

# Charleston Club Tattler

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## A Happier New Year-2021

### Meet Vice President-Elect Kamala D. Harris

Vice President-Elect Kamala Devi Harris was born in Oakland, CA on October 20, 1964. Her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a biologist whose work on the progesterone receptor gene stimulated advances in breast cancer research, arrived in the U.S. from Tamil Nadu in India in 1958 as a 19-year-old graduate student in nutrition and endocrinology at the University of California, Berkeley; Gopalan received her PhD in 1964. Her father, Donald J. Harris, is a Stanford University professor emeritus of economics, who arrived in the U.S. from British Jamaica in 1961 for graduate study at UC Berkeley, receiving a PhD in economics in 1966. Along with her younger sister, Maya, Harris lived in Berkeley briefly, an area often called "the flatlands" with a significant black population.



When Harris began kindergarten, she was bused as part of Berkeley's comprehensive desegregation program to Thousand Oaks Elementary School, a public school in a more prosperous neighborhood in northern Berkeley which previously had been 95 percent white, and after the desegregation plan went into effect became 40 percent Black. A neighbor regularly took the Harris girls to an African American Church in Oakland where they sang in the children's choir, and the girls and their mother also frequently visited a nearby African American cultural center. Their mother introduced them to Hinduism and took them to a nearby Hindu temple, where she occasionally sang. As children, she and her sister visited their mother's family in Madras (now Chennai) several times. She says she has been strongly influenced by her maternal grandfather P. V. Gopalan, a retired Indian civil servant whose progressive views on democracy and women's rights impressed her. Harris has remained in touch with her Indian aunts and uncles throughout her adult life. Harris has also visited her father's family in Jamaica.

Her parents divorced when she was seven. Harris has said that when she and her sister visited their father in Palo Alto on weekends, other children in the neighborhood were not allowed to play with them because they were black. When she was twelve, Harris and her sister moved with their mother to Montreal and Quebec, Canada, where Shyamala had accepted a research and teaching position at the McGill University-affiliated Jewish General Hospital. She attended a French-speaking primary school, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, then F.A.C.E. School, and

then Westmount High School in Quebec, graduating in 1981. Wanda Kagan, a high school friend of Harris, later told *CBC News* (in 2020) that Harris was her best friend and described how she confided in Harris that she had been molested by her stepfather. She said that Harris told her mother, who then insisted Kagan come to live with them for the remainder of her final year of high school. Kagan said Harris had recently told her that their friendship, and playing a role in countering Kagan's exploitation, helped form the commitment Harris felt in protecting women and children as a prosecutor. After high school, in 1982, Harris attended Howard University in Washington, DC. While at Howard, she interned as a mailroom clerk for California senator Alan Cranston, chaired the economics society, led the debate team, and joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Harris graduated from Howard in 1986 with a degree in political science and economics. Harris then returned to California to attend law school at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law through its Legal Education Opportunity Program (LEOP). While at UC Hastings, she served as president of its chapter of the Black Law Students Association. She graduated with a Juris Doctor in 1989 and was admitted to the California Bar in June 1990.

### The Lady Behind Moderna Covid-19 Vaccine

Kizzmekia "Kizzy" Shanta Corbett was born on January 26, 1986 in Hurdle Mills, NC (about 30 miles north of Durham); later this month she will be celebrating her 35<sup>th</sup> birthday. She is now, an American viral immunologist at the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) based in Bethesda, MD. Appointed to the VRC in 2014, she is currently the scientific lead of the VRC's Coronavirus Team, with research efforts aimed at propelling novel coronavirus vaccines, including a COVID-19 vaccine. In December 2020 the Institute's Director Anthony Fauci, said: "Kizzy is an African American scientist who is right at the forefront of the development of the vaccine."



In 2008, Corbett received a B.S. in Biological Sciences and Sociology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). In 2014, Corbett received a PhD in microbiology and immunology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While in high school, Corbett decided to pursue a scientific career, and as part of a program called Project SEED, spent her summer holiday working in research laboratories.

Dr. Corbett began her research at NIH working on the development of vaccines for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), two types of coronaviruses. Along with members of her team, Dr. Corbett identified the “spike protein” in COVID-19, when the virus emerged in December 2019. The claw-like shape of the protein, the spike, permeates healthy human skin, infecting the person with the virus.

