



December 14, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Office of the Secretary to the Council

FROM: Sandra Jowers-Barber, Ph.D.
Christopher Anglim, J.D., M.L.S.

RE: Submission of the University of the District of Columbia Commemorative Works Report

Preparing this commemorative works report has allowed my colleague, Dr. Christopher Anglim, the archivist for the University of the District of Columbia (U.D.C./University), and me to be happily overwhelmed by the number of persons instrumental in the uplift and advancement of District residents. We could easily have submitted several reports with qualified nominees. We were able to revisit, rediscover and in some cases, discover the numerous long-lasting and impactful contributions of residents of the District of Columbia (D.C.). Our city has been fortunate that these contributions have benefitted local, national, and international communities.

Our report has 12 nominees from various arenas who advocated for marginalized communities. They were social change activists who forged pathways for others to follow. They were voices for communities whose stories and experiences deserved to be shared. They opened doors closed by racism and sexism. They demanded civil rights and equality in education, wrote poems, made exceptional music, introduced new sports, demanded fair housing, and advocated for Black deaf children to attend schools in the city where they lived. These collective efforts over the years improved social and economic conditions for all residents of the District of Columbia.

We respectfully submit the "University of the District of Columbia Commemorative Works Report," confident that our nominees and site locations are worthy of consideration for commemoration.

**University of the District of Columbia Nominees with Supporting Narrative
for
Commemorative Works Consideration**

Bishop, Gardner (1909 -1992):

Born in North Carolina, Bishop became a community activist and widely known as the "Barber of U Street" and operated a barbershop until 1985, when he retired. As a civil rights activist in D.C., Bishop was known for his outspoken opposition to segregation and classism and his zeal for social justice and equal opportunity. This was clearly manifested in his championship of equal schools for black and white children in the 1940s and 1950s. Bishop organized a student strike at Browne Junior High School and later participated in the landmark *Bolling v. Sharpe* case, making school segregation unconstitutional in the District.

Bishop lived at 414 Fourth Street S.E. Currently, there is no memorial or marker to Bishop. Therefore, we recommend a memorial or market near Providence Park, 464 - 2nd Street S.E., or Marion Park, 401- 479 E. St. SE, or at the Browne Junior High School site, at 850 26th Street NE. See also: *Consolidated Parent's Group*.

Brown, Sterling A (1901-1989):

A renowned poet, who wrote poems such as "Strong Men" and "Southern Road," he became D.C.'s first poet laureate in 1984. He attended D.C. public schools and graduated from Dunbar High School. Brown graduated from Williams College and earned his M.A. from Harvard for his higher education. He later became a professor at Howard University from 1929 through 1969. Brown was a pioneering scholar of African American literature and music and was a renowned expert on Southern African American culture. His writings included the *Negro Caravan* (1941), a seminal anthology of African American writing. In addition, he worked on the Federal Writers Project for 13 years and participated in the Carnegie Myrdal Study of African Americans.

Among Brown's distinguished students at Howard were authors Toni Morrison and Amiri Baraka; psychologist Kenneth B. Clark; Actor Ossie Davis; poet Lucille Clifton; and political activist Stokley Carmichael.

Born in DC, Brown lived at 1222 Kearny Street NE (Brookland). He also lived at 6th St. NW, and 11th St. NW. Brown also had a farm in rural Howard County, Maryland, which inspired some of his writing on rural southern life. Brown's father bought this property as a vacation or weekend home. Currently, there is no memorial or marker to Professor Brown. Therefore, we recommend a marker or memorial near Taft Field, South Dakota Ave., Otis St. N.E. or Chuck Brown Park, 20th, and Franklin Streets N.E.

Consolidated Parents Group (C.P.G.) (1947-1954): D.C. Residents Protesting School Segregation formed by *Gardner Bishop* (see above).

