

The Iowa African-American Journal

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Spring/Fall 2001

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Denison

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Dubuque

Robert Tyson
Waterloo

Rose Vasquez, ex officio
Director
Department of Human Rights

*There is currently one
vacancy on the commission*

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Sixth Annual Conference Focuses on Black Families in Crisis

The Sixth Annual Status of African-Americans Conference was held March 9 and 10, 2001 at the downtown Des Moines Marriott. The theme, "Black Families in Crisis" was a departure from the traditional emphasis on black women's health. The objective of the change in theme was to promote the participation of men in the event and to bring together individuals from a broad range of disciplines to look at issues that are of concern to African American families in Iowa.

The event was kicked-off by Governor Thomas Vilsack, who urged participants to continue to work towards solutions to the complex problems facing the black community in Iowa. He challenged all Iowans, regardless of their ethnic background, to pursue equity and inclusion for all citizens of the state. The luncheon featured a dramatic performance and a



Nathan McCall at the dinner banquet with conference participants

dance presentation by two groups from Des Moines. The keynote speaker was Nathan McCall. Nathan McCall's new book *What's*

Going On examines and discusses the myths and realities of American life. Mr. McCall discussed being involved in gangs and getting in the prison system, but discovered that was not the direction to go. He turned his life around and encouraged other black males to realize that prison is not the end.



Nathan McCall

The workshop topics included relationships, the technology divide, starting and financing your own business, vintage age living, nurturing african american parents, recognizing our own "ism's", gang violence, preparing for healthy black babies, black politics, how to deal with homicide, the state of black Iowa, coping with stress, empowering black youth, 21st century careers for teens, asking for love with agry fists, and improving the mind, body and spirit of black women. Each session focused on the challenges facing the african american communities in Iowa and throughout the United States.

Governor Vilsack Appoints New ICSAA Commissioners

The members and staff of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans are pleased to welcome two additions. Robert Tyson of Waterloo was appointed earlier this year and works as a principal in the Waterloo School District. Beverly Allen of Des Moines is an employee of the Iowa Department of Personnel and is fulfilling the unfinished term of outgoing commissioner Joyce McGlory, also of Des Moines.

Mr. Tyson replaces Cammie Scully, of Waterloo, who resigned from the commission after serving nearly eight years. There is currently one additional vacancy and one anticipated vacancy on the commission. Citizens of Iowa who are interested in serving on a state board or commission should complete the form on page four. More information is also available at www.state.ia.us/governor/boards or by calling 515-281-5211.

ICSAA Honors Community Leaders with MLK Achievement Awards



Dr. Pearl Jefferson
Keynote speaker

January 15, 2001 marked the 12th year for Iowa's annual celebration commemorating the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The event was held at the State of Iowa Historical Building, beginning with signing the proclamation, declaring January 15, 2001 as Dr. King day and January 15 through 19th as Dr. King week in Iowa, by the Honorable Thomas Vilsack, Governor.

Following the proclamation signing, the traditional bell-ringing presentation was led by Scott Moline, MLK planning committee representative, Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. Governor Vilsack assisted the chosen children to ring the simulated bells for the audience. "We Shall Overcome" was lead by the East High School Chamber Chorus of Des Moines where the attendees joined in, and proceeded into the auditorium for the remainder of the event.

The program opened with a welcome and explanation of the theme by Rose Vasquez, Director, Department of Human Rights, followed by the invocation presented by Michael Murray, Pastor of Kyles A.M.E. Zion Church of Des Moines. A musical selection was then rendered by East High School Chamber Chorus, with remarks from Governor Vilsack afterward. The keynote address was given by Dr. Pearl L. Jefferson of Des Moines, Iowa.

The next item on the agenda consisted of the presentation of the MLK Lifetime Achievement Awards presented by Traevana Potter-Hall, Director of ICSAA with the assistance of Governor Vilsack. The recipients for 2001 included Ida Johnson – Executive Director of United Neighbors, Inc. in Davenport, and Ruby Sutton – President NAACP, Dubuque Branch, Dubuque. The award recipients were selected based on nomination forms submitted by community members who wanted to recognize these individuals for showing love and a commitment to service in their respective communities.

