

MARTINSVILLE – HENRY COUNTY

Branch 7089

Annual Freedom Fund
Scholarship Gala



*"Speak Truth to Power:
The Power is Within Us!"*

Friday, November 14, 2025
6:15 p.m.

New College Institute
191 Fayette Street
Martinsville, VA

Naomi Hodge-Muse, President



191 FAYETTE STREET * MARTINSVILLE, VA 24112



MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY BRANCH #7089



**Post Office Box 4544
Martinsville, VA 24114**

November 2025

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Greetings!

On behalf of the Martinsville Henry County NAACP Branch #7089, I want to express our sincere appreciation for your support of this Annual NAACP Freedom Fund Scholarship Gala and 20th Awards Recognition. Congratulations to the 2025 NAACP Award Recipients for your service, leadership, and achievements in this community. We are grateful for this platform to spotlight each of you.

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I would also like to thank the committee, program participants, as well as the churches, businesses and individuals in the community for your support in making this event a success. A special thanks to our keynote speakers for sharing with us, and we applaud your accomplishments. You are truly trailblazer across these United States.

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Because of the support of our sponsors, we will offer for the first time a \$1,000 scholarship for the 2025-2026 school year. We maintain our goal as a branch to focus on mentoring and providing opportunities for our youth to become active and visible in the community in a positive manner.

We are living in perilous times. We must “Speak Truth to Power and the Power is Within Us!” It is up to us as a people to pray, stand, and speak to be the difference we wish to see.

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The NAACP mission is to ensure the American Dream is accessible to all people, regardless of color. Therefore, we extend an invitation for you, individually or as a corporate group, to become involved by volunteering to help us in events and become a member. Join us today!

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Humbly submitted,

Naomi Hodge Muse, President

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE



On February 12, 2009, the NAACP marked its 100th anniversary. The NAACP Headquarters, based in Baltimore, MD, along with its 1,700 units nationwide, hosted celebrations and observances throughout the year ending on February 12, 2010, that highlighted the significant role the organization has played in leading social change in America.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination.

OBJECTIVES

The following statement of objectives is found on the first page of the NAACP Constitution — the principal objectives of the Association shall be:

- To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens
- To achieve equality of rights and eliminate race prejudice among the citizens of the United States
- To remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes
- To seek enactment and enforcement of federal, state, and local laws securing civil rights
- To inform the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination and to seek its elimination
- To educate persons as to their constitutional rights and to take all lawful action to secure the exercise thereof, and to take any other lawful action in furtherance of these objectives, consistent with the NAACP's Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution.

Post Office Box 4544
Martinsville, VA 24114



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OFFICERS for 2025 – 2027

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President..... Naomi Hodge-Muse

1st Vice President Lois Hairston

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Secretary Debra Hodge

Assistant Secretary..... Erica Crockett

Treasurer..... Valeria Edwards

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Assistant Treasurer..... James Brim

Member-At-Large Dwayne Waller

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

2025 Scholarship Winner



Destiny Johnson

2025 Graduate of Carlisle High School,
is a freshman, in her first semester, at
University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA.

After completing her general studies,
her goal is to pursue a degree in
Mechanical Engineering while selling her art.

She was the recipient of a
\$500 Scholarship Award
for the 2024 - 2025 school year.



Ms. Juneteenth 2024

2025 Scholarship Winner



Khameryn Millner

2025 Graduate of Magna Vista High School,
is a freshman, in her first semester, at
Winston-Salem State University in Winston-Salem, NC.

She is in pursuit of a degree in
Rehabilitation studies to become a Physical Therapist.

She was the recipient of a
\$500 Scholarship Award
for the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Thanks to businesses and the community for your support!

Order of Program

6:15 p.m.

Master of Ceremony..... Mr. James McNair

***Presentation of the Colors..... Martinsville Henry County Veterans Honor Guards**

***Selections “The National Anthem”**
“Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” Black National Anthem

Prayer and Blessing of the Food..... Rev. Kelvin Perry
Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church – Martinsville, VA