In 1947, Gardner Bishop, a barber, and civil rights activist, helped form the Consolidated Parents Group (C.P.G.) to campaign against racial segregation in D.C. public schools and overcrowding and inferior conditions at D.C.'s African American schools. Bishop had first tried to transfer his daughter from grossly overcrowded Browne Junior High School, a segregated African American School, to Banneker Junior High, an elite African American school. However, Banneker rejected the request because that school was reserved for children of African American professionals. Bishop then tried to have his daughter transferred to the nearby white Elliot Middle School, which had vacancies, but his request was rejected because of racial segregation. Bishop said he was doubly segregated (by race and by class).

The School Board sought to remedy the overcrowding at Browne by first having the students attend school in double shifts and then using formerly white, but subsequently unused Blow and Webb elementary schools as "annexes." These schools had no equipment and inadequate facilities. Outraged with the School Board's plans, the parents of Browne's students formed C.P.G. and voted for a student boycott of classes on December 3. On December 2, Bishop led a group of Browne parents and their children into a School Board meeting at the Franklin Building (then used as DCPS's administration building) to announce the boycott. In mid-December, C.P.G. partially ended the boycott by having the students return to classes at Browne but continued boycotting against Blow and Webb. As the boycott wore on, attrition began to set in. Finally, the parents settled with the School Board, and the students returned to classes on February 3, 1948.

While the boycott was unsuccessful, the issues prompting this action remained. Pursuing a remedy through alternative means, the parents chose to sue, arguing that segregation in public education violated the equal protection clause, because while the schools were separate, they were not equal, pointing out the inequalities such as crowding, lack of staff, and inferior amenities at the Black schools. Spottswood Bolling was one of the parents in Consolidated and the named plaintiff in the landmark case of *Bolling v. Sharpe*, which was consolidated with four other cases, and became part of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (U.S., 1954). Currently, no memorial or marker is honoring the Consolidated Parents Group. Therefore, we recommend a marker at Browne Middle School, Elliot Middle School, or Sousa High School. Browne Middle School is at 850 26th Street NE; Eliot Middle School is at 1830 Constitution Ave NE, and Sousa High School is at 3650 Ely Pl. S.E.

Gray, Kimi (1945-2000):

A D.C. public housing advocate born in D.C., she was President and C.E.O. of Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Mgt Co. (1992-2000), the first-ever tenant-run organization located at 1553 Anacostia Ave NE. Gray lived almost all her life in public housing communities. She graduated from Strayer College with an associate degree in business administration. In 1979, Mayor Barry appointed her president of the citywide public housing advisory council and a D.C. Commission for Women Board member. Gray also worked for the D.C. Department of Recreation as a roving leader, was a member of the Far East Community Services Board of Directors for 12 years, and was president of the Kenilworth Court's resident council. Currently, there is no memorial or marker to Kimi Gray. In her honor, we recommend a marker at Kenilworth Park, 1550 Anacostia Ave. N.E.

Harris, Patricia Roberts (1924-1985):

She was born in Mattoon, Illinois. Her mother was a dining car worker. She has several firsts to her name, including the first African American woman to serve as dean of a law school (at Howard University); the first African American woman to become an ambassador; the first

African American cabinet secretary; and the first African American to serve as a delegate to the U.N.

Harris first came to D.C. as a college student at Howard. She led civil rights demonstrations when the city was rigidly segregated and helped successfully integrate the Little Palace Cafeteria at 14th and U Street N.W. in 1943. Harris graduated from Howard in 1945 and then did graduate work at the University of Chicago. After being involved in civil rights and social work, she went to law school and graduated first in her class at George Washington Law School. She then worked at the U.S. Department of Justice and taught at Howard Law School. President Johnson appointed her as the ambassador to Luxembourg in 1965, and she served in that capacity until 1967. After Harris was Dean at Howard and worked for a short time in private practice, President Carter appointed her as the first African American Secretary of Housing & Urban Development (H.U.D.) in 1977, and later Health, Education & Welfare/Health & Human Services (HEW/HHS). From 1982 through 1985, she taught law at Georgetown University Law Center.

