

Charleston Club Tattler

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Hospital Strike - 50 Years Ago

Charleston's MUSC Strike 50th Anniversary



It was the Spring of 1969, 12 employees upset over inequities in working conditions, pay and racial discrimination walked off their jobs in protest at what then was the Medical College of South Carolina. Thus began the 110-day 1969 Charleston Hospital Workers Strike. **March 20th** marked the fiftieth (50th) anniversary of that strike. The four-month strike crippled operations at the Medical College Hospital of S.C. and Charleston County Hospital; and disrupted the historic city during the height of its tourist season. The 110-day strike helped to transform the city that had declined economically after the Civil War, but was experiencing a post-World War II business boost by the late 1960s. Some 1,500 Blacks, mostly women, worked at the Medical College of S.C. which was among the community's largest employers. But most only were paid minimum wage or about \$1.30 per hour.

Four hundred workers - all African American and mostly women—struck for higher wages, an end to workplace discrimination, and recognition of Local 1199B of the New York-based Drug and Hospital Employees Union. Organizers from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) arrived from Atlanta to mobilize church and community support and to orchestrate nonviolent civil disobedience that resulted in nearly 1,000 arrests.

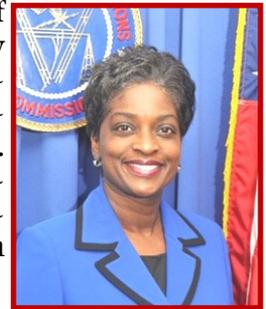
The Charleston strike generated great enthusiasm within the civil rights movement and on the left. Many believed that Charleston signaled the emergence of a potent alliance between the civil rights and labor movements. The strike brought together labor and civil rights organizations and mobilized thousands of Black residents. The strike influenced political participation across the state. Viewed as part of the longer sweep of local history, the Charleston strike was a spark for continued labor organization among the city's sanitation workers as well as steelworkers in Georgetown. The strike also inspired a mass voter registration drive that led to a dramatic expansion of

black voting power and the election of the first African Americans to the state legislature since Reconstruction. In this regard, the hospital strike marked the arrival of the Charleston area's black working class as a political force with which to be reckoned.

The strike, however, ended ambiguously at the end of June. The workers received modest raises that brought the lowest paid workers up to the federal minimum wage. And several strike leaders who had been fired for their activism were reinstated. However, the workers' were denied union recognition. Led by strike leader Mary Moultrie, Local 1199B survived a short time before national union staff shifted their attention and resources to other cities that offered better prospects for success. **March 20, 1969...fifty years later!**

Mignon L. Clyburn Going To "The Board"

Charleston Club member **Mignon L. Clyburn** has been appointed to the corporate board of Charah Solutions Inc.; a publicly traded company that provides environmental and maintenance services to the electric utility industry. The former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioner was named to the board on March 5th.



"Ms. Clyburn has more than two decades of experience operating highly efficient federal and state government agencies, including, while at the FCC, a track record of driving solutions to important industrywide issues, and we are pleased to welcome her to the board as a new independent director," said Stephen Tritch, Charah's chairman. "We are confident that Mignon's public sector experience as well as her background as a successful business executive will add tremendous value as Charah Solutions continues to deliver innovative solutions to customers while accelerating business and financial performance."

While on the FCC (2009~2018); two of the most controversial issues on the docket during Clyburn's tenure were "**net neutrality**," or the principle that Internet Service Providers (ISPs), mainly telecommunications companies or governments, may not restrict the use of content, sites, platforms, or the kinds of equipment that may be attached to their cable lines. The other was **Inmate Telephone Service**. Acting on its mandate to ensure that rates for phone calls are just, reasonable and fair for all Americans, the FCC reined in the excessive rates and fees on phone calls paid by some of society's most vulnerable people: families trying to stay in touch with loved ones serving time in jail or pris-

on. In most cases, inmates' telephone calling options were limited to one or more of the following calling types: collect, debit account or pre-paid account. Also, incarcerated persons typically cannot choose their calling provider. These factors, combined with unrestricted rates, have often resulted in unreasonably high phone bills for inmates' families.

Born and raised in South Carolina to a father who taught high-school history at C.A. Brown H.S. and her mother, Emily England Clyburn who was a school librarian at Burke H.S. Her father, James E. Clyburn, would eventually become South Carolina's Commissioner of Human Affairs, and, by the time Mignon turned 21, he had become the first black U.S. House Member from South Carolina since 1897.

