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ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Delta Studies Center



“A MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER”

BY: PEGGY R. WRIGHT

As we enter this joyous time of the year, I reflect on some of the fondest memories of my life evolving around the Christmas season with my parents, my brother and my sisters playing amid the poverty in the delta and making of a Merry Christmas.

This Christmas season, I hope each of you find the chance amid the chaos and hectic schedules to reflect and be thankful for all that you have.

2005 was a year of uncertainty for those of us at the Delta Studies Center, but we look forward to 2006 with excitement for all of the new opportunities and challenges that await.

Thus, I take this opportunity again to say, “thank you” for your support this past year and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Joyful Kwanzaa, and a Happy Hanukkah.



**MISSISSIPPI DELTA GRASSROOTS
 CAUCUS CONFERENCE
 JANUARY 26-27, 2005**

The 3rd Annual Mississippi Delta Caucus conference, that will promote a wide-ranging dialogue about fighting long-term poverty and the legacy of racial prejudice in the Delta, will be held in Little Rock, Thursday, January 26, 2005 through Friday, January 27, 2005. It will also focus on putting together a plan for the rebuilding of the region in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The opening session/reception will be held at the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce on Thursday evening from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. All day sessions will be held on Friday at the Clinton Library and will feature panels on disaster relief and rebuilding, economic development, health care and education. Also, President Bill Clinton has been invited for Friday’s session. The conference provides an excellent opportunity for networking and communicating with other people knowledgeable about the Delta and issues that affect us all.

Registration fee is \$15.00 and covers reception and lunch for the day and a half event. For more information, please contact Lee Powell, (202) 360-6347, E-mail: LeePowell2@cs.com. To register for the event go to <http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc/MDGCJan2006ConfRegistration.pdf>.

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ARKANSAS DELTA BYWAYS AWARDS TOURISM EFFORTS AT ANNUAL BANQUET



The ASU – Delta Studies Center staff attended the sixth annual Arkansas Delta Byways banquet held on October 28, 2005 at the Fowler Center located on the Arkansas State University campus in Jonesboro.

The banquet, hosted by the Arkansas Delta Byways Association, promotes tourism in fifteen counties located in Eastern Arkansas which is also home to Arkansas' only two scenic byways: Crowley's Ridge Parkway and the Great River Road.

This year's winners included:

- **Media Support Award:** Paul Holmes, Jonesboro, Craighead County

- **Hospitality Award:** Main Street Osceola, Mississippi County
- **Entrepreneur Award:** Shirley Schoettlin, Piggott, Clay County
- **Tourism Support Award:** Big Woods Conservation Partnership, Monroe County
- **Festival/Events of the Year:** Frontier Days, Wynne, Cross, County
- **Bootstrap Award:** Mississippi County Historical Society and Museum, Mississippi County
- **Promotional Award:** Tourism and Business Initiative of Eastern Arkansas:

Lee and St. Francis Counties

- **Outstanding Member Award:** Frank Henry, Dermott, Chicot County
- **Cultural Heritage Award:** Desha County Museum, Desha County
- **Tourism Person of the Year:** Garland Hayes, Stuttgart, Arkansas County.

Congratulations to all the winners.



COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATIONS RACE, GENDER, AND MEDIA HELD 9TH ANNUAL DIVERSITY PANEL DISCUSSION



On Thursday, November 17, 2005, the College of Communication's Gender, and Media class hosted its annual diversity discussion entitled, "From Hurricanes to Hip-Hop: A roundtable discussion on Race and the Media's Perspective."

This years panelists included: Wesley Brown, Columnist and Business Editor, Arkansas News Bureau; Rick Fahr, Managing Editor, The Jonesboro Sun; Jajuan Johnson, Oral History Coordinator, The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies; and Dr. Veda McClain, Chair of the Department of Teacher Education.

The roundtable discussion focused on media hurricane coverage and hip-hop culture.

Other topics discussed were: Movie glorification of gun violence, Hurricane Katrina: Did race play a role in rescue efforts?, NBA dress code: Attack on hip-hop culture?, and is National media more likely to cover cases of missing white females?.

The panel discussion spurred in-depth comments concerning race relations. An audience participant asked what did Hurricane Katrina teach us? "It showed us the extent of racial bigotry in our nation." Jajuan Johnson said. Wes Brown mentioned that race is always an uncomfortable topic to discuss. Johnson encouraged future journalists by reminding them that they can make a difference in the newsroom by being considerate of

how they portray people and groups in their news stories.

The roundtable discussion, in its ninth year, was held in partnership with the association for Women in Communications and a race, gender and media class taught by Dr. Lillie Fears, Associate Professor of Journalism.





