

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift every voice and sing, 'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty; Let our rejoicing rise,
High as the list'ning skies, Let it resound loud as the
rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught
us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought
us; Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, Let us
march on 'til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been
watered, We have come, treading our path through the
blood of the slaughtered, Out from the gloomy past, 'Til
now we stand at last. Where the white gleam of our bright
star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might, Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we
met Thee, Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the
world, we forget Thee; Shadowed beneath Thy hand, May
we forever stand, True to our God, True to our native
land.



Orange County
African American
Historical Society

2024 Eclipse Awards Banquet



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024

4:30 pm Reception

5:30 pm. Dinner



Orange County High School
201 Selma Road
Orange, Virginia 22960

OCAAHS Mission Statement

The Orange County African American Historical Society (OCAAHS) was founded in 2000 to explore African American contributions to the cultural and historical heritage of Orange County, Virginia. We also seek to enhance and promote awareness of the accomplishments and contributions of people of African descent as organic and essential components of our community, and of our nation, at large. Toward those ends, we endeavor to identify, research, and preserve African American legacies, lore, and historical sites.

Visit our website @ ocaahs.org

OCAAHS Board of Directors

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Membership

Support OCAAHS through membership and donations. Scan here for more membership information.



Orange County African American Historical Society

Thank you for
supporting our mission

Historic Germanna

James Madison's Montpelier

Montpelier Descendant Committee

James Madison's Montpelier

Orange County Tourism Department

OCHS African American Club

The Art Center in Orange

OCAAHS Logo



The Orange County African American Historical Society was established to explore and celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the cultural and historical heritage of Orange County, Virginia. Our mission is to raise awareness of the achievements and roles of individuals of African descent, recognizing them as vital and integral parts of both our community and the nation. To achieve this, we focus on identifying, researching, and preserving African American legacies, stories, and historical sites.

The new logo features tree roots that outline the continent of Africa, while the leaf canopy resembles the state of Virginia, highlighted by an orange spot representing Orange County. This new design was created by local talent, Anthony J. Owens, who is currently majoring in Architectural Drafting and Design and Construction Management and Engineering at Norfolk State University.



Save the Date



OCAAHS Annual Meeting

February 16, 2025

The Art Center in Orange
129 E. Main Street | Orange, VA 22960

Annual Juneteenth Celebration

June 2025

Church Street Commemorative Park



Please consider nominating a youth, to age 25, or an adult in our community who has dedicated their time and energy which aligns with the mission of Orange County African American Historical Society.

Submissions open February 2025 on our website.

Program

Welcome	President Bruce Monroe
Dinner & Blessing of the food	Rev. Robert Anthony
Statement of Purpose Introduction of Mistress of Ceremonies	President Bruce Monroe Pa'Trice L. Day Owens
Special Presentation	Office of Rep. Abigail Spanberger
Presentation of Eclipse Class of 2024	Mistress of Ceremonies and the OCAAHS BOD
History of the Black National Anthem	Mistress of Ceremonies
"Lift Every Voice and Sing" (Lyrics on back cover)	All, led by Ivan Orr
Closing Prayer	Rev. Darryle Crump



Musical Entertainment

Ivan Orr is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, performer, and writer. A native of Charlottesville, Virginia, Ivan was involved with the forming and nascent days of The Music Resource Center as its first Program Director. A graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Music, Ivan has returned to Charlottesville, Virginia where he teaches Audio Production at Albemarle High School and maintains an active performance and production schedule. Ivan serves as the Music Editor for Grown Folks Music, a position he has held since 2010.





Seidah Armstrong



Seidah Armstrong is considered a serial entrepreneur. Currently, she owns Sweet Vines Farm Winery, STREAM Bright Educational Services, and Shear Luxe Hair Studios. She is the previous owner of STEM Tot Preschool Academy and the author of ABC's STEM & Me: An Alphabet Book on STEM Careers. She was also vice president of the government contracting firm Performance Management Services, a middle school principal, a school administrator, and a high school teacher.

In 2016, Seidah decided to turn her winemaking hobby into a part-time career, opening the doors of Sweet Vines Farm Winery in winter 2021. A third-generation winemaker from Chicago, by way of Memphis and Mississippi, Seidah takes pride in curating experiences that tell the story of her family and the local African American Orange County community.

In the male-dominated agritourism industry, where African Americans have a rare presence and African American Women represent .0001 percent of participants, Seidah is the first African American Woman Primary winemaker who owns a vineyard, winery, and venue in Virginia.

Seidah is the 2022 recipient of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Entrepreneurship Award and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She resides on her 100-acre farm with her husband and niece.

