

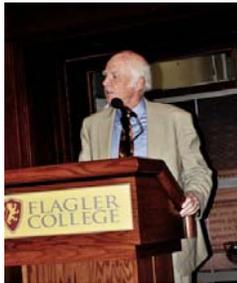


# Freedom Trail Luncheon 2012: Huge Success

The 6th Annual ACCORD Freedom Trail Luncheon, commemorating the 48th Anniversary Signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and honoring the heroes and sheroes of the 60s Movement of St. Augustine, FL was a huge success. Master of Ceremonies for the event was former Florida State Senator Anthony 'Tony' Hill, Sr. Over two hundred people gathered at the elegant and beautiful Ponce de Leon Dining Hall on the campus of Flagler College to hear the Keynote Speaker Taylor Branch and to honor three civil rights activists for courageous acts displayed during the St. Augustine Movement: Mrs. Loucille Plummer, Dr. Gail Blattenberger, and Mrs. Delores Miller Parks.

## Keynote Speaker

Many thanks to Richard Rettig, ACCORD Member who made the initial contact with Mr. Taylor Branch, having his daughter, who lives in Baltimore, MD give him a handwritten letter telling him about the 40<sup>th</sup> ACCORD, planting the seed in his potential to visit. On April 21, 2011, after that initial contact was made, Gwendolyn and Mr. Branch spoke. She sent him a packet of information on the organization. Then, on May 27, 2011, Mr. Branch contacted Mrs. Duncan via email and said that he was honored by the invitation to speak at the July 2, 2012 luncheon and to, "Please count me in if I am not too late. The date is on my calendar".



The rest is one for the history books. Mr. Branch put the 40<sup>th</sup> ACCORD, Inc. on his website as another confirmed speaking engagement. We were so very honored to have Mr. Branch, Pulitzer prize winning author of a trilogy on the Civil Rights Movement, America in the King Years of which Pillar of Fire has information on the St. Augustine Movement, speak at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual ACCORD Freedom Trail Luncheon: commemorating the 48<sup>th</sup> Anniversary signing of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Many

thanks to Kathy and Daryl Price for picking Mr. Branch up from the airport, escorting him around to the different venues, and taking him back to the airport for his return flight home. To hear Mr. Branch's speech, please click [HERE](#).

Diana O. Eubanks, accepting for mother: the Late Mrs. Loucille Plummer



Dr. Gail Blattenberger



Delores Miller-Parks



## Honorees

**Mrs. Loucille Plummer**, deceased, was the secretary for the Florida State headquarters of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Because of her civil rights activities, she lost her nursing job at Flagler Hospital. The mother of the governor of Massachusetts was a guest in her home in 1964. *Mary Parkman Peabody*, the wife of an Episcopal Bishop made national headlines, bringing St. Augustine's Movement to the forefront when she was arrested and jailed for sitting down with her Black friends asking to be served at the Ponce de Leon Motor Lodge Restaurant.



Mrs. Loucille Plummer holds the beach ball that was retrieved from under the 100-pound gas tank in 1965

Picture by Gail Blattenberger

In 1965, Mrs. Plummer's home, at 177 Twine Street, was the scene of an attempted firebombing because she hosted a white student staying in her home for a summer tutorial program. Her daughter, Diana O.

Eubanks (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) and son Eric James (Newark, NJ) were on hand to accept the *Dr. Robert B. Hayling Award of Valor* given by former Florida State Senator Anthony Hill, Sr. Dr. Robert B. Hayling, leader of the St. Augustine Movement and *Father of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, was also present, standing by their side as they accepted the *Soaring Eagle Award*: a 5.6 pound award, featuring an eagle taking flight and sculpted from solid optic crystal with solid elliptical base customized with the ACCORD logo and the recipient's name and that of sponsor: the Honorable Dr. Anthony Hill.

**Gail Blattenberger**, graduated in 1964 from Princeton High School, Princeton, New Jersey. During the summer of 1965 as a sophomore student at Smith College in East Hampton, she along with 29 other students from the North came to St. Augustine to take part in a tutorial program arranged by Chaplains from Dartmouth College and Yale University. Miss

Blattenberger taught Mathematics to high school level students of the community, at Florida Memorial College.

While visiting, Miss Blattenberger stayed at the home of Mrs. Loucille Plummer, a Black Civil Rights Activist and Secretary for the State Headquarters of Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As Mrs. Plummer and her guests were sitting around in the house, her son Eric saw three white men speed off in a truck after a beach ball filled with kerosene, wrapped in burlap, and set afire, was thrown beneath a 100-gallon gas tank outside of her home.

Mrs. Plummer and Miss Blattenberger raced outside, seeing the flames reaching 20 feet in the air. They doused the flames with water. The cap blew off the gas tank, which was empty and did not explode. A fire department spokesman reported a strong odor of kerosene or gasoline. In a 1965 Associated Press Article, the St. Augustine Fire Chief B. M. Hall said that the fire, "*definitely was set by someone*" and he would ask the state fire marshal to investigate the attempted arson. This AP story went all over the country.