Welcome..... Mrs. Naomi Hodge-Muse
Branch #7089 – President

Greetings and Proclamation Mayor L C Jones
City of Martinsville, Virginia

Acknowledgement of Sponsors

Introduction of Guests / Elected Officials

- Dinner -

Musical Selection Miss Kendall Gonzales

Introduction of Keynote Speaker Dr. Shelia Williamson-Branch

Keynote Speaker..... Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd

Presentations Gloria Johnson
and Cynthia Preston

Presentation of Awards

Naomi Hodge-Muse * Dwayne Waller * Lois Hairston

*President * Freedom Fund Chair * Vice President*

Community Involvement Award

Sheriff Wayne Davis

Freedom & Justice Award

Rev. Dr. Charles Whitfield

Great Expectations Award

Ethan Dukes

Khameryn Millner

Ret. General Dennis Via

Lifetime Achievement Award

Joyce Staples

Special Recognitions / Presentations

Remarks President Naomi Hodge Muse

*Closing Prayer Rev. Amy Hodge
Pastor of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion Church – Roanoke, VA

Congratulations to all recipients of the

NAACP

Awards!

Keynote Speaker

Rev Dr. Gwendolyn Elizabeth Boyd



is an engineer and is described as a dynamic and relevant leader, a prolific motivational speaker, a powerful preacher and a prominent advocate for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. Boyd is a native of Montgomery, Alabama and received a full scholarship to attend Alabama State University where she graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics with a double minor in physics and music. She received a full fellowship to pursue graduate studies at Yale University where she was the first African American female to earn a M. S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from this Ivy League institution. She earned both the Master of Divinity and the Doctor of Ministry degrees from Howard University. Additionally, she has been awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Lincoln University (2004), Bennett College (2004) and Kentucky State University (2019) and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (2019).

Boyd's professional career of more than three decades at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory was highlighted by exemplary leadership and dedicated service as part of engineering teams. She was selected to serve on the inaugural team of the Johns Hopkins Diversity Leadership Council (DLC) for Johns Hopkins University (1996) and served as Chair of the DLC from 2001-2013 reporting directly to the President of Johns Hopkins University as the Council worked on issues of diversity, inclusion, civility and respect across all the various divisions of Johns Hopkins.

Boyd is a nationally recognized champion of education, especially as it relates to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) disciplines. In March 2009, Boyd was nominated by President Barack Obama and she received U.S. Senate confirmation to serve as a trustee to the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. In January 2014, President Obama appointed Boyd and 14 other individuals to serve on the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

Boyd returned to her undergraduate alma mater, Alabama State University (ASU) in January 2014 and for three years she served as the 14th and first female president of ASU. Highlights of her presidency included getting the university its very first engineering degree program with approval for a BS in biomedical engineering. Boyd and her team got the university removed from accreditation warning status with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The largest freshman class was documented during her tenure.

Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd is a minister and an ordained itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She serves on the ministerial staff of Ebenezer AME Church in Fort Washington, Maryland. She is also a sought-after speaker and lecturer to various audiences on topics including STEM, higher education, HBCUs, leadership development, and non-profit board development. She has had the honor of speaking for morning worship at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC; the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia and Bloody Sunday Service at Brown Memorial AME Church in Selma, Alabama, and a lecturer at the Hampton Minister's Conference.

In 2000, Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd was elected to serve as the 22nd National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., an international organization of more than 300,000 initiated members. During her tenure from 2000 - 2004, Boyd was described as a creative and innovative leader. She was known as the "Technology President," as she facilitated the establishment of technology usage and capacity in all facets of the sorority's activities and administration. Her four-year tenure as president included a number of transformative accomplishments, including the launching of Project SEE (Science in Everyday Experiences), an initiative funded by a \$1.6 million National Science Foundation grant with a goal of promoting math and science for middle school African American girls.

As National President, Boyd created and secured external funding for a new initiative, Leadership DELTA, an innovative year long program for collegiate members to prepare for STEM careers by introducing them to tools for workplace success and providing them with meaningful internships. She led the sorority through the process of obtaining Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Status at the United Nations with the Economic and Social Council making Delta Sigma Theta the second African American organization to obtain this designation. With the receipt of this NGO status Boyd introduced and led the sorority to have its first annual Delta Day at the United Nations. As National President, Boyd also led the sorority's humanitarian, education, advocacy efforts and facilitated fundraising for projects in various parts of South Africa specifically to build a group home for AIDS orphans in Swaziland, establish a computer center in Lesotho and providing a library and other school essentials at the Adelaide Tambo School for the disabled in Soweto.