Mignon graduated from W. J. Keenan High School, Columbia, SC in 1980 then attended the University of South Carolina where she majored in banking, finance and economics. In 1984, after earning her degrees, Clyburn became the publisher and general manager of her father's brainchild: a weekly Charleston newspaper (*The Coastal Times*) that focused on issues affecting the African-American community. Clyburn worked at the now-defunct Coastal Times for 14 years. In the late 1990s, Mignon was a member of the South Carolina Public Service Commission (PSC), representing South Carolina's 6th congressional district. She was first elected to the post in July 1998, and served as the chair of the Commission from 2002 to 2004.

In April 2009 President Barack H. Obama appointed her to be one of the five FCC commissioners. Mignon completed her term in June 2018. She was designated a Women's History Month Honoree by the National Women's History Project and a past chair of the YWCA of Greater Charleston in 2009. Mignon Clyburn has two younger sisters; Jennifer Clyburn Reed (Walter) and Angela Clyburn Hannibal (Cecil); both currently living in South Carolina. Her father, James Enos Clyburn is the Majority Whip, he is the third-ranking Democrat in the United States House of Representatives. Mignon L. Clyburn just had a birthday this March 22nd, she has been a very active member of the Charleston Club for the past decade ...you might say... *"when Mignon L. Clyburn talks, everyone listens!"* **Happy Belated Birthday Mignon; Congregations and Best Wishes, from The Charleston Club!**

Changes at Charleston's Air Force Base



For the first time, the top two leaders in Air Base's history are African Americans. The 628th Air Base Wing is part of Charleston's Air Base, which also includes the 437th Airlift Wing and 315th Airlift Wing. Joint Base Charleston encompasses four installations, including Charleston AFB and

Naval Weapons Station Charleston. **Col. Terrence A. Adams** is commander of the 628th Air Base Wing and Joint Base Charleston. **Chief Master Sergeant Michael Cole** is the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the 628th Air Base Wing.

Adams, a native of Tuskegee, AL, said his ethnicity relative to his command is a bigger deal than he'd make of it, but he understands that the role is more about the perception of others – how others may see him and be inspired. And he's quick to offer himself in efforts to promote such inspiration. **Cole**, who hails from Maryland, also feels the leadership dynamic at the base is inspirational and helps younger minority personnel realize that ethnicity may be less of a concern than ability.

For the two leaders, ability is where the rubber meets the road. Adams served in the Army, both active duty and reserve, totaling five years. He entered the Air Force through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) after graduating from Auburn University with a degree in Computer Information Systems. In 1997 he earned a Masters of Business Administration from Troy State University. He commanded six times at the squadron and group levels and has held a variety of positions at squadron, group, wing, major command, air staff and joint staff levels.

Cole's resume also is impressive. He is the principal advisor to the commander on all matters of morale, welfare, readiness, professional development, and operational utilization of the enlisted force. In addition to earning in 2016 a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management from Park University, he has completed training which includes; a 2006 Associate Degree in Aircraft Maintenance Technology from the Community College of the Air Force and in 2016 the Air Force Command Chief Training Course. Cole entered the Air Force as an Aircraft Maintenance Apprentice in May of 1991. He has held several positions in the aircraft maintenance career field in addition to serving as a First Sergeant. Prior to assuming his current position, he served as the Command Chief Master Sergeant, 15th Wing, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

The officers' experience and expertise qualify them for the task they face. Joint Base Charleston is host to over 60 Department Of Defense and federal agencies. The wing provides installation support to a total force of over 90,000 airmen, sailors, soldiers, marines, coast guardsmen, civilians, dependents and retirees. In addition, the wing provides mission-ready expeditionary airmen to combatant commanders in support of joint and combined operations worldwide. As wing commander Adams is responsible for \$7.5 billion in base property and capital assets and controls an annual budget exceeding \$172 million. In comparison, the scope of Charleston Air Force Base in 2008 consisted of: 7,509 active duty and Air Reserve Component military and civilian personnel which include approximately 3,964 active duty, 2,524 reservists, 1,021 civilians and about 18,000 military retirees.