### **Delores Miller Parks,**

A Richard J. Murray high school student who was heavily involved in the civil rights movement, as she says, "*...a part of my life that I will not forget...*" Delores was one of seven students released from jail after her mother "*signed me out*" for a Sit-In conducted at the Woolworth lunch counter after being arrested for refusing to vacate the store in 1963. She walked the picket lines, attended the mass meetings and non-violent workshops. She painfully recalls being dragged on her knees

from the entrance of Marty's Restaurant on US 1 and taken to the St. Johns County Jail. She remembers trying to integrate St. Augustine Beach with a group of others and surrounded by state troopers, only to have the KKK pull them under the water in an attempt to drown them. She thanked God, because she did not and still does not know how to swim. She recalls still hearing the bullets being fired as she and others marched at night around the old "Slave Market".

Delores was arrested four times and carries the memories she says, "*...with me forever, as a reminder of how far we have come and a motivation to continue the dream!*"

Gail and Delores were presented the ACCORD Award for their courageous acts displayed during the 60s Movement by Mrs. Cora Tyson, Vice-President of ACCORD. To see Spotted photos of the luncheon, by Shirley Williams-Collins, please click [HERE](#). To view the News Coverage of the Event, click [HERE](#). To hear video of Taylor Branch's speech, click [HERE](#).

## **Student Hosts Tutor 47 Years Later In Her Home**

**Twila Fleming** was a 12-year-old student in 1965 when Gail Blattenberger, an 18-year-old graduate of Princeton High School and a Smith College sophomore, came to St. Augustine to tutor Black Students in Math under a program arranged by Chaplains from Dartmouth College and Yale University. Gail was one of thirty-one students who came to the deep South, making history because she happened to be in the house of Mrs. Loucille Plummer when three white racists tried to firebomb the house.

Gail, however was a courageous young lady and did not let what happened deter her from her duties. After the summer tutorial program ended, Gail accompanied twenty Black teens back to the North as a reward for doing well during their studies. Twila Fleming was one of those students.

In a *Florida Star Newspaper* Article dated, Saturday, September 4th, 1965 it states, "*During their stay in the North, each child "lived the life" of his or her host family, including their visits to church on Sunday...The twenty students chosen for the trip were among several hundred who took part in the tutorial-recreation projects conducted in the Ancient City during the summer months*". Students stayed in the homes of their host families in the following cities: Dairen, Connecticut; Princeton and Summerville, New Jersey; and Washington, DC. While there the students visited the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, Kennedy's grave site, the World's Fair, United Nations, the Statue of Liberty, went on sailboat rides, garden dinners by candlelight, visited Harlem, attended a Shakespearean Play, and many other sites.

Purcell Conway, civil rights activist was also one of the

students who went on the trip. He and his wife June hosted Gail and her sister Beth in their home for a day, being caught up on all the events of the past and discussing current events. Beth took a swim in the Conway's pool. Gwendolyn Duncan, her grand daughters Nia and Gabrielle, Elizabeth Duncan and Purcell Conway's nephew also were in attendance to listen to the stories and visit with their out of town guests from Salt Lake City, Utah. A very nice dinner was served by the Conways before everyone departed.

Group Sees "Trees Without Moss"



**NORTHERN TREK** - St. Augustine youth were awarded with a trip up North following their diligence during the Summer Tutorial program this summer. Rewardees and places where they were guests, front row from left are Delores Miller, Darien, Conn.; Eric James, Princeton, N.J.; Christine Brown, Darien; Barbara Odom, Princeton; Terry Pierson, Summerville, N.J.; Twila Fleming, Princeton; Linda Howard, Summerville; Phyllis Fisher, Summerville; Arlane Johnson, Princeton; and Freddy Goodson, Washington, D.C. Second row from left James Jackson, Princeton; Shirley Johnson, Darien; Alfonso Tate, Darien; Purcell Conway, Princeton; Marva Eubanks, Darien; Gwendolyn Reed, Darien; Tony Jenkins, Washington; Melvin Wilcox, Summerville.

Names listed below the picture are as follows: front row, *Delores Miller*, Darien, Conn; *Eric James*, Princeton, N.J.; *Christine Brown*, Darien; *Barbara Odom*, Princeton; *Terry Pierson*, Summerville, N.J.; *Twila Fleming*, Princeton; *Linda Howard*, Summerville; *Phyllis Fisher*, Summerville; *Arlane Johnson*, Princeton, and *Freddy Goodson*, Washington, D.C.; second row from left to right, *James Jackson*, Princeton; *Shirley Johnson*, Darien; *Alfonso Tate*, Darien; *Purcell Conway*, Princeton; *Marva Eubanks*, Darien, *Gwendolyn Reed*, Darien; *Freddy Jenkins*, Washington; and *Melvin Wilcox*, Summerville.

