates of Burke School decided, at our Class Reunion, to reorganize our High School Social Club, The Coronets. They meet annually, enjoying each other's company for a long weekend and we donate a "Book Scholarship" to a graduating senior from Burke High School, who will attend college upon graduation. They have done this for 14 years; and "they love it!" Debbie thinks, "I would have to say this is a very significant project. We have so many students that want to attend school and are in great need of financial assistance. Our scholarship is small but it serves a worthy cause; helping students to purchase books for college." Community Service is easy to do working in the field of Social Work. "I think it comes with the territory. I enjoy it and I can't think of any "pitfalls" of such a worthy and needed cause."

Her hobbies include travelling, and spending time with family and friends and attending South Carolina State University Football Games (home and away). "Giving back to South Carolina State University is something that I take very seriously. We need this University to remain in great existence for our future students. I have been actively involved with the University since 1979, serving in the Alumni Association on the local level in many capacities and as President." Debbie is a Past National Alumni Association President and has served in many positions on that level. She currently serves on the SCSU's Real Estate Foundation Board. She participates in (all) Class Reunions, giving of her time and financial resources. Deborah Walker Joseph is a Life-Member of South Carolina State University National Alumni Association. She is a member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church and sings in the choir. Her Life's Motto is: *I firmly believe that "Nothing beats a Trial but a Failure. I think that is one guarantee that we have in life. Try something, you just might make it! If you don't try, you will not make it."* She looks forward to working (perhaps) one more year in the schools of Charleston County as a School Social Worker before retiring to enjoy family, friends and probably more community service.

Barbara Gathers - Entrepreneur

March was Women History Month and the Charleston Chronicle recognized Barbara A. Gathers among the women in the community who have made history and continues to do so. A Burke High School graduate ('63) who grew up in the west side peninsula Charleston 'Back The Green' neighborhood, Gathers has distinguished herself culturally and professionally in the local community. She is a pioneer in the field of equal employment opportunities and as a small business owner.



Among her most obvious characteristics is her modesty. Asked if she should be considered a figure in women's history, she exclaimed, "I don't know why!" She immediately credits her many accomplishments to her grandmother, the late Corine Wilson Gathers, a domestic worker who with her husband Abednigo provided a college education to their children and Gathers. With pride, love and respect she says of her grandmother, "She only went to the fifth grade, but she had a Ph.D. in life."

Gathers said among the lessons her grandmother taught her were to be confident and to prepare oneself. A capable student, Gathers aspired to become a social worker. She got a degree in Sociology from North Carolina A&T University ('67), but landed a job as a teacher upon graduating. Teaching was satisfying work, but it wasn't what she set out to do. So when her teaching career ended with the closure of W. Gresham Meggett after its 1970 graduating class left, Gathers took a job as a counselor with the S.C. Commission for Farm Workers. She did that four years and describes it as one of her best jobs because it gave her the opportunity to help guide students into college.

A trip to graduate school followed by several years working for the Department of Social Services led the self-described occupational rolling stone to the Dept. of the Army as an equal employment opportunity officer. It was work she'd do 22 years, serving different times for different federal agencies as manager and as a specialist. Her jobs took her to offices in Charleston, Columbia and Japan. All the while she aspired to become a business owner. While still working for the federal government she took courses and attended business seminars in preparation for opening her own business.

Among her passions has been a love for art and literature. Going into business, for her, meant art and literature. For 12 years beginning in 1986, she was one of only a few Black entrepreneurs owning stores in downtown Charleston south of Calhoun Street. Unique Ideas Gifts and Accessories on Meeting Street and later on King Street offered a venue for African American art sales and gifts. But her store was more than a retail outlet. It also was a venue where Gathers presented local and national artists to the public. The store was a base for book signings, art exhibits and literary recitals. She was among the first locally to showcase the artwork of Jonathan Green.

Gathers said surviving a business environment that wantonly discriminated against Black entrepreneurs was difficult. Eventually she closed the store. But she's a survivor. She's survived a heart transplant and breast cancer. Ten years ago Gathers founded The Tri-County Women's Resource Project, a non-profit organization promoting health, economic, civic, social and spiritual awareness among women. And since 2009 she has headed Barbara Gathers and Associates. In 2015 she published her memoir, *"From Back Da Green-Stories From The Heart"*.

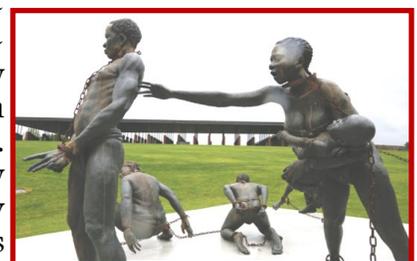
Gathers says she unsure what she'll do next. "I'll go wherever God leads me and do whatever that little voice I recognize as His tells me to do," she says. She is certain however, "You can't just jump out there. You've got to prepare."

National Memorial for Peace and Justice Opens



A memorial that honors thousands of victims of lynching and explores the lasting impact the practice had on American culture opened on April 26th in Montgomery, AL. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice sits on a six-acre site in the state's capital and contains 800 steel monuments that each represent a county in the United States where lynchings took place. The columns are engraved with the names of lynching victims from each of those counties.

