

# Commission on Human Rights

## **KY Human Rights Commission today inducts 23 into the KY Civil Rights Hall of Fame**

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(October 16 2014, Bowling Green, Ky.) - The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights today at the Western Kentucky University Carroll-Knicely Center in Bowling Green, Ky., inducted 23 new members to the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame at the 2014 inductions ceremony and celebration.

Following is a list of the new inductees in alphabetical order (inductee profiles follow the list):

- Akins, Roszalyn
- Anderson, Alan B.
- Aubespin, Mervin
- Cleveland, Roger
- Cofield, William
- Coleman, Samuel, Sr.
- Davis, Merlene
- Grundy, Chester
- Hamilton, Ed
- Karem, Edmund P.
- Lanier, Shelby, Jr.
- McCray, Linda
- McMurry, William F.
- Miller-Cooper, Carolyn
- Newman, V. Ann
- Porter, Woodford, Sr.
- Saltsman, Scottie
- Stanley, Frank L., Jr.
- Sweeney, Pruitt Owsley
- Watkins, Gloria Jean (bell hooks)

- West, Judy Moberly
  - Williams, Abraham
  - Wilson, Harrison Benjamin, Jr.
1. Roszalyn Akins, Lexington, (1954-), Lexington, KY – She is a founder of the Black Males Working (BMW) Academy in Lexington, which encourages youth to study and improve their reading, writing and communication skills. The students attend programs on Saturdays and spend time with teachers, counselors and advisers. Akins developed the program in 2005 after learning that African American youth at Leestown Middle School in Lexington had the lowest performances on state-required CATS test scores while also having a high number of office visits. She and her husband, Rev. C.B. Akins of the First Baptist Church of Bracktown, had already been working with Leestown Middle School through the African American Coalition “Adopt a School” program when she, Dr. Roger Cleveland and others developed a program to give the students more structure, discipline, encouragement and role models. The students are taken on field trips and college tours and receive scholarships after graduating from high school. Akins has served as a consultant for schools and businesses throughout Kentucky and the Midwest due to her innovative techniques in teaching and counseling.
  2. Alan B. Anderson (1934-) Bowling Green, KY – A professor of social ethics and racial justice at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Dr. Anderson has spent a lifetime working in, documenting and teaching civil and human rights. He worked directly with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on projects to desegregate Albany, Ga., during the early 1960s and fasted for six days in jail to protest segregation and discrimination in the Georgia town. Later, Anderson founded the Interracial Council of Methodists in Chicago and also joined the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations, where he helped arrange for King’s 1965 and 1966 campaigns to desegregate housing in Chicago, Illinois. He later wrote a book, “Confronting the Color Line, The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago,” which was nominated for a 1988 Pulitzer Prize. He has been a leader in Bowling Green and Warren County on fair housing and equal opportunity in employment. He has been a sought-after speaker on civil and human rights.
  3. Mervin Aubespain, (1937-) Louisville, KY - He is a retired Associate Editor of Development for the Louisville Courier-Journal newspaper. Aubespain spent 35 ground-breaking years at Kentucky’s largest daily newspaper as one of the first African American journalists to cover the Civil Rights movement in the Commonwealth during the 1960s. He graduated from Tuskegee University in Alabama in 1958. He participated in demonstrations to open restaurants, hotels and stores in Louisville and throughout the south during the early 1960s. He worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and participated in the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965 that led to passage of the Voting Rights Act. Aubespain joined the Courier-Journal in 1967 as a news artist and was assigned to cover the civil unrest in the city. He later joined the Minority Journalism Program at Columbia University in New York in 1971. Aubespain became a leader and president of the National Association of Black Journalists, which fought to increase the number of minorities in newsrooms across the country. He led the organization from 300 members to more than a 1,000 and helped establish the association’s national office in Washington, D.C. He led journalists in 1985 on a report on drought in West Africa and has been a consultant on United Nations Development Programs. He has also served as a member of the United Nations Task Force on AIDS in Africa. In 1997, he was part of an international group of journalists that traveled to Guatemala at the end of a 36-year civil war. Aubespain has received many awards for his work in journalism and civil and human rights.
  4. Roger C. Cleveland, (1963- ), Lexington, KY – Dr. Cleveland is an associate professor of Education at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond. He is a dynamic national leader in diversity, sensitivity and cultural awareness who has spoken on racial and social justice from Alaska to Mississippi. He received his bachelor’s degree from Morehead State University, his master’s degree from Union College and his doctorate from the University of Cincinnati. He has helped many school districts close their educational gaps for minority students by working with the students, their parents and educators from superintendents to teachers. His chief instruction to those who think minority students can’t achieve their

