

PROGRAM



Civil Rights

FULL CIRCLE

FULFILLING THE DREAM

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 2021

ROSEN SHINGLE CREEK RESORT



PROGRAM

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

*Gwendolyn Wiggins, Esq., MBA
Human Relations Official, City of Orlando*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOME

Commissioner Bakari Burns

PANEL SESSION ONE

*Mr. Hezekiah Watkins
Ms. Willie Pearl Mackey-King
Ms. Joan Mulholland*

MEET AND GREET - 30 MINUTE

*Ms. Joan Mulholland
Mr. Hezekiah Watkins
Ms. Willie Pearl Mackey-King*

LUNCH

Plated Lunch Served

LUNCH SPEAKER

*Leon Russell
National Chairman NAACP*

PANEL SESSION TWO

*Attorney Shannon Ligon
Former Fl. Supreme Court Justice James Perry
Representative Geraldine Thompson*

CLOSING REMARKS

*Gwendolyn Wiggins, Esq., MBA
Human Relations Official, City of Orlando*



Gwendolyn Wiggins

GWENDOLYN WIGGINS, ESQ., MBA is the Human Relations Official for the City of Orlando. She has worked for local governmental agencies in the Kissimmee/Orlando, Florida area for over 30 years. Prior to joining the City of Orlando's Office of Human Relations as the Human Relations Official in June of 2016, she had previously worked for the City of Orlando for ten years in the City Attorneys Office and in the Office of Human Relations. The last four of those ten years she held the position of Assistant to Director of the City of Orlando's Office of Human Relations.

She left the City of Orlando in July of 2010 to pursue a law degree. While attending law school she continued to stay involved with promoting anti-discrimination laws by performing EEO law trainings, diversity inclusion trainings and civil rights presentations for the FBI, Orange County Public School System and various other entities. She also worked part-time during the first year of law school for a local solo practice employment law attorney. She graduated from Florida A&M College of Law in 2014 and was sworn into the Florida Bar as an Attorney at law in 2015.

Prior to returning to the City of Orlando in June of 2016, she practiced as a private attorney in the area of employment, criminal and family law. She is also a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family and County Court Mediator and has been a County Court Mediator for the Ninth Circuit (Orange & Osceola Counties) since 2007. She has been an adjunct instructor at various local colleges in the Orlando area since 2001. She currently is an adjunct professor at the Maitland, Florida Campus of Strayer University where she teaches both business and law classes.

She holds a Juris Doctorate (J.D.), Masters in Business Administration (MBA), Bachelors of Art in Organizational Management and an Associate Degree (legal studies).

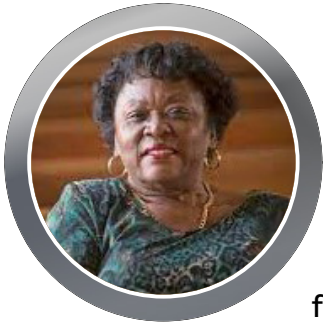


Hezekiah Watkins

Mr. Hezekiah Watkins, a life-long resident of Jackson, MS, has also been a civil rights activist since the age of thirteen. He graduated from Lanier High School and continued his education at Utica Junior College, Southern Illinois and East Tennessee State University. Mr. Watkins became a proponent of Justice after his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1961, the “Freedom Riders’ banned together in Jackson, MS to demonstrate against state segregation laws, and for doing so, 328 people were arrested with the charge “breach of peace”. Mr. Watkins was the youngest to be arrested on July 7, 1961 and housed on ‘Death Row’ at Parchman Prison. He was 13 years of age and an eighth grader attending Rowan Junior High School. After spending time with and learning from great leaders of this movement such as James Bevel, Dave Dennis, Jerome Smith, Jessie Davis, and Jessie Harris, Watkins continued his involvement in Mississippi’s fight for civil rights and justice which resulted in more than 100 arrests. These experiences strengthen his commitment to improving the quality of life and opportunities for young African American youth and all of mankind.

Mr. Watkins career began as a young entrepreneur, opening a houseware and appliance store. Economics being hard lead him to seek full time employment with Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health Center for some years and, then later, with Hinds County Human Resources Agency. He presently works with The Civil Rights Museum and was the owner of the Corner Food Market and Deli of Jackson for 28 years until a heart attack in 2012 forced him to close the business.

He continues his activism for justice as a community leader who promotes community and civic involvement in African American youths of Mississippi. His dedication to the cause of Civil Rights was recognized by Congressman Bennie Thompson in 2012.



Willie Pearl Mackey King

Retired after six years as a contractor for U.S. Office of Compliance for Capital Hill.

Ms. King retired from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission after serving 32 years. She served as the Financial Manager for the Commission, she served as the Accounting Officer.

Ms. King worked for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference under the leadership of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for four years-February 1962 until February 1966-as a member of his Executive Staff. She performed a variety of administrative duties that included traveling with Dr. King across the country. While in Birmingham, Alabama with Dr. King, during the Direct-Action Protest Movement, she typed and helped Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker transcribe the famous Birmingham Jail Letter. The Birmingham Jail Letter was transcribed and typed from newspaper edges, table napkins, toilet paper and whatever writing materials Dr. King could find.

