The Key to success is EDUCATION

Martha Mason Hill Memorial Foundation
2013 Clearwood Drive
Mitchellville, MD 20721-2511

Volume 5 Number 1 NEWSLETTER Summer/Fall 2005

Martha Mason Hill
1911 - 1985

Martha Mason Hill Memorial Foundation

MMHMF

"Promoting Higher Education"
Helping to Build the Next Generation of Leaders

MMHMF 2005 AWARDS PROGRAM

Saturday, September 24th
4:00p.m.
Historic First Baptist Church Centralia
Richmond, County, Virginia

Honoring Retired Educators

Mrs. Rebecca Surley Branch
Mrs. Marguerite Friend Christian
Mrs. Irma Baugh Mason

Presenting

2005 MMHMF Academic Scholarship

Featuring

The Anderson Family Singers
from Dinwiddie, Virginia

For directions and more information contact:
Ms. Trudy Stephenson (804)-590-1493

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE GOSPEL SERVICE
"Designated Offering" TO MMHMF IS EXPANDED
Other Services To Contribute. Article on page ___.

2005 Scholarship Recipient

Lea C. Trotter, Animal Science major North Carolina, AT&T See article on Page 6.

MMHMF OUTREACH

Supplies donated for County elementary school children. See article on Page 8.

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From The Desk of The Chairman

This year, the nation celebrated the 51st anniversary of Broad vs. Board of Education. When I think about this landmark decision that struck down the national education policy of "separate but equal", that was in effect "separate and unequal", I am reminded that much work remains.

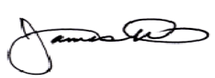
My personal experience dealing with the aftermath of the Brown vs. Board decision centers on my 1964 work with students, faculty, and staff in Prince Edward County, Virginia. The County's response to the Brown Vs Board decision had been to close all public schools there. As a result, from 1959 through 1964, the majority of African American children in Prince Edward County received no formal education. My most vivid memory of my experiences working with my colleagues in the County was the disastrous impact this had on such a large number of students.

I am often asked "Has the nation made progress since the landmark decision of Brown vs. Board"? Clearly the answer is yes. In 1959, only 17 % of all African Americans ages 18 – 25 had a high school education and only 3 % over age 25 had a college degree. Today, 79% of African American adults have graduated from high school and the number with a bachelor's degree is just over 20%. The number of African Americans having a graduate degree is at an all time high. Furthermore, the income gap between African Americans and Whites narrows with increasing educational levels and disappears at the doctorate level

Do we have more to do? Again, the answer is clearly yes. The performance gap between black and white students on standardized tests has not been narrowed. African Americans are the least likely group to take the rigorous high school courses that will ensure success in college. The number of African Americans pursuing careers in science, technology engineering and mathematics is woefully low. Given that jobs in these fields represent the "growth industry" for the next generation; this under representation is especially troublesome.

This year, we honor three former educators who dedicated their lives to providing quality education for all students, in particular, African American students. I applaud and thank the educators we are honoring this year, Mrs. Marguerite Christian, Mrs. Rebecca Branch and Mrs. Irma Mason, for their devotion to education. It cannot be overly emphasized that educators alone cannot succeed in narrowing the gap. Worth noting is data showing that when students have strong support systems at home and elsewhere, they excel. It is well documented that African American students who have a strong support system and who take rigorous courses in math and science perform on par with white students. Data further indicates that African American students who are home schooled perform at levels comparable to their white counterparts and both, on-average, out perform students of all races educated in public schools. Students need to be held to high standards and to know that we believe in them. I encourage parents and others in the community to get involved and to stay involved.

Martha Mason Hill believed in the power of education and the role that it played in ensuring that all students would reach their true potential. MMHMF is dedicated to caring out her legacy. With you help and support, we are well on the way to achieving our goals. The community of MMHMF supporters helps to make the old African proverb "It takes a community to raise a child" a truism. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you.



James H. Stith

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2013 Clearwood Drive Mitchellville, MD 20721-2511; ajhstith@msn.com

Make checks payable to MMHMF and mail to the above address. 100% of your tax-deductible donation goes to support Foundation scholarships and Programs.

Pledge Card

☐ I ENCLOSE MY TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF $_____TO:
THE MARTHA MASON HILL MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

NAME_____

STREET ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ Zip Code_____

Honoree - Rebecca Surley Branch, Retired Principal

Mrs. Rebecca Surley Branch, the daughter of the late Deacon Irvin W. and Mehetta B. Surley, is a native of Chesterfield County Virginia. She attended Union Branch Elementary School and graduated from Daniel Webster Davis High School, Ettrick, Virginia. She received her B.S. and M.S. degrees from Virginia State College (now VSU) and has done further study at the University of Virginia and the University of Maryland.

