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ACCORD/Northrop Grumman Phase II Freedom Trail Celebration A Huge Success

by Gwendolyn Duncan

Our celebration this year began on June 28th with a **Family Fun Day** in which we conducted two historic civil rights landmarks tours compliments of the St. Augustine RED Sightseeing Train, the showing of Jeremy Dean's documentary film, **Dare Not Walk Alone**, bingo, puzzles, coloring, storytelling by Shirley Bryce, & Civil Rights Heroine Janie Price, Freedom Songs with Carrie Johnson, cotton candy, popcorn, hot dogs, drinks, music by DJ Richie Rich, and much more. There was fun for everyone and for all ages. The Mayor of St. Augustine, the Honorable Joseph Boles was in attendance as well as candidates running for office who came to donate their time and talents to help with this year's event. Doctoral students from the University of St. Augustine volunteered their time as well. Some children wanted to know when we were going to do it again.

On July 2nd, the 44th Anniversary of the Signing of the Landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, we began our celebration with a tour of the Freedom Trail Phase II sites compliments of the St. Augustine RED Trains and narrated by local historian and Co-chair of the ACCORD Freedom Trail Committee, David Nolan. A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was conducted by the St. Augustine/St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce at the home of Mrs. Rena Ayers.

The 2nd Annual Freedom Trail Luncheon was held at the Casa Monica Hotel, ACCORD welcomed back to St. Augustine, FL, **Dr. C.T. Vivian** as keynote speaker. He is a legendary hero of the Civil Rights Movement: one of the closest living associates of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He played an important part in the civil rights movement in St. Augustine in 1964 and was pictured in the center of a famous photograph showing the wade-in at St. Augustine Beach that attracted international attention. We honored 103 year-old housemother to the civil rights movement, Mrs. Rena Ayers. Student demonstrators and attorneys who defended them in the courts were provided food and lodging by this brave and courageous woman. Commissioner Errol Jones was our Master of Ceremonies and did an excellent job. In attendance were Civil Rights Hero and Leader of the St. Augustine Movement, Dr. Robert B. Hayling who also introduced Dr. Vivian. Florida State Senator Tony Hill addressed the crowd and announced that starting next year he will sponsor through ACCORD, the **Dr. Robert B. Hayling Civil Rights Award** to be given in Dr. Hayling's name, at our next Freedom Trail Luncheon. Mayor Joseph Boles read a proclamation from the City of St. Augustine acknowledging the great works of Dr. C.T. Vivian. Rick Matthews, Vice-President of the Northrop Grumman plant here in St. Augustine greeted the crowd and said that it was an honor for his company to sponsor Phase I and II of the Freedom Trail Project.

Dr. Vivian vividly recalled being in St. Augustine and the reception he received this time was nothing like before. His powerful and eloquent speech was very moving and inspiring. Also in attendance were Attorney Dan Warren, author of, ***If it Takes All Summer*** along with his lovely wife Judge Stasia Warren and son Attorney Adam Warren. There were many civil rights demonstrators in attendance from the 1963-'64 Movement of St. Augustine. Ms. Carolyn Fisher and her pianist Philip Brown serenaded the crowd with Freedom Songs. The Celebration was counted as a success and as Rick Matthews says, "...we look forward to Phase III".

ACCORD's Freedom Trail Celebration culminated on July 13th, when David Nolan, Barbara Smith (civil rights demonstrator) and yours truly attended the reading of a Proclamation by the St. Johns County Board of Commissioners in which the Board honored Dr. C.T. Vivian and declared the month of July as **True American Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement Month**.

Special thanks to the **Northrop Grumman Corporation**, Presenting Sponsor of the Freedom Trail Phases I & II; **The St. Augustine Alligator Farm**, silver sponsor; **Christine & Christine Law Firm**, our bronze sponsor; **The St. Augustine RED Sightseeing Trains**; **United Way of St. Johns County**; **Publix Supermarkets**; **Coca Cola Bottling Company of Jax**; **Flowers by Shirley**; and **Jalaram Hospitality Group** for helping make our Phase II Freedom Trail Project a huge success. After a short respite, we will start once again start preparing for next year's celebration.

Phase II Freedom Trail Celebration, June 28, 2008

by Shirley Williams-Galvin



Nia Duncan & Anisa Andrews enjoy the Bouncer. A little girl paints the airplanes on a tee-shirt compliments of the Northrop Grumman Corporation.



Dr. C.T. Vivian smiles as he accepts an award for being the Keynote Speaker at the 2nd Annual ACCORD/Northrop Grumman Freedom Trail Luncheon at the Casa Monica Hotel. July 2, 2008



103 YEAR-OLD HOUSE MOTHER TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT HONORED

By David Nolan

Mrs. Rena Ayers, 103 year-old House Mother to the Civil Rights Movement was honored at the 2nd Annual ACCORD/Northrop Grumman Freedom Trail Luncheon held at the Casa Monica Hotel, 95 Cordova Street on July 2nd, 2008. Mrs. Rena Ayers is known as a **“Housemother to the Civil Rights Movement of St. Augustine”**.