This year, the Status of African-Americans decided to

honor outstanding citizens of Iowa communities that also commit their time and energy to service projects throughout the year(s) to improve the quality of life in their individual neighborhoods throughout the state. The recipients for outstanding community service projects were Cedar Valley Diversity Appreciation Team and Study Circles – Commission on Human Rights, Waterloo, Global Health Corps – University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Park Neighborhood Association, Des Moines.



Gov. Vilsack & Ida Johnson

Following the awards recognition, the choir rendered 2 more selections and closing remarks were given by the Director of ICSAA, after which, the benediction was given by Reverend Murray.

To submit nominations for the MLK Lifetime Achievement Award or MLK Service Project Award for January 2002, please complete the following pages and return to the address listed, by December 2001.



Cedar Valley Diversity Apprec. Team & Study Circles



Global Health



MLK Jr. Park Neighborhood Assoc.

ICSAA Director Traevana Potter-Hall Resigns



Traevana Potter-Hall

Effective July 27, 2001, Traevana Potter-Hall resigned as Director of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans. Traevana accepted a position as the Director of Affirmative Action at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. Traevana will be missed by the commissioners and staff of the Status of African-Americans.

"Big shoes to fill. I know it is a cliché, but it could not be more appropriate when we talk about replacing our former Status of African American director, Traevana Potter-Hall. Her high energy,

enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the Commission was virtually unmatched. More importantly, her work was inspiring to those of us who worked with her. She went around the state setting up public hearings and enjoying every minute of it. She made us realize the value of interacting with people at all levels and in a lot of different locations. She put together events and celebrations with great aplomb and made us all feel a welcome part of the process. The Commission's good work will continue without her, but we owe a good deal of thanks to Traevana for bringing us to this point. We wish her and her family the best in her new position out East." *Rose Vasquez, Director*

If you are interested in applying for the position of director of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans, please see the advertisement on the following page.

ADMINISTRATOR DIVISION ON STATUS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

The Iowa Department of Human Rights is accepting resumes for the position of Administrator for the Division on the Status of African Americans. This position serves a Commission, reports to the Director of the Department and is appointed by and serves at the Governor's pleasure. The Commission studies the changing needs and problems of African Americans in this state, and recommends new programs, policies and constructive action. Position is located in Des Moines, Iowa. Travel will be required.

Desired qualifications include graduation from an accredited college or university. Must have experience in public administration, human or civil rights, management, program development, or meeting the needs of African Americans. Need a proven record of increasingly responsible experience at the management level in a related area to African Americans or an equivalent combination of education and experience. This position is exempt from the merit system. Salary Range: \$32,200 - \$60,255 plus an excellent benefits package. Resumes may become public.

Fax or send cover letter and resume to

Rose Vasquez, Director
Iowa Department of Human Rights
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
Fax: 515/242-6119

Resumes must be received by October 15, 2001.

The State of Iowa is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.



The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony is a state celebration sponsored by the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans. The program includes participating in the nationwide bell - ringing ceremony and features special guests, entertainment, refreshments and the presentation of the Fifth Annual MLK Lifetime Achievement Awards. The awards recognize individuals who have demonstrated commitment to the vision of Dr. King by promoting the racial equality of all people of Iowa. In order to be considered to receive this award, one must have demonstrated a lifetime commitment to diversity and inclusion in his or her community and in the State of Iowa.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award 2002 Nomination Form

Please type or print neatly.

Nominee:

Name _____

Title/Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ Telephone (office) _____

Person submitting nomination:

Name _____

Title/Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ Telephone (office) _____

Include the following with the completed nomination form:

- ? A summary of the nominee's contributions that reflect the theme of the award;
- ? Three (3) letters of support;
- ? A biographical sketch of the nominee (a resume may be used); and
- ? Three other items of supportive material: This could include, but is not limited to, pertinent newspaper and/or magazine articles, primary works, published material, etc.