“WHAT DO WE NEED FROM AMERICAN HISTORY” LECTURE RHODES COLLEGE BARRETT LECTURE SERIES



On Thursday, November 17, 2005, the ASU-Delta Studies Center staff attended the Barret Lecture Series featuring Dr. Edward Ayers at the McCallum Ballroom on the Rhodes College Campus in Memphis, Tennessee.

Dr. Ayers, Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia, was the third speaker of the Barret Lecture Series, a year long celebratory schedule of events, which commemorates the opening of the new Paul Barret Jr. Library at Rhodes. The presentation also included digitized documents from the desegregation of schools in Hoxie, Arkansas, in 1955 as well as a panel discussion with three individuals who participated in the 1955 event: Mrs. Essie Steadman, Mrs. Fayth Hill-Washington, and Mrs. Charlene Trotter.

The lecture began with the panel presentation. Mrs. Steadman, who was the school bus driver before desegregation of the Hoxie Schools, was the first to speak. She explained that “Yes, I don’t know how I did it, but I did it. I would get up early in the morning and pick up about nine or ten kids. Take off to Jonesboro, which was about twenty-six miles away. I would rush back home, go to the Walnut Ridge cleaners and clean, press clothes for about five or six hours. I would come out of there and I would take off to Jonesboro to pick up my kids. Once I got back to Walnut Ridge and Hoxie and dropped them off I would take off across the railroad track and go do another job. I did this as long as the school was like it was, but it was fun. I enjoyed it.”

Mrs. Charlene Trotter, the first African-American teacher whose very first job, in 1953, was at the Black school in Hoxie, spoke next. She was the only teacher in the

school that had three rooms. Though they did not have the resources of the all white school, they still, according to Mrs. Trotter, “did everything that the school systems do now. I was grouping when I didn’t know what the word meant. I had peer facilitators when I didn’t know what that was either. We had one school. We had graduations. We had students who put on plays. We just covered everything.”

Mrs. Fayth Hill-Washington, a Hoxie 21 member, who attended the all black school until 1955 when she along with twenty other students desegregated into the Hoxie School District, was the last speaker.

Mrs. Washington stated, “there was no diversity in the Hoxie school to teach the diverse kids that were coming in.” In fact, the African-American parents of these children “really didn’t have anything to say about” the desegregation. And according to one of Mrs. Washington’s classmates many students “didn’t consider that we were making history. I considered being obedient to our parents because they told us to go and that is what we did.”

But even after integration many black students still faced segregation when it came to extra-curricular activities such as Basketball and Choir. This, according to Mrs. Washington, was due to the fact that many of the school districts surrounding Hoxie were still segregated. And “even through the struggles that we went through with families having to move out of the city and parents not having a job we were able to work together to come up with a happy medium so that we got along in the school.” Just in the Hoxie school, but as far as the integration part there were some



Mrs. Peggy R. Wright, Director of the Delta Studies Center, Dr. Edward Ayers, Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia, and Mrs. Fayth Hill-Washington, Hoxie 21 student.

Photo by: Christine Perry



L/R Mrs. Essie Steadman; bus driver for Hoxie African-American students, Mrs. Fayth Hill-Washington; Hoxie 21 student, and Mrs. Charlene Trotter; African-American Hoxie School teacher before desegregation.

Photo by: Christine Perry

“We had one school. We had graduations. We had students who put on plays. We just covered everything..”



Barret Lecture Series audience listens as the Hoxie panelists speak about their experiences in the 1955 desegregation of the Hoxie School District.

Photo by: Christine Perry



BARRET LECTURE SERIES “FEATURING HOXIE DESEGREGATION STORY” CONTINUED



room for improvement on that.”

The final presenter for the night was Dr. Ayers. Ayers spoke concerning his authoritative internet archive, “Valley of the shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War.” He explained that his whole premise for this website was to make information available on the site that would allow people to be “able to explore the past for themselves and not just bank on what we told them in some book.” To make people understand that “we’ve barely begun to scratch the surface of American History. You see episodes like Hoxie there and you’ll see there are stories like that all over our history that are full of meaning for us.”

Dr. Ayers also went on to say that, it is becoming clear, as more research is being done, that the American Civil War has an African-American Story. Putting this information into a digital format and

placing it on the internet has given many people, from various places around the world, access to these raw materials. Allowing these individuals, for the first time, the opportunity to read stories told from the African-American perspective. Helping them to try and understand “how it is that black people and white people have lived together in this country and how it is that they’ve made each other and how they’ve made the south.”