goals: "We need to think of our young people as prospects and not suspects." He is associate director of the BMW Academy at First Baptist Church of Bracktown. The program helps African American males prepare for college and careers through classwork, encouragement, supervision and field trips. Cleveland has a consulting business, Millennium Learning Concepts, and has been named by Gov. Steve Beshear to the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council. He received the 2013 P.G. Peoples Equity and Excellence Achievement Award from the Fayette County Equity Council for his work in improving Lexington Schools. From training leaders in college, high schools and elementary schools, to working with civil rights organizations and civic officials, He has developed new theories on equality by emphasizing past formulas for success: respect for each person, hard work and dedication by the individual and commitment by society for just allocation of resources.

5. William E. Cofield Sr., (1939- ), Frankfort, KY - Cofield was president of the Kentucky NAACP for 28 years before retiring from the position in 2013. He has dedicated his life to equal rights in housing, employment and public accommodations on national, state and local levels as a lifetime member of the NAACP. He has been a member of the National NAACP Board of Directors since 1986. As a member of the National Board, he helped promote dynamic young leaders like former National NAACP President Benjamin Jealous, who increased the organization's youth membership. During his tenure, the Kentucky NAACP expanded its chapters, registered more youth members, developed scholarship programs and increased outreach to other minority groups. He has served as chair of the Frankfort-Franklin County NAACP for many years and in 1991 became the first African American appointed to the Frankfort-Franklin County Board of Education. He was president of the National Caucus of Black School Board Members in 2004. He has established voter registration drives in Kentucky, supports initiatives to give felons the right to vote and welcomed dozens of Latino leaders to the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights' Hispanic Summit in 2005. He has worked with branch leaders to establish food pantries and encourage youth to become doctors and lawyers. The local branches hold education forums and events honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders. He is a longtime educator at Kentucky State University. He has served as advisor for the NAACP Youth Chapter at Kentucky State University and has received many awards during his long civil rights career, including recognition from former Kentucky Gov. Wallace Wilkinson. He has received NAACP awards named for former Executive Director Benjamin Hooks.

6. Samuel R. Coleman Sr. (1929 – 2002), Middlesboro, KY - He was a leader and mentor in his community. He helped organize the minority veteran community by forming the "Middlesboro Appalachian Region Black Veteran Association." The organization was the first branch of the National Association of Black Veterans in Kentucky. The organization produced projects and outreach efforts to address physical, spiritual, educational, social, judicial and economic issues in Eastern Kentucky. He was instrumental in organizing and becoming president of the Christian Community Club organization in Middlesboro. The purpose of the club was to make the community safer, to improve community relations, to lend a hand to neighbors, and to reach out to the youth of the community. He was a strong advocate of education and the right of young people to receive a quality education, and he was a dedicated mentor to many students in his community. He would often use the saying "To teach is to touch a life, forever." He took an active role in addressing injustices within the school system. Not only did he see that Black History Month was always celebrated, but he also led in the successful efforts to get the Middlesboro Independent School System to recognize the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. Late in his life, when many would just rest on their accomplishments, he took on the challenge of the local black cemetery that was in great disrepair.

