

# The Heritage Herald

A Publication of the Mary Allen Museum of African American Art and History in Houston County - 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2018  
Barbara A. Wooten, Newsletter Editor



Est. 1886

## Mary Allen Museum of African American Art & History

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Blog: [maryallenmuseum.blogspot.com](http://maryallenmuseum.blogspot.com)

### Website

Under New Construction

[www.Facebook.com/under\\_new\\_construction](http://www.Facebook.com/under_new_construction)

## Sharing the Past Shaping the Future

### Mary Allen Museum of African American Art & History

#### Meeting Schedule

Time: 10 AM

Location: Heritage House

October 13, 2018	Meeting
November 10, 2018	Conference Call
December	No Meeting
January 12, 2019	Meeting
February 9, 2019	Conference Call
March 9, 2019	Meeting
April 13, 2019	Conference Call
May 18, 2019	Meeting

### Mary Allen Museum Event – Nov. 17, 2018

#### *Crockett Christmas on the Square*

Visit the Mary Allen Museum booth

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**Dr. Thelma J. Douglass**



A Celebration of Our Heritage, Our Harvest

### **The President's Message**

There are different seasons: planting and sowing, reaping and harvesting. It is harvest time for our community. Let us celebrate the opportunity to enlighten, educate, encourage, and engage in the beauty of our heritage. We cannot forget, as we reflect and remember the unsung heroes and she-roes who shoulders we stand on in this dispensation. We are grateful for their courage, communication, challenges endured, and commitment to keep the hope of the Mary Allen Museum of African American Art and History, INC (MAM) and college memorabilia and memories alive.

Under the auspices of this new administration, Dr. Thelma Douglass, recently elected President is looking forward to fulfilling the dreams planted concerning Mary Allen Museum and College. The new elected officers along with the entire MAM Board are diligently working to advance and accelerate the overall building and program projects. The newly elected officers are **Shirley Murray**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, **Jean Shepherd**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, **Earlene Clebourn**, Treasurer, and **Alicia Bailey**, Secretary. **Earlene Clebourn, Viktor Ewing, Dr. Loria Miles** and **Gloria Wooten** have gone the extra steps behind the scene to help in the harvest.

The MAM Board is expanding its membership to partner with the City of Crockett and Houston County. We are elated to have Mayor Joni Clonts join us as an ex-officio board member. She has taken immediate action by donating a conference table and Chairs. We appreciate her creative contribution and innovative ideas.

This Fall Harvest, the MAM Board team will come together to plan and implement our vision, goals, and dreams. In collaboration with Dr. Julianne Cenac, *Leader Channel*, who will facilitate the leadership discussion along with Michelle Barnes *Community Artist Collective*, MAM will host a leadership/fellowship development retreat. We encourage with excitement that board members, advisory board members, and leaders participate in a leadership development session to begin landscaping our future and building on our past foundation of MAM. More details are highlighted in this Newsletter.

We acknowledge that our Creator orchestrates our steps in this terrestrial seed, time, and harvest journey. Thank you Board for your dedication and determination to forge forward in our Fall Harvest of reaping.



## *Strategies for the Preservation Goals*

Dear Friends of Mary Allen Museum,

Exciting things are underway for the Mary Allen Museum and College Initiative. Dr. Thelma J. Douglass, elected new President, brings over 25 years of experience in Higher Education Administration and Organizational Leadership. The broader vision for the organization is to develop partnerships in an academe community and continue institutional collaboration opportunities in Crockett and Houston County.”

As we prepare for the coming year we are partnering with Julianne Cenac of *Leader Channel* to present an **Autumnal Leadership and Development Retreat Saturday, October 13, 2018** *immediately following the Mary Allen Museum Board Meeting at 10:00am. The leadership will be from 11:30am – 4:30pm* at the Mary Allen Heritage House. Also, everyone is invited to attend the Board Meeting.

