

ACCORD Newsletter

APRIL 2010

ACCORD HONORS FRED MARTIN: UNsung HERO OF THE ST. AUGUSTINE MOVEMENT

"I was assigned to work in St. Augustine on a movement that had been going on for some time...Andrew Young asked me to keep notes on what happened." — Fred Martin

Over three dozen people gathered at the Downtown Bandstand in St. Augustine, for the ACCORD MEET & GREET Reception honoring one of the Unsung Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. Fred Martin of Canada was labeled as "an outside agitator" in 1964 but was greeted by Dr. Robert B. Hayling, leader of the St. Augustine Movement to a hero's welcome. Unlike the reception Martin received in



Mr. Martin today (above) and back in the 1960s (right).



1964 when snipers were on the roof tops of nearby buildings waiting to take him out. ACCORD and many well wishers warmly greeted him back to the Nation's Oldest City. Deacon Richard Burton, Sr. former NAACP National Board Member and Director of Project R.E.A.C.H. of Jacksonville, FL was the Emcee for the Program. Mrs. Carrie Johnson welcomed the crowd to the event. Dr. Robert B. Hayling, guest speaker recalled many courageous acts displayed by Martin. Gwendolyn Duncan read greetings which included a letter from U.S. Senator Bill Nelson.

David Nolan, local historian and co-chair of the ACCORD Freedom Trail Project, bringing the occasion said: "Historians will always be grateful to Fred Martin for the meticulous notes he kept during the months of

May, June, and July 1964, when the civil rights movement was at fever pitch in St. Augustine. I have had much experience with trying to reconstruct the details of those days. I have heard people assert--with the fading memories of nearly half a century--which they were there "When Mrs. Peabody and Dr. King jumped in the Monson pool and Jimmy Brock poured acid on them." Well, various parts of that happened, but not all at the same time and with the same people. Memory plays funny tricks on us.

So we are dependent on reliable accounts from closer to the time period. I have gone through the FBI reports from St. Augustine in 1963 and 1964: they are available on microfilm at the University of Florida Library in Gainesville. I hoped to have found a treasure trove--but was disappointed. There were reports, day after day, saying the same thing: "Florida Memorial College students picketed a downtown store." What store? What students? What were their names? What happened to them? So much useful information was left out! Then Fred Martin sent the treasure trove of notes he took in 1964--and there were the details we had been looking for. For

instance, on May 28, 1964:

• 1:20 PM — Mrs. Nellie Mitchell, Mrs. Georgie M. Reed, Mrs. Gertrude Jones (captain) went to Ponce de Leon to eat. All three were arrested.

• 2:00 PM— Mr. James H. Streeter, Miss Maud Burroughs (college student), Mrs. Annie Mae Simmons (captain) went to Monson to eat. Water hose was turned on them. Mrs. Simmons was kicked in the lower abdomen by James Brock, the manager of Monson's."

When we were putting together the markers for the Freedom Trail, Fred's notes were of inestimable value. Fred Martin is from Canada. When people like that come down here to spend money, we call them tourists. When they came down here in 1964 to do the right thing, they were called "Outside Agitators."

I say thank God for outside agitators like Fred Martin! I only regret that he didn't come earlier and stay longer.

To top off the day's event, about a dozen well wishers joined Fred Martin, his wife, son, and daughter-in-law, at Harry's Seafood Bar & Grill for lunch. In attendance were: sisters, Deltra and Alice Long; Purcell and June Conway; Gwendolyn Duncan and daughter Elizabeth; David Nolan; Dr. Robert B. Hayling; Gale Burnick; Deacon & Mrs. Richard P. Burton; and Audrey Nell Edwards.