7. Merlene Davis, Lexington, KY – She has spent more than 25 years as a trailblazing journalist and columnist at the Lexington Herald-Leader. She is among the few female African American columnists at a major daily newspaper in the U.S. She uses her column to fight for the rights of the homeless, immigrants, domestic violence victims, people who are gay, African American, and others who have faced discrimination. She attended segregated schools in Kentucky as a child and remembers being treated poorly because she is black. She didn't allow her mistreatment to make her bitter. Instead, she became a champion of causes ranging from education to fair housing to employment. She believes that former felons should get a second chance at being citizens by having the right to vote. She has written columns about black men who had been bullied as youth who later grew up to become motivational speakers. She has written about programs that have helped struggling young mothers go back to school and complete their education. She has written about the barriers that people with disabilities have to overcome, and

she has implored her neighbors to welcome everyone, regardless of their race, color, gender, national origin or sexual orientation. She is a 1982 graduate of the Summer Program for Minority Journalists at the University of California at Berkeley. That program was sponsored by the Robert Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, a prestigious organization that brought in reporters and editors from the New York Times, Washington Post and other leading newspapers to work with her and 15 other aspiring journalists. She became the leader of her 1982 class at Berkeley and returned to Kentucky with more skills and determination.

8. Chester Grundy, (1947- ), Lexington, KY – He is a civil rights leader, college administrator, educator, jazz enthusiast and arts patron and has used his love of the humanities to advance society. Grundy began a 40-year affiliation with the University of Kentucky during the 1960s, when he became a leader of the Black Student Union and lobbied college leaders for more Black History courses, more diversity on staff and administration, and a welcome atmosphere for all students of color. He later broke new barriers at UK by becoming the director of the office of Minority Affairs (Multicultural Affairs) and establishing the Martin Luther King Cultural Center, where students could hear entertainers, writers, actors and actresses and singers speak about their lives. Such luminaries as Muhammad Ali, Coretta Scott King, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Maya Angelou, Spike Lee, Alex Haley, Nikki Giovanni, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and the Boys Choir of Harlem have appeared at UK through Grundy’s auspices.

9. Ed Hamilton, (1947-), Louisville, KY - Hamilton is a renowned sculptor whose work with African American themes have found homes across America - from the Joe Louis statue in Detroit, Mich., to the Booker T. Washington statue at Hampton University in Virginia, to the York statue in Louisville to his acclaimed artwork in Washington D.C., which honors the African American Civil War soldiers depicted in the Oscar-winning movie, “Glory.” Hamilton has touched the hearts and souls of millions who view his work. Indeed, during the 1930s and into the 1940s, Joe Louis held the heavyweight title in boxing for longer than any man and was an inspiration to Americans, black and white alike. York was the African American slave from Louisville who accompanied Lewis and Clark in their journey across America in 1804; Booker T. Washington was the famous educator and founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The black soldiers from “Glory,” were founded in Massachusetts and became known for their bravery during the Civil War. That Hamilton was chosen to create these master works is a testament to his skill, intelligence, persistence and dedication.

10. Edmond P. “Pete” Karem, (1941- ) Louisville, KY - Karem is a retired judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, where he served in 1995, and of the Jefferson Circuit Court, where he served from 1984-1993. He served nine years – seven as chair – on the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights from the 1970s to the early 1980s. A 1968 graduate of the University of Louisville Law School, he is known for donating countless hours to many organizations and agencies, including the Kentucky Youth Advocates, the Louisville Bar Association, where he served as president in 1980, the Spalding University Board of Overseers. He was chief judge of the Jefferson Circuit Court and served at the Center for Educational Leadership. He began his career as a teacher at Bishop David High School in Louisville and has retained his mentorship of youth as a hearing officer for the Kentucky High School Athletic Association as an appeals hearing officer on eligibility.

