



SCOPE50 News

The Struggle Continues!
SCOPE50.org

December 2023

SCOPE50 Fundraising Event

On October 19 SCOPE50 held a fundraising event (*Motown 3*) on Seabrook Island, South Carolina. There was food, a silent auction, and live music by Visions, a Motown band. This was the third time this event has been held, and it is always well attended. This year, in addition to the host John Reynolds, we were pleased to have several SCOPE50 Board members in attendance: Richard Smiley, Steve Guthertz, and Barbara Williams Emerson. The Board members especially enjoyed having Steve Guthertz join the band on keyboard for one of their numbers.



The following day, the Board members visited Charleston's new International African American Museum. The museum is built on the wharf where the enslaved Africans disembarked in America.



National Park Services' Network to Freedom Program

Congressman James Clyburn joined representatives from Audubon South Carolina, the National Park Service, Clemson University and other community leaders for an event at Audubon's Center and Sanctuary at Francis Beidler Forest to commemorate the Four Holes Swamp watershed's role in the fight for freedom from slavery in South Carolina. The event was held in September in honor of International Underground Railroad Month. Audubon South Carolina sought NPS designation for the site after research revealed that freedom seekers used the area as a refuge from slavery leading up to the Civil War.

The Four Holes Swamp is a blackwater swamp that rises in Calhoun County and flows for 62 miles to the confluence of the Edisto River. The watershed includes portions of the tribal lands of the Edisto Natchez-Kusso, a state-recognized Native American Tribe, which is headquartered in Ridgeville. Research is being conducted to develop a clearer picture of the interactions between the Native Americans and those escaping slavery.

Among those invited to the event was Chief John Creel, tribal chief of the Edisto Natchez-Kusso, and John Reynolds, who has been working closely with the Chief concerning his involvement in getting the Native American children in Four Holes admitted to the public schools in 1969.



Rep. Clyburn, Chief Creel, John Reynolds

The Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe is one of a number of native tribes in South Carolina looking to be officially recognized by the United States. The tribe is among nine recognized by the state. Only one, the Rock Hill-based Catawba, enjoys the benefits of federal recognition. Federal recognition would give the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe access to funding for housing, education and trade. Gaining this status is competitive because there's only so much federal money budgeted for distribution to recognized tribes, and other groups don't want their share diluted. Rep. Nancy Mace has sponsored a bill in support of the tribe's effort.

Effort to admit Native American Children to Public Schools in Ridgeville, SC, 1969

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the effort in 1969 to admit the Native American children into the public schools might like to click on the following link and watch NBC's Huntley-Brinkley Report of October 3, 1969, to see a 23-year old John Reynolds being interviewed and arrested on camera! <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1553547118162947>

The Loss of Another Freedom Fighter – by John Reynolds

We have lost another great freedom fighter: Terrie Randolph. Earlier this month Terrie died at home, apparently from a heart attack. Most of us in the original SCOPE Project in 1965 got to know Terrie. She was one of the first to respond to Dr. King's call to come South and help register black people to vote. Terrie left Milwaukee and was assigned to Savannah. After working there for a while, it was felt that she would be most effective working at the SCOPE headquarters in Atlanta as Hosea Williams's assistant.

Terrie was one of the first SCLC staff that I met. When Dorothy Cotton and Septima Clark brought me to Atlanta to be interviewed by Dr. King for a position on SCLC's staff, it was Terrie who was waiting in the SCLC office on that Saturday afternoon when we arrived. Terrie arranged for me to stay at the YMCA over the weekend before my interview with Dr. King, and she gave me money to get something to eat. Because of those simple acts of kindness, I felt close to her. Terrie would continue to be in touch with me throughout almost every project that I worked on with SCLC, as she was with many of you.



Terrie and John at the SCOPE 50th Reunion

Terrie served as Hosea's assistant for years, both during his time with SCLC and after, except for a period when she was Dr. Abernathy's assistant. She was the living memory of all that went on during her years with the SCOPE Project and SCLC. In later years she was involved with *Hosea Feeds the Hungry*, and she helped Barbara Williams Emerson organize Hosea's papers before they were donated to the Auburn Avenue Research Library. She was an important resource for Willie Leventhal when he put together the information on the SCOPE Project, *The SCOPE of Freedom*, and also for Rolundus Rice as he wrote his recent biography of Hosea, *Hosea Williams: A Lifetime of Defiance and Protest*. Our freedom fighter sister kept the faith until the end, when God finally called her home.