Because of that work, Dr. Corbett was chosen to lead the team of scientists who partnered with the biotechnology company Moderna in development of a promising vaccine that uses a genetic code sequence to prompt the body’s immune system to react when the spike protein is detected, thus blocking the infection process. On March 3, 2020, Dr. Corbett shared her research with President Donald Trump during his NIH tour. Three days later, the president signed a bill authorizing an \$8.3 billion dollar emergency coronavirus response, which included at least \$3 billion for accelerated research on a vaccine and treatment.

### MacKenzie Scott Gives Away \$4.2 Billion

MacKenzie Scott, a writer, philanthropist and ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, announced on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> charitable gifts of about \$4.2 billion to 384 organizations, including more than 30 colleges. Many of the gifts went to HBCUs, tribal colleges, or community colleges. Among the beneficiaries are Prairie View A&M University, in Texas, which described Scott’s \$50 million gift as the largest ever gift in the college’s history. Other HBCUs reported receiving record-breaking gifts from Scott in the tens of millions: Morgan State in Baltimore, reported a gift of \$40 million; Winston-Salem State in NC, reported a gift of \$30 million; and Delaware State and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore reported gifts of \$20 million each.



In addition to the gifts to colleges, Scott also announced gifts to a wide array of other charitable organizations, including food banks, United Way and YMCA chapters, among many others. Scott previously announced in July about \$1.7 billion in donations to 116 organizations, including organizations that grant scholarships or provide college advising to minority or low-income students -- beneficiaries included the American Indian Graduate Center, College Track, the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the Posse Foundation, TheDream.US, the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund and the United Negro College Fund.

**Here are the names of some of the HBCUs ... Alcorn State - \$25M, Bowie State - \$25M, Claflin - \$20M, Clark Atlanta - \$15M, Delaware State - \$20M, Dillard - \$5M, Elizabeth City State - \$15M, Hampton - ???, Howard - ???, Lincoln - Pennsylvania - \$20M, Morehouse - unknown, Morgan State - \$40M, Norfolk State - \$40M, N.C. A&T State - \$45M, Prairie View A&M - \$50M, Spelman - ???, Tuskegee - ???, Virginia State - ???, Voorhees - ???, Xavier - ???, and Winston-Salem State - \$30M.**

### SC’s Clay Middleton joins President-elect Joe Biden’s transition team

A well-known South Carolina name helped shape President-Elect Joe Biden’s transition into the White House prior to the Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> inauguration. South Carolina Democratic strategist Clay Nimoy Middleton, has helped lead three presidential campaigns and held positions in the Obama administration, joined Biden’s transition team as House legislative advisor, responsible for outreach with members of Congress and other stakeholders. Middleton, who turns 39 in November, is a Charleston native. He graduated from Burke in 1999 and The Citadel in 2003 officially joined the team helping to handle personnel requests and answer policy and administrative questions between the president-elect’s transition team and Capitol Hill. Prior to joining the transition team, Middleton said he took leave at Mercury, a Washington-based public strategy firm, where he was announced in June as senior vice president for the firm’s Washington and South Carolina offices.



Middleton has many valuable years of government, political, military, and leadership experience. He is a MAJ (P) in the SC Army National Guard, combat veteran, and Bronze Star Medal recipient. Clay’s public service alternated between roles in South Carolina, Washington, DC, Florida, and other states serving in a variety of key government and senior level positions in the Obama Administration, with Former Secretary Hillary Clinton, Senator Cory Booker, and Majority Whip Jim Clyburn.

### Biden Picks A&T Man (Aggie Pride) to Head the EPA

President-elect Joe Biden nominates Michael S. Regan, who heads the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, as the next Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator. Regan, 44, will become the first Black man to run the EPA. He would play a central role in realizing Biden’s promises to combat climate change, embrace green energy and address environmental racism. He also would be responsible for crafting fuel-efficiency standards for the nation’s cars and trucks, overseeing emissions from power plants and oil and gas facilities, and cleaning up the country’s most polluted sites.



Regan has served as North Carolina’s top environmental official since early 2017. During that time, he forged a tough multibillion-dollar settlement over a coal ash clean-up with Duke Energy, established an environmental justice advisory board and reached across the political divide to work with the state’s Republican legislature. “Right away he prioritized climate change, environmental justice and coal ash cleanup.” “Regan realized that America’s environmental laws and policies must, first and foremost, protect the most vulnerable.” Growing up with asthma in eastern

North Carolina, Regan saw toxic pollution, agricultural waste and environmental destruction being concentrated near communities of color and low-income communities.