11. Shelby Lanier Jr., (1936- ) Louisville, KY - For former Detective Shelby Lanier Jr. of the Louisville Metro Police Department, “To serve and protect” wasn’t a slogan, but a way of life, a creed that he used to improve the lives of his family, friends and the public. As a police officer, he helped solve murders and robberies. He walked the beat and rode motorcycles. During his off-hours he worked to advance civil rights by building relationships between police and the community and between officers and their command. He dedicated his life to equality and counseled inmates because he believed they deserved a second chance. Lanier joined Louisville Police in 1961 and organized the Black Police Officers Organization 10 years later, serving as its first president. In 1972, he became a co-founder of the National Black Police Association and became chairman of that organization in 1990. He believed that his department must treat blacks within its ranks fairly before it could seek trust from the community. As a result, he filed a lawsuit against the Louisville police department in 1974 that resulted in a \$3.5 million settlement for 98 African Americans who were denied jobs or promotions. He won concessions that led to officers being able to wear their hair naturally. He was a founder of the Metro Junior Football League to give youth positive role models and helped organize the Louisville Black Transit Workers. He testified before the

Louisville Board of Aldermen about Ku Klux Klan activity and before a U.S. Senate committee on school desegregation.

12. Linda McCray, (1954- ), Bowling Green, KY - McCray, the former long-time executive director of the Bowling Green Human Rights Commission, has used her life as a model for non-violent social change. She was executive director of the Bowling Green Human Rights Commission from August 2001 through September 2012. During that time, she took the agency from a small rented space with one staff member to its own building with numerous staff members who fight for fair housing, employment, public accommodations and financial transactions. In 1999, she became a charter member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Planning Committee, which honors the slain civil rights leader every year with forums and educational programs. She began her career as a volunteer at the Bowling Green Human Rights Commission in 1997. She became a staff member in 1999 and was selected two years later to head the agency. She has organized counter-demonstrations against Ku Klux Klan members who marched through Bowling Green. She has helped girls through Bowling Green Housing Authority Girls Empowerment Program and the Girls Club. She has organized candidate forums to give the public information on people running for local government. She has led voter registration drives. She has filed many legal actions against employers and building owners who denied people jobs or housing because of race, color, gender, disability, religion, national origin or family status. She worked with the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights to organize a forum for police and young men to build bridges instead of barriers. She has organized housing fairs to help low-income people buy homes.

13. William F. McMurry, (1955- ) Louisville, KY - McMurry is a Louisville attorney who has earned international recognition because of his landmark case against the Catholic Church that resulted in a \$25.7 million settlement for 243 people who were sexually abused by priests. He won a \$2.5 million judgment against the Imperial Klan of America for severely beating a man because of his color. He won a \$125,000 award for a low-income woman who sued a hospital that released information on her medical status. He received a \$1,500 ruling for a family whose young son was jailed after they missed a payment for a couch. McMurry in 2008 worked with the Southern Poverty Law Center to win a case against the Imperial Klan of America. Some Klan members had beaten Jordan Gruver, then 16, who was Native American and Panamanian, at the Meade County Fair in Kentucky. Dozens of police officers had to secure the safety of Southern Poverty Law Center officials and McMurry during the trial against the Klan.

14. Carolyn Miller-Cooper, (1965- ) Louisville, KY - Miller-Cooper has been executive director of the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission since 2008. She was assistant director at the agency for 10 years before being elevated to the top spot. She has worked for the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children and the Department of Public Advocacy. She earned her undergraduate degree from Hunter College of New York and law degrees from the University of Kentucky Law School and McGeorge School of Law. Besides investigating local cases of discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations, she has overseen the publication of groundbreaking reports such as "Making Louisville Home for Us All: A 20-year Action Plan for Fair Housing," which documents past discrimination and includes remedies to prevent future issues. She hosts annual Race Relations Conference each year in Louisville and brings stakeholders to the table for peace and understanding. She has worked with Jefferson County Public Schools on educational issues and encouraged parents to participate in the Mayor's Initiative for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods. She established Cross Cultural Connections to help people understand their common humanity. In particular, she has helped African Americans and Latinos work together on issues such as housing, employment, public accommodations, and education through mentoring programs.