Ms. King is a member of the Montgomery Hills Baptist Church of Silver Springs, Maryland and Chair of the Trustee Board. She served as chair of the of the Deacon Board, Member Heritage and Hope Fund, and Teacher AGAPE Sunday School Class.

Some of Ms. King's speaking engagements included: Senate Judiciary Committee, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Merit System Protection Board, U.S. Department of Treasury, Larry King Live, CNN, Howard University (Student Campus Ministry), Margaret Murray Washington School, Concordia Lutheran School, Armstrong (Skills & Training Program), Eastern Middle School, Montgomery Hills Baptist Church, District of Columbia Baptist Convention Ministers Group, Interfaith Group (Washington, DC) U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church, Takoma Park Baptist Church, College of Southern Maryland and The Transition Network-DC Chapter.

Ms. King attended at Dimery College, Georgia State, University of Maryland, Montgomery College and LaSalle University. She earned a bachelor's degree in business management.

Willie King is married and has one daughter, three grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



Joan Mulholland

Her Freedom Rider mugshot has been called one of the most iconic in American history. By the time she was 23 years old, Joan Trumpauer Mulholland had participated in over 50 sit-ins and demonstrations including the Freedom Rides, the Jackson Woolworth's Sit-in, the March on Washington, the Meredith March and the Selma to Montgomery March. Her path has crossed with some of the biggest names in the Civil Rights Movement: Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, John Lewis, Diane Nash and Julian Bond to name a few. Joan is a recipient of the 2015 National Civil Rights Museum Freedom Award, the 2018 "I am a Man" Award, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated Annual Award of Honor and the Anti-Defamation League Annual Heroes Against Hate Award. She has appeared in several books including "Coming of Age in Mississippi", "Breach of Peace", "We Shall Not Be Moved", and, "She Stood For Freedom". She has appeared on television and news programs like the "CBS Nightly News" and award winning programs like the "CBS Nightly News" and award winning documentaries including "An Ordinary Hero", PBS's "Freedom Riders", "Standing on My Sister's Shoulders" and the groundbreaking film "Eyes on the Prize".



Leon Russell

Mr. Russell has been a NAACP board member for over 31 years. He was re-elected as the current National Chairman of the NAACP in February 2021. He served as President of the Florida State Conference of Branches of the NAACP from 1996-2000, after serving for fifteen years as the First Vice President. He is also the former Director of the Office of Human Rights for Pinellas County Government, Clearwater, Florida from 1977-2012, where he was responsible for implementation of the county's human rights and affirmative action ordinances.



Shannon Ligon

Attorney Shannon Ligon is a serial entrepreneur and lawyer, she founded PrettySMART Law, at the age of 25, to better serve her clients by offering services that transcend beyond your typical legal services. Since then, Ms. Ligon has represented numerous families, athletes, executives and entertainers and serves as a TV legal analyst appearing on CourtTV, Dr. Phil, CNN and more. She serves as founder of her own non-profit, Legacy Entertainment & Arts Foundation, Inc. (L.E.A.F. Inc. 501c3) that advances social justice initiatives, entertainment and the arts by creating scholarships for underprivileged youth and is passionate about her creative and healing works with PrettySMART Studios and Spiritual & SMART.

She earned her Juris Doctor Degree from Florida A&M University College of Law and Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Florida State University. Attorney Ligon studied International Business at the Universidad de Valencia in Valencia, Spain and later received her certification in Television & Radio Broadcasting & Production from the CSB School of Broadcasting in 2004.

Ms. Ligon has experience in the areas of Entertainment, Media & Business Law where she has successfully worked within the entertainment and sports industry for over ten years. She has appeared on Dr. Phil and national TV advocating her client's rights but also enjoys transactional work for her clients such as: negotiating record, film and TV licensing and sports deal against WarnerBrothers, HBO Sports, and Sony to name a few.

Previous work experience includes: Integrated Sports Management with Sports Agent Richard Deluca, Big3 Records, and Clear Channel Communications. Before starting her own firm she gained experience in Personal Injury, litigation and negotiation managing and consulting other law firms while building up her Entertainment & Sports Law practice. She has negotiated music publishing deals for a producer's works on Kanye West, 50 cent & more.

She is also a proud supporter of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In her spare time she enjoys traveling, fitness, and songwriting. Ms. Ligon is a member of the Florida Bar, American Bar Association: Entertainment & Sports Lawyers Division, the Recording Academy of the Grammy, the National Bar Association and the Black Entertainment & Sports Lawyers Association.



