

Kentucky Commission On Human Rights

Working to eradicate discrimination

Immigrant Network Summit

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights (KCHR) held its second annual Kentucky Hispanic and Immigrant Networking Summit on Sept. 29, at the UK Cooperative Extension Office in Shelbyville, Ky. About 145 people attended. (See photo below.)

The summit kicked off a statewide celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 — October 15).

The commission organized this unique event to increase communication and collaboration between the federal, state, and local governments with Kentucky's immigrant communities.

Partnering government institutions had the opportunity to network with Hispanic educators and entrepreneurs, directors of Kentucky Latino centers and refugee agencies, and members of the Hispanic media from across the commonwealth.

Speakers like Ron Crouch from the Kentucky State Data Center, Edgardo Mansilla from the Americana Community Center, and Steve Bogus from the Catholic Charities emphasized the current needs



and potential of the growing immigrant population.

In addition to the day's speaker panels, representatives such as Troy Body from the Governor's Office of Minority Empowerment, Marcia Hall-Craig from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Deborah Knight from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Brenda Walker from the Kentucky Housing Corporation were able to visit one-on-one with immigrant community contacts that have been built over half a decade through KCHR's intensive outreach efforts. •



42nd Great Black Kentuckian is retired judge

As a black student, he wasn't allowed to attend law school in his home state in the 1940s, but when he later returned with law degree in-hand, he helped win a case that integrated the University of Kentucky Law School. About his life, Benjamin Shobe says, "I was always willing to try, I was never going to back down, I was willing to take the challenge, win, lose or draw."

The retired circuit judge and former civil rights attorney is now the 42nd member of the Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians, the educational poster and bookmark series produced by the Kentucky

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Commission on Human Rights (KCHR) and used by schools and libraries all over the state.

The poster of Judge Shobe was unveiled

at a public ceremony on Nov. 3, at the University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law in Louisville, Ky. About 100 people came to watch the judge help unveil his poster and talk about his experiences.

The son of educators, Shobe was born in Bowling Green, Ky., on Oct. 2, 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from Kentucky State College in 1941, and his law degree from the University of Michigan Law School in 1946.

He had wanted to attend the University of Kentucky or University of Louisville Law schools, but African Americans were not allowed to attend graduate or professional schools in Kentucky at that time.

Instead, the state of Kentucky paid Shobe's tuition to the University of Michigan under the Anderson-Mayer Bill. This law paid tuition for black students at out-of-state graduate schools since they were not permitted to attend with their white counterparts inside the state.

In 1946, Shobe began his career in Kentucky and became an accomplished trial attorney. In 1949, he, along with Thurgood Marshall (who later became the U.S. Supreme Court Justice), James

Nabritt, and James Crumlin, represented Lyman T. Johnson in a well-known case involving the University of Kentucky. The men triumphed, and the university integrated, admitting black students into its graduate and professional schools.

On Jan. 6, 1953, Shobe became the first African American since Reconstruction to serve on the Circuit Court in Kentucky. He was appointed to the Criminal Division of the court, which had three divisions at that time, also including the Common Law and Equity divisions. Judge Frank Ropke, presiding judge over the Criminal Division, appointed Shobe.

In 1976, Shobe was appointed to the 15th Division of the Jefferson Circuit Court where he served until his retirement in 1992. For two of those years, he was the first ever black chief judge of the Jefferson Circuit Court with its 16 divisions.

Currently Judge Shobe is an Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist with the Retired Judges and Associates.

Free posters and bookmarks are available to everyone. Call us at 1.800.292.5566. •

Student education recognized

For the past year, the KCHR has been holding The Color of Justice program for young minority students from many walks of life who want to be lawyers and judges one day, and some who fear the dream is beyond their grasps.

On October 5, our agency was recognized for this effort by the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) when the KCHR executive director became the 2006 recipient of the organization's Mattie Belle Davis Award.

Linda Strite Murnane received the award at the NAWJ 28th annual conference, which was held in Las Vegas, Nev. Each year, the association presents the award to a member for demonstrating growing leadership in the organization.

Executive Director Murnane implemented the program, which was created by the NAWJ, shortly after her arrival to the KCHR in February 2005. The NAWJ helps fund with grants our multi-project Color of Justice program.

KCHR presents the program to middle and high school students of all minorities, young people who are interested in becoming lawyers and judges, and some students who have been discovered by Color of Justice faculty to believe such careers might not be possible for them.

The one day event brings in minority Kentucky lawyers, judges, law professors and law students to talk to the Color of Justice students and to mentor them one-on-one and in small groups, at no charge. The professionals inspire the young people, offer them hope, and provide them with attainable goals.

Most recently, the program was held on Sept. 30 at the Chase Law School of Northern Kentucky University. This was the third Color of Justice presentation in Kentucky. Our first was held in October 2005 at the University of Louisville and the second was held in April 2006 at the University of Kentucky.

The NAWJ launched the Color of Justice in St. Louis Mo., in August 2001. Since that time NAWJ members have held Color of Justice programs across the U.S.

On Nov. 13, with the Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) College of Justice and Safety in the lead, KCHR assisted in bringing a newly-invented version of the program. It was tailored by the EKU College of Justice and Safety Dean, Allen Ault, his faculty, and the KCHR to meet the needs of the university.