PR Harris School at 4600 Livingston Rd S.E. is named after her. Therefore, we recommend placing a commemorative marker at the school or Hancock Park, at 800 C. Street S.W., near the H.U.D. Building at 451 - 7th Street S.W. and the H.H.S. Building at 200 Independence Ave. S.W.

Henderson, Edwin Bancroft (1883-1977):

Henderson was born in Southwest DC. He graduated as an honor student from M Street High School (later renamed Dunbar High School). While in high school, Henderson played baseball and football and ran track. He then graduated at the top of his class at Miner Normal School in 1904. He attended Harvard and became the first African American certified to teach physical education in American public schools. Advocating for improved exercise opportunities for African Americans became Henderson's lifetime mission. In 1904, he was D.C.'s first male African American physical education teacher (most likely in the United States). Henderson later earned a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a master's degree from Columbia University. From 1926 until he retired in 1954, Henderson served as director of health and physical education for D.C.'s Black schools.

Henderson became known as the Father of Black Basketball because he introduced the game of basketball to African American students in D.C.'s segregated public schools in 1907 and formed a basketball league with eight teams in the northeastern U.S. The team played at the True Reformers Building at 1200 U Street N.W. In 1909, Henderson formed and became captain of the 12th Street YMCA basketball team, which was undefeated that year. In addition to being an excellent player, Henderson was also an excellent coach, promoter, and organizer. He formed the Interscholastic Athletic Association (ISAA) to organize and promote games between Black basketball teams in the mid-Atlantic coast.

After he retired from playing, Henderson focused on coaching, promoting fitness and athletics for African Americans, and sports administration. He formed the Public Schools Athletic League to establish competition in track and field, soccer, basketball, and baseball among the District's African American schools. Henderson also founded and was an Eastern Board of Officials official, the first to train African American athletic officials. He served as the group's first president and officiated at football, basketball, track, and field events.

Henderson also wrote *The Negro in Sports*, a history of African Americans in athletic competition in the United States. While continuing to teach physical education in D.C., Henderson continued to fight racial discrimination in several ways, including helping to integrate professional boxing in D.C. and discrediting discrimination and promoting awareness and dignity for African Americans through prolific letter-writing (3,000 letters) to the editors of over a dozen newspapers.

Currently, U.D.C. is honoring Henderson by naming the U.D.C. athletic center after him. We also recommend a marker or memorial at the Miner Building on 2565 Georgia Ave N.W. Georgia Avenue might be preferred; however, it is on land owned by Howard University and is already recognized as a historic site by both the U.S. and District governments. So, as an alternative, we recommend Hancock Park, 800 C. St. SW (or as possible alternates to Hancock Park, Dean Wilhelm Park, 391 -6th St. SW or Box Car Willie Park, Virginia Ave. S.W.).

Hill, Roger "Buck" (1927-2017):

A renowned jazz saxophonist, Hill was known as the "Wailing Mailman," who continued working as a postal worker until 1998. Born in Northeast D.C., Hill graduated from Armstrong High School. He played his first professional performance in 1943 at age 16. Hill later served in the U.S. Army and played in the 173rd Ground Forces Band. After he returned to D.C., he married and raised a family. By the 1950s, he was applauded as the best saxophonist in D.C. He played in Charlie Byrd's band at the Showboat Lounge on 18th Street N.W. In addition to his local renown, he also had a national reputation in the jazz community. He toured with Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie, and Cannonball Adderly. Hill was also a prolific recording artist. In 1978, he started recording under his name and made about 24 other records with local musicians like Charlie Byrd and Shirley Horn. As a composer, he is best known for "The Ones," "Scope," and "I am Aquarius."