A native of Goldsboro, NC, Regan studied Earth and Environmental Science at N.C. A&T State University and later earned a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University. He and his wife, Melvina, and their son, Matthew, live in Raleigh.

### Charleston County's Dawson New SC Federal Judge

Longtime Charleston County general counsel Joseph Dawson III was confirmed Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> by the U.S. Senate (56-39 vote) as South Carolina's newest federal judge. Dawson, 50, a 1991 graduate of The Citadel and 1997 graduate of the University of South Carolina Law School, will be the only African American male judge on the state's federal bench. Federal judges, who oversee federal civil and criminal hearings and trials, are lifetime appointments. Dawson was sponsored by U.S. Senator Tim Scott (R-SC), who said he has known Dawson for 17 years and Dawson has been married 29 years and has three children. "As good as an attorney as he is, he is a better husband. He is a better father." Scott continued, "He is an excellent person of high integrity, deep faith and strong character." In his experience on county council, Scott said, Dawson doesn't tell people what they want to hear, "He tells you the law ... We disagreed on a number of occasions, but Joe was right more than I was."

Dawson will likely take a significant pay cut to become a federal judge. In 2019, he was paid \$421,357 by Charleston County, according to an article in the Charleston Post & Courier. As a district court judge, he will make approximately \$216,000 a year.

### Charleston Club's Nonagenarians Celebrating 90s:

**Hazel L. Seaberry's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration...** A many splendored ZOOM! "Give me my roses while I can smell them..." On Sunday, November 15, 2020, the family of Hazel L. Seaberry hosted a 95<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for her via ZOOM. There were more than 35 participants-family, friends, church members, Charleston Club members, Sorors of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and alumni from S.C. State University. Attendees hailed from a dozen (12) states; Arizona, California, Maryland, New Jersey, Florida, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Texas, Washington DC, Georgia, and New York. Hazel was delighted to see and communicate with so many friends and family that she had not been in touch with for many years. One of the most noteworthy gifts she received



was a life membership in the Charleston Club!

Hazel was born on November 15, 1925 in Spartanburg, SC. She earned her Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees from South Carolina State University. After marrying Dr. Norman F. Wilson, she relocated to Charleston and taught Home Economics at Burke and C. A. Brown High Schools. She resided in Charleston until her remarriage to Joseph Eugene Seaberry ("Gene"). She then relocated to Washington DC area. She taught at several local schools until her retirement in 1992. She and Gene were long time and active members of the Charleston Club for many years. Gene was a former treasurer of the Charleston Club. Gene passed in 2015.

Hazel was the first African American female licensed representative in the state of South Carolina to sell stocks, bonds and tax shelter annuities in the 1960's. She was instrumental in motivating many Charlestonians to invest and educated them on investing.

Hazel was blessed with two children from her first marriage, N. Denise Wilson-Taylor (Charleston Club member) and Dr. Dennis Norman F. Wilson, II (Marva) of Raleigh, NC. From her second marriage she was blessed with two step children, Beatrice Seaberry Edmonds (Anthony) and Joseph E. Seaberry, II (Brenda). Hazel has five grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

### Dolores Moultrie Abrams

It is said, "A room full of sisters like jewels in a crown: vanilla, cinnamon and dark chocolate brown. Now picture yourself in the midst of this glory, as I describe the sister who is a part of this story." She is Dolores Moultrie Abrams, a self-described "true Charlestonian" born, reared and educated at Immaculate Conception School (I.C.S.) in Charleston." She is a proud graduate of Benedict College in Columbia, where she was initiated into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. After graduation, she returned home, where her first teaching job was at A.B. Rhett Elementary. The next year she taught at Four Mile Hill Elementary in the Liberty Hill area. Later, she was assigned to Buist Elementary, where she taught many of the children of the "Who's Who in Charleston." Her father, Mr. William Emile Moultrie was the first black captain in the Charleston City Fire Depart.

Dolores attended graduate school at New York University and received two Masters Degrees. During one of her many social outings with friends, she was introduced to a handsome soldier, Sergeant Alvin Abrams, and the rest in history. They traveled to many countries and she taught four years in Turkey and one year in Greece. After Sgt. Abrams' foreign tour of duty, he was assigned to Andrews Air Force Base in Suitland, Maryland.