This endeavor is designed to gather our Board and support constituents for a day of cooperative critical strategizing, with focused attention on updating our Constitution’s content, setting board objectives and collaborative vision planning. More broadly the workshop works towards starting critically constructive conversations on the future of our institution in the local and global sociocultural economy.

This new planning effort follows naturally from our work during the last several years. To date the Museum has been passionately committed to heritage preservation through the maintenance of the historic site, archiving of alumni memorabilia, consistent quarterly publications and public outreach initiatives.

Your presence and participation are requested to help strategize sustainable solutions towards developing support systems for arts, education, and culture in our region. As we recognize great value in your perspective and organizing expertise, we encourage you to bring cultural supporters or business professionals interested in seeing cultural and educational development in Houston County with you to the retreat. This workshop will serve as an introduction to an ongoing series conversation and corporate strategizing sessions around issues pertaining to heritage preservation, higher education exploration and diverse cultural expression in Crockett.

Know that Mary Allen Museum of African American Arts and History is committed to fostering meaningful institutional collaborations and programming initiatives to increase the collective quality of life in the region. To confirm your presence, please email your name and any dietary restrictions to [maryallenmuseum2018@gmail.com](mailto:maryallenmuseum2018@gmail.com). Please RSVP before Thursday, **October 11, 2018** as lunch and breakfast will be served and a proper count is needed for the catering staff.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thelma J. Douglass  
Mary Allen Museum President

Viktor. L. Ewing-Givens MFA  
Mary Allen Museum Advisory Board Committee Chair



## **The Honorable Joni Clonts**

Mayor of Crockett

Ex-Officio Member of Mary Allen Museum Board

Mayor Clonts moved to Crockett from Houston in August 1992 after her father died. She is the daughter of Doyle Cook from Porter Springs and Mary Katherine Swearingen-Cook from the Arbor Community. She has always had a passion and love for Crockett and Houston County. This was evident and demonstrated with tears flowing down her cheeks every time she left the area.

She worked in Houston ISD until 1992 and then moved her family to Houston County. Their possessions were only three beds, a few dishes a small table with four chairs and a TV. They moved into a one-room cabin with no running water. The shower was outside on a pine tree and located near the cabin was an “*out-house*”. The limited conveniences did not deter the move to Houston County because they loved the piney woods of East Texas, Houston County. Crockett was now their home.

Clonts received employment after an attorney in Crockett called and offered her a job. Approximately a month later, Realtor Charles Barney informed her of a building on the square that was for sale. She cleaned the dirt off the windows and was amazed that it had a little sandwich shop next to the building. She sought advice from her mother on the business adventure. With a candid and whimsical reply her mother said, “You cannot cook”. Joni purchased the building and sandwich shop and developed entrepreneurial skills and she learned how to manage a cafe. A few years ago, she asked her mother if she thought her father would be pleased with her food business and other accomplishments. Her mother responded emphatically that, “he would be very pleased.”

Her civic involvement and community service consist of: President of the Davy Crockett Pilot Club, President of the Downtown Beautification Committee for 12 years, organizer of the first Fourth of July Parade, Crockett Housing Authority Board member for two terms, and Chairman of the Houston County Republican Party since 1996 organizing all aspects of the Republican Primary. Joni Clonts and Charles Arnold brought back the World Championship Fiddlers Festival. Also, she served on the Crockett Chamber of Commerce Board and received the Citizen of the Year Award in 2015. In May 2017, she was elected the first woman to serve as Mayor of Crockett.

She attends Good Shepherd Fellowship Church and has been a member for nine years. She owns and operates the Moosehead Cafe located in downtown Crockett and the Crockett Printing located next door to the Crockett Post Office.



# Dreaming South.

## A love poem

**Viktor I. Ewing Givens** is a performance artist from Houston TX, who recently relocated to Crockett to steward ancestral lands. Avid writer and sculptor Viktor seeks to share his creative gifts with the Houston County community through his involvement with Mary Allen Museum and

{i} excite when I head read watch once lived story poems-of  
sharecropping-  
cotton picking plucked-  
with bare hands in burlap sacs full of grasshoppers-flutter flies ‘nd weevils wobbling ‘bout  
the treacherous bulb.

emancipations jubilation rings melodic liquid tones of blue red orange green and brown...

