Facing Challenges
Lillie Tyson - Head, President

The world as we have known it has changed dramatically over the past five months due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the recent tragic deaths of Mr. George Floyd, Ms. Breonna Taylor, and Mr. Ahmaud Arbrey. These public health crises have turned our lives into a state of emergency. We all have had to make extreme physical, social, and emotional changes. No parts of our everyday normal practices are untouched. Equal justice and humane treatment are being demanded with daily protesters, dignity and respect should be a guarantee for us all.

Because of social distancing and stay at home orders, religious worship services were interrupted causing despair and anxiety. Face to face visits with our families and friends caused drastic challenges and financial hardships. The fear of not being able to return to our familiar and comfortable lifestyles faded positive outlooks. Will we have the vision, courage, and fortitude to make the changes necessary today that will ensure a better tomorrow? Indeed, We Will! We must remain steadfast in bringing about change in a racist society. Philippians (4:13) boldly assures that, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

There are many times during our lifetime, devastating situations rock our world. Events are postponed and cancelation of special events occurs. The historical and extreme onset of COVID-19 early this year is an example of such a time. We all were eagerly anticipating traveling to Tuskegee, Alabama to honor the legacy of the 623 African American men unethically and immorally treated in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee and Macon County from 1932 -1972. The 7th Annual Descendants Day of Healing, Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation 3rd Annual Scholarship Banquet; the 21st National 1997 Presidential Apology Commemoration Luncheon Banquet; and the National Center of Bioethics in Research and Health Care Public Health Ethics Intensive; all at Tuskegee University were abruptly halted this year, March 23 – 27. The disruption of these important events were very disappointing to everyone especially the descendants. This was the first time since 1999 family members were not able to greet each other with love and in solidarity. We were unable to share untold stories, and honor the legacies of our beloved ancestors. The postponement of this auspicious occasion was crucial and prevented exposure to possible life or death situations. We as descendants are looking forward to meeting again soon. Until then, we are continuing to remain steadfast transforming the USPHS Syphilis Study.

Voices For Our Fathers Legacy Foundation Board of Directors have continued to work hard. All plans for the 2020 Family Day of Healing, Morning Devotion, Meditation and Reflection, tour of the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial of Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL, Annual Meeting, Memorial Service, Silent Auction, Scholarship Banquet and Candle Lighting Ceremony were scheduled as part of the descendants’ special day. Added to our schedule this year was a Town Hall Meeting to be presented by descendants and VFOFLF at Tuskegee History Center in Tuskegee on March 23. And as always, we were anticipating learning while interacting with scholars at the Public Health Ethics Intensive.

My pray and hope is that each of us be extremely careful, stay safe and stay healthy during these extraordinarily difficult times.

Stay in Faith and Be Well

Lillie Head, President
Could anyone have imagined that our “ordinary life would be changed into an extraordinary life” when the Coronavirus came on the scene. I myself believe that this uncertain hiatus in my life was a blessing from Our Almighty God. Our world has gone through many changes over the decades. We have all gone astray like sheep. Our shepherd, the Good Shepherd wants us to come back to him with all our hearts and minds.

Springtime took on a totally different significance. It’s as if the birds sounded more chipper, the sky became so blue and clear, the clouds so white and puffier, the flowers’ color more intense, the sun shone so much brighter, the moon glowed like a shining crystal ball, the green leaves of the trees were more green. Did you notice? I thanked God for His creation daily and arose to seek the quietness of the morning sunrise, chirping birds, neighbors waddling ducks, and the solace of prayer in my own “war room.” Yes, I stopped literally to smell the roses and relish the goodness of Lord.

As a wife, mother, sister, aunt, cousin and grandmother I was able to interact with my family on a different level. Our relationships became more attentive, more appreciative, more loving, more giving, more joyful, and more tolerant. I believe Our Almighty God wanted us to just slow down, get off the fast train of life and become the sons and daughters He created us to be. Did we recognize the importance of these encounters? I’m thankful that the train stopped and all of us had to stop and reflect on our life’s journey. Are we satisfied where our life journey is going? Do I want to make some changes? Do you want to make some changes? Our Almighty Father is giving us time to reflect now and as we go forward, and let’s make those changes and seek His loving care as we return to Him, our Good Shepherd.
Congratulations
2020 Voices For Our Fathers
Legacy Foundation Scholarships Winners
Each recipient has been awarded
$700.00 for the 2020 -2021 Academic Year.
Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher, Scholarship Committee Chair
Mrs. Joann Deck, Assistant