Mrs. Branch began her teaching career in 1951 at Midlothian Elementary School in Chesterfield County. She also has taught at the Kingsland, Winterpock and Union Grove Elementary schools. In January 1962, she was appointed head teacher of Dupuy Elementary School. In August 1962, she became the teaching Principal of Dupuy Elementary School, a position she held until 1967. She became the principal of Dupuy and Union Grove Elementary schools in August 1967. She worked in this position for one year and in August 1968, she became the full-time principal of Dupuy Elementary, a position she held for three years. In August of 1971, she became the first African-American principal of Ettrick Elementary School from which she retired on June 30, 1983.

Also, Mrs. Branch served as president of the Chesterfield Teachers Association (CTS) and served on several visiting committees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. She held membership in the following professional organizations: Chesterfield Association of School Executives (CASE), Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP) and the National Association of Elementary Schools Principals (NAESP).

Mrs. Branch aided in writing the recommendation and then she was selected to present this recommendation to the school board that resulted in the naming of the newly constructed school in the Bermuda District of Chesterfield County, the "Marguerite F. Christian Elementary School." It was dedicated in 1996.

Fraternally, she is a member of Electra Chapter No. 7, Order of Eastern Star, and the Petersburg Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

She is a member of the Union Branch Baptist Church where she was a member of the choir for many, many years and also taught church school. Currently, she is a member of the Diaconate and the Missionary Ministry and has served and still serves on numerous committees. She is also a member of the Chesterfield County Deacon and Deaconess Union and served as president of the Women's Auxiliary for three years.

Mrs. Branch is a loving, warm and caring individual whose wisdom and guidance is invaluable in the church and community. She is the widow of the late Deacon Melvin S. Branch and parent of one son, Ronald and two granddaughters RaShanda and Devondra.

2004 DONATIONS

—$25 to $50—

Ms. Hattie H. Green	Petersburg, VA		Ms. Kiera Robinson	Fort Washington, MD
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—$50 to $100—

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—$100 to $200—

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MMHMF thanks all who contributed to the Foundation in 2004. We apologize if any names were inadvertently omitted from the above list. Please contact the Foundation if your name does not appear. Thanks to those who contributed to the general offering taken at the 2004 Annual Program.

Reflections: Granddaughter and Great Grandson

GREAT GRANDMOTHER AND ME: 21ST CENTURY

Great Grams don't come any better, they say
But I only heard of Momma's ways.
Though her journey on earth is through,
She still has a message to pass to me and you.
She knows the young need a helping hand,
So it's translated in a way this generation can understand.

"Homie," wake up! Don't let your gifts go to waste,
It's time to take your rightful place.

Can't get my game on,
Tired of getting held back by parents singin' the same song
Talkin' 'bout school will get me places
While I'm just try'na chill back with different faces.

Chillin'? You're frozen like ice!
God wants you to do something with your life.
USHER in some changes, listen to my advice!

I wanna live life now because tomorrow's not promised.
Try'na lay back and keep it real, Grams, I'm just being honest.

Some call you Generation X.
What's up with that? Does it mean your life's a mess?
Throwin' away any future you could ever hope to get.
Making bad choices, living wild, that's not your DESTINY, CHILD

It can't get any realer than hangin' out with your friends
On the corner rappin', wishin' the day wouldn't end.

But when the day does end, what will you do then?

Take it easy, there's no rush,
Layin' back with my Game Boy and PS2 Crush.

You only wind up with a brain full of mush.

I'm not try'na be a gangsta or a hood rat,
I'm try'na live life not face'n facts.

That's LUDRACIS! Make your own mark,
DEM BOYS IN DA HOOD only like it dark.
Wasting time, all your money spent,
That idea's not worth 50 CENT

Ya' mean I need to do something now
Even if I don't feel the how.

That's right. Get your shine on!
Focus on school, and then you'll B2Kool

By Doretha Gilliam Houston and Michael Houston

HONOREE - Irma Baugh Mason, Retired Teacher

Mrs. Irma B. Mason is the daughter of the late Mrs. Ruth Baugh and Mr. Ellie Baugh and a native of Chesterfield County; she attended Union Grove Elementary School and graduated from Daniel Webster Davis High School, Ettrick, Virginia. She received her B.S. degree in Elementary Education from Virginia State College, now Virginia State University, Ettrick, Virginia, and a M.S. degree in Early Childhood Education from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

Mrs. Mason began her teaching career in Chesterfield County at the Winterpock Elementary School. She also taught at Dupuy Elementary and Harrowgate Elementary. She was stricken with multiple sclerosis in 1977 and retired from Harrowgate Elementary in 1979.