They relocated to Washington with their three sons, Alvin, Jr., Maurice, and Henri. In Washington, she was employed by the District of Columbia Public School System



and her tenure began at McGogney Elementary in south-east Washington. It was there that her lifelong friendship with Principal Joyce Simmons Jamison began and lasted to this very day. She was promoted to Assistant Principal and served at Patricia Roberts Harris Educational Center, The School Without Walls, and Merritt Educational Center, until her retirement in 2003.

Dolores Abrams is a devout Catholic and a longtime member of Assumption Catholic Church in southeast. A firm believer in a Catholic Education, all of her sons were educated at Assumption Elementary School and Mackin Senior High School. After retirement, Dolores was invited to join a group of DCPS retirees to charter a chapter of *Just Good Friends, Inc.*, an organization established by three good friends in 1997 to provide opportunities for members to expand their circle of friends through stimulating and exciting social activities and to promote friendship. In 2006, The Potomac Valley Chapter (known as *"The First Ladies"*) of Just Good Friends, Inc. was chartered and the members remain actively involved in friendship activities and supporting each other.

On Sunday, December 20, 2020, Dr. Janice Barclay and Carolyn Pinckney organized a "drive-by" celebrating **Friend Dolores Abrams' 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday**, friends, former co-workers, church members, Charleston Club members, and neighbors joined the celebration and "drive by" at her house on Ladd Road in Suitland.

### Noah Harris, History Being Elected 1st Black Student Body President at Harvard

Noah Harris was elected president of Harvard's Undergraduate Council on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>, becoming the first Black undergraduate elected as student body president at **Harvard University**. Harris is 20, a junior from Hattiesburg, MS, majoring in government and co-chairs the Undergraduate Council's Black Caucus. Two other Black students have previously headed Harvard's Undergraduate Council, but Harris is the first Black man to be elected by the student body. Harris told his hometown paper, the *Hattiesburg American* that he does not take the honor lightly. "Especially with everything that went on this summer with the death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, all the protests that went on in this moment of racial reckoning in this country" he said. "This is a major statement by the Harvard student body to entrust a Black man with such an unprecedented moment in its history."



He continues, "I hope the message is that Black men, and young African Americans in general, belong at these universities. That they can be from Mississippi. And to not be deterred from applying to [schools like] Harvard, Yale, Princeton or Stanford. That they can belong in these spaces. And not only can they belong, but they can thrive." After earning his Bachelor's, Harris says he wants to go to law school and become a courtroom attorney, though he

seems to have a natural ability for, and sincere interest in, politics. When asked where he would like to study law, he quickly and politically responds: "My dream law school would be Harvard."

### Ex-Tuskegee Airman Alfred T. Farrar dies at 99

Alfred T. Farrar, Sr. a former Tuskegee Airman, died on Thursday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> in Lynchburg, nine days before a ceremony planned to honor his service in the program that famously trained Black military pilots during World War II; he was 99 years old. Farrar died days before he would have turned 100 years old on Dec. 26, 2020.

Farrar left his Lynchburg hometown for Tuskegee, AL, after graduating from high school to begin his aviation training in 1941. Farrar learned to be a pilot during his time in U.S. Army Air Corps. After his discharge in 1943, Farrar studied to be an aerospace engineer and worked as an engineer with the Federal Aviation Administration for four decades. A local veterans' group planned a fly-over memorial ceremony on Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> on his birthday.

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

- ◆ The Charleston Club's **January 2021 Meeting/Social** is scheduled for **January 9<sup>th</sup>**, plans are currently ongoing as to what form will work best during these quarantine guidelines days; look for an e-mail soon, or see you at our March 13<sup>th</sup>, Meeting (???)
- ◆ **President-Elect Joe Biden** has named **Rep. James Clyburn** as the chairman for the January 20, 2021 swearing-in. Rep. Clyburn, The House Majority Whip, was Biden's most important proponent: it was Clyburn's endorsement that helped swing the South Carolina primary and began his remarkable comeback in the Democratic field.
- ◆ Two **South Carolina HBCUs** institutions headline the list of positive accreditation actions. **Benedict College** and **Denmark Technical College** were removed from accreditation probation during the winter meetings of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), in mid-Dec 2020.

## Happy Birthdays!

### January 2021 Birthdays:

**Juanita Wilder** – Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ **Nicole Hagan** – Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> ~ **Carl White** – Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> ~ **Aurelia Olverson-Carr** – Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> ~ **Karen Champaign** - Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> ~ **Herbert Pittman** - Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> ~ **Tony Gaston** - Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> ~ **Carolyn Young** – Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> ~ **Mildred Green** – Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>.