Madison Franks
Indianapolis, Indiana 46229
Warren Central
High School Senior
Kentucky State University
Biology Major
Lineage
Mr. Warren Julkes - Great Grandfather
Mr. Albert Julkes and Mr. Ephrom Julkes – Great Uncles

Kristen Josephs
Tampa, FL 33602
University of South Florida
Petersburg, FL
Premedical Student
Lineage
Mr. David Foster - Granduncle

Zenae Lewis
Hartford, CT 06114
Berlin High School Senior
2020-2021 Freshman
Southern Connecticut State University – New Haven, CT
Healthcare Studies Major
Lineage

JaMyia McNeil
Tuskegee, Alabama 36083
Booker T Washington High School Senior
2020 - 2021 Freshman
Tuskegee University
Animal Science Major
Lineage
Mr. Lee Kelly

Sean C. Walters
Stamford, Connecticut 06905
University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT
Sophomore
Biomedical Engineering Major
Lineage
Mr. Freddie Lee Tyson – Great Grandfather

Brycen Whitaker
Fairfield, California 94533
Vanden High School Senior
Biology Major
Lineage
Mr. Albert Robinson
Mrs. Lillie Tyson Head, Dr. Rueben Warren and Dr. Arvilla Payne-Jackson attended the Ethnography and Qualitative Research Conference and the American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences Conferences held in Las Vegas, Nevada on February 24-25, 2020. These conferences were well attended by scholars, researches, doctors and graduate students from across the country.

Mrs. Lillie Tyson Head, Descendant and President of VFOFLF represented the Legacy Foundation and presented a poster display, “Transforming The Legacy from Trauma to Honor”.

The poster detailed how descendants have gone from the trauma to that of honoring the legacies of their ancestors. The VFOFLF Crest designed and created by Mr. Leo Ware, 2nd generation descendant, was the center panel on the poster and statements by Ms. Ambria Walker, 3rd generation descendant, were also included. Dr. Payne-Jackson contributed immensely to the development of this exemplary poster.

Dr. Arvilla Payne-Jackson, Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminology, Howard University, Washington, DC presented scholarship on: The Descendants’ Untold Stories of the Impact of The United States Public Health Service Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male (1932-1972) in Tuskegee and Macon County, Alabama.

Dr. Rueben Warren, Professor and Director, National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care, Tuskegee University presented in lector scholarship on; Trustworthiness and Trust.
I am always honored to share my feeling and thoughts in the Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation (VFOLF) regularly, published newsletter. To include me in the newsletter is both a pleasure and an obligation to keep the lines of communication open between the descendant family members and the National Bioethics Center. More than ever, your newsletter is an essential way to stay in communication; thank you! President McNair is back! We are thankful that she has returned to her leadership role at Tuskegee University. We thank Dr. Ruby Perry, Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, for her tenure as Acting President. She did an extraordinary job!

I pray that none of the descendant family members, your family and friends have been infected by the coronavirus. Painfully, April 9, 2020, Dr. Bailus Walker was infected and died from the coronavirus. Many of you surely remember him. He spoke at every Public Health Ethics course until a few years ago, when his health would not allow him to travel from Washington DC to Tuskegee University. Dr. Walker is my dear friend. We have worked together, for nearly 40 years. He is a giant in public health. Dr. Walker rewrote the proposal that started the MPH Program that the descendant family members wanted at Tuskegee University. I speak of him in the presence because, I believe, even though he is no longer physically here with us, as long as we call his name, he lives. We will continue his work!

In order to stay healthy and safe, where possible, we must abide by the public health guidelines to protect ourselves and those whom we care about. Please practice physical distancing, wash your hands regularly, with soap and water for at least 20 minutes, and stay home, if possible. The recommendation for social distancing is not healthy, particularly for Black people. For many of us, being socially and spiritually connected are essential to our well-being. The media, particularly the social media, allows us to see and talk to each other, frequently. Our faith tradition demands that we stay in close contact with GOD our religious and faith beliefs, which permit us to see beyond our current conditions to the ones that bring, abounded love, prefect peace, divine harmony, and good well.

I recognize abiding by every public health guideline is not possible for everyone. But everyone, can wash their hands, find and wear a mask; some of us elect to selectively, use gloves. Please do the best that you can! The coronavirus has not changed, but we must change, if we expect to stay healthy and do the work of your Foundation. Please listen to the people whom you trust. Everybody, unfortunately, is not trustworthy. There is much information about the reopening of the states, cities and local communities for the sake of the economy. In my view, we must not view a healthy community or a healthy economy. They both can, and must co-exist. "Both and", instead of "either or" is the mantra. In fact, healthy people promote and sustain healthy communities, which in turn build a healthy economy. When we open communities too soon, essential frontline workers, who are disproportionately Black and Brown, are at the greatest risk of harm from the coronavirus. While some of us are blessed to work from home, many of our people are not. To discuss the safety of health professionals, such as physicians and nurses, in the same protection conversations with hospital janitorial workers, is not a reasonable proposition. The risks and rewards are not equal. Both groups should be recognized and rewarded for their work, but the two groups are not the same proposition.