**Flags sent to Honorees**

In addition to all the gifts and trophies presented to the Speaker and Honorees, ACCORD, through the office of United States Senator Bill Nelson of Florida, had five



United States Flags, each flown over the Capitol in Washington, DC, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, the 48<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the Landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, sent to them as an additional memento of our celebration. Each flag came with a numbered certificate

of authenticity.



**Mayor Joseph Boles Reads a Proclamation from the City of St. Augustine**

Mayor Joseph Boles, in attendance along with other City of St. Augustine Representatives, reads a



Proclamation in honor of the sixth Annual ACCORD Freedom Trail Luncheon Commemoration. For text of the Proclamation, click [Here](#),

Many thanks to General Manager, Mr. Bob O'Neill for hosting Mr. Branch at his hotel and the wonderful breakfast held the morning of the second. The Dutch Treat Breakfast in honor of Mr. Taylor Branch, held at the [Historic Hilton Bayfront](#) Inn can be seen by clicking [HERE](#). Luncheon Photos by Shirley Williams-Collins can be seen by clicking [HERE](#).



**Mrs. Rena Ayers Attends Luncheon**



Dr. Anthony Hill presents the 2012 Dr. RBH Award of Valor to the children of Mrs. Loucille Plummer: daughter, Diana O. Eubanks and son, Eric James, as Dr. Robert B. Hayling, leader of the St. Augustine Movement looks on

*Momma Rena*, as she is called by some, *Housemother to the Civil Rights Movement of St. Augustine*, along with companion Shirley Garvin attended the ACCORD Luncheon. Although Mrs. Ayers, now in a wheel chair, will be 108 years of age in October, and is in the Bayview Nursing Home, it did not deter her from attending the luncheon. All dressed up in a pink two-piece suit, Mrs. Ayers along with hundreds of others, listened attentively to the all too familiar stories of her fellow comrades, while dining on a delicious meal prepared by *Aramark*.

After the luncheon, Mrs. Cora Tyson presented Mrs.



Activists Greet each other: 107 year-old Mrs. Rena Ayers and with 91 year-old, Mrs. Mary Brown, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Ayers with one of the two flower arrangements, donated to ACCORD by *Flowers by Shirley* to take back with her as a reminder of an inspirational and memorable day. As of July 12, Shirley Garvin said the flowers were still

beautiful and full of life.

## Leader of the St. Augustine Movement & Family and Friends Attend ACCORD Luncheon

Dr. Robert B. Hayling, “*Father of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*” and leader of the St. Augustine Movement along with 20 other family and friends were in attendance at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual ACCORD Freedom Trail Luncheon.

Dr. Hayling said that it was a, “...*mini Reunion...*” staying an additional five days vacationing in the city. Family members came from St. Petersburg, Ft. Myers, Sarasota, FL, oldest daughter from Mississippi, and youngest daughter from Singapore with his grand sons. In addition, they had friends who came from Los Angeles, CA and New York. Dr. Hayling was so very happy.



Above: Attorney Garvey & Mrs. Yvonne Clarke of Sarasota, FL: Dr. Hayling’s brother-in-law and sister attend the Dutch Treat Breakfast, at the Historic Hilton Bayfront Inn. Below: patrons await FT Tour on Old Town Trolley w David Nolan as narrator.



## Blessings BIG or small, we are Thankful for them All!

The ACCORD Freedom Trail Audio Tour got a little publicity in the Folio Weekly, July 10-16, 2012 issue. To view, click: [Here](#) A big thank you to Nancy Moreland for mentioning us in her article entitled, *Everything Ancient is New Again: New and lesser-known sights give locals a reason to explore St. Augustine.*



Autographed picture signed by Ambassador Young and Dr. Hayling was presented to Mr. Taylor Branch by ACCORD Members Daryl & Kathy Price



As usual, Carolyn Fisher is singing praises unto God and making us Happy!



Carolyn Fisher and Minister Philip Brown (pianist) at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual ACCORD Freedom Trail Luncheon



Rev. Ronald Stafford, Pastor of the New Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church was on hand to give the opening and closing prayers, and blessings of food. Carolyn and Philip are members of his church. Also, Rev. Stafford was one of the Richard J. Murray High School Students, in 1964, who held a mass Sit-In at the Ponce de Leon Dining Hall. This was his second time being there, the first time as an undesirable guest and now, an invited guest.



## Luncheon Photos

To view more click [HERE](#).

by Shirley Williams-Collins



Diana O. Eubanks and brother Eric James speak about their mother: Mrs. Loucille Plummer. Diana said, "My mother said what she meant and meant what she said". Diana and her husband, who was in the Air Force were stationed in California when she received the news about the 1965 attempted firebombing of her mother's home at 177 Twine Street in St. Augustine, Florida



## MEMBER UPDATES

Happy June & July Birthdays to:



Mrs. Cora Tyson  
Mr. David Nolan  
Mrs. Gwendolyn Duncan



Aloha to:

Dr. Priscilla Duncan who left July 5 en route to Hawaii on a new job assignment. Glad to report the Lord blessed her with a safe journey. GD