She is a member of Union Grove Baptist Church where she has served as a member of the Deaconess Ministry, Youth Choir, Senior Choir, Pulpit Hospitality Society and the Golden Circle. She was also coordinator of Vacation Bible School for many years and a member of the Chesterfield County Deaconess Union.

Mrs. Mason is a member of Union Grove Lodge Number 233 and the Alease Cooley Memorial Tent Number 718 where she served as financial secretary for approximately twenty five years.

Mrs. Mason is a member of Union Grove Lodge Number 233 and the Alease Cooley Memorial Tent Number 718 where she served as financial secretary for approximately twenty five years.

She is a devoted and loving individual who continues to give generously of her time and means to family and community. She is the wife of Deacon Beverly V. Mason, the mother of Angela Blowe and Carolyn Mason and the grandmother of Ian Blowe.

Major Bruce W. Jones
Gospel Service Chaplain To Leave AAFB

AAFB Worship Services Expanding Donation To MMHMF

(continued from cover)

The Foundation received a contribution of over $2,600 in February. This is the third year the Gospel Service has chosen MMHMF to receive one of several "designated offerings" it gives to organizations each year. .

GREAT NEWS!

MMHMF is most grateful to the Protestant Chaplain Service and worshippers of all services at Andrews AFB for the honor of being selected to not only continue receiving an annual designated offering from the 1130 Gospel Service, but to also receive an offering from the other services as well. Two charities will receive the offerings each month to receive offerings collected from all four services during a designated Sunday morning worship service. The Gospel Service has been a major supporter of MMHMF since 2003.

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—Up to $25—

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Dr. & Mrs. Vernon Crawley	Orland Park, IL		Mr. & Mrs. Robert D. Scott	Bel Camp, MD
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Fisher	Petersburg, VA		Ms. Esther Smith	Petersburg, VA
Mrs. Sharon Gray	Herndon, VA		Mr. & Mrs. Stith-Melsen	Aarhus, Denmark
Mrs. Sharon Gray	Herndon, VA		Dr. Bea Taylor	Alexandria, VA
Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Harrison	Woodbridge, VA		Mr. & Mrs. Amigo Wade	Petersburg, VA
Ms. Tonya L. Henderson	Chester, VA		LTG & Mrs. William Ward	Europe
Mrs. Doretha Houston & Family	Baltimore, MD		Dr. Wanda Ward	Lanham, MD
Mrs. Olivia Joseph	McDonough, GA		Ukrop's	Colonial Heights, VA

HONOREE - Marguerite Friend Christian, Retired Supervisor

Mrs. Marguerite F. Christian, a native of Chesterfield County, Virginia, began her formal academic training in the Kingsland Elementary School, subsequently graduating from Peabody High School in Petersburg, Virginia. She earned both B.S. and M.S. degrees from Virginia State University and continued post-graduate studies in supervision at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama amd William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Mrs. Christian began pursuit of a teaching career in Fluvanna County, Virginia in 1935. She later taught at Hickory Hill School in Chesterfield County until 1948 when she was appointed supervisor of elementary education. She held that position until early retirement in 1976. Her career as an educator was highlighted by many notable events, including securing funding for the County's first Head Start Program and bringing the first music teachers to Chesterfield's African-American elementary schools. Her outstanding leadership was exemplified through serving in capacities such as Vice Chairman of the Richmond-Petersburg Supervisory Group, the Third District Supervisory Group, and the Commission on Elementary Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and schools, representing the state of Virginia. She served on numerous local, state and national curriculum committees. In 1996, the Marguerite Christian Elementary School was dedicated in Chestsrfield County, paying tribute to the many achievements of this notable educator

Her religious activities, too numerous to itemize, include lifelong membership at First Baptist Church Centralia, where she has served faithfully on the Board of Trustees and the Deaconess Board for many years. She is a charter member and President Emeritus of the Chesterfield County Deaconess Union. In addition, she is Past President of the Women's Auxiliary of the Virginia State Baptist Deacon's Convention and Past President of the Women's Auxiliary of the National Baptist Deacon's Convention.