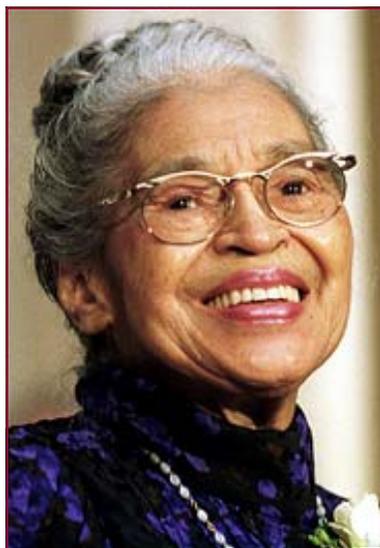
To show “that the Hoxie story is a culmination of a story that has been unfolding for a very long time,” Dr. Ayers shared with the audience a story in which “four or five months after slavery’s end” African-American people began asking for schools. But this is just the beginning of what can be done with history. Dr. Ayers reminded the audience to begin to collect these stories. To use the technology that is available to them to preserve the

history and to invest time into talking to, interviewing and developing the “Living Histories” around them.

For more information on the Barret Lecture Series, please visit the Rhodes College website <http://www.rhodes.edu>.



MOTHER OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ROSA MCCAULEY PARKS (FEBRUARY 4, 1913 - OCTOBER 24, 2005)



Rosa Parks at Congressional Gold Medal Presentation on June 15, 1999
Photo by William Philpott/Reuters

On Wednesday, November 2, 2005, at 12:00 p.m. in the Student Union Auditorium, the ASU Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held a memorial service in memory of the “Mother of Civil Rights Movement”—Mrs. Rosa Parks. The thirty minute program held at ASU reflected on Mrs. Park’s life and legacy.

Mrs. Parks was a prime mover in changing the course of American History and sparked the modern civil rights movement in 1955 when she courageously refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama city bus to a white man

when ordered to do so by the bus driver. (excerpted from her Memorial Services Program held on Monday, October 31, 2005 at the Metropolitan AME Church, Washington, DC.).

All who attended received inspiration and encouragement as students reflected on Rosa’s brave action on December 1, 1955.

For more information on this or other programs sponsored by the ASU Chapter of the NAACP, please contact Jerrod O. Lockhart, Assistant Dean of Students, ASU-Tribal Leadership Center at (870) 972-2055 or email him at jlockhar@astate.edu.





IN MEMORIAM - ROSEMARY WILLIAMS HILL (OCTOBER 16, 1927 - NOVEMBER 5, 2005)



On November 5, 2005 the Delta lost one of its local civil rights heroes, Mrs. Rosemary Williams Hill. Mrs. Hill, who passed away in Memphis, TN, was born in Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas in 1927 and was very active in the desegregation of the Hoxie Public Schools system in 1955.



Mrs. Rosemary Williams Hill

Hoxie, the first system in the Mississippi Delta to attempt desegregation, was a small town of approximately 2,000 in total population. A year after the Supreme Court ordered school desegregation with “all deliberate speed,” the Hoxie school board made a decision, based on economics to desegregate Hoxie’s schools.

This action placed Hoxie third in Arkansas to desegregate its school system, and the first in an area of Arkansas with a large population. However, Hoxie stands alone as being the “first challenged” desegregation in Arkansas.

On November 17th, Mrs. Hill, the last surviving Hoxie parent, was recognized by Rhodes College for her stand for change at the Barret Lecture Series featuring Dr. Edward Ayers and a Hoxie Desegregation Panel with the below acknowledgement.

“Larger than life, larger than death, Mrs. Hill lives on in the memories of the many whose lives she touched. Countless others who did not know her have enjoyed freedom and opportunities because of her courage and leadership.”

“Never overbearing but always strong, Mrs. Hill inspired love and devotion among friends, family and the several church congregations she served. She truly made a difference in this world.”

“We are diminished by her death.”



NEWLY RELEASED REPORTS



“RESEARCH & RESOURCES FOR REBUILDING”

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has compiled a list publications and resources to help those involved in Gulf Coast hurricane recovery efforts. The package, entitled “Research & Resources for Rebuilding,” is a package designed as a one-stop-shop for research reports, publications, and information concerning the use of manufactured and modular housing, rehabilitation, storm-resistant building design, and disaster response. The list is available at <http://www.huduser.org/publications/destech/hurricanes05.html>

NEW VIDEO & DISCUSSION GUIDE CHAMPION “SCHOOLS AS CENTERS OF COMMUNITIES”

A new video and discussion guide from the American Architectural and KnowledgeWorks Foundations explains the benefits of creating schools as centers of the community. The video focuses on the transformation of a St. Paul, Minnesota school into a model of academic excellence with community involvement. Go to <http://www.archfoundation.org/aaf/aaf/News.15.htm> for information on how to order the free video and discussion guide.