15. V. Ann Newman, (1957- ) Ashland, KY - Newman served as a board member of the Kentucky Human Rights Commission from 2007-2013. She reviewed of hundreds cases involving discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and financial transactions. She represented the 7<sup>th</sup> Supreme Court District on the commission, which included her home areas of Ashland and Boyd County in Northeastern Kentucky. For more than six years, she drove hundreds of miles from Ashland to Louisville to hear human rights cases. During this time, she was president of the Boyd and Greenup County NAACP, where she organized the annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. She served as secretary of the Kentucky State NAACP. She raised scholarship money for minority students, served on an Ashland planning committee that charted the growth of the city, worked for the Ashland Inc. Credit Union, and ran her own diversity-training company, Newman and Associates. She volunteered to help local colleges and has been a longtime member of the Ashland Human Rights Commission. In 2003, she worked with Ashland Human

Rights Chair Carol Jackson to organize a community event at the Paramount Theater in Ashland to counteract an appearance by followers of the late Rev. Fred Phelps' of Topeka, Kansas, who had come to town to protest the Gay-Straight Student Alliance at Boyd County High School. Not only did the Ashland Human Rights Commission event draw 500 people to blunt the protest, but the local human rights commission also provided meeting space for the Gay-Straight Student Alliance while their school decided its future.

16. Woodford R. Porter Sr., (1918-2008), Louisville, KY - In 1958, Porter became the first African American elected to the Louisville Board of Education and later became chair of the board and president of the University of Louisville Board of Trustees, where he served for 23 years. He was the owner of A.D. Porter and Sons Funeral Home in Louisville and a member of the YMCA Metropolitan Board and was a veteran of World War II. He is credited with leading the University of Louisville to national recognition as a research university that welcomes students from around the world. He stressed the importance of education from kindergarten through high school through college. The College of Education and Human Development Building at U of L was named in honor of Porter and his wife, Harriett Porter.

17. Scottie Wayne Saltsman, (1968-2013), Richmond, KY - Saltsman, a native of Glasgow, Ky., pushed for an anti-discrimination ordinance that would have granted civil rights protections in housing, employment and public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity as additions to other existing protected classes. He was a supervisor at the Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training and was a law enforcement instructor at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond. He worked for an end to discrimination against people who are gay, lesbian and transgender in Kentucky. He joined the Richmond Human Rights Commission in approximately 2003 to champion people's civil rights. He was a former police officer at EKV, and received a bachelor's degree in Police Studies and a master's degree in Public Administration. He became secretary of the Richmond Human Commission and played key roles in many of the group's successes, from improved police-community relations to annual cultural celebrations. He was an officer of the Native American Intertribal Alliance and Richmond Pow-Wow Association where he pushed for full recognition and appreciation of Indians in Kentucky.

18. Frank L. Stanley Jr., (1937-2007), Louisville, KY - The landmark Kentucky Civil Rights Act may not have passed in 1966, making Kentucky the first state in the south to have such a state law, without the organization and leadership of Frank L. Stanley Jr., the former publisher of the Louisville Defender. Georgia Davis Powers, the first African American woman to serve in the Kentucky Senate, recalled that Stanley was key in organizing the historic 1964 March on Frankfort that drew 10,000 demonstrators who pushed for an end to segregation. Stanley brought together businesses, social organizations, and educational, labor and political leaders to form the Allied Organization for Civil Rights to lobby the governor and the General Assembly for civil rights. He supported the 1963 March on Washington by urging many Kentuckians to take railroad transportation to Washington D.C. for the national push for civil rights. After participating in the 1963 Washington March, Stanley believed that the historic program could be duplicated in Kentucky – and be just as successful in protecting minority rights in housing, employment and public accommodations.

19. Pruitt Owsley Sweeney, (1895-1960), Louisville, KY - Sweeney, a dentist and businessman, was the son of sharecroppers in Boyle and Fayette Counties in Kentucky and rose to become one of the 100 richest African Americans of his time, according to Ebony Magazine. Dr. Sweeney leaves a legacy as a civil rights leader who waged a successful legal battle in 1952 to integrate public golf courses in Louisville. He was also a patriarch who inspired generations of his family to attend college and become doctors. He was president of the Louisville NAACP in 1937. He fought for equal pay for black and white teachers and became chairman of the Mammoth Life Insurance Co. and the Louisville Urban League. He also served on the WW II draft board in Louisville.

