

Charleston Club Tattler

Volume 24, Issue 135

A publication of The Charleston S.C. Club of Washington, D.C. Area

Website: charlestonsclub.org/

February 1, 2021



Black History Month - 2021

George R. Carruthers – A Giant Within Our Midst

Dr. George Robert Carruthers overcame a devastating personal loss, moving away from home and struggling in high school to becoming one of the world's most respected minds in astronomy and astrophysics. A scientist and inventor, Carruthers' research has



helped unveil some of space's greatest mysteries. Carruthers was born October 1, 1939 in Cincinnati, OH, the oldest of four children, he was led to science by his Army Air Corps civil engineer father (Wright Patterson AFB), also named George. The family relocated to the South Side of Chicago after the sudden death of his father when he was 12, forcing his mother, Sophia, to take a postal job there. His father's death was hard for the family, and Carruthers' grades suffered throughout high school. Despite his struggles, he won three science fair competitions. He developed an interest in science while in elementary school. His focus was astronomy and space travel. After graduation from Englewood High School, he attended the University of Illinois graduating with in aeronautical engineering in 1961. Over the next three years, he obtained a master's in nuclear engineering, and a doctorate in aeronautical and astronomical engineering.

Carruthers took his talents to Washington, DC where he began working on far ultraviolet astronomy at the Naval Research Laboratory. By 1969, he'd obtained a patent for what was called the "Image Converter for Detecting Electromagnetic Radiation Especially in Short Wave Lengths." The invention was launched into space in 1970, providing the first scientific proof that molecular hydrogen existed in deep space. The UV telescope, or spectrograph, was used once more in 1972 on the Apollo 16 moonwalk mission and was aimed at studying Earth's atmosphere. He created the Science & Engineers Apprentice Program in the 80's, which allowed high school students to visit the NRL site and learn more about astronomy. When Hailey's Comet passed Earth last in 1986, one of Carruthers' inventions captured ultraviolet images of it. He refurbished Howard's unused and unknown observatory with resources that the Consortium granted. After the telescope was refurbished, S.M.A.R.T and the Howard University Department of Physics & Astronomy held public viewings when something astronomical was going on in the universe. Dr. Carruthers, along with NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center space scientists gave related presentations at the preceding

S.M.A.R.T. Family Night Programs. Guests for these activities ranged from toddlers to senior citizens.

Carruthers also extends his efforts to education. He helped create a program called the Science & Engineers Apprentice Program, which gave high school students the opportunity to work at the Naval Research Laboratory. In 1996 and 1997, he taught a course in Earth and Space Science for D.C. Public Schools Science teachers. Then, in 2002, Carruthers began teaching a course on Earth and Space Science and atmospheric physics at Howard University. Carruthers had received numerous awards based on his research; he was one of the recipients of the 2011 National Medal of Technology and Innovation. His medal was presented by **President Barack Obama** in 2013 at the ceremony to honor those who have achieved significant scientific achievements.



Dr. Carruthers was a quiet gentle spirit. His quiet and unassuming demeanor made him one of those people that you meet in life and everyone has nothing but good things to say about him. He was a scientific genius, no doubt, but more than that he was the type of person most good people strive to be. He was often seen going here and there, peddling along on his bicycle while crisscrossing the streets of Washington. He was always willing to cooperate/collaborate and do more than his share of the work with the same accuracy and care that he gave to an important scientific experiment. His style was to rarely complain, but rather focus on solving the problem. He was admired by peers and colleagues who sort to emulate him. He was not as impressed as others were by his achievements, because he always maintained the child-like joy of doing the things that he most enjoyed – science and sharing it. Dr. George Robert Carruthers died December 26th 2020 here in Washington; he was 81 years old.

Ebony Magazine Sold For \$14 Million

A retired NBA player has stepped up to save an iconic publication that is embedded in the fabric of Black culture. **Ulysses "Junior" Bridgeman** is buying the media company Ebony out of bankruptcy. The acquisition was made through his company Bridgeman Sports and Media. Bridgeman-an East Chicago native-bid \$14 million for the



company in U.S. Bankruptcy Court. The athlete-turned-entrepreneur says by purchasing the publication he hopes to preserve its legacy and make it profitable in this digital age. “Nothing is ever easy, but this would be, I think, a labor of love.” “Ebony kind of stood for Black excellence, showing people doing positive things that could benefit everyone. When you look at Ebony, you look at the history not just for Black people, but of the United States. I think it’s something that a generation is missing and we want to bring that back as much as we can.” Bridgeman said the company will be operated by his children and the publication will remain digital with exclusive print issues.