James E. C. Perry

A native of New Bern, North Carolina, James E. C. Perry was appointed as the 85th Justice to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Charlie Crist and took office there on March 11, 2009. Before his appointment, he served as a Circuit judge of Florida's Eighteenth Judicial Circuit upon his appointment by Governor Jeb Bush in March 2000. Justice Perry later served as Chief Judge of the Circuit for a two-year term beginning July 2003. He attended Saint Augustine's University, graduating in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and Accounting. After serving in the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant, he went on to Columbia Law School where he earned his Juris Doctorate degree in 1972. Justice Perry met his future bride, Adrienne M. Perry, Ph.D., while at Columbia Law School. They have three children, two attorneys and a Human Resource Manager.

Justice Perry has been actively involved in many community activities. A dedicated father, Perry managed his son's AAU basketball team, the SanLando Greyhounds and played an active role in all their sports activities. Justice Perry's commitment to improving children's lives extends beyond his own family. As founder and president of the Jackie Robinson Sports Association, Perry built a baseball league serving 650 at-risk boys and girls - the largest in the nation. However, the Association did more than coach baseball. Volunteers also served as mentors and provided free tutoring. In addition to his work with disadvantaged kids, Justice Perry served as captain of the Heart of Florida United Way Campaign and his firm served as general counsel for the Florida Chapter Branches of the NAACP. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees at Saint Augustine's University. Justice Perry has been a member of the Carter CME Tabernacle Church of Orlando for more than 30 plus years. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees.

As an attorney, Perry was widely recognized for his legal skills and abilities. Prior to his appointment to the trial bench, Justice Perry was senior partner in the law firm of Perry & Hicks, P.A., where he specialized in civil and business law.

Justice Perry has received numerous honors and awards including the 3rd Annual Puerto Rican Bar Association's Moot Court Competition Award in 2014, the 2014 Key to the City of Titusville Award for recognition of his dedication and extraordinary commitment to Justice, the Florida Memorial University's President's Award in 2014, the North Brevard County Branch NAACP's Award of Appreciation for outstanding and exemplary service to this nation in fall 2014, the Seminole

County NAACP Humanitarian Award, the Orange County Chapter NAACP Paul C. Perkins Award, and the 2005 Martin Luther King Drum Major Award for Social Justice. In 2004, Justice Perry was honored by his hometown, New Bern, North Carolina, receiving the “Key to the City.” In 2005, the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) selected Justice Perry as one of four individuals to be profiled during its national broadcast of *An Evening of Stars: A Celebration of Educational Excellence*. Most recently, Justice Perry received the prestigious Williams-Johnson Outstanding Jurist of the Year Award for 2006 from the Brevard and Seminole County Bar Associations. The recipient of an honorary Doctor of Law degree from Stetson University College of Law, Justice Perry is frequently asked to speak at schools, churches, and civic groups. He has delivered the commencement address at several schools including the University of Central Florida, Stetson University College of Law, Barry Law School and his alma mater, Saint Augustine’s University.

Justice Perry was the first African-American appointed to the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit. Governor Jeb Bush issued this statement when he appointed Justice Perry to the circuit bench in March of 2000. “James brings a high level of professionalism, knowledge, and skill to the bench. His community service and commitment to the Jackie Robinson Little League demonstrates his dedication to the community. I am confident that his expertise, strong commitment, and dedication will continue to be an asset to the 18th Judicial Circuit and the state.” Following his appointment to the circuit court bench, Justice Perry ran unopposed to retain his seat. Justice Perry retired from the Florida Supreme Court on December 30, 2016.



State Representative Geraldine F. Thompson

When state Representative Geraldine F. Thompson was elected on November 6, 2018, she became the first female, Democrat, and person of color to serve Florida House District 44. The district includes Oakland, Winter Garden, Windermere, Isleworth, Buena Vista, I-Drive, Gotha, Williamsburg, and part of Ocoee.

After receiving an undergraduate degree from the University of Miami in 1970 and a Master of Science Degree from the Florida State University in 1973, Geraldine F. Thompson served for six years as an Orange County Public Schools teacher. She later served for 24 years as an administrator at Valencia Community College where she established the College Reach Out Program, which enabled thousands of low income and disadvantaged students to fulfill their dream of going to college.

Rep. Thompson also developed a reputation as a respected historian for compiling the history of African Americans in Central Florida and authoring the book “Black America: Orlando,

Florida”. She led the campaign to preserve one of Orlando’s unique landmarks, the Wells’Built Hotel which, during the days of segregation, provided lodging to some of America’s most prominent citizens including Justice Thurgood Marshall. Today that landmark is known as the Wells’Built Museum of African American History and Culture.

She previously served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2006 until 2012. She was elected to the Florida Senate in 2012 and served until 2016. Significant legislation which she initiated and saw passed included bills to exonerate the Groveland Four, provide compensation to James Joseph Richardson who was wrongfully incarcerated for 22 years, and outlaw discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace.

Geraldine F. Thompson was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and grew up in the South Dade town of Perrine, Florida, where members of her family worked in agriculture and construction. She is married to the Honorable Emerson R. Thompson, Jr. She is the mother of three children (Laurise, Emerson III, and Elizabeth) and the proud grandmother of four. She enjoys reading and traveling.

