

The Iowa African-American Journal

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October 1999

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ICSAA Kicks off Statewide Public Hearings

351-4659.

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans (ICSAA) is conducting seven regional public hearings throughout Iowa to gather information on issues affecting African-Americans in the state. Individuals and organizations with an interest in these issues are encouraged to present written or oral testimony at the public hearings. Testimony will influence the ICSAA 2000 Agenda, which includes proposals to the Governor and General Assembly as well as other constructive action.

All persons or organizations wishing to present information for consideration at a public hearing are welcome, as well as any community members who are interested in learning more about the ICSAA. Those wishing to discuss a particular issue should call or write for scheduling on the agenda at least seven days in advance of the hearing. This will guarantee that time will be reserved for all individuals or organizations wishing to present to the commission.

To make a request for time or for more information, contact: Kim Cheeks at the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines IA 50319 or call (515) 281-3274 or (800)



Public Hearings Schedule:
(all hearings run 7:00 – 9:00 PM)

Fort Dodge, October 11
Fort Dodge Senior High School

Dubuque, October 14
Best Western Midway Hotel

Sioux City, October 18
Western Hills AEA
Sequoyah Center

Cedar Rapids, October 19
St. Paul United Methodist Church

Waterloo, October 21
Waterloo Center for the Arts

Fort Madison, October 25
Second Baptist Church

Davenport, October 28
North High School

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Iowa CASA Fights Violence Against African-American Women

The Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (Iowa CASA) has recently formed a Statewide Advisory Committee for Women of Color. The committee was formed because many women of color throughout the state do not take advantage of victim services as much as white women do. In 1998 Sexual Assault Crisis centers throughout the state served 3,497 victims, of that number 319 were African-American.

Since much of the early activism against rape was focused on putting rapists into the hands of the judicial system, African-American women were understandably reluctant to become involved with a movement that may have led to further repressive assaults on their families and communities. Yet, black women were, and continue to be, in great need of the services provided by the violence against women movement, since they comprise

Continued on page 2



MARK YOUR CALENDAR **The Fifth Annual Iowa** **African-American** **Women's Conference**

March 17-19, 2000
Holiday Inn Convention Center
Waterloo, Iowa

Empowering African-American women with the tools needed to be fully prepared for the new millennium.

For more information call 800-351-4659 or check out the conference web site at www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa

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Iowa CASA, continued

a disproportionately large number of rape survivors.

The Iowa CASA is made up of 31 sexual assault crisis centers throughout the state. Those centers offer counseling, advocacy and other assistance to victims and survivors of sexual assault. Iowa CASA's office coordinates training on intervention and prevention of all types of sexual assault. Iowa CASA also coordinates a statewide information and referral service for survivors, their family and friends and for professionals assisting survivors.

The creation of a statewide committee that is diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and professional interests will benefit women of color who are not receiving an appropriate level of

service. Among other things, the committee will be making recommendations on whether services need to be offered differently to communities of color. Another goal is to educate young black women and teenagers about sexual abuse and violence against women, as this group comprises the highest percentages of sexual assault victims.

If you or anyone you know has an interest in learning more about the Iowa CASA's Statewide Advisory Committee for Women of Color, please contact Nansi Fant Tyson at Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (515) 244 - 7424 or Iowacasa@aol.com.

Letters to the Editor

It was truly a pleasure to meet all of the wonderful people at the African American Women's Conference in Sioux City ... You and the entire planning committee are to be commended for a job well-done. Your hospitality, accommodations and organization were gratefully appreciated.

Catherine R. Connor
Conference Presenter

I read with interest your remarks in the last issue of your journal regarding the Davenport Civil Rights office and the selection of our new director, Judith Morrell... I never offered

to apologize to Thomas Mann for a "botched" hiring process. On the contrary, I commend our Civil Rights Commission for the diligent way they pursued a new director. I simply told local NAACP representatives that I would apologize to Mann for any misconceptions he had about the process, much the same that I'd apologize to a local citizen who received poor service or misunderstood the service provided.

Phil Yerington
Davenport Mayor

Commissioner Profile: *Meet Theresa Clark-Kline, Fort Madison*



Theresa Clark-Kline
ICSAA Commissioner

Theresa Clark-Kline was born and raised in Fort Madison, Iowa. After graduating from Fort Madison High School she attended Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Education with an interest area in Special Education. Mrs. Clark-Kline is currently employed at Fort Madison High School as a Special Education Resource

Teacher where she is the only African-American teacher in the district. She is actively involved in the school district and is a member of the Human Equity Committee, Field Representative for Upward Bound, sponsor of the Student Equity Committee and the Senior Class.