Ebony Media is currently owned by Linda Johnson Rice and the CVG Group which acquired the publication in 2016. Bridgeman—a former Milwaukee Bucks player who retired in 1987, has made several power moves in the realm of business. In 2017, he opened Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Co. after spending decades as a fast-food restaurant franchisee. In 2019, he attempted to acquire Sports Illustrated from The Meredith Corp.

A Georgia First – Senator Raphael G. Warnock (D-GA)

Meet **Rev. Raphael Gamaliel Warnock**, he is the first black senator from Georgia; he is the 11th African-American U.S. Senator. He was born on July 23, 1969 (51 y.o.), a Baptist pastor and a “first time” politician. He has been the senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta since 2005. Warnock came to prominence in Georgia politics in the campaign to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. A member of the Democratic Party, he ran and was expected to win the Georgia.



Warnock is from Savannah, GA, he is the eleventh of twelve children born to Verlene and Jonathan Warnock, both Pentecostal pastors. His father, a World War II veteran learned automobile mechanics and welding, and subsequently opened a small car restoration business where he restored junked cars for resale.

After graduation from high school and, having wanted to follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther King Jr., he attended Morehouse College, where he earned a B.A. in psychology. He credits his participation in the Upward Bound program for making him college-ready, as he was able to enroll in early college courses through Savannah State University. He then earned a Master of Divinity, Master of Philosophy, and Doctor of Philosophy from Union Theological Seminary (New York City), a school affiliated with Columbia University.

In the 1990s, Warnock served as the youth pastor and then assistant pastor at Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York, he was actively involved with a group of church leaders that worked to protest Rudy Giuliani’s workfare program. In 2002, he served as a senior pastor at Douglas Memorial Community Church in Baltimore, MD. In 2005, Warnock became senior pastor of the Ebenezer

Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA, Martin Luther King Jr.’s former congregation; he is the fifth (5th) and the youngest person to serve as Ebenezer’s senior pastor. In January 2013, he delivered the benediction at the prayer service at Obama’s second inauguration. In March 2019, Warnock hosted an interfaith meeting on climate change at his church, featuring Al Gore and William Barber II.

Warnock came to prominence in Georgia politics as a leader in the campaign to expand Medicaid in the state. In March 2014, Warnock led a sit-in at the Georgia State Capitol to press state legislators to accept the expansion of Medicaid offered by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. From June 2017 to January 2020, Warnock chaired the New Georgia Project, a nonpartisan organization focused on voter registration. Warnock supports expanding the Affordable Care Act and has called for the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. In January 2020, Warnock decided to run in the 2020 special election for the U.S. Senate seat held by Kelly Loeffler. He was endorsed by Democratic Senators Chuck Schumer, Cory Booker, Bernie Sanders, and Elizabeth Warren, Stacey Abrams, and former presidents Barack Obama and Jimmy Carter. The closing argument of Warnock’s campaign focused on the \$2,000 stimulus payments that he and Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) if they won!

The Negro Leagues Now ‘Major League’ in Eyes of MLB

For decades, baseball historians and fans have accepted it as gospel that Willie Mays collected 3,283 hits in his career, Bob Feller threw the only Opening Day no-hitter in baseball history and the top three batting averages of all time belonged to Ty Cobb (.366), Rogers Hornsby (.358) and “Shoeless” Joe Jackson (.356). To suggest otherwise was to provoke a bar fight ~ or at the very least a peaceful consulting of Google. But on Dec 16th in a monumental change for the sport, Major League Baseball announced it was elevating the 1920-48 Negro Leagues to major league status, the segregation of baseball that famously ended when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947 ~ but also forces a wholesale recalibration of its record book.

The “long overdue recognition,” will add the names of some 3,400 Negro Leaguers from seven distinct leagues in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, along with all their accumulated statistics, to its official records. That means Negro League stars such as Josh Gibson, Oscar Charleston and James “Cool Papa” Bell ~ all of whom were inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, in the 1970s ~ will gain an additional designation denied to them during their lives: big leaguers. The move was the result of years of study by researchers from the Negro League Database~who pored over newspaper clippings, scorebooks and other historical records to compile statistic~as well as research by the Baseball Hall of Fame, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, MO. “In the minds of baseball fans worldwide,” Bob Kendrick, president of the Negro Leagues Museum, said in a statement, “this serves as historical validation for those who had been shunned from the Major Leagues and had the fore-



sight and courage to create their own league that helped change the game and our country too.” “It is MLB’s view,” the league’s statement said, “that the Committee’s 1969 omission of the Negro Leagues from consideration was clearly an error that demands today’s designation.”