Dr. Robert B. Hayling, Mrs. Ayers, and Mr. Charles Hayling, July 2008

Student demonstrators and attorneys who defended them in the courts were provided food and lodging by this brave and courageous woman. Mrs. Ayers is 103 years old. She was married to Jutson Ayers, who worked as an alligator wrestler for a quarter of a century at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm before his death in 1958. His widow, Mrs. Rena Ayers, gave important support to the civil rights movement of the 1960s by providing lodging for out-of-towners who came here to support the movement.

In March 2005, when she was 100 years old, Mrs. Ayers had a visit from one of those she had hosted 41 years before. He was Alvin J. Bronstein, an attorney who had come to St. Augustine in August 1964 with the idea of spending his two week summer vacation aiding the movement with his legal skills. Instead, he wound up spending the next four years as staff counsel for the Lawyers' Constitutional Defense Committee (LCDC), handling important civil rights cases in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana (including getting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. out of jail in Mississippi). He was one of many people whose lives were deeply influenced by their time in St. Augustine. On his 2005 return, he went in the front door of this house, pointed to the left and said, **“That’s my room!”**

When the U.S. Postal Service issued a set of stamps commemorating the Freedom Movement in August 2005, Mrs. Ayers was honored in a ceremony at the Post Office as one of the legendary “House Mothers of the Civil Rights Movement” in St. Augustine.

Ten Additional Markers Added To The Freedom Trail

During Phase II of the ACCORD/Northrop Grumman Freedom Trail Project, ten additional Civil Rights Markers were added to the ACCORD Freedom Trail on July 2, 2008. These markers were made possible through a generous grant to ACCORD by the Northrop Grumman Corporation. The Locations of the markers are as follows:

1. 33 Bernard Street
2. 84 Bridge Street
3. 570 Christopher Street
4. 120 DeHaven Street
5. 111 Lincoln Street
6. 112 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave.
7. 56 Park Place
8. 222 Iberia Street
9. 84 St. Benedict Street
10. 1074 West King Street

Freedom Trail Brochures/Maps for the Self-Guided Tour are located at The St. Augustine/St. Johns County Visitors Information Center and Ripley’s Sightseeing Trains, free of charge.

Florida State Senator Tony Hill Announces the Creation Of The Dr. Robert B. Hayling Civil Rights Award

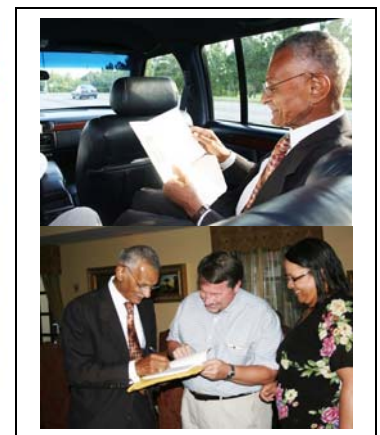
Dr. Robert B. Hayling Civil Rights Award is the brainchild of Florida State Senator Tony Hill and will be awarded annually beginning next year at the ACCORD/Northrop Grumman 3rd Annual Freedom Trail Luncheon. More information will be forthcoming.

5th GRADE HONOR’S CLASS AT R.B. HUNT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SENDS GREETINGS TO DR. C.T. VIVIAN

Dr. C.T. Vivian was presented many Greeting Cards made especially for him by the students in Mrs. Donna Jung’s 5th Grade Honor’s Class. ACCORD President Mrs. Gwendolyn Duncan and Photographer, Mrs. Shirley Williams-Galvin greeted Dr. Vivian and Mr. Don Rivers at the JAX International Airport to escort them to St. Augustine. While riding in the limousine, compliments of Chase & Sons Funeral Home, Mrs. Duncan gave the cards to Dr. Vivian to read. He was ecstatic and read each and every card. A sample of one of the cards is below:



Dear Dr. C.T. Vivian,
We are glad that you came to St. Augustine today
and we are proud of you.
Thank you for everything I am glad I went
to nearby school.
I’m hearing about the card I’ll protect
like you! This is white, black people.
-G B
(with a heart symbol)



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO ALL WHOSE BIRTHDAYS ARE IN
August, September, & October
GOD BLESS YOU TO HAVE MANY, MANY MORE
*

WANT TO HELP US CONTINUE OUR MISSION OF REMEMBERING THE HEROES AND SHEROES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FL?

PLEASE SEND YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION MADE PAYABLE TO:
THE 40TH ACCORD, INC
P.O. BOX 697
ST. AUGUSTINE, FL 32085-0697