NEWLY RELEASED REPORTS CONTINUED



“THE 2004 YOUTH VOTE”

“The 2004 Youth Vote,” a new publication from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), examines the youth vote in the 2004 elections. Among the most notable statistics: 47 percent of 18 to 24 year-olds voted in 2004, up from 36 percent in 2000 and the highest turnout among young voters since 1992. Those with some college experience were more likely to vote than others, and young women were more likely to vote than young men. Download the report, including state-by-state statistics, at

http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/2004_votereport_final.pdf

“COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR GRANTMAKERS ON FOSTERING BETTER OUTCOMES THROUGH GOOD PROCESS”

A new report from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation points out the importance of collaboration as a key to good community development. The report also goes on to identify several elements that facilitates a good community process are: 1) requires advocacy; 2) meaningfully engages residents and links participatory processes together; 3) is supported by many; 4) is not imposed on people; 5) addresses underlying issues such as race, class, culture, and power; and 7) anticipates conflict and works to identify common ground.

To review this information, go to

<http://www.hewlett.org/NR/rdonlyres/7DC1D659-2BED-467F-9A13-5F39CFF70AFF/0/CommunityDevelopment.pdf>

“EDUCATION AS A RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY”

"Education as a Rural Development Strategy," an Economic Research Service brief, discusses whether investments in rural education pay off in the short and long term. The researchers found that many rural communities improve education, but struggle with brain drain-only 55 percent of college graduates return to rural areas and that rural residents not finishing high school or not going on to college are less likely to leave.

To learn more view the brief online at:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/November05/Features/Education.htm>.

“INCOME OF U.S. WORKFORCE PROJECTED TO DECLINE IF EDUCATION DOESN'T IMPROVE”

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (Center for Higher Ed) brief, “Income of the U.S. Workforce Projected to Decline if Education Doesn’t Improve”, finds that if states do not focus on boosting the skills of minorities the nation’s per capita income will decline. States must substantially increase the number of minorities finishing high school and pursuing a postsecondary education to meet the growing demand for skilled workers. Minorities will represent 40 percent of America’s workforce by 2020. The percent of all workers with a Bachelor’s degree increased from 1980 to 2000, but the gap between whites and minorities actually widened.

To learn more about this report go to: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_decline/index.shtml.





UPCOMING NEWS AND EVENTS



**ARKANSAS SOIL & WATER EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2006
JANUARY 12, 2006 * CONVOCATION CENTER
JONESBORO, ARKANSAS**

You are invited to attend the Annual Arkansas Soil and Water Education Conference to be held Thursday, January 12, 2006 at the Convocation Center, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro. Registration begins at 8:00 am. The conference registration fee is \$20.00 which includes a luncheon. For more information contact the College of Agriculture at (870) 972-2085 or go to their website at <http://agri.astate.edu/>

**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AGRIBUSINESS CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 15, 2006 * CONVOCATION CENTER
JONESBORO, ARKANSAS**

Mark your calendars and pass the word concerning the Arkansas State University College of Agriculture Agribusiness Conference slated to be held on February 15, 2006. For more information call ASU - College of Agriculture at (870) 972-2085 or go to their website at <http://agri.astate.edu/>.

**THE 13TH OXFORD CONFERENCE FOR THE BOOK
MARCH 30 - APRIL 1, 2006**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI * OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

This conference will bring together notable authors, editors, publishers, and others in the trade as well as educators, literacy advocates, readers, and book lovers and is dedicated to novelist and historian Shelby Foote (1916 - 2005). The conference is open to the public without charge. To assure seating space, those interested in attending should pre-register by contacting the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. For more information about this program, speakers, and registration visit the Center's website at <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/>.

**THE 33RD ANNUAL FAULKNER AND YOKNAPTAWPHA CONFERENCE
JULY 23-27, 2006**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI * OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

This conference will examine Faulkner's fiction in terms of its depictions of the South as a representative "global" culture. For more information on this conference as it becomes available, visit <http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/>

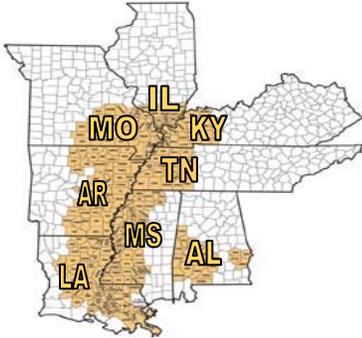


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We're on the web
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Happy Holidays

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