The risks and rewards are not equal. Both groups should be recognized and rewarded for their work, but the two groups are not the same.

The 2020 Commemoration has been postponed, not cancelled. Tuskegee University is working through how and when the university will reopen. Many of us have been on remote work schedules, but the work continue. The National Bioethics faculty, staff and student are doing incredible jobs during the coronavirus pandemic crisis. Under the leadership of Dr. David Hodge and Ms. Robyn White, both in the National Bioethics Center, the Bioethics Honors Program students are preparing virtual tutoring for Macon County high school students, during the summer. Dr. Kimberly Carr graduated virtually, in May. She is a post-doctoral student at Michigan State University. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we postponed the undergraduate summer public ethics internships at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the graduate public health ethics fellowships at Tuskegee University.

We are keeping up with what is going on around the world, in the U.S. in the region, the state of Alabama, in Macon County and the city of Tuskegee. Tuskegee University is participating in national conversations about the coronavirus pandemic, its spread, especially among Black people. And know the violent deaths of African American men and women in Georgia. Kentucky and Minnesota by white police or former police officers is another challenge that shall not be ignored. I believe that the work that the descendant families is undertaking specially, on behalf of the men and their families who were in the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee is consistent with the movement to make this a better world, particularly for Black people. I believe our collective goal is seeking the TRUTH, and align it with justice and social justice. Through your work, we are learning much about the shortcomings of local, state and federal officials and agencies, supposedly, committed to serving the public. However, in all instances, they are not. The U.S Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee is a prime example, where that did not happened, which eroded the trust in the people elected to serve the public. As we continue to share the Truth about the men who were U.S Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee, I believe, as we listen to the stories of others, they will listen to ours, as well. If we listen with an open and honest hearts, we will surely know that their story and our story are the same. I know that we all agree. “Black Lives Matter.”

I often repeat the mantra, TU-You Know! The response from Tuskegee University students and alumni when I say TU, the response is always, YOU KNOW!

Sincerely,

Rueben C. Warren
DDS, MPH, Dr.P.H. MDiv. Director
Important to Know

The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting African American lives in multiple ways. We must be persistent in practicing good hygiene, social distancing and wearing our mask.

Remember that hand washing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

And anyone can be asymptomatic or have mild to severe symptoms.

Recognized COVID-19 wide range of symptoms ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

• Cough
• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
• Fever
• Chills
• Muscle pain
• Sore throat
• New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Please be extraordinary careful, stay safe and be well.
In Loving Memory

It is with a heavy heart and great sadness we acknowledge the lost of our wonderful friend, and Voices For Our Fathers Legacy Foundation exceptional Treasurer and a passionate advocate for justice,

Joyce Pollard Williams

Your gentle face and patient smile

With sadness we recall,

You had a kindly word for each
And died beloved by all.

The voice is mute and stilled the heart
That loved us well and true,

Ah, bitter was the trail to part

From one so good as you.

You are not forgotten loved one

Nor will you ever be,

As long as life and memory last

We will remember you,

We miss you now, our hearts are sore,

As time goes by we miss you more.

Your loving smile,
Your gentle face,

No one can fill your empty place.

Author Unknown
VOICES FOR OUR FATHERS LEGACY FOUNDATION  
MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL FORM  

Transforming the Legacy from Trauma to Honor  

Annual Donation ...... $25.00 per person  

Make Checks or Money Orders payable to: Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation or VFOFLF  

Name  
First _______________________________________________MI___________Last_________________________________  

Address____________________________City__________________________________State_____________Zip Code  

Telephone ( ) ____________________________E-mail _____________________________________________  

Name of Person in the USPHS Syphilis Study______________________________________________________  

Your Relation to Him_________________________________________________________________________________  

Supporter_____________________________________________________________________________________________  

Complete and Return to:  
Mr. Clemmon Julkes, Acting Treasurer  
P. O. Box 1001  
Wirtz, VA 24184  

Give Us Hope  
When evil darkens our world give us light. When despair numbs our souls, give us hope. When we stumble and fall, lift us up. When doubts assail us give us faith. When nothing seems sure give us trust. When ideas fade, give us vision. When we lose our way, be our guide! That we may find serenity in Your presence and purpose in doing Your Will.  

John D. Rayner