



**TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Tennessee Human Rights Commission Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



The Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC) will be honoring 10 local human rights and civil rights advocates at the Tennessee State Museum on February 28, 2013, from 6-7:30 p.m. as part of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year celebration.

Executive Director Beverly Watts said, “We gather in Nashville to continue our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. In addition to sharing our history, we acknowledge some of the individuals in the Middle Tennessee area who have worked tirelessly to advance human and civil rights.”

Attendees will also view a replica of the Emancipation Proclamation and the original 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment on display at the museum. This event has sold out; however, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will continue with events across the state and culminate with an Anniversary Luncheon on October 4, 2013, in Nashville.

The honorees are:

**George Barrett, Esq.** - A dedicated civil rights attorney, Barrett began his career during the late 1950s and early 1960s when the Civil Rights Movement was at its height in Nashville. Barrett built a busy law practice representing unions and many civil rights, discrimination and class-action plaintiffs. He was the original counsel in *Geier, v. Ellington*, the first case to challenge the public higher education system in a state, a model for

desegregation in public education. Mr. Barrett has served on many Government committees and commissions to better the lives of all citizens. He has served on the Governor's Commission on Human Relations (1964-1966), was the President of the Tennessee Council on Human Relations (1960-1961), the Secretary of the Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1960-1966) and served on the Governor's Task Force on Workman's Compensation for the State of Tennessee (1973-1974). He is the founding partner of the law firm of Barrett Johnston, LLC, currently appealing the constitutionality of the current Voter ID law.

**Waverly Crenshaw, Esq.** - Mr. Crenshaw, partner at Waller, has made human rights education a priority for decades. His support of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission's Employment Law Seminar for more than ten years is just one example of his dedication to community and diversity education. While working with his clients and the legal community, Mr. Crenshaw makes diversity and non-discrimination education a priority. Additionally, Mr. Crenshaw has served the community to ensure human rights for all through a variety of activities: Board Member for Middle Tennessee Workforce Development Center and National Museum of African-American Music, member of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Equal and Fair Employment Opportunity, serves as member and legal counsel for 100 Black Men of Middle Tennessee and is a former board member of the Nashville Bar Pro Bono Board.

**Ms. Jane Eskind** - Ms. Eskind was a pioneer in Tennessee politics for women as the first woman in Tennessee to win statewide office and as a Democratic candidate for governor and U.S. Senate. She served as the first female Chair of the Tennessee Democratic Party in the 1990s and became the first woman to be elected to the Public Service Commission in 1980. She has also served on committees of the Anti-Defamation League, the International Women's Forum, a charter member of the Women Executives in State Government, chaired the Tennessee Commission on the Status of Women from 1978-1980, and has assisted many organizations through fundraising efforts such as the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on African American Church Studies and the League of Women Voters. With over five decades of leadership within state and national politics, Ms. Eskind has established diversity in the political arena.

**Sen. Thelma Harper** - Ms. Harper has made significant progress in establishing diversity in state politics as the first African American female elected to the Tennessee State Senate in 1991. For more than 20 years, she has been a prominent and highly influential figure in the civic lives of many, serving her constituents of the 19th Senatorial District in many capacities including chairing the Tennessee Black Caucus. Prior to election to the Senate, she also served as a Metro Nashville Councilwoman. She has served the community through countless activities and memberships including Women in

Government, YWCA Advisory Committee for Links, delegate to the Democratic National Convention (1980, 1984, 1988, 1992), and as Vice Chair of the Tennessee Black Healthcare Commission.

**Dr. Charles Kimbrough** - Dr. Kimbrough is a pioneer in establishing the NAACP throughout Tennessee. Beyond his service to the NAACP, Dr. Kimbrough has demonstrated the effects of dedication and perseverance through his own personal accomplishments. He served in the Korean War, earning a Purple Heart, Medical Combat Award and Bronze Star in 1950, and spent seven years in the military and traveled extensively. He was one of the first African Americans to hold a license to practice veterinary medicine in Tennessee. As a civil rights activist, he established and organized NAACP chapters in Sparta, Illinois (Randolph County Branch), Dugoin, Illinois (Perry County Branch), Pulaski, TN (Giles County Branch) and Waverly, TN (Waverly Branch). From 1973 – 1980, he was the President of the Nashville NAACP Branch, where he saw a surge in chapter membership, addressing civil rights issues within the local African American community. As a minister, Dr. Kimbrough has also touched thousands of lives.