Hill lived at 1062 48th Pl. N.E. He is memorialized in a mural at 14th and U Streets. We recommend a commemorative marker or memorial at Deanwood Park, 1350 49th St. NE.

Hobson, Julius (1922-1977):

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, he came to D.C. to study at Howard University. He paid his tuition and living expenses by working as a researcher at the Library of Congress. Hobson became a community activist who fought for the District's Home Rule, served as an at-large member of the D.C. Council, and helped form the D.C. Statehood Green Party (formerly known as the D.C. Statehood Party).

In a lifetime of fighting an unorthodox and often lonely war on the racism he had experienced since growing up in the segregated South, he fought segregation as an NAACP member in the 1950s and later as a member and President of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). After Hobson left CORE in 1964, he formed his Associated Community Teams (A.C.T.). Hobson achieved much in local civil rights and educational reform by leading protests that resulted in downtown white business owners hiring Black employees, integrating "white-only" apartment buildings, and being the lead plaintiff of the *Hobson v. Hansen* federal lawsuit that ended tracking in D.C. Public Schools in 1967. He also ran for and was elected to the D.C. School Board in 1968.

Hobson lived at 1610 K N.W. (near Farragut Square). Hobson has no memorial or marker, although a Julius Hobson Middle School at 12th and E Streets S.E. were reorganized as the current Stuart-Hobson Middle School at 410-E Street NE. Therefore, we recommend a commemorative marker or memorial at Stuart-Hobson Middle School or on the grounds of the Sherwood Recreational Center at 640-10th St. NE.

Horn, Shirley (1934-2005):

She was a Grammy award-winning jazz singer and pianist. Horn was born in D.C. and attended Howard University. She began her concert and club career in D.C., and beginning in 1954; she led her own jazz trio. In 1960, Horn recorded her first album, *Embers and Ashes*, for a small local record company. Miles Davis discovered her, and, soon thereafter, Horn recorded with the Mercury label. By the mid-1960s, she stopped touring and restricted her performances to venues near Baltimore and Washington to raise her daughter. From 1963 through 1978, Horn made only two albums, *Traveling Light* and *Where are You Going?* From 1978 through 1984, she recorded with a Danish recording company, Steeplechase, and her career enjoyed a revival with the jazz audience.

Horn lived at 5709 Bass Place S.E. She raised her daughter in D.C. Currently, there is no memorial or marker to Horn. Therefore, we recommend a commemorative marker or memorial on the grounds of the Harris Recreation Center, at 5341 C Street S.E., or the grounds of the East Capitol Community Center, on A Street and 56th Place S.E.

Miller, Louise Beatrice Burrell (1916-1963):

Miller was born in Washington, DC. In 1952, Louise Burrell Miller and the parents of three other deaf African American students sued the D.C. Board of Education—and prevailed—to have deaf African American children educated within the District. D.C. Schools were segregated at the time, including the District's only school for deaf children, the Kendall School for the Deaf at the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind (now Gallaudet University). Before this decision, deaf and blind African American DC residents attended the Maryland School for the Blind in Baltimore, a two-hour bus ride away. The School for the Colored

Deaf, where the District children were educated, was located within the school. The families found the separation emotionally distressing and the strictly vocational curriculum inferior to the education they would have received at Kendall. Instead of sending their deaf son, Kenneth (1941), to Baltimore, Louise and her husband, Luther Miller (1915-), a theater manager, joined other parents in a lawsuit organized by the American Veterans Committee, an integrated civil rights group, in 1951.

The Millers prevailed in *Miller v. Board of Education* (DCDC, 1952). The Court did not rule segregation unconstitutional but instead followed a precedent established in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (the U.S., 1938), which interpreted the "separate but equal" doctrine from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (the U.S., 1896) to mean that African American children could not be sent outside a state to obtain the same education that White children could have within the state. When Kendall began receiving Kenneth and other African American students, they were taught in separate classes in the basement until *Brown v. Board of Education* (U.S., 1954) required all public schools to desegregate.