During her administration as President the sorority published a cookbook "Occasions to Savor" featuring vetted recipes from throughout the sorority's membership. As the 22nd National President, Boyd led the fundraising effort to pay in full a one-million-dollar donation to Howard University in honor of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's Founders and to provide academic scholarships at Howard University during the sorority's 90th anniversary celebration in Washington, DC. In 2013, Boyd served as Chair of the Sorority's Centennial Celebration. The Centennial Celebration began on January 1, 2013, with a historic float representing the sorority in the Tournament of Roses Parade. The Centennial festivities involved many multifaceted celebratory events throughout the country all year long culminating in a Washington, D.C.-based convention that brought together more than 40,000 members of the sorority from around the world.

Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd is a lifelong STEM advocate and community servant. Currently, she is a Golden Life member of the Washington DC Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a member of the Capital City Chapter of the Links, Inc., a Life member of NAACP, a Life member of NCNW, member of the International Women's Forum, a member of the Board of Trustees of Morris Brown College and serves on the Board of Directors of MedStar Health Systems in Maryland.

For her many and varied contributions to the community, Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd has received numerous honors, awards, citations, commendations and tributes. These include, but are not limited to recipient of: The 2023 Fitzroy Medal from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, The Carver Medal from Simpson College; Chancellor's Award from North Carolina Central University; numerous Congressional city and state recognitions; "Keys to the City" from 40 cities; a "Key to the State of Florida"; the declaration of **Gwendolyn E. Boyd Day** in eighteen cities; selected as part of a permanent display at Johns Hopkins University entitled, **The Indispensable Role of Blacks at Johns Hopkins**; the Presidential Award from the Black Women's Agenda; the Living Legend Award from the Greater Nashville Black Teachers Alliance; The Spirit of Rosa Parks Courage Award from the Southern Youth Leadership Development Institute; The Yates Achievement of Excellence Award from BFSA at JHU; The Trailblazer Tribute Award; The Voices of Democracy Leadership Award from the Committee of Ten; Powerful and Influential Woman from the Alabama Diversity Council; and many other civic, leadership and professional awards for her achievements in the fields of engineering, higher education and community activism.

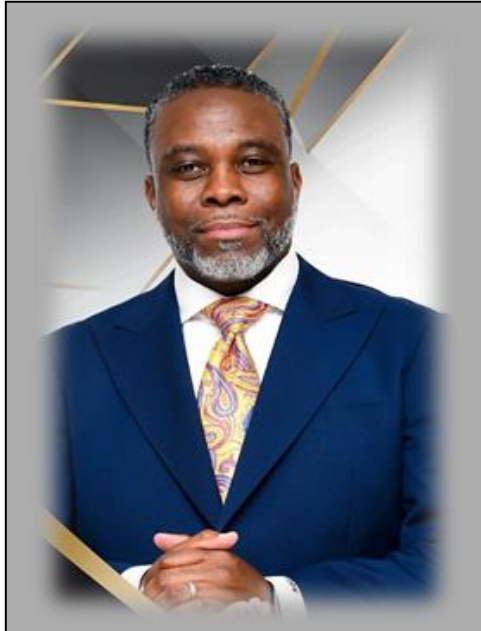
Our Honorees

Community Involvement Award



Sheriff Wayne Davis is a 25-year veteran of the department, having started as a deputy and moving up to criminal investigator, sergeant and lieutenant, then captain of the Investigations Division and SWAT commander at the Henry County Sheriff's Office and now serving as Sheriff. His office appreciates all the valued support received from the citizens of this great community. The office is committed to the highest standards of professionalism and service on behalf of the community we serve by providing effective law enforcement services to the residents and businesses in Henry County. He believes that Law Enforcement and the citizens we protect must work together to create a county we proudly call home. "We will fight harder than ever to remove all drug dealers from our streets and any criminal who chooses to prey upon the innocent people who live in our community," said Davis. He believes in being transparent and serving in a manner to ensure his office acts honorably and professionally. "We will be accountable from the top down, and that starts with me. We, as a team, will put ourselves above no man," Davis said. He continues to serve this community. He is married to Tashah.