Application materials must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2001. Mail to:

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans
Department of Human Rights
Lucas State Office Bldg.
Des Moines, IA 50319

If you have any additional questions, please call Kim Cheeks
(515)-281-3274 or (800)-351-4659
Email: kim.cheeks@dhr.state.ia.us
Visit our website at www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa

**2002
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Service Project**

Individual Group (Please attach additional pages if necessary)

Name of Project		Contact Person:	
Group participants			
Address (if a group, please complete for all names) City, State, & Zip			
Telephone	E-mail address		
Brief description of service project:			

Date project started _____
 Please feel free to submit photographs, videos, or any promotional items involved with your project.
 NOTE: these items will not be returned.

Record the total number of hours dedicated to your community service project.

<u>Month 1</u>	<u>Month 2</u>	<u>Month 3</u>	<u>Month 4</u>
Week 1 _____	Week 1 _____	Week 1 _____	Week 1 _____
Week 2 _____	Week 2 _____	Week 2 _____	Week 2 _____
Week 3 _____	Week 3 _____	Week 3 _____	Week 3 _____
Week 4 _____	Week 4 _____	Week 4 _____	

Application materials must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2001. Mail to:

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans
 Department of Human Rights
 Lucas State Office Bldg.
 Des Moines, IA 50319

If you have any additional questions, please call Kim Cheeks
 (515)-281-3274 or (800)-351-4659
 Email: kim.cheeks@dhr.state.ia.us
 Visit our website at www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa

IOWA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Department of Human Rights
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

Staff:
Kim Cheeks, Program Planner

Phone: 515-281-7283 or 800-351-4659
Fax: 515-281-3858
Website: www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa
Email: dhr.icsaa@dhr.state.ia.us

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Across Black Iowa...

Cedar Rapids: The African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa unveiled their newest educational project on April 25, 2001, the African American Elected Officials in Iowa poster. A ceremony was held at the State Capitol in Des Moines, organized by Representative Wayne Ford, and since, the poster has been presented to school boards and city councils throughout the state. The poster features photographs of twenty-one current African American elected officials, including two Museum board members. To obtain a poster, stop in the temporary location of the museum at Westdale Mall in Cedar Rapids, contact your local African American elected official, or call the Museum at 1-877-526-1863.

Davenport: AFRICAN FORMS, will be featured at the Davenport Museum of Art Main Gallery **September 8 – November 11**. The first exhibit to examine handcrafted African objects, over a broad geographical and stylistic range while focusing on design aspects and aesthetics. The exhibition features a breathtaking display of over 400 handcrafted objects from the entire African continent.

Des Moines: In his new book "The American Dream," Dan Rather, CBS Evening News anchor, profiles 32 individuals and families from all around the country, their goals in life and the obstacles they overcame to achieve them. Two of the 32 small business owners include Melissa Gradischnig

Nelson and State Representative Wayne Ford who both live in Des Moines.

Middle Amana: Supremacist literature was passed out at the Iowa Renaissance Festival held in Middle Amana Park on the weekend of September 1, 2001. "The Roots of Civilization" that appeared in National Vanguard magazine of Hillsboro W. Virginia was the title of the fliers that were placed on an estimated 1000 car windshields parked at the festival.

Statewide: The average composite score of Iowa white students who took the ACT was 22, compared to the national average of 21. The students that were African-American scored an average composite of 17.8. There are statewide concerns that the disparity between the scores of black and white students in Iowa is the result of black students not taking advanced classes in high school and are being inadequately prepared to attend post-secondary schools.

Statewide: September 25 thru October 30, 2001, a series of 12 education hearings will be held throughout Iowa to collect vital information and understanding of the unique nature of Iowa's Black academic crisis. The hearings will focus on K-12 issues. For more information, call 515-284-5006 or visit the website: www.stateofblackiowa.com