Uncle stowing mason jars lined in caning wax preserving servings of persimmons,  
figs,  
peaches  
berries.  
plums ‘nd apple jams to spread on bread baked in wood fed fire ovens , yeast loves rising two  
times two

the commotion of fruit wagons  
milkmen  
dripping molasses.

Penny candies  
And half-cent cookies  
pie cooling in window seals Pecan caramel, apple chess dotted slim slice in delight.

grandma kneads and needs flour for the home hand made hot flaky butta’ biscuits  
as the

cauldron simmers  
black eyed’s turnips  
collards  
mustards  
kale.

papa’s back yawd whiskey and auntie’s hot water cornbread  
processions to those down by the riverside baptisms  
remind me of my reason

gives possibility on as to how life was simplicity  
tightly woven in complexity because those living then feared what life living would be for me in  
the now...

assuming the raptures end.  
revealing revelations of god condemning the souls of those who danced in juke joints-  
exposed their nudity-  
played with their private parts in public -drank bootlegged liquor-  
wore street clothes to church- ate before praying and married after sex.  
the color of blues then still remains the same hue now. Hymns still plead the blood of Jesus Gods  
mercy and amazing grace.

single mothers still sit on the stoop waiting watching for the sun the cast the shadow of his love  
back into her arms and around their offspring  
sunday dinner still warms the stove.

Simple living never changes.

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## **Mary Allen Museum - BOARD MEMBERS**

### **Officers**

Dr. Thelma J. Douglass, President  
Shirley Murray, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Jean Shepherd, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Alicia Bailey, Secretary  
Earlene Clebourn, Treasurer

### **Directors**

Sandra Berry – Mayor Joni Clonts  
Viktor Le Ewing – Loria Ewing-Miles, Ph.D.  
Jeffield Jefferson – Gloria Wooten

### **Advisory Board**

Viktor L. Givens Ewing, Chair  
Barbara A. Wooten – Coordinator Engineer  
Nancy Givens, Retired Educator  
Bridget Lamb, City Employee  
Debra Lamb, Educator  
Chip Miles, Business Entrepreneur  
Elmer Murray, Retired City Administrator  
Soccora Conner Sanders, Intele Travel  
Michelle Barnes, Community Artist Collective  
Andrea Roberts, Texas A&M Freedom Colonies Projects  
Addna Addae, Project Row House  
Anthony J. Suber, the Kincaid School  
Franchelle Lucas, Fre whun Artist Collective



*Mrs. Mary Ester (Thompson) Allen (1837-1886) the Women's for whom "Mary Allen College" Was Named.*

In 1884 The General Assembly authorized the establishment of the Women's Executive Committee of the Board of Missions for Freedmen. Mary Allen (Mrs. Richard H Allen) assumed the position of chairperson of the new organization which had its first meeting in December of 1884.

## Planting and Sowing the Seed of History



**Callie Wynne Braggs**

Sandra Berry recalls how instrumental her mother Callie Braggs was in saving the historical administration building of Mary Allen. Therefore, we revisit and revise an original article submitted by our past president to include the names of community leaders who helped to sow seeds in establishing the Mary Allen Museum.

“Callie Wynne Bragg, one of 10 children of the late Steve and Hattie Wynne, of the Fodice Community in Houston County, graduated from Mary Allen Jr. College in 1943. Her father was a sharecropper. Bragg attended Crockett Colored High School and reported “Of the 43 graduates of her Class of 1943, 90% of the students attended Mary Allen “because it was just right there.” She earned her bachelor’s degree from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas and continued on to attend Atlanta Clark University obtaining a master degree from the University of North Texas. Mrs. Bragg taught in Dallas ISD for 31 ½ years and later began to focus on the restoration of Mary Allen College.