ABOUT FRED MARTIN

Fred Martin graduated from the University of Alberta, in 1963, with a BSc in Honors Mathematics, joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, under the direction of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Fred was sent to St. Augustine in 1964 and given his assignment by Rev. Andrew Young to, "...keep notes on what happened". Fred sporadically attended California Institute of Technology during his stint with SCLC which lasted until 1968. Fred was involved in voter registration, political organizing, and direct action campaigns in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. He says that he, "...learned enough about changing unjust political systems to earn lumps, jail time, and ulcers...and about the structure of semi-simple group algebra to earn a MSc in Math for Cal Tech." Martin did some work on his PhD in Math and moved to British Columbia steelhead fishing and working with west coast Indian Bands. He worked with the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations in an effort to secure the land base of the Metis Settlements to increase their capacity for self-governance. Martin earned his LLB from the University of Alberta Law School, he articulated, practiced, and later became a partner in Ackroyd LLP. His practice was a mix of public utilities and corporate aboriginal law. On the utilities side, Fred appeared as counsel in power, gas, and telephone rate applications and related public utility hearings. His corporate work was putting structures for joint ventures on energy related projects. He worked for the Nunavut government on energy policy and the creation of their own power company. The Aboriginal related work involved NWT work on a new constitution, arctic gas pipeline..., federal work for the Royal Commission, new Indian lands legislation..., other First Nations work..., but mostly work for the Metis Settlements in Alberta developing and implementing an Accord with Alberta that ended a 20 year lawsuit about oil and put in place new legislation creating a self-governance framework for the Settlements and amending the Constitution of Alberta to protect the land and then trying to make it all work. In 2006, Fred Martin Retired but does a little consulting when the right project comes along.



REFLECTIONS ON THE ST. AUGUSTINE STRUGGLE

BY FRED MARTIN

Introduction

I would like to begin by thanking Mrs. Duncan, Dr. Hayling, and the many people of the ACCORD for their kind welcome. Mrs. Duncan has been responsible, as many of you know, for leading the effort to preserve the history of the civil rights movement in St. Augustine and the crucial role it played in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

I think it is fair to say that if it were not for Dr. Hayling that movement may not have ever happened. Certainly, it would not have succeeded to the extent it did without his leadership, commitment, and courage. He was my mentor, my guide, and my protector while I was here, and for that I thank him.

In wandering about this beautiful historic city for the past few days, I have been struck by how much has changed since I was here in 1964. St. Augustine has seen a lot of development. My impression today is of a bustling tourism center making the most of its long history. But, while being struck by the beauty of the present, my thoughts have been dragged back to a less happy period in its history--the long, hot, terrifying, and inspiring summer of 1964.

At that time, planning was underway to celebrate the historical significance of its 400th Anniversary as America's Oldest City. And that summer the city made history, not for the events of the past, but for the strength its Black Citizens showed in their commitment to a different future.

Their vision was of a city where the freedom and equality promised by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 would be practiced in life. Because the hard truth of their lives was that in 1964, freedom still had not moved from a promise on paper to a practice in every day life.

As hard as it is for us to believe today, if we had gathered here like this less than 50 years ago, most of us would not be able to go to the nearest restaurant and eat.

Most of us would not have been able to go to the nearest hotel and find a place to sleep.

And, most of us would not even be able to go to the nearest beach and have a swim.

That was the situation in a country Dr. Hayling, as a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force, had signed up to die for. And that was the situation that when he came back as a civilian, he and other fed up citizens of St. Augustine decided they had to change.

And, they set out to change it. The civil rights movement they began led a long and costly fight for change through 1963 and into the early winter of 1964. They suffered intimidation, beatings, burnings, and arrests. But, for all that, they had not received an expression of willingness to structure an effective Bi-racial Commission to address the problems. By, February of 1964, after months of struggle, the local civil rights movement was near exhaustion. Some were ready to

quite—some, but not all.

On this very day, 46 years ago, on March 19, 1964, Dr. Hayling, Henry Twine, Goldie Eubanks, and a few co-workers decided that the people here had walked too far to walk away now. But to reach their goal, they had to take their message beyond the powers of the city to the people of the nation.

They knew that nation's attention would come if Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would come. And they knew he was a short drive away at a meeting of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Orlando. So, the next day they went to Orlando to present their case to Dr. King.