The leaders say their military experience hasn't exempted them from the reality of being Black in America, but it offers more possibilities where the processes are less biased – less at the enlisted level than among the executive command level, Adams concedes. Whether civilian or military, Adams said overcoming those biases rests on having courageous conversations. As Joint Base Charleston commander, he's committed to having those conversations.

Clafin University Honors Pres. Henry N. Tisdale



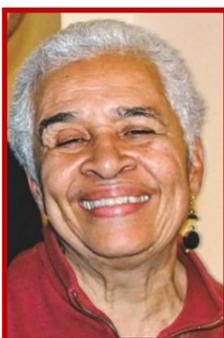
Clafin University to host Gala to celebrate 25 Years of Visionary and Transformative Leadership. In honor of 25 years of visionary and transformative leadership by President Henry N. Tisdale and First Lady Alice Carson Tisdale,

Clafin University is hosting a black tie event, *“A Legacy of Visionary Leadership Gala”* on Monday, April 1st, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center in Columbia. “The event will provide the Clafin community and constituents an opportunity to express their appreciation for the Tisdales’ dedicated service and unwavering commitment to academic excellence during their 25-year tenure at the University,” said James K. Lehman, chairman of the Board of Trustees. “Together, the Tisdales have guided Clafin to new heights and helped secure the University’s status as a leading 21st Century institution of higher education. The proceeds from the event will support the endowed scholarship fund the Tisdales have established to support deserving Clafin students,” Lehman said.

A 1965 honors graduate of Clafin University, Tisdale returned to his alma mater in 1994 and launched his exceptional tenure at the first historically black college and university in South Carolina. On April 17, 2018, President Tisdale announced his retirement effective June 30, 2019, after serving Clafin University as its eighth president for more than two decades.

Remembering Dr. Myrtle Gonza Glascoe

The SNCC Legacy Project announced that Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) veteran, Myrtle Gonza Glascoe, died on Tuesday, March 5, 2019. As a member of the SNCC staff, she worked in West Point, MI, and on the 1965 Arkansas Freedom Summer Project in West Helena, AR. Myrtle G. Glascoe was born in Washington, DC and graduated from Dunbar H.S. and received a bachelor's degree from Howard University. After leaving the South, she attended Harvard University and received a doctorate degree in education. Myrtle became one of the early voices and pioneers in the Post-Civil Rights Black Museum Movement. She served as the first director of the



Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston. Then she spent a few years as a faculty member at Gettysburg College (Gettysburg, PA) before retiring back in the Charleston area. Myrtle G. Glascoe was a very important leader in the areas of Black history and culture.

Dr. Lessane leaving Avery, Onward to Morgan State

After nine years overseeing some of the most transformative times as executive director at The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston, Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane will be leaving the job on April 30th. Lessane will take a position as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Morgan State University in Baltimore.



During her tenure as the 4th executive director at Avery, Lessane achieved landmark accomplishments after taking the helm at Avery in 2010. She immediately conducted a conference about Julie Dash’s 1991 film *“Daughters of the Dust”*, the first feature film directed by an African-American woman distributed theatrically in the U.S. which tells the story of three generations of Gullah women on St. Helena Island.

In addition to teaching, scholarly writing and running Avery, Lessane brought several conferences to the center that converged scholars, historians and others from around the Lowcountry and world at the center. Constantly pushing the envelope the center’s Race and Social Justice Initiative helped move the needle beyond conversation. In 2017 the center released *“The State of Racial Disparities in Charleston County, South Carolina 2000-2015”*. Throughout her tenure Lessane continued the work around race and social justice. Lessane’s 2015, *New York Times* editorial, *“No Sanctuary in Charleston”* gave personal and social commentary about African American life in Charleston following the massacre at Mother Emanuel AME Church and she frequently writes opinion pieces about the intersection of race, gender, and class in Black life in the United States. She serves on the board of the Collegium of African American Research (CAAR), WREN (Women’s Rights and Empowerment Network), the Sophia Institute, and the Charleston Library Society.

She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., a Fulbright Specialist and in 2016 was a Fulbright scholar at University of Málaga in Málaga, Spain. Recently, she was honored at The College of Charleston’s Excel Awards as Administrator of the Year and was one of eleven women honored at the Greater Charleston YWCA’s inaugural *“What Women Bring”* awards for her work as a non-profit leader. She was voted Speaker of the Faculty at College of Charleston which resulted in her being the first librarian to be elected in that role. “I came to Avery with my credentials and my integrity. I said I would leave with both,” related Lessane when asked what are the highlights of her

tenure. "I love that our small, but powerful staff has made African American history and culture accessible to all people and that we have trained some amazing students," she said.