The Color of Justice and Safety Day drew 150 regional high school students interested

in careers in criminal justice and law enforcement, corrections and juvenile justice, fire and safety, emergency medical care, and assets protection and security.

Mattie Belle Edwards Davis was a founding member of the NAWJ. She was one of the few senior women judges in 1979, when the association began. In 1987, she was recognized by the Fellows of the American Bar Association as the first woman to reach 50 years of membership in the American Bar Association. •

Paris & Louisville Town Forums

We conducted a public forum on Oct. 2 in Paris to discuss concerns about racial incidents involving an African American police officer and members of the Latino community who felt they were being discriminated against.

KCHR Executive Director Linda Strite Murnane moderated and Field Supervisor Juan Peña translated the program, which was attended by about 30 residents. Paris Mayor Donald Kiser, Paris City Commissioner Herman Hutsell and Clarence Ayers, head of the Paris/Bourbon County NAACP, were among those who participated in the meeting.

The meeting was called after an African American police officer, Myron Thomas, complained that he had received racist material at work. A number of Latinos had also complained that police were treating them unfairly. Mayor Kiser and members of the police department said the city would strive to treat all citizens fairly.

The 12th Louisville Town Forum was held on Nov. 17, at the Louisville Free Public Library, downtown branch. About 40 people attended. The topic of discussion was, "1966-2006, 40 Years after the Kentucky Civil Rights Act, Where Do We Go from Here?"

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Panelists included Cass Irvin, a disabilities rights advocate; state Sen. Gerald Neal, D-Louisville; Isela Arras of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association; Attica Scott of Kentucky Jobs with Justice; Omar Ayyash of the Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Office for International Affairs; Ron Russell, an immigration attorney in Louisville; and Professor James C. Klotter of the history department at Georgetown College. •

Local Commission News

Charles D. King was elected as the new chair of the *Covington Human Rights Commission* during its November meeting. Mr. King, a longtime member of the Covington commission, replaces Rev. Donald Smith, who resigned in October. Rev. Smith, an original member of the Covington commission, was honored for his humanitarian work in November by the Covington City Commission.

The *Maysville Human Rights Commission* named Jack Hussey as the new chair, and Dorothy Maddox is serving as vice-chair. The Maysville Commission was re-appointed this summer under the mayor and city commission and has referred several cases to the Kentucky Human Rights Commission.

The *Richmond Human Rights Commission*, along with the African/African American Program at Eastern Kentucky University, Hispanic Outreach and the Madison County Boys and Girls Club, sponsored a youth empowerment program on Sept. 26. The program encouraged youth to go to college and fulfill their ambitions. Elder John Settles, Sandra Anez Powell and Karen McClain Wright of the Richmond Human commission have been leading efforts to give youth guidance in the community.

The *Bowling Green Human Rights Commission* conducted a forum on Oct. 21 to improve relationships between youth in the community and police. The KCHR assisted in the program, which was organized by Linda McCray, the executive director of the Bowling Green commission, the Bowling Green/Warren County NAACP and other groups. The Bowling Green Human Rights Commission this year celebrates its 40th anniversary. •

Murnane at Hague until February

KCHR Executive Director Linda Strite Murnane has been temporarily assigned by the United Nations (UN) to serve as the senior legal officer for Chamber III of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Retired Colonel Murnane will be located at The Hague, The Netherlands for three months and will be in a leave status from the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights while performing her duties for the UN. She departed in November.

A retired U.S. Air Force chief circuit judge and 30-year veteran, she will be responsible during her time in Europe for the legal matters under consideration by Chamber III in charge of trying genocide, crimes against humanity, and other war crimes.

Among the trials she will be involved with are those of the codefendants of Slobodan Milosevic, the toppled Serb leader whom the UN charged with genocide and crimes against humanity and who died while on trial earlier this year at The Hague.

Day-to-day operations at the KCHR have not changed. Executive Director Murnane set in place communications systems in order to continue her work with the agency during her temporary absence. •

Commission Rulings

KCHR is the state government agency that enforces The Kentucky Civil Rights Act and the policies of federal civil rights laws. The board meets monthly, with the exception of November, to hear and rule on discrimination complaints. In September and October, it ruled to approve one conciliation agreement, dismiss 76 complaints, which after investigation or reconsideration, resulted in findings of no probable cause, accept seven complaint withdrawals with private settlement terms and 15 complaint withdrawals without settlement and with a right to sue. The following conciliation agreement was reached through KCHR negotiations between the complainant and respondent in consideration for the full and complete resolution of claims of alleged discrimination:

Lexington Fair Housing Council v. Newspaper Holdings Inc. d/b/a The Morehead News, in Morehead: The complaint alleged discrimination based on familial status in housing, a violation of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act (KRS 344.360) and the U.S. Fair Housing Act. The complainant alleged the newspaper published advertisements that were discriminatory. The newspaper denied all allegations of violations of the law and asserted the advertisements were accidentally placed by a new staff person. The respondent further asserted the ads did not forbid parents with children or pregnant women from applying for housing, but stated a preference. The parties agreed to conciliate. The respondent agreed to compensate the complainant in the amount of \$2,000, undergo Fair Housing training, undergo commission monitoring for three years, and provide the commission advertising space to promote Fair Housing rights to the public for one year. •

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