“The issues of inclusion and exclusion that the commissioner addressed are really dramatic ones,” John Thorn, MLB’s official historian, said in a telephone interview. “We’re not merely focusing on stars like Josh Gibson and Oscar Charleston but more than 3,400 men who seemingly had insignificant careers and who are now joined with their white peers in the record books. It’s big for a major institution [such as MLB] to admit publicly to a mistake and go about correcting it.”



Inez “Zeni” Jackson: Super Model

Black History Month would not be complete without looking internally; Charleston native **Inez Carolyn Jackson**. We knew her as “Zeni,” the lady that drove three (3) hours from New Jersey to attend Charleston Club meetings. Everyone admired her dedication in attending club meetings, but that was Zeni! She was the daughter of the late Clarence and Maranda Phillips Norris (“Charleston’s Mother Theresa”). The street (2 Court Street) on Charleston’s west-side, was re-named in honor of her mother “Maranda Holmes.” Inez attended Henry P. Archer and Simonton and was among the first group to attend the newly constructed A.B. Rhett Elementary School. She early exemplified talent as a performer participating in teacher Johnny Johnson Wineglass’ Tap Dance group. An excellent dancer, Inez performed on the D. Jack Moses’ TV show “Talent Parade” on WCSC TV, Channel 5. Inez also was a majorette in Burke H.S.’s marching band. She graduated from Burke in the late ‘50s and attended Allen University; she worked as a librarian at the Columbus Street Elementary School (now Wilmot J. Fraser).

Having moved to Pennsylvanian, she married Olin F. Jackson, Sr., started a family and began to follow her dream of modeling. Barbizon Modeling Agency was notably the first and original fashion modeling agency in the world; Barbizon Agency was founded in 1939 on Fifth

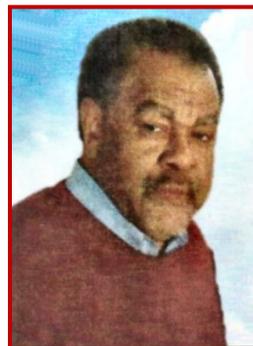
Ave. in New York City. For over 80 years, it has been in the forefront of the industry, and a leader in developing the careers of Women, Men, Kids and Teens all over the world. While at Berks County Community College (PA) she decided to enroll in the Barbizon Modeling School to hone and sharpen her modeling skills, receiving the Barbizon modeling certificate. Her captivating beauty, enormous charm and considerable modeling skills immediately came to the attention of the Barbizon leadership who encouraged her to enroll in the Barbizon advanced studies program. Barbizon hired Mrs. Jackson in the local office where she taught the fundamentals of modeling. She became one of the first African American International Field Directors for the Barbizon Modeling Agency and one of few African American Certified National Fund-Raising Executives.

Inez Carolyn Jackson was a stalwart member of the Charleston Club for many years, she assisted greatly with the last two Charleston Club Grand Reunion events (she was “the Gifts’ Lady.”) Inez “Zeni” Jackson passed away in May of 2020. Surviving family includes three sons; Garry, Michael, and Olin, a sister, **Dr. Jeanette Maranda Holmes Steward** (Charleston Club member), and brother, Dr. James Arthur Holmes (N.C.) and 3 grandchildren.



Charleston Club Member John Larry McNeil Dies at 68

Charleston Club member, **John Larry McNeil**, departed this life peacefully on Monday, December 28th, after a brief illness in Maryland; he was 68 years old. Some called him John, others (from Mullins and S.C. State) called him, Larry. He was born July 20, 1952 in Mullins, SC to the late Johnny McNeil and Alberta Leonard McNeil.



At an early age, Larry joined Old Field Baptist Church in Mullins where he was active and participative member. His early education was in the public schools in Mullins, after graduating from high school Larry matriculated at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg where he received a Bachelor of Science degree. Shortly thereafter he moved to Washington and began a career in management at Peoples Drug Store. Some years later he would begin an even longer career at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) as bus manager and metro access. His life with his loving, dedicated and supportive partner and wife, Linda Gordon McNeil began at South Carolina State

prior to Larry's graduation in 1974. The couple were joined in Holy matrimony in 1978. Larry and Linda became devoted members of St. Paul United Methodist Church, Oxon Hill in the 1980s. After joining they soon became part of the church family's spiritual life and Larry gradually became active in many ministries. He served as Trustee, taught Sunday School, and drove the church's van. He was an integral part of St. Paul's and loved contributing in any way he could.