Irving L. Pickering Dies at 78 in Charleston

Irving Lorenzo Pickering entered into eternal rest on February 25th in Charleston; he was 78 years old. Fondly known as "Irbee" by family and friends, he was born on May 3, 1940 as the oldest son of Dr. & Mrs. Lorenzo Irving Pickering. Irving attended I.C.S. and played football on the school's 1957 Championship Team. He graduated in ICHS' class of 1958, and received an athletic (football) scholarship to Bethune-Cookman College (now Bethune-Cookman University) in Daytona Beach, FL. Irving wanted to study animal husbandry (agriculture) and decided to enter North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (NC A&T) in Greensboro. In July 1964 he entered the U.S. Army and served in the Vietnam War with the 212th Military Police sentry dog company. Later, he entered the field of pathology and research and was stationed at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, DC.



In 1973, while stationed in San Francisco, he met and married his wife of 44 years, Dixie Lee Pickering. The family moved to their Wadmalaw Island homestead in the late 1970s and Irving began his agriculture/animal husbandry endeavors on his own farmland. Irving L. Pickering was a quiet, gentle soul with a big heart. He loved animals and people alike, he enjoyed working with his hands and his mind. He is survived by his wife, Dixie Lee; three children, Theodore, Derrick and Damon; and a large family of Pickering brothers, sisters, in-laws, grands. His Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, March 2nd at St. Patrick Catholic Church on St. Philip Street in Charleston.

Charleston Club Tattler ~One liners . . .

♦ Charleston's District Four Councilmember **Robert M. Mitchell** was warmly welcomed during his **March 9th** Charleston Club meeting visit. The Councilman spoke for a few minutes on what was going on in Charleston and the status of current events. District Four incumbent Robert Mitchell who won re-election in 2017 to the seat he first captured in 1998. Mitchell could see the majority Black status of his Eastside Charleston district change in 2020 when council districts will be redistricted.

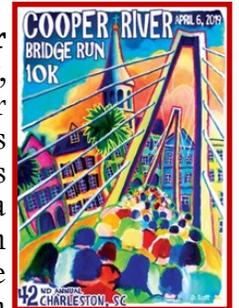


♦ The **Burke High School Band** visited New York City for Spring Break 2019 with tours and scheduled performances during **March 25th~28th** in **"The City!"** Their bandmaster, Mr. Linard McCloud and bandmembers stayed in the Queens area of NYC. The band visited; Jersey Gardens Outlet Mall, performed in



two band concerts, visited Madison Square Garden, Central Park, the Statue of Liberty and attended a Broadway Play (**"Ain't too Proud"**) at the Imperial Theater. The Charleston Club took up a collection at the **March 9th** club meeting and made a contribution towards sponsoring the trip for The Band!

- ♦ The **42nd Annual Cooper River Bridge Run** will occur on Saturday, **April 6th** this year. The Cooper River Bridge Run provides a world-class 10-K foot race. The race promotes continuous physical activity and a healthy lifestyle through education and opportunity. The race course begins in Mt. Pleasant on Coleman Boulevard, crosses the beautiful Cooper River Bridge and finishes in downtown Charleston. The Cooper River Bridge Run has become a world-class 10K foot race; the 3rd largest in the USA and one of the most popular with over 75,000 participants! The finish festival and Bridge Run Expo will feature hundreds of vendors.



- New Jersey senator and 2020 presidential candidate, **Cory Booker**, will deliver the commencement address at SC State University's 2019 graduating class. The spring Commencement address is scheduled to begin Friday, May 10th at the Oliver C. Dawson Stadium. A native of Washington, D.C., Booker has dedicated his life to fighting for those who have been left out, left behind or left without a voice. In 1996, he moved to Newark, New Jersey, and founded a non-profit organization to provide legal services for low-income families, helping tenants take on slumlords, improve their living conditions and stay in their homes.



Happy Birthdays!

April 2019 Birthdays:

Michelle Gaston – April 3th ~ **Vanessa Tabern** – April 4th ~
Emmett Russell – April 8th ~ **Jack Rogers** – April 14th ~
Clarence McNeill – April 23rd ~ **Alethia Starke** – April 27th.
~ The Fly on The Wall !