As Founder, and first President of the Mary Allen Museum, Mrs. Bragg gave her all to restore Mary Allen College’s education legacy. *Community leaders who stood by her side or even served on the MAM Board were Mr. Otis Wooten, Mr. Jake Caprilian, Dr. Willie Wooten, Mrs. Agnes Rhoder, Ms. Roberta Mason, Mrs. Steve Lewis, Ms. Jenee, Bragg Guidry, Mrs. Jean Shepherd, Ms. Sandra Berry, Ms. Gloria Wooten, Ms. Cindy Garner, Mr. Nikita Warner, and others.* The thought of Mary Allen having been reduced to a crumbling relic brought her to “tears most of the time,” she once stated. The school closed in 1978 when Mrs. Braggs began the crusade to save what was left of Mary Allen College.

Her goal was to reopen the administration building as a multiethnic arts center and museum that pays tribute to Mary Allen’s history. Mrs. Bragg once said, “I’m trying to plant a tree even though I may never enjoy its shade.” Encouraged by Crockett preservationists and alumni across the country, she organized a board of directors including officials and local citizens, developed a mission statement, received 501c3 status, and launched the first fund-raising campaign to pay off the remaining debt of purchasing the property from a local businessman. The work that she did “Means a lot to us,” said Birdie Houston, alumnae and President of Mary Allen’s Dallas Alumni Chapter. One of the officials who met with Mrs. Bragg during the initial preservation discussions was Eliza Bishop, an 81-year old Crockett resident and Houston County Historical Commission Chairwoman. Ms. Bishop had already worked to list the Mary Allen Seminary on the National Registry of Landmarks in 1978. She joined the Board to help with the mission of restoration. “I grew up on that hill and can remember seeing the little girls going to seminary in their uniforms ... [Mrs. Bragg] has a dream to preserve that history, and I feel we can realize it,” Ms. Bishop told a local reporter.

In 2000, Callie Bragg, Eliza Bishop, and Tim Culp, of the Crockett Economic and Industrial Development Corporation (CEIDC) submitted and received a \$17,500 matching funds grant from the Texas Preservation Trust Fund. Mrs. Bragg also invested more than \$26,000 personally, toward the \$95,000 required to purchase the school’s administration building and surrounding 11.5 acres. The remaining \$34,000 was raised through donations and fundraising events throughout Crockett over a period of 10 years.

By 2001 the campus was overgrown strewn with discarded tires and broken furniture. Today the Board continues work to plant Callie Bragg’s ‘tree.’ It is harvest time for us in the community to help bring the seeds planted for Mary Allen Museum and college concept into fruition.



# Let's Make It Happen! Mary Allen College

## Wall of Honor

Mary Allen College alumni, administrators, faculty, staff, family, and friends

We are extending an invitation for you to share in the commemoration and continual legacy of the beloved Mary Allen College. As part of the initiatives for the 2018-2020 the Mary Allen Museum of African American Art and History, Inc. is developing the Mary Allen College Wall of honor. This is a campaign to help fund the Mary Allen Museum and College Building Restoration.

Recognize a Mary Allen College alumni, administrator, faculty, or staff today on the *Mary Allen College Wall of Honor* in the Mary Allen Heritage House located in Crockett, Texas the official headquarters for the Mary Allen Museum of African American Art & History, Inc. We are excited to display the names of those who graced the hallowed halls of Mary Allen College.

Be instrumental and proactive in keeping the legacy alive of family and friends who attended or worked at Mary Allen College (M. A. C.). As tours are conducted and people visit from across our global society, they will see the names of M. A. C. administrators, faculty, staff, personnel, or students indelibly imprinted on the picturesque plaque on the wall of honor.