In addition to Mrs. Christian's religious and educational involvements, she has many civic affiliations to add to her credit. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Children's Home of Virginia Baptists, and after many years recently retired as its treasurer. She is Past Matron of Electa Chapter #7, Order of Eastern Star; a member of the Petersburg Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; a lifelong member of the NAACP. She is listed in Who's Who of American Women. The Greater Richmond YWCA recognized her achievements and importance to the community by selecting her in 1977 as Outstanding Woman of the Year in the field of Education. Her name appears at the Chesterfield County Courthouse as a member of the Senior Citizen's Hall of Fame. She was featured on the cover of the premiere issue of *Chesterfield Living* Magazine in the 1996 fall/winter edition.

As a family member and friend, Mrs. Christian is devoted, kind and understanding, giving generously of her time and her means for the welfare of others. She still resides in Chesterfield County, where she was born to Mrs. Atla C. Friend and Mr. Timothy Friend, with the late Mr. John Christian.

MMHMF OUTREACH

SCHOOL SUPPLIES PROVIDED FOR TWO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

For the second year in a row school supplies for children were collected, assembled and delivered to two elementary schools located in the Chesterfield County by the MMHMF Oututreach Committee members. The committee decided that Ettrick and Harrowgate Elementary schools would receive the school supplies collected this year. School items were donated by committee members, Foundation and Board members. The Flames of Union Grove Baptist Church, friends and other persons in the area are concerned with the education of children.

A list of supplies for kindergarten through second grade was obtained from the schools. Teachers will hold the supplies and make them available to students with the greatest need. The boxes were delivered to the schools on September 1, 2005 in time for students at the beginning of the school year.

MMHMF and the Outreach committee thank all who contributed or helped with the organizing and/or delivery of the items to the schools. We extend special thanks to two young volunteers of Chesterfield County, Shanda Wallace 10th grade and DeShawn Delane 3rd grade for helping to count and box the items. They also assisted with delivering the items to the schools.

CARE PACKAGES TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

Each February, members of MMHMF Outreach Committee prepare and send care packages to college students from Chesterfield County. Concern about retention and attrition rates in higher education have increased over the years. There are many factors that have been found to influence student retention and to be strongly associated with student persistence in college. These factors include student commitment, student characteristics, **support from family, peers and others outside the institution**, involvement in the institution's academic life, and frequency and quality of student interaction with faculty

WORKSHOP PLANNED

The Outreach Committee is planning a workshop for parents and students for the fall.

Outreach Committee Members

Mrs. Ann Henderson, Chairperson
Mrs. Sarah Cheatham
Mrs. Gwen Davis
Dr. Renia Cobbs
Mrs. Lois Coleman-Ellis
Mrs. Barbara Crews, Assistant Chairperson
Mrs. Brenda Friend-Briggs
Mr. Paige Johnson
Rev. Dr. Harold Braxton

MMHMF OUTREACH

Pictured below are members of the Outreach Committee with young volunteers of Chesterfield County School System organizing supplies for County elementary school children.

Pictured (left to right): DeShawn Delane, Barbara Crews and Sarah Cheatham

Pictured (left to right): Sarah Cheatham, Shanda Wallace and DeShawn Delane

Pictured (left to right) are Committee members Ann Henderson, Harold Braxton, Barbara Crews and Sarah Cheatham.

Pictured (left to right): DeShawn Delane, Shanda Wallace, Sarah Cheatham. And Ann Henderson

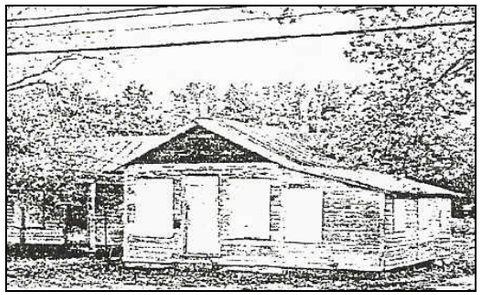
MMHMF 2005/2006 MAILING LIST: sign up to receive news about local and national educational opportunities and Foundation projects and programs and more, write or call us at

MMHMF, 2013 Clearwood Drive, Mitchellville, MD 20721-2511
(301) 390-5914 or (804) 590-1493, Email: ajhstith@msn.com

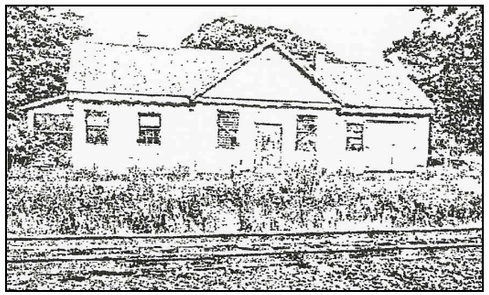
FOOD LION SHOP & SHARE PROGRAM: help the MMHMF scholarship fund by enrolling in this program. For details and to sign up, contact us at the above address.