Woman Attempts to Burn Down Birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Earlier this month police arrested 26-year-old Laneisha Shantrice Henderson and charged her with criminal attempt arson and criminal attempt interference with government property – the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Police say two tourists from Utah who were in the area saw Henderson pouring gasoline on the home and interrupted her. "We believe at this time she was pouring gasoline on the porch and the door of the home. Their quick action saved a jewel of our city, something very important to Atlanta," Atlanta Police Chief Darin Schierbaum said. The woman was taken to a hospital for a psychological evaluation.

The two-story Queen Anne-style house, built in 1895, was Dr. King's home for the first 12 years of his life. The house is in Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Historic District and is a federal landmark. Those of you who were in the SCOPE Project in 1965 may remember that this was where the SCOPE offices were located. The historic site is now a museum owned and operated by the National Park Service.

The King Center said in a statement posted on X: "Tonight, an unfortunate incident occurred at the birth home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as an individual attempted to set fire to this historic property. Fortunately, the attempt was unsuccessful, thanks to the brave intervention of good Samaritans and the quick response of law enforcement." The statement also said, "Our prayers are with the individual who allegedly committed this criminal act."

National Racial Equity Initiative for Social Justice Summit – by John Reynolds

The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation hosted the 2023 National Racial Equity Initiative for Social Justice Summit on November 14. Participants were invited to register to attend in person or virtually. I participated virtually. The Summit allowed participants to learn and engage in conversations that examined critical social justice issues. The panel included scholars, subject-matter experts, emerging leaders, and Congressional Black Caucus members. This year's summit explored topics including measures to empower the most disadvantaged Black voters, the importance of safeguarding African American truth and history, and the influence of corporations on the changing social justice landscape. I was able to participate in two sessions:

Protecting the Black Vote: The Road to 2024 – Panelists discussed the current state of voting restrictions, misinformation surrounding voting preparations, and tactics to ensure fair representation for all.

Upholding the Truth: Preserving African American History for a Better Tomorrow – Panelists discussed the importance of safeguarding African American truth and history and the impact on Black students, educators, and communities when critical aspects of history are inaccurately portrayed in educational settings.

Outdoor Classroom on Reconstruction

From the *Charleston Post and Courier*, 11/16/2023: For decades, a historic Black cemetery that's the final resting place of at least a dozen of South Carolina's Reconstruction-era legislators lay neglected under a growing thicket – as forgotten by the public as its assassinated namesake. Now, 155 years after state Sen. Benjamin Franklin Randolph was gunned down at an Abbeville train station and hastily buried in Columbia, supporters envision a restored Randolph Cemetery serving as both an outdoor classroom and park-like gateway to the capital city along a trail from Lake Murray.

"This is one of the best classrooms we have in the city of Columbia," said Bobby Donaldson, a University of South Carolina professor and director of its Center for Civil Rights History and Research. "It's an urban museum." One of the legislators buried at Randolph Cemetery includes state Rep. Charles Wilder, who was born a slave in Sumter, attended the University of South Carolina when it was briefly integrated during Reconstruction and was appointed one of the country's first Black postmasters – a position he remarkably held for nearly a decade after Reconstruction ended.

During Reconstruction, South Carolina had the nation's only majority-Black Legislature, made possible by the 1868 rewriting of the state constitution that gave Black men the right to vote and mandated free public schools for children of all races. The assassination of Sen. Randolph and three other Republican leaders following ratification of the constitution hinted at the post-Reconstruction violence that reversed racial progress and ushered in the Jim Crow South.

SCOPE50 Members' Activities

One of our SCOPE50 members, Harcourt "Harky" Klinefelter, has continued to stay in touch. He is living now in The Netherlands and, as you can see from the photo below, continues to protest. This photo was taken in August at a "partly USA air force base which has nuclear weapons."



SC Democratic Party's Get-out-the-Vote Effort

From the *Charleston Post and Courier*, 12/12/2023: The South Carolina Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee is launching a statewide get-out-the-vote effort to stoke voter turnout ahead of its inaugural "First in the Nation" presidential primary this winter, party officials announced this week. The initiative will deploy 50 employees and a tour bus in a sweeping effort to connect with Palmetto State voters where they are to encourage as many Democrats as possible to engage in South Carolina's upcoming presidential primaries on Feb. 3 – the first time in the state's history its primary will take place at the start of the Democratic presidential nominating calendar. "For the first time ever, Black voters, rural voters and Southern voters will get to have their voice heard first in this process," Christale Spain, South Carolina Democratic Party chair and the first Black woman to held the post, told reporters. "And with so much on the line in 2024, we're going to use every tool at our disposal to make sure that South Carolina and that South Carolinians are fired up and ready to go to cast their ballot."