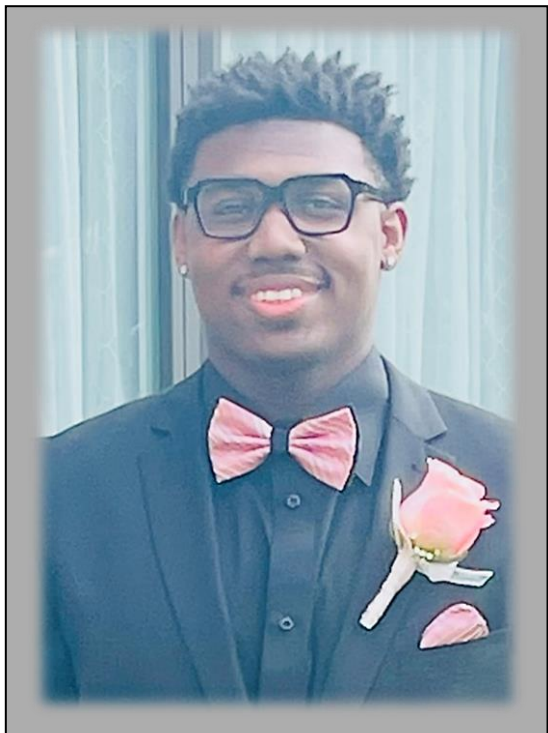
Freedom & Justice Award



Rev. Dr. Charles Whitfield is the Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church East Martinsville in Martinsville, Virginia, where he has faithfully led for over 29 years. A powerful preacher, respected community leader, and passionate advocate for spiritual and economic empowerment, he is known for his anointed preaching, compassionate counseling, and kingdom-minded leadership. He answered the call to ministry in July 1994 and has since dedicated his life to preaching, teaching, and transformational leadership. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Education, a Master of Arts in Human Services with a focus in Family & Marriage Counseling, and a Master of Divinity from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. In addition to his pastoral ministry, he is the author of two inspiring books, *Anointed in the Moment* and *Embracing the Anointing*, which explore the power, purpose, and presence of God's anointing in the lives of believers. He is also the President of the Minority Business Consortium, a regional initiative focused on empowering underrepresented entrepreneurs and expanding equitable opportunities in the business ecosystem.

A sought-after revivalist, leadership trainer, and Christian counselor, he has been invited to preach across the country and has had the unique honor of delivering the opening prayer for three NASCAR races at the historic Martinsville Speedway. He served on the Board of Directors for the Harvest Foundation and the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation. He currently serves with C-PEG (Chamber Partners for Economic Growth) and continues his commitment to education and ministry as a former trustee of both Virginia Union University and Virginia University of Lynchburg. He is the former President of the Virginia Baptist State Convention (2018–2021) and Moderator of the Smith River Missionary Baptist Association. Married to Carmela Starkey of Wirtz, VA.

Great Expectations Award



Ethan Dukes is a senior at Magna Vista High School where he is maintaining at 3.4 GPA. He thinks his teachers would describe him as respectful, dependable and hardworking. Outside of the classroom, sports is a big part of his life. He plays football, basketball, indoor and outdoor track. He believes that being active in sports, has taught him discipline, teamwork, leadership, and humbleness. He was honored to be voted onto the Homecoming Court as Prince his junior year, and King his senior year. This has taught him that his peers respect and look up to him. He is also involved in a Christian based organization for high school students called Young Life. This allows him to grow stronger in his faith and build positive friendships while providing community service. His goal is to play in the NFL, however he will also pursue college studies in Business. His top two choices are Campbell University or the Naval Academy.



Khameryn Millner is a native of Martinsville, VA. She is a 2025 graduate of Magna Vista High School with an advanced diploma and a 3.8 GPA. During high school, she took college credits and was in the National Honor Society, receiving her National Honor Society hood for graduation. She maintained A's and B's, and for her final semester of high school she made Honor Roll. She is a freshman at Winston Salem State University Majoring in Rehabilitation studies to become a PT. She is also a cheerleader for the Mighty Rams! She is a member of Christian View Missionary Baptist Church.

Great Expectations Award



Dennis L. Via retired from the U.S. Army as a 4-Star General and is currently an executive vice president with Booz Allen Hamilton in McLean, Virginia. In this role, he leads firmwide corporate engagement in the Office of the CEO. Via is also a fellow for Defense Futures and a Booz Allen's Defense Sector leadership team member. Within the global defense business, he helps formulate the firm's future business strategy for the defense market. He contributes to growth across technology innovation, warfighter advancements, readiness, training, and security cooperation. As a defense fellow, he assists senior defense, intelligence, and homeland security clients in navigating today's evolving global threat and budgetary environments. In his final assignment with the Army, he led the largest global logistics enterprise in the U.S. Army and Department of Defense (DoD), comprising 120,000 military and civilian employees in 38 countries and 41 states, with an annual budget of \$50 Billion.