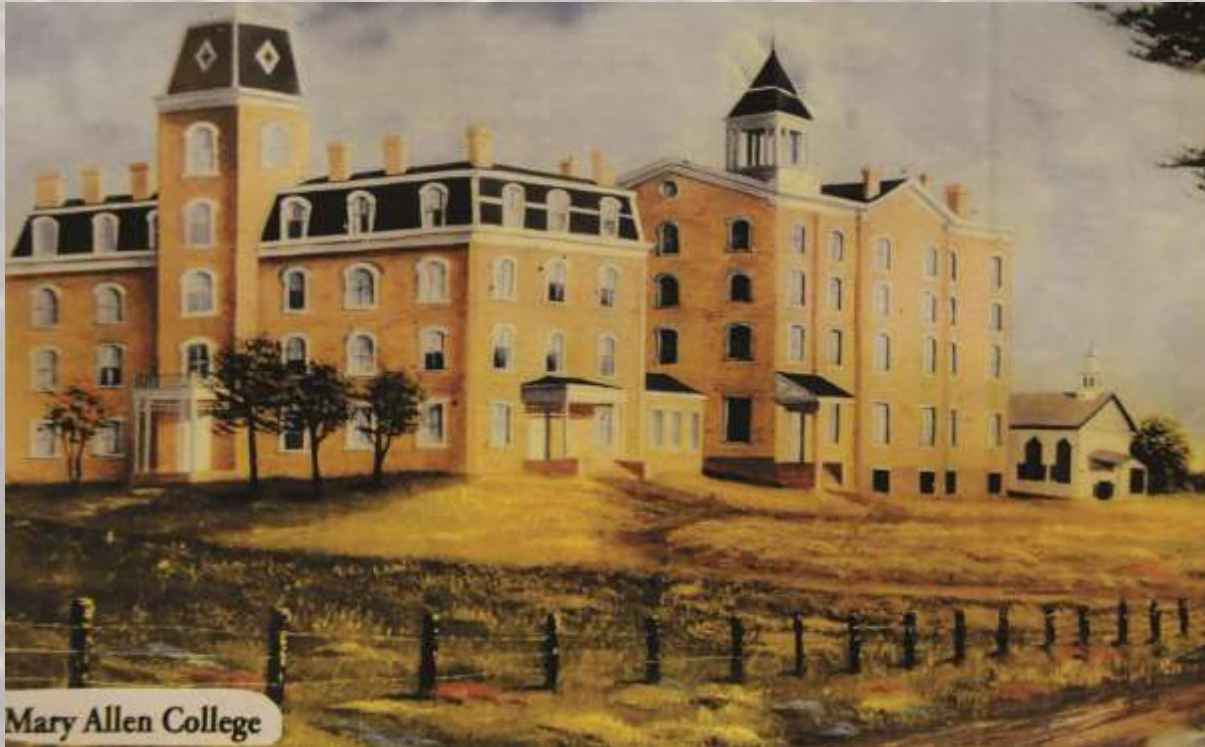
The prices to secure a name on the plaque are \$250 for bronze, \$375 for silver, and \$500 for gold. Please fill out the *Mary Allen College Wall of Honor Commemorative Plaque Order Form* and submit a check, certified fund, or money order to Mary Allen Museum of African American Art and History, INC. in the amount you select for each name to be placed on the wall. Please notify us by email, [maryallenmuseum1986@gmail.com](mailto:maryallenmuseum1986@gmail.com) that you have mailed a payment.

### Mail checks to:

Mary Allen Museum of African American Art & History, Inc.  
c/o Dr. Thelma Douglass  
P. O. Box 324  
Crockett, Texas 75835

*Dr. Thelma Douglass, Project Organizer*  
*Viktor Le Ewing, Project Form Art Organizer*  
*Dr. Thelma Douglass, President*

# Mary Allen College



## WALL OF HONOR COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE ORDER FORM

ORDER INFORMATION: Please print legibly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Check enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (payable to) Mary Allen Museum of African American Art and History, INC.

Certified checks and money orders accepted

PLEASE PRINT: the name and affiliation year of the one to be honored (Plaque name)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Honoree

Year Affiliated