Their case was simple and direct:

1. The movement in St. Augustine needed his help to keep their struggle for desegregation and equal rights alive.

2. At that very moment, a civil rights bill designed to protect in the courts the rights they sought in the streets was stalled in the United States Senate; and

3. With his help, the people of St. Augustine would lead the fight to get that bill passed into law and bring a new era to America.

The good news for history is that Dr. Hayling was convincing and Dr. King decided that, exhausted as they were from Birmingham, he had to get his team behind the movement in St. Augustine. And to start that effort he sent one of his top aides, Hosea Williams.

My Start In St. Augustine

It is my great sorrow that Hosea is not with us today. He was the leading push inside SCLC for action in St. Augustine. He was a good man that fought the good fight until the day he died. There was no quit in him. And there was no saying "no" to him. I couldn't.

I was set to go to Mississippi to work on the 1964 summer voter registration project when Hosea called me up and said "Fred, you don't need to go to no Mississippi. You need to go to St. Augustine. That's where the people are going to make history made this summer."

And, as much as I ever hated to agree with Hosea on anything, I think he was right.

The Summer of 1964

The people of St. Augustine really did make history that summer. The stage had been set by the protests throughout the south in 1963. In Montgomery, in Nashville, in Birmingham people marched, students sat in, and thousands went to jail.

This waive of civil unrest was focused on Washington. The time of arbitrary exclusion had to end. People wanted the law to guarantee that color would not decide where they could eat, sleep, live, or work. By 1963 Black people across America had waited long enough.

From the streets of the South they were sending a clear and unambiguous signal— "We're not waiting any more. We have waited 100 years and that is too long. The time is now." That signal was heard in Washington. By early in 1964 a Civil Rights Bill had been drafted and put before the Senate. And then the talking started: the age-old southern Senators strategy of the filibuster. If a Bill is going to bring change, talk it to death; and that was what they set out to try.

Does this strategy sound familiar to anyone here today? I thought



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so. But, when the southern Senators thought they could derail the Bill with their talking, they missed a critical new factor. They didn't realize that as committed as they were to talking the bill to death that the people of St. Augustine were even more committed to walking that bill into life. The more the people in Washington talked, the more the people here walked.

They walked through the streets of Lincolnville

They walked two by two in a long slow chain that surrounded the Old Slave Market

And they walked at night with nothing to protect them but their songs and prayers.

Those are sights and sounds I can never forget. The dim light, of a few odd street lights, creating more shadow than substance. The night, quiet except for the crunch of shoe leather from hundreds of feet. Walking! And then, the slow sound of "I love everybody, I love everybody, I love everybody in my heart..." And with that powerful anthem they walked

- through the beatings,
- through the Billy Clubs,
- through black jacks and baseball bats

They filled the paddy wagons, they filled jail cells, and they filled the hospital. But they did not stop. And at the end of June, they were still walking when the Senate finally gave up talking. The Bill passed. And on July 2, 1964 President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law.

The people of St. Augustine had done it. They had been possessed by a powerful faith and a hope for the future. And they put their bodies on the line to achieve it.

Their victory for

- their faith in the justice of their cause,
- their hope in a better tomorrow,
- their courage in facing the ancient enemy of fear, and
- their commitment to keep on marching toward that day.

That was the message of the Movement's hymn---
"We Shall Overcome"

Aftermath

The Civil Rights Act was not the end of the road. We had gained the right to eat in the local restaurants, but in many places Black people were still denied the most basic right of citizenry---the right to vote. And so, the pressure continued, in St. Augustine, in Selma, and in countless other communities across America. From all this suffering and effort came the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 1965, the legal framework was finally in place to protect what Lincoln had promised in 1863. It had been a long and costly struggle. We mark the battlefields where so many died to secure so that the Constitution could be amended to ban slavery. We mark those sites not because of who won or lost that battle, but because they ultimately contributed to the life, liberty, and equal justice that America holds so dearly. And this is the challenge to St. Augustine.