Mrs. Clark-Kline is actively involved in her church and community. She is the Treasurer for Second Baptist Church and is a member of the American Association of University

Women. In her "free" time Mrs. Clark-Kline is pursuing her Masters in Educational Administration at Western Illinois University, enjoys reading, and spending time with her husband and family.

Mrs. Clark-Kline is committed to the struggle of African-Americans, especially African-American youth. She feels that it is our duty and obligation as adults to empower ourselves and youth to continue our fight against inequalities and injustices. In the state of Iowa we have an advantage over some states by having the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans to help legislate change, but this can only be done when we all work together across the state. It is her hope that with the strength and determination of the new administrator and staff, and the continued support of each and every Commissioner, the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans will be a catalyst for change across the state of Iowa for the new millennium.

Task Forces to Address Concerns of African-Americans

Governor Tom Vilsack and Lt. Governor Sally Pederson have announced the formation of three task forces focused on maintaining diversity in state government and its operations. The task forces will be made up of representatives from business, non-profit, and the public sectors. "This administration is committed to recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce that is representative of the community," Vilsack said. "We must focus on making sure that state government employees possess a diverse set of traits and skills that will enhance the quality of services provided to Iowa residents."

The task forces created by the Governor are the Task

Force for Equal Opportunity in Employment, the Task Force on Targeted Small Businesses, and the Task Force on Minorities in Iowa State Prisons. "These task forces will help us identify how we can help all Iowans have the opportunity to get a fair shot," Vilsack said. "No one should be stopped from being able to pursue the American dream because of the color of their skin or other unique characteristics."

For more information about the Governor's Task Forces, contact Madhu Chugh at 515-281-0176.

ICSAA Prepares to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony is a state celebration sponsored by the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans. Next year's event is scheduled for Monday, January 17, 2000 and will feature the presentation of the Third 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/her communities and in the State of Iowa. Past recipients of the award include

former Lt. Governor Joy Corning, Reverend Wilson Rideout, Mrs. Mary Louise Smith and Mrs. Beulah Webb.

To nominate an individual, group or organization for an MLK Lifetime Achievement Award, please contact the ICSAA at 800-351-4659. Nomination forms will be available on-line at www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa. All nominations must be postmarked by Friday, November 6, 1999.

**IOWA COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS**

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Across Black Iowa...

Ames... Iowa State University has forwarded its new policy on racial and ethnic harassment to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, and was approved by the President's Cabinet. The document's main recommendations were a racial harassment policy and racial harassment training for employees and students. The policy is available on the Human Resource Services Web site and from the President's Office. Training began last spring for students and employees and will continue through the summer and fall.

Burlington... Gregory L. Fields, a former manager of the Greenway apartment complex has filed a racial discrimination lawsuit against the Heartland Management Company and his former supervisor for firing him last year because he is black. In his position as residential manager, Mr. Fields alleges the regional manager subjected him to discrimination and harassment by withholding pay raises, holiday bonuses and commendations

Cedar Rapids... The Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission received a national Department of Housing and Urban Development award recognizing the commission's efforts to promote fair housing. The commission was one of the top 400 with best practices in dealing with housing issues. Louise Lorenz, Director, traveled to the HUD "Best Practices" convention in Kansas City, Kansas to receive the award.

Davenport... Jennifer Caudle, Davenport, was crowned Miss Iowa on May 29, 1999 in the Miss Iowa Scholarship Program there. Ms. Caudle is the second African-American to win that title, the first was Cheryl Brown in 1970. Ms. Caudle represented the state in the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, N.J. on September 18, 1999 and won special recognition and scholarship money in the talent competition. She is the daughter of Henry and Esther Caudle.

Waterloo... Martha M. Frazier, an African-American woman, has filed a lawsuit against Des Moines company, Principal Financial Group, Inc. alleging it turned down her application for employment at its Waterloo office because of her race, color and national origin. The suit filed in federal court is based on her application made in November 1995. The suit alleges that the company told her that she was overqualified and they were not hiring people with four-year college degrees. It alleges the company did hire people with such degrees for the positions which she applied. Ms. Frazier charges that the company's Waterloo office hired between 100 and 150 people since she applied and only two are African-American.