Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation Membership

Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation is a non-profit organization formed by descendants of the 623 African American uninformed men from Tuskegee/Macon County, Alabama who were victims of physical and social abuse in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee and Macon County, Alabama for forty years, 1932-1972. If you have not joined the Foundation, please consider doing so. And, if you have already joined, please recruit other family members, friends and supporters. The membership form is below.

Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation
Descendants of the 623 Men in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee & Macon County, Alabama

Membership Form
Yearly Dues...$25.00 per person

(please print)

Name First                                    Middle                              Last

Address Street                                 City                                Zip Code

Telephone (              ) ____________________________E-mail _____________________________________________

Name of Person in the USPHS Syphilis Study
Your Relation to Him
Supporter

The purposes for dues:
1. To build a lasting tribute to the 623 men who were victims of the Syphilis Study. The family members have been given an appropriate outdoor area at the Bioethics Center to develop a Memory and Inspiration Garden to Honor and Remember Our Fathers.
2. To insure that Family members remain closely connected to Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care and inform Family members of the Annual Commemoration of the 1997 Presidential Apology held at Tuskegee University.
3. To insure the sustainability of Voices of Our Fathers Legacy Foundation so that Our Fathers Voices are kept alive.
4. To continue collecting photos of the men and stories about them and their families.
5. To develop an annual scholarship program for descendants.
6. To publish Voices for Our Fathers Newsletter bi-annually and assist with administrative expenses.

Make Checks or Money Orders payable to: Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation
Donations gladly accepted _________________________________________________________________

Send To Either Officer Below:
Maggie Antoine, Secretary
2904 Perry Street
Tuskegee, Alabama 36088

Joyce Pollard Williams, Treasurer
3321 Cross Ridge Rd.
Montgomery, Alabama 36116

Thank You!

Decades after realizing the horror from immense unethical and racist, physical abuse, mental anguish and social injustice, descendants of the 623 African American male victims in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study are uplifting their Fathers’ legacies for a greater purpose. Several dedicated and passionate descendants united and founded Voices for Our Fathers’ Legacy Foundation in 2014 to honor the sacrifices of these heroic men, tell their untold stories, and transform the legacy of the Syphilis Study in Tuskegee/ Macon County, Alabama. The Foundation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization with a membership of 50 and includes descendants and supporters.

Because of the exemplary professional and committed leadership of Dr. Rueben Warren, Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation have formed a strong partnership with the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care at Tuskegee University. Together, we are making sure that this infamous study is told now and remembered forever. At every opportunity descendants provide interviews; utilized social and mass media; write articles for Ethical Journal; and identify and visit grave-sites of these beloved men. Mr. Leo Ware has designed a beautiful Legacy Crest for the Foundation. Many of the descendants have participated annually in the 1997 Presidential Apology Commemoration. However, more descendants are encouraged to participate in the healing and sharing with families their stories at this exciting Annual event. The Foundation publishes bi-annual newsletters that have featured some of the men’s pictures and highlighted their legacies. There are hundreds of men’s stories yet to be honed and told. To include your loved one’s story email Lillie, lilewh@aol.com or call 540-238-1030. In addition, Voices for Our Fathers Newsletter informs descendants about the state of the Foundation, upcoming events and its partnership with the National Center for Bioethics. At the 2017 Commemoration Luncheon the Foundation expects to announce the name of our first recipient of Our Fathers’ Legacy Scholarship to a young descendant attending college. The leadership Team is excited about the possibility of sponsoring a Community Healing and Memorial Candlelight Service on the descendants’ 2017 Day of Healing. Descendants have planted a Crepe Myrtle tree and roses in the dedicated Memorial and Inspiration Garden located at the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care. This special Garden will be a place for remembrance, reflections, revelations and serenity.
Dr. Joan R. Harrell,  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND VISITING SCHOLAR  
Tuskegee University  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOETHICS  
IN RESEARCH AND HEALTH CARE

Descendants of the unethical U.S. Public Health ServiceSyphilis Study at Tuskegee saw their fathers’ medical records for the first time.

At 6:00 a.m. on April 11, 2016, during National Public Health Month and National Minority Health Month, when the United States’ public health community observed the theme, Accelerating Health Equity for the Nation, children, sisters, brothers, grandchildren and great-great grandchildren and other relatives of the African American men in Tuskegee and Macon County, AL, who were unethical engaged in the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee, boarded a bus to travel to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Archives their relatives’ medical records for the first time.