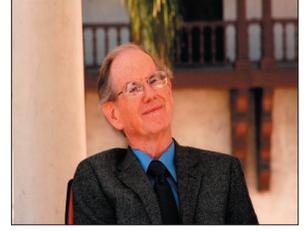
Here is where the great struggle took place that gained passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and with it the legal protection of freedom

and equal justice for millions of Americans. That struggle was carried by the courage and commitment of citizens of this city. Where are the signs declaring St. Augustine's pivotal role in American history? Where is the pride that, regardless of who was on what side, this was the place that finally made it happen? To me, that is the proudest moment in St. Augustine's history. It is a monument to the courage of its people and the gift it gave America.

That is the great gift the people of St. Augustine gave me — a gift that changed my life. The gift of knowing that change can come against impossible odds. That people can overcome when they have faith in their cause, and when they have hope for their future, and when they will not be turned around.

Thank you, people of St. Augustine for that great gift. And thank you Mrs. Duncan, Dr. Hayling, and others that made this day possible. Thank you!





Fred Martin Reunites with Mrs. Cora Tyson

It took a lot of calls and schedule changes, but finally Fred Martin was able to reunite with Mrs. Tyson after 45 years. Fred remembers staying at the house of a couple that lived near Dr. Hayling's dental office, but wasn't sure which house it actually was.

The landscape of the area has changed a lot since Fred Martin came to the Nation's Oldest City by his leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Iceberg is no longer there and the home of Mrs. Annie Mae White and Mrs. Thornton's rooming house are all gone. Even Casto's Appliance Store is gone. As a matter of fact the City owns most of the property across from Dr. Hayling's old office and has put a parking lot there with one exception: the Gordon Family owns a plot of land and has put their own parking lot there.

Nevertheless, the reunion between the two freedom fighters, recalling so many events that took place during the turbulent times of 1964, was grand. Please see the pictures below.



ACCORD Newsletter VOL. 4 NO. 2
Published by ACCORD, Inc,
P.O. Box 697, St. Augustine, FL 32085
Editor: Gwendolyn Duncan

Attorney Dan Warren and Gwendolyn Duncan Speak to Women's Club of Grand Haven in Palm Coast, FL

Over ninety women gathered at the Grand Haven Golf & Country Club for their Annual Luncheon & Meeting. Guest Speakers for the event were Attorney Dan Warren, author of *If It Takes All Summer: Dr. Martin Luther King, the KKK, and States' Rights in St. Augustine, 1964* and Gwendolyn Duncan, President of the 40th ACCORD, Inc.

Gwendolyn took the podium first and talked about the 40th ACCORD, Inc., from its inception in 2003, incorporation in 2004, and all the wonderful activities to date that it has sponsored to bring recognition and honor to the heroes and sheroes of the Civil Rights Movement of St. Augustine, FL. She told the story of how David Nolan, local historian was the impetus to her involvement in celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Signing of the Landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 and also taking the presidency to keep things moving.

The greatest project to date sponsored by ACCORD, Inc. is the Freedom Trail presented by the Northrop Grumman Corporation. Duncan invited them to take the self-guided tour whenever they are in St. Augustine visiting. She was surprised to hear that a few of the ladies had already had the privilege of taking one of David Nolan's Freedom Trail tours and enjoyed it thoroughly.

The atmosphere in the Nation's Oldest City and around the country led many young demonstrators to take to the streets in non-violent protests to fight for freedom and equality. Those events that took place in St. Augustine, FL in 1963-'64 was discussed by Duncan and it set the stage for Attorney Dan to take the podium. A trailer of the Documentary, "Crossing in St. Augustine" was sent from Atlanta, by CB Hackworth, the director of the film and was shown to the audience. Attorney Dan talked about the historical perspective of the events surrounding the 1963-'64 civil rights movement and his involvement with Dr. King. He told the audience that it was the events in St. Augustine that led directly to the passage of the Landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 which ultimately affected every one in the Nation. Many thanks to Attorney Dan for helping ACCORD get the message out about our organization.

Freedom Trail Markers are HERE!

Finally, the Freedom Trail Markers have arrived from Canada. ACCORD will be unveiling these markers at different times during the next few months.

Please check our web site for News & Updates on when the celebrations for the unveilings will take place.

Best Wishes to all those who have birthdays in April.