20. Gloria Jean Watkins (bell hooks), (1952-) Berea, KY - The author of 25 books, numerous magazine and newspaper articles on education, racism and feminism, Bell Hooks was born Gloria Jean Watkins, one of seven children in segregated Hopkinsville, KY. As she grew older, however, she attended integrated schools in Hopkinsville and did not feel accepted by her white teachers and classmates. She eventually enrolled at Stanford University, where she received her bachelor's degree in English. She earned her master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Dr. Hooks has taught and lectured at many colleges and universities across the country, including Yale University and Oberlin College. She has worked at Berea College since 2004, where she

serves as a distinguished professor in Appalachian Studies. She often writes about racism, sexism and gender politics. Her work has been translated into more than 20 languages. She is perhaps one of Kentucky's best known writers and is known to challenge the status quo. She urges students to think for themselves and challenge themselves to learn about other cultures, countries and living conditions. She has urged women, African Americans and others who have been disadvantaged to fight against oppression and to participate in their liberation.

21. Judy Moberly West, (1941-1991), Lakeside Park, KY – West wanted to become a lawyer when she was a young woman in the early 1960s. However, there were few female attorneys in Kentucky at the time. She was the only woman in her class at the University of Kentucky Law School. She was ranked second in her class after her first semester. She received her undergraduate degree from Northern Kentucky University in 1973. She earned her law degree from Chase Law School at NKU in 1977. She ran a private legal practice for three years before then Gov. John Y. Brown appointed her in 1980 as the first woman judge in Kenton County District Court. She was elected three times to district court before being appointed as the first woman on the Kentucky Court of Appeals in March 1987 by then Gov. Martha Layne Collins. Judge West had broken barriers that no woman in Kentucky had encountered. She reached out to other women and encouraged them to join the legal profession.

22. Abraham A. Williams, (1949- ), Bowling Green, KY - Williams, the executive director of the Bowling Green Housing Authority, was originally from Phenix City, Ala., and grew up during segregation. He remembers when his mother suffered a stroke when he was a child, and he was told she had to ride in the back of the bus. As a teenager, his school counselor told him that he was not college material. When he moved to Bowling Green 19 years ago, he was told that public housing children are incapable of learning. He earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Alabama A & M University in 1971. He has been executive director of the Bowling Green Housing Authority since 1995. For the past seven years, he has taken children on tours of Historic Black Colleges and Universities from Louisiana to Washington D.C. He has worked with Western Kentucky University to bring 15 public housing children to China during the past three years. He developed programs in Bowling Green that have moved 92 families from public housing to home ownership. He established a "from-welfare- to- work" program that has helped more than 600 people find jobs. He is the founder of the "Why Try" program that uses more than 40 African American men as role models for students in Bowling Green and Warren County.

23. Harrison Benjamin Wilson Jr., (1925- ) – Pendleton, Ky. (living now in Chesapeake, Va.) – Wilson has enjoyed a long and successful career as a college president, health professor, and basketball coach. In 1946, he returned to Kentucky after spending four years in the Navy during World War II. He wanted to enroll at UK but was denied because he was an African American. It would be another two years – and after a major lawsuit – before Lyman T. Johnson would be admitted to the University of Kentucky. Instead of going to UK, Wilson enrolled at Kentucky State University, the historic black college in Frankfort, Ky., where he earned his bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees. He became a coach at Jackson State University. Later, he served for 22 years as president of Norfolk State University in Virginia. While president there from 1975-1997, he increased the number of graduate programs, expanded the Naval ROTC program, which generated more minority officers to the Navy, and established a doctoral program in social work. He established more science courses, and he conducted outreach to area businesses and public schools in order to place students in jobs. This year, the University of Kentucky honored Wilson with an honorary doctorate degree.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government authority that enforces the Kentucky Civil Rights Act, and, through its affiliation with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, enforces federal civil rights laws. For more information or to receive help for illegal discrimination, contact the commission at 1.800.292.5566.