Via is a native of Martinsville, VA. He attended Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA, where he graduated in May 1980 as a Distinguished Military Graduate and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He is the first commissioned Signal Corps Officer in the U.S. Army's history to achieve the rank of 4 Star General. He is married to the former Linda A. Brown of Warsaw, Va. They have two adult sons. Dennis Via was appointed to the Virginia State University Board of Visitors in November 2023.

Lifetime Achievement Award



Joyce Staples is a proud citizen of Henry County. After graduating from George Washington Carver High School in 1971, after which her educational pursuits included: Associate degree from Patrick and Henry Community College, Bachelor of Arts from Averett University, a Master of Arts with a concentration in English from Virginia Tech, and a Certificate of Advanced Studies from Hollins University. She retired as Associate Professor of English at Patrick and Henry Community College with 39 years of teaching middle school, high school, and college students. Joyce has an enduring history of volunteer service in the Martinsville-Henry County community, which she attributes to her late mother, Lola P. Toney. Christian Church. She serves on several boards, including Grace Network, Virginia Museum of Natural History, the Trinity Presbyterian Historical Foundation as secretary, Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) as board chair, Safety Net, Inc., and the treasurer of the Martinsville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. to name a few.

Joyce is the recipient of numerous awards, including finalist in the United Way Woman of the Year, the Faculty Award for Professional Excellence and she was also named the first Poet Laureate of Patrick and Henry Community College. In 2022, the Harvest Foundation awarded her a grant to start the Hope Book Club for Middle School Girls. Joyce and her dance partner, Josh Bires-Grodensky, emerged as the winner. Joyce is married to Kenneth Staples, and they will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in December. They are the proud parents of Christopher, Nicholas, and Abigail. She serves as Elder at Meadow Christian Church.

..... Gala Sponsors

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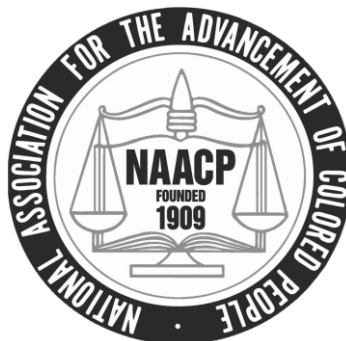
Ret. General Dennis Via

Mount Sinai Apostolic Church

Omega Psi Phi – Tau Omicron Chapter

Patrick & Henry Community College

Christian View Missionary Baptist Church



In Loving Memory...



Tony Millner, former President of
Martinsville Henry County NAACP #7089

-Imogene Hodge Draper

*In Memory of Annie K. Hairston
NAACP Life Member*

*Best Wishes for a successful Gala! Thank you for all that
you do for the community!*



*Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. ®
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Martinsville, VA
Angela Hairston, President*

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Martinsville & Henry County
Veterans Honor Guard

Ashley Gravely, MHC NAACP Webmistress
Visit us! www.mhcnaacp.org

Celebrating 116 Years!



Founded February 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. There are more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, campaigning for equal opportunity and conducting voter mobilization.

The NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group citizens of United States and eliminate race prejudice. The NAACP seeks to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic processes.

The NAACP established its national office in New York City in 1910 and named a board of directors as well as a president, Moorefield Storey, a white constitutional lawyer and former president of the American Bar Association. The only African American among the organization's executives, Du Bois was made director of publications and research and in 1910 established the official journal of the NAACP, *The Crisis*.

Heading into the 21st century, the NAACP is focused on disparities in economics, health care, education, voter empowerment and the criminal justice system while also continuing its role as legal advocate for civil rights issues.

Yet the real story of the nation's most significant civil rights organization lies in the hearts and minds of the people who would not stand idly by while the rights of America's darker citizens were denied. From bold investigations of mob brutality, protests of mass murders, segregation and discrimination, to testimony before congressional committees on the vicious tactics used to bar African Americans from the ballot box, it was the talent and tenacity of NAACP members that saved lives and changed many negative aspects of American society.

While much of NAACP history is chronicled in books, articles, pamphlets and magazines, the true movement lies in the faces--the diverse multiracial army of ordinary women and men from every walk of life, race and class--united to awaken the consciousness of a people and a nation. The NAACP will remain vigilant in its mission until the promise of America is made real for all Americans.

Become a member today!

Thank you to our keynote speaker, program participants, New College Institute, and community for your support in making this event a success. Congratulations to all honorees. A special thanks to our President for your leadership and gracious hospitality.

The 2025 Gala Committee

Dwayne Waller, Freedom Fund Chair

Valeria Edwards

Lois Hairston

Gloria Johnson

James McNair



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