**Ms. Rosetta Miller-Perry** – Ms. Miller-Perry was directly involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. After serving in the U.S. Navy, she was one of the first African-American students to graduate from Memphis State University. After attending law school at Howard University in 1960, she began working with the U.S. Civil Rights Commission during the height of the movement in Memphis. In 1975, she became the Nashville Area Director for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission until her retirement in 1990. Following her government service, Ms. Miller-Perry founded Perry & Perry Associates, publishing *Contemporaria* magazine and the *Tennessee Tribune* to focus on Nashville's diverse community issues. She also established the Greater Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce in 1998. Using her publications as a platform, Ms. Miller-Perry has been able to educate and inform the black community of Nashville for over 20 years.

**Ms. Tommie Morton Young** – Ms. Morton-Young has influenced the progress of human rights through her career as an educator, through activism and her preservation of African American genealogy. She attended Nashville public schools and earned her undergraduate degree cum laude from Tennessee State University. In 1955, she became the first African American to graduate from Vanderbilt Peabody College for Teachers where she earned her Master of Arts in library science. She later earned her Ph. D. from Duke University. She served the government for many years with the U.S. Navy Library and the Library of Congress. While teaching at North Carolina A&T, she developed her extensive work in genealogy, which she went on to organize the North Carolina Afro-American Genealogical & Historical Society and the Tennessee African American Genealogical & Historical Society. She has advocated for women and minorities as a community activist and as a former

chairperson of the North Carolina Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (from whom she received the Distinguished Service Award). Currently, Ms. Morton-Young owns and operates Authentic Tours: Teaching through Tourism.

**Nashville for All of Us** - An unprecedented citywide coalition, Nashville for All of Us is a coalition of individuals and organizations opposed to the English charter change proposed in Nashville in 2009. This coalition is a true testament to the power of grassroots organizations and partnerships making a profound difference in the future of human rights. The English Only Charter Amendment would have made English the official language of the Metropolitan Nashville Government and would deny any right to services in any other languages. The coalition of over 80 organizations and business and nearly 400 individuals, worked tirelessly to combat this divisive proposed amendment. January 22, 2009, Nashville for All of Us saw their efforts succeed when the legislation was defeated in a margin of 57-43%.

**Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition** - The Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) is a statewide immigrant and refugee-led collaboration whose mission is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout Tennessee to develop a unified voice, defend their rights, and create an atmosphere in which they are recognized as positive contributors to the state. TIRRC's accomplishments include substantially contributing to the "English-only" referendum; engaging thousands of new American voters (5,000 new voters registered); creating the Welcoming Tennessee Initiative to generate positive dialogue related to immigration; advocating for a bill to increase statewide funding for English learner language programs; and increasing access to drivers licenses by working to increase number of language translations available for the written test.

**YWCA – Middle Tennessee** – The YWCA of Nashville & Middle Tennessee is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. The YWCA has been serving women and girls for more than 100 years in Nashville. Through its many programs, the YWCA has worked to break down barriers to human rights, barriers that perpetuate racism, violence and hopelessness. Specifically, the YWCA of Middle Tennessee's Racial Justice initiative has been encouraging equality through conversation and community programs for many years. Through activities like the Stand Against Racism, Community Conversations on Race and many other initiatives, the YWCA creates community dialogue. Alongside these activities, programs like Girls, Inc., anti-racism workshops and many others continue the YWCA's efforts for a more just society.

The THRC safeguards individuals from discrimination through enforcement and education. An independent state agency, the Commission is responsible for enforcing the Tennessee Human Rights Act and the Tennessee Disability Act which prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, color,

national origin, religion, sex, disability, age (40 and over in employment), familial status (housing only) and retaliation in employment, housing and public accommodations. To file a complaint of discrimination or to receive additional information, please call 1-800-251-3589 or visit [www.tn.gov/humanrights](http://www.tn.gov/humanrights).

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