

REMEMBERING UNSUNG HEROES AND SHEROES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN NEW ORLEANS

WBOK Black History Month Interview February 28, 2022
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During the 1960s as New Orleans NAACP Youth Council President, I worked on voter registration drives and picketed for better jobs for African Americans,-- but I did not work **alone!** Many unsung **heroes** and **sheroes** worked with me. **Yet**, no monuments memorialize these pre-teen, high school, and college students:

I remember **Charles Bickham, Tyrone Bordenave, Ferdinand Caliste, Andrea & Noel Casanave, Ethel & Joyce Coston, Brenda Dyer; Gail & Leslie Duralde, Alton, Claude, and Felix Gasper, and Alphonse & Henry Gunn.** Despite marching in the scorching heat and bitter cold, No historic markers celebrate *these stalwart souls*:

Very often you would see **Albert Hadley and the Hales:- Inez & her brother, Roosevelt; I later married Inez. We've been married for 52 years.**

Many siblings were present: **Gordon & Henry Cagnolatti, Dianne, Eileen & Tessie Jackson; Feltus & Joe Nathan Kennedy; Carol & Elaine Lazard; Byron & Vernon Marquez; Hiram, Willie, Yvette, & Yvonne Mason;** as well as **Beverly, Carolyn, & Celine Mitchell,** along with **Barbara Moseley;** the **Mobleys, & Moutons.** I also remember **Lana & Rena Price.**

These were supported by **Cathleen & Cornelius Saul; Marva & Jimmy Smith, Frank, Paul & Stephanie Stewart;** the **Thompson sisters: Alice, Jean, & Shirley,** and their brother, **Pierce;** along with **Barbara & Joan Truehill. Wendel Valteau & Louise Williams often accompanied us. But no streets or buildings proclaim the sterling services of any of these brave warriors:**

We were aided by a number of dedicated NAACP adult members. I salute these dedicated mothers: **Margaret Cloud, Lorraine Poindexter & Madalyn Williams-Cochrane.** They **paid** babysitters so they could walk the picket lines.

Perhaps no one deserved more recognition than **Horace C. Bynum, Sr.** who served the NAACP in many different official capacities for more than six decades. He would leave his drug store to walk the picket line or work voter registration classes. *It has not yet happened, but a prominent **Bynum** street or avenue would not only be appropriate, but long overdue.*

Sometimes, **Arthur J. Chapital, Sr.**, the long-time Adult President/Executive Secretary would march with a sign that carried the slogan of the **1963 March on Washington**, "for Jobs and Freedom." Chapital was the quintessential life-long 7th Warder. There must be some public space or building between Esplanade and Elysians Field Avenues that would be better adorned if Chapital's name was attached to it. I later christened his youngest grandson, my namesake, Raphael J. Chapital.

Our NAACP Youth Council Senior Advisor, **Llewelyn J. Soniat**, was an indefatigable champion. He, along, with his wife, **Novyse**, & their Children, **Donald & Cynthia**, were mainstays of the movement for years. A number of Soniat's nieces and nephews were also there. Soniat would leave the picket line and report to his job at the post office.

Similarly, other postal workers: **Edwin J. Barthé, Joseph Jacques, Sr.**, and **Anderson V. Washington** were there. Other parents walked the line with their children. **Archie Bertrand** and his son were there, along with **Vallery Ferdinand, Jr.** who walked with sons, **Vallery, III** and **Kenneth**. **Irvin Daniel** walked his daughter, **Ida**.

At times, **James C. Lawrence, Sr.** walked with his son, **James Jr.**; **Zach Ramsey** was there with his daughter, **Merle**, and also **Anderson V. Washington** walked his son, **Maurice**.

Drs. Wellington Arnaud and **Walter Young, Jr.** scheduled dental appointments around their picket duties. **Roy Rome, Sr.**, not only provided transportation, but joined his sons, **Roy, Jr., Ronald, Joseph**, and **Norbert**, and three year old daughter, **Belinda**, on the picket line.

Rev. Warren Ray, Sr. painted our picket signs; some which were carried by his own sons: **Warren, Jr. and Ronnie**; and daughters, **Beverly** and **Gwendolyn**. We cannot forget the unselfish works of **Mrs. Annie W. Ramie**, Secretary of the adult branch. She not only walked the picket line, but supplied us with a grocery basket to transport our signs.

Mrs. Ramie also attended youth council meetings and offered encouragement when we needed it most. *None of these adults sought or worked for fame or recognition, but all of them are worthy of more than a token of public acclaim.*

Steadfast and immovable, we were: *black, white, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish*. **Maxine Alfred, Diana Batiste, Maurice and Patricia Boissiere, Buddy Bougere, William Castle, Pamela Dunn, Larry Ellow, Jeanne McGlory, Lloyd Ruffin, Lee Madere, Gwendolyn Perkins, Beverly Toney.**

Some of you may remember: **Jackie Ezidore, Louis Gerdes, Charles Cotton, Yvonne Goff, Donna LaCroix & Charles Swanson; Michael Starks, Leo Laventhal, Lynn Toliver, Jean Howard, Roger Mill, Marian Parmele, Walter Winston, Cecilia Taplett** who sometimes marched along side of **Elmore R. Johnson**, and **Yvonne Goff**,

Raymond DuVernay was there with his future wife, **Adeline Thompson**, along with **Peter Carriere, Bertrand Sudduth** and **Henry Gaspard**. **Marie Bijou Wong** spent long hours joined by sisters, **Agatha, Alfreda**, and **Ursula Bijou**. Their younger sister, **Elaine**, babysat Marie's young daughter. *Bet you won't see any of their names inscribed upon a school.*

*We were never paid;--- only received bus fare, a coke, and a sandwich-- but only if we picketed 4 hours.----*Our real pay was completing a job well done!
And we did!

This list is incomplete, and there are many more un-named soldiers. Many, have already left us. We pray, however, we will meet them again and share in a joyous reunion in eternity in that new land where **"the wicked will cease from troubling and the weary will be at rest."**