Always an orator and a product of famed educator, Marva Collins, Westside Preparatory, Seidah is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana and George Mason University. She completed certification from the School Superintendents Association's Aspiring Superintendents Academies and received her viticultural certification from Purdue University.

DONORS

An Anonymous Donor

Gloria Gilmore

Mary Freeman

Ruth Long in Memory of George Long



Special Thank You's!

Orange County High School

Catering by Turner Gurlz

Decorations: In A Day's Work & Esther Woodard

Web design by Deb Newman, Petite Taway, Inc.

Music by Ivan Orr

2024 Eclipse Banquet Sponsors

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Dr. Dena Jennings



Dena Jennings, D.O. is a luthier, musician, writer, Virginia Master Naturalist, and Internal Medicine physician with certification in Ayurvedic practice. In addition to over 30 years of medical practice, she completed a 4-year apprenticeship in Ontario, Canada, to build gourd instruments of cultures around the world.

She and her husband live in Nasons on an organic herb farm and meditation center they lovingly call the Farmashramonastery. There, she practices medicine and counseling, hosts retreats, hikes, and weekly meditation, harvests herbs for her apothecary, and raises chickens. She also performs nationally demonstrating her gourd instruments as they are used in her Appalachian and Bengali heritage.

In 2018, she founded The Affrolachian On-Time Music Gathering, an annual music festival. In 2019, she was appointed by the governor to the Virginia Commission for the Arts, later serving as chair. In response to global humanitarian crises, in 2023, she established "Sing Peace," a local gathering every Wednesday in Commemoration Park. She also established the Ukulele Society of Nasons.

Dr. Jennings conducts conflict transformation workshops, including one for artistic ambassadors through the US State Department. She has developed accredited curricula for racial justice meditation, compassionate listening, and cultural sensitivity in artistic performance.

She is founder and Executive Director of Imani Works Corporation, a human rights advocacy group with consultative status for the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs. She previously served on several local boards and worked with the Boys and Girls Club, while maintaining a solo medical practice in downtown Orange.



Wendy Rivas



Jennifer, also known as "Wendy" Rivas, is a compassionate and kind individual with a warm and infectious laughter that radiates joy. Her positive energy and uplifting presence leave a lasting impact on everyone she encounters.

Known for her exceptional caregiving skills, Wendy consistently goes above and beyond in her role. Her dedication led to her being awarded the 2023 Being Excellent Everyday (BEE) Award by the Nursing Professional Governance Office. This award recognizes outstanding support team members who collaborate with nursing teams to provide expert and compassionate care.

Wendy's unwavering commitment to delivering top-notch care to her patients sets her apart from her colleagues. She treats everyone with dignity and kindness, irrespective of their race, gender, or abilities. Sharing her faith brings her immense joy, especially during her work at the hospital, where she spreads positivity and comfort. As a valued member of the UVA medical center team, Wendy's contributions have not gone unnoticed. Patients, families, colleagues, and the community all appreciate her efforts and the light she brings into their lives.

Hall of Eclipse Award Honorees

The Annual OCAAHS Eclipse Awards recognize those who have advanced awareness of the rich cultural and historical heritage of OC's African American community.

2018

(Inaugural Year)

Carolyn French
Deacon Edmond Harrison Jr.
Clara Ellis Payne
Ruth Lewis Smith
Laura Thompson

2019

Phyllis A. Highland
George and Ruth Long
Irene M. Spotswood
George L. Taylor
Jane H. Ware

2020

James Monroe Jr.
Eva Starks
Margaret Ware
Mary White

YOUTH

(New Category)

Abena Sekum Appiah-Ofori
Myles Johnson

2021

Barbara Ann Johnson
Pastor Frank Lewis, Sr.
Emily Winkey

YOUTH

O'Brian Martin
Nia Robinson

2022

Rebecca Gilmore Coleman
Jane Ware Johnson
Flossie Jones
Jeff Poole

YOUTH

Donea Brooks
Anthony J. Owens

2023

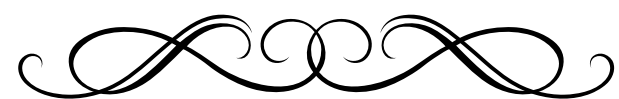
Gloria J. Gilmore
Jesse Magruder
Mary Minkoff
Ernestine Reid

YOUTH

Juliet Daniel
Sakhile Mthetwa



Theresa Collins Williams



Theresa Collins Williams embodies the spirit of service and compassion. She also places great importance on preserving and celebrating African American cultural heritage. For 20 years, she has been chair of Blue Run Baptist Church's Black History Month Program, an educational and celebratory event highlighting the history and talents of church members and guests. She brings history to life, ensuring the younger generation understands and appreciates their roots. At Blue Run Baptist, Theresa is also a deaconess, treasurer, and choir member.