Notably, he actively supported and participated in activities and events of South Carolina State University Alumni Association. He felt strongly about supporting the institution's vision and assistance for young students. It was thru the S.C. State Alumni Association that they became acquainted with The Charleston Club; **Ned Felder**, then President of S.C. State Alumni Association, invited Larry and Linda to visit a Charleston Club meeting/event. They came, thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and the rest is history! John and Linda McNeil have been loyal, faithful, active members of The Charleston Club for the last fifteen years. Rain or shine; both John and Linda were present for every S.C. State (Alumni) and Charleston Club event in the Washington area. John loved to "talk," to talk "trash, that it"...and Charleston Club repast sessions were his playground...he loved it and so did we! The well-read John Larry McNeil, could hold his own; and then some!

Larry loved to read and spent many precious hours delving into interesting books by authors he admired. Or, his love for cars (expenses ones and old cars), and all things associated with cars. He had an adventurous nature about himself that would show itself periodically!

John Larry McNeil leaves to cherish his memories his wife of 42 years, Linda D. McNeil; brothers Belcher Marshall McNeil of Fort Washington, MD and Watis A. McNeil of Myrtle Beach, SC; brother-in-law Reverend Bobby Gordon (who delivered the eulogy) and his wife, Carolyn; sister-in-law Patricia R. Walker, and a host of other relatives and very dear friends attended his graveside services (within COVID-19 restrictions) on January 9th at Carmichael Cemetery in Mullins, SC.

Charleston's Benita Brooks Smalls Dies at 77

A well-known Charlestonian, **Benita Gwendolyn Brooks Smalls** died Sunday, January 10th at Roper St. Francis Hospital in Charleston; she was 77. She was the wife of Mr. Robert "Bobby" L. Smalls, Sr., the couple were married in 1964, and would have celebrated their 57th anniversary this February 1, 2021. Benita was the eldest daughter of the late Benjamin "Bennie" and Frances Taylor Brooks, the family lived at 67 Ashe Street. Charleston Club member Dr. John Brooks, Jr. MD was a "special" cousin of Benita's.

Benita graduated from Burke H.S. in the Class of 1961, and attended Morgan State College (now University) in Baltimore, MD. She would later earned her undergraduate degree from Shaw University in Raleigh Her elementary teaching career started with the Charleston County School District (CCSD) as a teacher's aide at Mary Ford Elementary School in North Charleston. Then she became

a teacher at Wilmot J. Fraser Elementary School on Columbus St. Mrs. Smalls retired from the CCSD. In 1982, she became an active member of the Charleston Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



Benita and Bobby had a military tour overseas in the 1960s, where he was an infantry machine gunner in the Army (Germany); it was there that their first child, Kimberly L. was born. When the family returned to Charleston, their son, Robert "Abe" Smalls, Jr. was born. "Abe" was born on February 12th (Abraham Lincoln's birthdate), thus the nickname "Abe" became his. Sadly, "Abe" passed away in June 2011 at the young age of 43.

Benita, the daughter of a prominent African-American Charleston family of entrepreneurs (Charleston's original **Brooks Bros**: Henry, Benjamin, Albert, John, William, and Marion; and 2 sisters: Evelyn and Louise), she was considered the family linchpin of her generation. *"Generations work together to build a legacy!"* A family member said of Benita;... *"she was the glue that connected our family."* She had a rare talent for diplomacy and mediation. She was a superb cook of all the traditional and authentic low-country (ole Charleston black) foods; she loved playing "bid whist" (but hated losing); she loved Italian subs from Sonny's (west of the Ashley); and lastly, she was known for exposing her younger cousins and friends to the arts... writers like James Baldwin or musicians like Shirley Scott. She thoroughly enjoyed going to Henry Smith's (music) Shows at County Hall.

Benita is survived by her beloved husband, Robert "Bobby" L. Smalls, Sr.; a daughter, Kimberly Smalls Rivers (Joseph E.), three grandchildren: Kristyn, Kolby and Kennedy; a sister and brother-in-law, Jean Brooks Murphy (Earnest Raleigh Murphy); a brother, Benjamin Brooks; a "special" cousin, Dr. John Brooks, Jr. MD and many other family, in-laws, and friends. Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, a memorial tribute for Mrs. Benita Gwendolyn Brooks Smalls will be held at a later time.

Charleston Club Tattler ~ One liners ...

- ♦ President Joe Biden has nominated **Jaime Harrison** (SC) to be the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).
- ♦ **Lloyd James Austin, III** (Ret. 4-star Gen.) was confirmed (93-2) on January 22, 2021; with this confirmation, Austin became the first Black Secretary of Defense.

Happy Birthdays!

February 2021 Birthdays:

Arnette White-Cobb - Feb. 4th ~ **Ralph McNeill** - Feb. 9th
Mary Lou Palmer - Feb. 10th ~ **Rosalie Randall** - Feb. 13th
 ~ **Bernice Johnson** - Feb. 18th ~ **Brenda Owens** - Feb. 25th.
 - *The Fly on The Wall!*