A plaque recognizing Miller's efforts was installed at the Kellogg Center at Gallaudet University. We also recommend a marker or memorial at 1204 T Street N.W., Brentwood Hamilton Park, 1300 6th Street NE, or Lewis Crowe Park, at 1821 Capitol Ave. N.E., near Gallaudet University and Kendall School.

Peters, Margaret (1915-2004) and Peters, Matilda Roumania (Walker) (1917-2003):

They were sisters born in Washington, DC, and lived at 2710 O St. NW. The Peters sisters were American Tennis Association (A.T.A.) tennis stars in the 1940s and 1950s. The A.T.A., one of the oldest organized African American organizations, organized tennis competitions nationwide. The Peter sisters were tennis players from 1935 – 1953 and teachers from 1941 – 1981. After teaching at Howard, Matilda was a physical education instructor for D.C. public schools (mainly at Dunbar High School). Matilda also directed a tennis camp for the D.C. Department of Recreation for about 20 years, mentoring hundreds of District students. Matilda won the national title of the A.T.A. in 1944 and 1946. The latter victory came against legendary African American tennis star Althea Gibson. Margaret and Matilda teamed up to win the A.T.A.'s

women's doubles title 14 times from the mid-1940s to the early 1950s, a record that continues to be unbroken.

The sisters were born in Georgetown, and both graduated from the Tuskegee Institute (Matilda graduated in 1941). Currently, there is no memorial or marker for Peters and Romana. They began learning how to play tennis at Rose Park playground, across the Street from their Georgetown home. Therefore, we recommend a marker or memorial at Rose Park at 2459 P Street N.W.

Roundtree, Dovey Johnson (1914-2018):

She was born in Charlotte, NC, and graduated from Howard University Law School. After graduating from law school, she became the first African American female member of the Washington Bar Association. She later became an attorney in several high-profile civil rights cases. For example, she defended a Black Georgetown resident accused of the murder of a white woman (U.S. v. Ray Crump, 1965). Roundtree also pursued a case in the Interstate Commerce Commission that prohibited segregated bus travel in the U.S. in 1955.

In addition to being an attorney, Roundtree was an African American civil rights activist, an ordained A.M.E. minister, and a World War II veteran. Currently, there is no memorial or marker to Roundtree. Therefore, we recommend a marker or memorial at the site of the D.C. Appellate Court (D.C.), D.C.'s highest Court, at 430 E St. NW.

Shippen, Jr., John (1879-1968):

He was born in Washington, DC, the son of former slave and Presbyterian Minister John Shippen. The younger Shippen was the first African American U.S. professional golfer and the first to play in the U.S. Open in 1896. As the original trailblazer for African Americans in golf, he played in five U.S. opens from 1896 through 1913.

Shippen lived at 311 Nichols NW and 401 T Street N.W. Currently, there is no memorial or marker to Shippen. Therefore, we recommend a marker or memorial in Fort Slocum Park, at 5800 Kansas Avenue N.W., or Anna J. Cooper Park at 3rd and T Streets N.W., in the LeDroit Park area of Washington.

Slowe, Lucy (1883-1937):

Slowe was a Professor of English and Education at Howard University and an accomplished athlete. Born in Berryville, VA, she graduated from Howard University in 1908 and from Columbia University Teacher's College. She became the first female dean at Howard University, where she also created a woman's campus.

As an athlete, Professor Slowe was the first African American female to win a national championship, when in 1917, she won the first women's national singles championship of the American Tennis Association (A.T.A.), which was founded the year before the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association banned African American, tennis players. Among her other accomplishments are that she was a founding member of Alpha Kappa Sorority and the first president of that organization in 1908. She lived at 1256 Kearney NE (Brookland). The 2400 block of 4th Street N.W. was renamed in her honor. We also recommend a marker or memorial in her honor at Taft Field or Chuck Brown Park.