Lynching refers to the mob-fueled killing of an accused person, often without a trial. The practice occurred throughout much of the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries and generally targeted African Americans, who were usually hanged in public. The Equal Justice Initiative, the nonprofit behind the Alabama memorial, spent years compiling a report detailing thousands (4,000) of instances of lynchings that occurred around the country between 1877 and 1950. The organization said its research identified hundreds of lynchings that had not been previously recognized. Beyond lynching, the memorial also explores other aspects of racial inequality and injustice as they relate to the African American experience. It recognizes the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow laws and the civil rights



movement and confronts police violence and other contemporary issues facing communities of color. The Equal Justice Initiative called the memorial a "sacred space for truth-telling and reflection about racial terror in America and its legacy."

Charleston Club Tattler ~ One liners ...

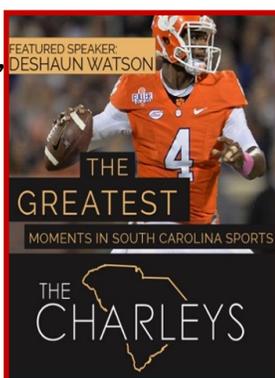
◆ **Burke's Class of 1963's 55th Anniversary Reunion** is on schedule for the Washington area June 13th-17th, 2018. Their host hotel, The Harborside Hotel is in Oxon Hill, MD. Charleston Club members, **Reggie Russell** and **Marion Rhodes** are your local Points of Contacts. Charleston Club members are invited to their Reunion Finale – An Evening with **Janine Gilbert-Carter, International Jazz Vocalist**, Saturday, June 16th, at 7:00 p.m. at Harborside Hotel, (\$50.00 Per Person).

◆ **Charleston Club's 2018 70th Grand Reunion July 19-21** is almost here, our May 19th meeting will be the last meeting before the big event! The club needs everyone to continue to sign up and register...and secure their hotel rooms!

- Souvenir Journal Ads are coming in, there is still time to submit an Ad! Members may still solicit ads.
- We have over 60 pictures of club members for the journal, only a few mail-in replacement shots are needed. **Thank you for your cooperation!**

◆ The next **Charleston Club meeting** will be Saturday, May 19th at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church on Allentown Road in Ft. Washington at 2:00 p.m. This will be our last meeting before The Grand Reunion in July.

◆ The Post and Courier will host an event **"The Greatest Moments in South Carolina Sports"** on Friday evening, May 11th at The Charleston Gaillard Center to recognize major sports achievements, relive unforgettable moments and salute the leading performances in the State of South Carolina. The featured speaker will be Deshaun Watson, the man who led



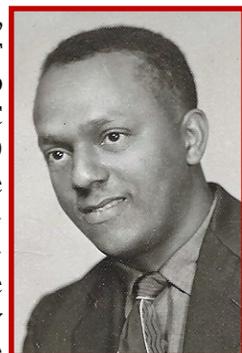
Clemson University to win the National Championship game for the 2016 season and is now playing with the Houston Texans. A Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Coach John McKissick, the winningest high school football coach in South Carolina.

◆ Marvel and Disney's **Black Panther** continues its reign as a box office superhero. The film is on a record-breaking streak, and it's just made history again. Its \$652.5 million domestic box office total reportedly officially beats out **Jurassic Worlds** \$652.3 million earned in 2015. That makes **Black Panther** the No. 4 movie ever in the U.S. Once **Black Panther** passes James Cameron's nautical 11-time Oscar-winner, it will need to rally another \$100 million to hit **Avatar's** \$760.5 mill. At the top of the heap is **Star Wars: The Force Awakens**, dropped in

December 2015 and outperformed all of American movie history to the tune of \$936.6 million.



Wendell "Do" Phillip Middleton, the uncle of Charleston Club member **Leroy "Bobby" Palmer** entered into eternal rest on April 18th, at MUSC Hospital in Charleston; he was 89 years old. Uncle "Dolly Do" as he was known, was the last of his generation of Middletons. He was a graduate of Burke High School in the late 40s. Many folks in Charleston knew him as "Dolly Do," a nickname he acquired as a young child. He was truly a good guardian to all his nieces and nephews that grew up in Charleston. The kind uncle who always attended and supported any event they participated in. Dolly Do was known for his (strong) likes and dislikes; new theaters were never quite as good as the **Lincoln Theater** on King Street or that, no store was as good as **Edward's 5¢ and 10¢ Store**. A Funeral Mass was held Wednesday, April 25th at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, West of the Ashley and internment was at St. Peter's Catholic Cemetery on Spruill Avenue in North Charleston.



Robert Francis Kennedy
(November 20, 1925 – June 6, 1968)
Wednesday, June 6, 2018 will mark the 50th anniversary of the assassination of New York Senator Robert "Bobby" Kennedy in Los Angeles, CA. The 42 years old senator was shot at the Ambassador Hotel after winning the June 5, 1968 California presidential primary.
"Some men see things as they are, and say why? I dream things that never were, and say why not?"
~ Robert Francis Kennedy*
* Used in his 1968 campaign for the presidential nomination.

Happy Birthdays!
May Birthdays:
Michael McKinney - May 2nd, ~ Angela Martin - May 3rd, ~ John Jackson - May 5th, ~ Bernice Brooks - May 7th, ~ Vera Bradford - May 13th, ~ Lanard Geddings - May 18th, ~ Terrance Edwards - May 26th, ~ Leroy Bennett - May 27th, ~ Georgia Chisolm - May 28th, ~ Gilbert Knowles - May 30th. **- The Fly on The Wall!**