



WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
FOR A GREATER MEMPHIS

2009 Legends Award

Reception – Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Introduction and Event Overview

The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis is pleased to announce its new **Legends Award**. The **Legends Award** was created to pay tribute to women whose work embodies the mission of the Women's Foundation. The purpose of the **Legends Award** is to applaud these trend-setting women, whose visionary and innovative work is paramount in their specialized areas of outreach. The determination and passion evident in the **Legends Award Honorees'** work inspires others to strive for a better community for all.

The 2009 **Legends Award** Reception is **Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at 6:00 p. m. at the Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis**. This event is the first of its kind dedicated exclusively to honoring Legendary Women through Artistic Expressions. These artistic renditions will embody and personify the accomplishments and perseverance of the Legends Award Honorees. Each art piece will be unveiled at the Legends Award Reception.

The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis would like to thank each of you for your participation in this momentous occasion. We are excited about this opportunity to celebrate legendary women and their contribution to the Memphis community. We hope this will be an extraordinary experience for you.

2009 Legends Award Honorees

Minerva Johnnican



Artist ~ *Marítza Dávila*

Minerva J. Johnnican is a well-respected community leader, who has used her success in the public arena as a means to open doors of opportunity for other women and African Americans. She spent the first 18 years of her life shaping the lives of children in the Memphis community as an educator and mentor serving both as a teacher

and media specialist in the Memphis City Schools System. As a political trailblazer, Minerva has gained a reputation of being a proven leader and administrator. Her first encounter with politics came as a child when she helped her father canvas the 26th Ward in a challenge against the powerful E. H. Crump machine. Helping her father in a door-to-door voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaign, Minerva handed out leaflets to the residents while her father talked to them about the campaign. Their efforts were successful in defeating the Crump-backed candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Susan Sanford

Artist ~ *Carol DeForest*



Susan H. Sanford, president and CEO of the Mid-South Food Bank, is committed to ending hunger in the Mid-South through advocacy and providing food to the needy. Prior to joining the food bank in 1991, her commitment was exhibited during her tenure as a board member and chairman (the first woman to hold this position) of United Way of the Mid-South. During that time, United Way implemented workplace food drive that provides approximately 10 percent of the food distributed by the food bank today. Under her leadership the food bank has grown from an agency providing food to two counties in the Mid-South to a large distribution center supplying food to 31 counties. This growth occurred with only a small increase in staff. She constantly reminds the staff that operations must be as good as the food bank's largest food donors – but without the expense.



Maxine Smith

Artist ~ Brenda Joysmith

The name, MAXINE, helps to define the Memphis Civil Rights Movement. A woman of strength, character, and fortitude, Maxine Smith was born in Memphis on October 31, 1929. She received her A.B. degree in biology from Spelman College (Atlanta) in

1949, and a master's degree in French in 1950 from Middlebury College in Vermont. What propelled Smith into the eye of the civil rights storm was her rejection by Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) when she and Miriam Sugarmon Willis applied to do graduate work there in 1957. Memphis State's decision met with thunderous resistance from both Smith and Willis and they vowed to fight. Smith became active in the Memphis NAACP, serving as volunteer executive secretary. She coordinated sit-ins, protests and voter registration drives.

Dr. Jane Walters



Artist ~ Lurynn Franklin

The work of Dr. Walters reflects the strength of one person striving to build a better city. Memphis has undergone several changes throughout our history both good and bad. What keeps us growing are people like Dr. Walters, people who give of themselves to others. The most important impact Dr. Walters' contributes is individuality. Her goal

is not to produce doctors and lawyers, but youth who have the confidence to succeed. Their success is measured by their own unique definition.

Ovation Award Recipients Happy Jones and Jeanne Varnell Collaboration of Sisterhood at Its Strongest

Happy Jones

Artist ~ Pam Cobb

Although Happy Jones is from a privileged family, descending from founders of the city, she chose for herself decades ago a path into leadership, political activism and social causes very different from most of her relatives and childhood companions.

She made the momentous choice nearly 50 years ago to break the barrier of wealth and separateness in order to be a servant of change and unity in her city—and she has never stopped.



Jeanne Varnell

Artist ~ Pam Cobb

Jeanne Varnell is a native Memphian and a long time philanthropist and community building advocate. Community service has played a distinctly important role in her personal and professional interest.

Professionally she worked for more than 25 years as a Human Resource trainer and consultant working specifically with non-profit organizations. As founding board member of many of the organizations she has help to raised millions of dollars to create, build, sustain and increase resources to those in need. As an expert in group leading/facilitation she has led race and gender relations discussion for nearly three decades bridging gaps and opening opportunities for collective dialog and work to improve our community and beyond.



Mission

The mission of the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis is to encourage philanthropy and foster leadership among women and support programs that enable women and children to reach their full potential.

Vision

The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis is the agent for change committed to a community of wellbeing and prosperity, where women live in sufficiency, strength and safety, sharing their leadership and empowering their children.

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