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RAIL TRAIL

The History of African Americans in Chesterfield County, Virginia from the View of the Rail



Cooley Store, located on the south side of River Road, west of Ettrick, is the only early store recorded in the county originally owned and operated by a black man.



Centralia Post Office building also housed a general merchandise store in early 1900's

MMHMF and the Trustees of First Baptist Church Centralia co-sponsored two tours exploring the history of African Americans in Chesterfield County. The first tour was Saturday, January 15, 2005 (Martin Luther King Day) and the second tour was Saturday, February 12, 2005 (during African American History Month). Participants met at the Amtrak Station in Ettrick, Virginia, and received a wealth of information before boarding the train. Each person received a folder containing historical literature and a bagged gourmet lunch. Mrs. Brenda Friend Briggs, Attorney at Law, a member of Centralia and of the MMHMF Board of Directors, was the narrator. Mrs. Sarah Cheatham, member of the MMHMF Board of Directors and Executive Committee, and Dr. Lucious Edwards, Jr., Virginia State Archivist, shared information about Ettrick and Virginia State University. Passengers enjoyed a relaxing train ride as they observed historical sites mentioned by Mrs. Briggs in narrative.

During the event participants:

- Learned about the contributions of African Americans to Chesterfield County
- Saw communities where African Americans have lived for over a century
- Heard about federal, state, and local businesses of the county
- Saw schools, churches, community centers, and institutions
- Enjoyed the beautiful scenery of Chesterfield communities, rivers and streams
- Researched the history, community and business linkages, and ancestry of African Americans in the metropolitan Richmond-Petersburg areas
- Made history on this "freedom ride"

The trip ended at the Staples Mill Station in Richmond and passengers were returned to Ettrick by motor coach. On the return trip, participants were given the opportunity to win a variety of prizes by correctly answering questions based on the information provided in the presentations and packets. Both trips were sold out.

MMHMF Scholar News

2005 Scholarship Recipient

Lea C. Trotter

My name is Lea C. Trotter. I am a graduate of Matoaca High School, where I've learned that everyday is a learning experience. I volunteered in many activities through out my high school years. I was a volunteer cheerleading coach for three years where I learned patience, dedication and how to enjoy working with young girls. At the same time I was cheering for Matoaca High School and learning to balance my time to accomplish all the things I was doing. I also volunteered for a local "PRINCESS" group where I helped mentor young girls about sex, drugs and self-esteem. At the end of the year all the "PRINCESSES" would dress up in gowns and we would have a formal party for them. In addition, in high school I also worked part time. My first job was working at Pet Smart where I loved working with animals. Next I worked as a sales associate at Claire's Boutique where my hours were more flexible and better suited for my busy schedule

Now I'm attending North Carolina A&T State University where my major is Animal Science. My long term goal is to become a Veterinarian. I am blessed to be a recipient of this Scholarship, it has really helped me.

2004 Scholarship Recipient

LaTonya Bowles

First and foremost in college you quickly get a rude awakening that you are not in high school anymore. In other words, your immediate task is to develop good study skills, make some positive decisions, and decide to win at them all. It really doesn't matter whether or not you have a major the whole focus is to understand that the professors in college expect high quality work. Therefore, you must adequately be prepared on a daily basis. Fortunately for me I have been blessed to be able to utilize my good study skills from high school, which has proven helpful toward my success in college so far. I was a Jr. Varsity cheerleader as a freshman, and now I cheer Varsity as a sophomore. This activity commands that grades must be in tact in order to be apart of the squad.

Again, I have been blessed to do both. I have my share of ups and downs, but the ups out weigh the downs. It is my desire to keep the following goals in prospective for the remainder of my college career and they are: Keep God first, family second, and all other business third.

Last, but certainly not least it's organizations like the Martha Mason Hill Scholarship Foundation that helped me to be more successful upon my entrance into college. It was an honor to have been selected as a recipient of this wonderful scholarship.

My mother told me to add that the care packets that are sent out to students are very timely and wonderful. My brother David, who is a student at Virginia State University, and I have certainly appreciated them. May God continue to bless each of you in a special way.

With much love and appreciation,
LaTonya L. Bowles