She always makes time for her family, sharing Sunday dinners filled with laughter and stories from the past. Her home is a testament to her love for history, adorned with photographs and memorabilia that tell the rich story of her life and the lives she has touched. She often says that her greatest achievement is the love and respect she receives from her community, which she holds dear to her heart.

After graduating from George Washington Carver Regional High School, Theresa worked for Marion duPont Scott at Montpelier, conveniently located next door to Jacksontown, her lifelong community. From Montpelier, she joined American Woodmark where she worked for 32 years before retiring.

Theresa remains hopeful for the future, believing in the power of kindness and dedication to making the world a better place. Her life is a testament to the difference one individual can make, inspiring others to follow in her footsteps and continue the legacy of service and compassion.



Denise Cooper Thompson



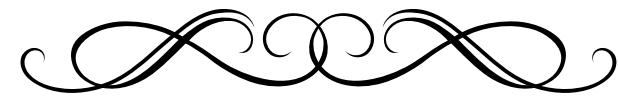
Denise Thompson is the owner of Coopers Cookin and Catering LLC. Her commitment to service is reflected in the events and initiatives she proudly organizes each year. The Annual Community Give Back Day event brings the community together to support and uplift one another. She also uses this event to thank patrons for their continued support throughout the year. Her business celebrates the community with good food and amazing entertainment totally FREE to the public. Denise also hosts an annual Christmas Day Feed the Homeless event that provides a hot meal to those less fortunate, ensuring that no one feels alone for the holiday season.

Beyond these events, Denise is dedicated to supporting our local heroes and youth through donations to the rescue squad, free clinic, and contributions to our school athletic department. These efforts reflect her deep belief that when we come together as a community, we can overcome any challenge and build a brighter future for all.

Denise is grateful and humbled to be nominated alongside such inspiring people. She is proud of the work she does and the impact it has on the community. This recognition is encouragement to continue serving and investing in the lives of others, staying true to the belief that giving back is not just an act of kindness but a responsibility we all share.



Robert Wade “JD Slade”



Robert “JD Slade” Wade has served over 50 years as an Orange County radio disc jockey and host on WJMA.

At just sixteen, Bob entered the WJMA radio station, expressing his desire to become a disc jockey. Bob recalls that the preparation was far from glamorous. He spent months reading copy into a microphone to work on pronunciation. After persistent effort, Bob finally got his chance to go on air.

He has since hosted over 10,000 morning shows across the United States, working at WTON in Staunton, as a music director at Culpeper’s WCVA, and at WFIC in Philadelphia for eight years before returning to Orange as J. D. Slade.

Bob has become a beloved figure in the community, known for his distinctive voice, engaging on-air presence, and genuine connection with listeners. He has seen many changes in the industry, from the advent of digital streaming to the consolidation of radio networks. Yet, he remains a steadfast advocate for local content, ensuring that the voices and stories of Orange County are heard, fostering a sense of community and belonging. His show was more than just a source of information; it was a daily ritual for many, starting their day on a positive note.

Bob credits his success to the support of his family, friends, and loyal listeners. He is excited to continue his journey in radio, embracing new technologies while staying true to the heart of what makes his show special: the people.



Alyssa Waller



Alyssa Waller is a passionate, hard-working woman who puts passion and care for others into everything she does. As a mother of two sons, she believes the history of African Americans needs to be passed onto future generations and that African American history is inadequately addressed in our educational system. Black History Month prompts obligatory Black History programs, but the significance of Black History merits deeper inclusion in our curriculum, and rectifying historical inaccuracies is paramount. To this end, Alyssa has taken the initiative to press this matter with the Orange County School Board. By enlightening an adult audience, she hopes a ripple effect will foster dialogue about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Alyssa is a board member of the Orange County Academic Scholar Institute (ASI), dedicated to helping young men of color graduate from high school and pursue college matriculation and successful careers. She has also served on the Minority Advisory Board and the Minority Task Force for Orange County Public Schools. She is also a member of the Orange County Branch of the NAACP, serving on the youth committee.

Alyssa was twice honored with the OCPS “Above and Beyond” award. Former Superintendent Brenda Tanner called her the “unofficial school mom of OC.” In 2022, she co-hosted the first Multicultural Festival in Orange County. Within the UVA community, Alyssa is part of the Black Faculty and Staff Employee Resource Group, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), and DEI Committee for the Pediatrics Department.