According to Lille Head, daughter of Freddie Lee Tyson, one of more than 600 men in the study, she and other descendants founded Voices for Our Fathers, “Historically, this will be the first time ever, 30 descendants will travel to The National Archives in Morrow, GA to research their fathers, grandfathers or uncles’ original medical records that will date back to the 1930’s. Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation was organized in 2014 by descendants of the 623 African American men that were victims in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study in Tuskegee/Macon County, Alabama.”

I had the privilege to travel on the bus with the descendants to the National Archives. It was a humbling experience to be in the presence of the women, men and great grandchildren as they opened the patient index cards to see their fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, great grandfathers and church members’ names typed on lists titled “Living” or “Dead.”

One family member who asked to remain anonymous told me, “While traveling to the National Archives on the bus this morning, I didn’t know what to expect. I felt excited and I felt a sense of not knowing. But now that I am here looking at my father’s records and looking at the photos of how some of the men’s bodies were prodded and observed, I have so many more questions.”

We only had a few hours to review the medical records which revealed a life time of questions that still must be answered about the unethical United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee, which was the result and is evidence of racist based medical research.

1. Share information at different activities:
   A. Reunions
      a. Family
      b. School/class
      c. TJU Homecoming
      d. Any vacation trips
   B. Social Media
      a. GroupMe
      b. Facebook:
         facebook.com/www.voices4ourfathers
      c. Twitter
         twitter.com/TuskegeeLegacy
d. LinkedIn

2. Church Family, Media, School, Fitness
   A. Ask permission to place announcements in your church bulletin
   B. Anyone who has/have family or friends associated with TV/Radio media or Newspaper (ask if you may get 10 minutes on talk show to explain what we are about.) Put articles in paper, run for several weeks.
   C. Volunteering at schools or senior groups… spread the word… tell about Tuskegee and the “Healing Descendants” of the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study on Black Men in Macon County, AL is taking place in Partnership with The National Bioethics Center in Research and Health Care at Tuskegee University.
   D. Health and Fitness Club (networking)

3. Incentives
   a. Be able to hand out a 1-cup, T-shirt, lanyard, fan, ink pin or booklet to people who become a member.

MEMBERSHIP TRI-CHAIRS
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Special thanks to Mrs. Florine Edwards for serving as Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation’s membership chairwoman for the past two years. Under her leadership and direction she guided us through the first membership recruitment of 50 members. Due to personal commitments Florine is unable to continue serving in this capacity. Sincerest thanks and appreciation Florine for your dedication and hard work.

Theilene F. D. Williams, Evelle Gaston and Peggy F. Tatum have graciously agreed to accept this position as Tri-Chairs of the Membership Committee. Thank you Theilene, Evelle and Peggy for your willingness to serve and continue moving the Foundation forward.

Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Baums has volunteered to be the Public Relations chairman. Thank you Rev. Baums for your dedications.

MEMBERS OF THE 2016-2017
FAMILY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Lillie Head, President – Wirtz, VA
Maggie Antoine, Secretary – Tuskegee, AL
Joyce Williams, Treasurer – Montgomery, AL
Carmen Head, Policy – Alexandria, VA
Emma Sinclair Willis, Program Coordinator – Opeika, AL
Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Baums, Public Relations – Syracuse, NY
Evelle Gaston, Membership Tri-Chair – Cleveland, OH
Peggy F. Tatum Membership Tri-Chair – Atlanta, GA
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1997 Presidential Apology  
ANNUAL COMMEMORATION LUNCHEON

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2016-2017
Dr. Ajeerah Haynes and I are working with Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation to do oral histories that will tell the stories of the men and families affected by the infamous United States Public Health Service Tuskegee Study. We are working with families to do oral histories that will tell the stories of the men and their families. The key references made about the men, who were the victims of the study, only suggest they were “poor, black, uneducated, sharecroppers.” However, this totally misrepresents who these men were, the important roles they played in their communities, and how they loved their families and their communities. A focus on the men’s disenfranchisement also neglects to tell the whole story of how the study has directly and indirectly impacted their wives, children, grandchildren, and future generations. The suffering experienced by the men and their families due to the debilitating effects of the disease and early loss of life has never been fully addressed. The struggles of families trying to deal with the impact of this horrific social injustice have yet to be acknowledged. We hope to provide a voice for the families to tell the world, who these men were, who the families are, and the pain families have suffered. We hope these discussions will aid in the families’ road to healing and will bring public awareness of the loss to humanity as well as the urgent need to be constantly vigilant against horrific abuse of all humans.

Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation sponsored a historical tour to the Centers for Disease Control National Archives in Morrow, GA on April 11, 2016 for 27 descendants of the men in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study. Drs. Ed and Anne Wimberly, moderators of the Descendants’ healing sessions, also visited the Archives with us along with Dr. Arvilla Payne Jackson and Ms. Deborah Gray.

Personally seeing, for the first time, the medical records of “Our Fathers”, filled us with many deep mixed emotions. We sensed their spiritual presence. We felt a sense of empowerment, because in our hands and before our eyes, we were reading the medical histories of “Our Fathers”. We were eager to read every file and see all those painful and disturbing pictures. We were disappointed in the amount of time that was allotted for viewing the files. We felt anger upon seeing that little or no health care was provided when the men complained of other serious health issues. We felt deep sorrow and pain for their sufferings and for the sacrifices they endured for 40 years, all the while not knowing their fate and trusting in unethical and deceitful medical professionals.

This tour was a powerful experience. Some of the information we received from “Our Fathers” records will help us to understand what they had to endure during these years of medical abuse and neglect. All of us are now inspired to do more. We will never forget what happened to them and why. Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation is committed to ensuring that this cruel and dehumanizing study will never happen again. This unprecedented tour is important for our personal healing and Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation first collective effort in seeking more facts and truths as descendants.

To learn more about these medical records, descendants are encouraged to visit or contact the CDC National Archives South East Region at atlanta.archives@nara.gov; or call 770-968-2100.
The year 2016, is providing tremendous opportunity to continue to build community between the descendant family members and the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care (National Bioethics Center). Since the 2015 Commemoration Anniversary much has occurred. On February 11, 2016, during Black History Month, the popular press magazine, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, published an article featuring the descendant family members fighting to keep the memory of their fathers alive. The descendant family members have established the Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation to support their activities. On April 11, 2016, many of the descendant family members visited the National Archives in Morrow, GA, to research their fathers’, grandfathers’, and/or uncles’ original records that date back to the 1930’s. Since the visit, I have spoken with some people at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, and they indicated that they were pleased that the descendant families decided to visit the Archives. I encourage all of us to follow up on this visit. I am sure that there is much to learn and to share.

One of the lessons learned from the 2015 Commemoration Anniversary was the importance of family. Yet clearly understanding what family entails has been a challenge, particularly in the context of the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. There are important unanswered questions about blood line family, blended family, extended family, etc. that remain. After much discussion at the National Bioethics Center and among the descendant family members and others, we agreed to conduct a full-fledged study about family. Since that time, the National Bioethics Center and the descendant family members are working with Howard University on a multiphase project to determine how family was defined related to the Syphilis Study, how family members work together to address common interest, and how family members are working with Howard University to conduct a full-fledged study about family. Since that visit, I have spoken with some persons at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, and they indicated that they were pleased that the descendant family members and others attending the late breaker were engaged in intense discussions during the panel presentations on how to demystify the Syphilis Study and clarify the truth about the men in the study. We expect the students to continue their interest in the work of the descendant family members and the National Bioethics Center. The Public Health Ethics Intensive Course gathered an empowered group of scholars to discuss several issues related to family to include, but not limited to: the importance of the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee and the development of Institutional Review Boards (IRB), Public Health Policy Impacting on Families and Communities, the Evolution of Family, Nation to Nation: Family to Family, School as an Extension of Family, from Family to Gang to Prison, Religion, Ethnicity and Identity. One of the most exciting presentations was from Mrs. Lillie Head, one of the descendant family members. It was empowering to hear Mrs. Head respond to a keynote address with authority, precision and commitment.

This issue of the Voices for Our Fathers newsletter continues to honor the legacy of the men who were in the Syphilis Study. Equally as important, the newsletter shares the plans that the descendant family members have to honor their fathers. There are unique stories about the men who were in the study that only a family member could know and tell. The newsletter is the unique place to read about the authentic, extraordinary and, at time, the emotional journeys of the men who were in the Syphilis Study and their families. Some of the stories are historic and some are current. However, all of the stories in this issue and in the other issues tell incredible stories about incredible people.

Sincerely,
Rueben C. Warren DDS, MPH, Dr. P.H., M.Div.
Director of the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care