Preserving the Legacies and Histories of the 623 Men Victimized in the USPHS Syphilis Study

Fostering Social Justice, Education, and Public Health Research

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2019 Scholarship Donors

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Our Mission
Preserving the Legacies and Histories of the 623 Men Victimized in the USPHS Syphilis Study

Moving Forward Through Generational Healing

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On April 8 this year at Tuskegee University National Bioethics Center in Research and Health Care

Descendants once again met for a Day of Healing. The morning healing session was led by Drs. Rev. Edward and Anne Wimberly focused on Restorative and Justice. A motivational discussion ensued with the sharing of personal experiences and suggestions about how to pursue and achieve restoration. Descendants are deeply grateful and appreciative for the Wimberly’s leadership and spiritual guidance in self – healing over the past seven years.

Nicole Tang from Julia R. Masterman High School in Philadelphia, PA along with her sophomore team presented an extraordinary exhibit, titled “WhenMorals and Medicine Clash” detailing facts and timeline of

the United States Public Health Syphilis Study in Tuskegee on 623 African American men for 40 years. The students won 1st place in the state and competed on the National level. Their exhibit was displayed at the Pennsylvania State Museum in Harrisburg, PA. It is encouraging to know that this younger generation is interested and determined to seek facts about this dehumanizing unethical study.

Voices For Our Fathers Legacy Foundation continues to move forward seeking Healing, Answer, Reparations, Reconciliation and Restorative justice by following:

1.) Convening some descendants and contacting more descendants of the 623 African American men unethically treated and victimized for 40 years by the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study annually and throughout the year
2.) Honoring and remembering the sacrifices of our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, great grandfathers, and uncles
3.) Participating in a Research Project: Revealing the Untold Stories
4.) Awarding academic scholarships to descendants
5.) Building an Appropriate Inspirational and Healing Memorial Garden
6.) Participating in Tuskegee University’s Public Health Intensive Annually
7.) Commemorating the 1997 National Presidential Apology Luncheon Banquet
8.) Sponsoring an Annual Scholarship Banquet and Candle Lighting Ceremony

More descendants are becoming aware of the Foundation and its mission. The membership is increasing with new supporters and generous donors are contributing to the Scholarship Fund. The VFOFLF’s website (www.voicesforfathers.org) provides an opportunity for descendants and supporters to donate and become members.

As always, the Public Health Ethics Intensive was educational as well as inspiring. Each speaker shared ways to address the

8th Annual Bioethics Intensive theme; “400 years -1619 to 2019: Ethics of Reparations and Reconciliation”. As previously stated, the Wimberly’s leadership encouraged attendees to

moving forward with each generation

Lillie Head, President

Lillie Head, Miss Nicole Tang, and her Team

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(continued from page 6)
to use Black people for the Syphilis Study long after the treatment goal of the Rosenwald Fund treated syphilis and providing treatment. While

syphilis was widespread in both white and Black communities, the Rosenwald Fund selected to fund the syphilis treatment program in low-income Black communities. In this instance, taking care of Black people by white people (Rosenwald Fund), was for the common good, that is, to benefit Black and white people. However, due to the lack of funds, partly due to the 1930 Depression, the Rosenwald Fund ended its involvement in 1932 and the beginning of the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee.

I also want to point out that coming to Macon County by the U.S. Public Health Service and the Rosenwald Fund was no accident. The Rosenwald Fund ended its involvement in 1932 and the beginning of the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. Furthermore, to make clear that coming to Macon County by the U.S. Public Health Service and the Rosenwald Fund was no accident. The county was and continues to be largely Black, low income, with a large number of undereducated residents. However, there were also many people in Macon County who are wise and well educated by their lived experiences. They had strong family ties, strong religious backgrounds, and strong histories and commitments to Macon County.

The overall theme of the 2019 Commemoration was: 400 years-1619 to 2019: Ethics of Reparations and Reconciliation. After the annual descendant family members healing session, facilitated by Drs. Anne and Edward Wimberly, on Monday evening, April 8th the VFOFLF hosted the 2nd Annual Scholarship Banquet at Tuskegee Municipal Center. It was a wonderful affair. The VFOFLF continues to open the doors and award scholarships for descendant family members to continue their college education pursuits. Several scholarships were awarded during the banquet. Tuskegee University President Lily McNair, Ph.D. attended the banquet.

On Tuesday morning, Tuskegee University Provost, Roberta Troy, Ph.D. opened the 2019 Commemoration Events attendees to week-long activities to study King’s work, his contributions, and his influence on the Civil Rights Movement. His presentation included challenges in a larger nation and expanded on the topic from the lens of a care ethicist. The final presentation was by Crystal Chissell-JD, the author of a book on Optimal Health. I responded.

To the Middle Passage to Optimal Health, though fraught with challenges, is a Spiritual one. The only way that we are survived is by believing in something much bigger and more powerful than any human being or any human system.

Call it what you wish, but I believe that the men who were in the U.S Public Health Syphilis Study at Tuskegee knew that something bigger than any one of them would right the wrong, if not for them, for their families and generations to come. The Voices For Our Fathers Voice Legacy Foundation is answering the call.

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I am once again, honored to share my thoughts about the extraordinary work of the descendant family members in the Voices For Our Fathers Newsletter. I am meeting new family members every year and hearing some phenomenal stories about the advocacy working that the Voices For Our Fathers Legacy Foundation is undertaking. I am meeting younger generations of family members who are very interested in learning about the history of the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee, the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care and how they can engage. The descendant family members continue to transform pain into power, and talk into action. They are creating international recognition about their work. The men who were in the study are seen as heroes, who had the strength and courage to forgive those who knowingly or unknowingly caused intra-generational and inter-generational physical, psychological and spiritual pain. The power to forgive also demands the power to never forget, lest history will repeat itself. The Voices For Our Fathers Legacy Foundation (VFOFLF) Newsletter is the vehicle to remain abreast of the ongoing activities of VFOFLF.

The 2019 Commemoration Events occurred during a historical year in the lives of African Americans. Four hundred years ago, Africans were transported to North America and forced into the most horrendous violation in human history, chattel slavery! I wish to recount the journey and connect it to the tremendous communal strength, resilience, and faith that our people had to endure seemingly insurmountable odds. I believe those traits were passed down to the men who were in the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee, and those traits continue from generation to generation. To fully understand how the men who conducted the Study could justify the abuse, the context and timeframe that preceded the actual Syphilis Study are recounted. Three major historical occurrences set forth the context for the Study: the Middle Passage which ushered in the enslavement of Africans in the Western Hemisphere; chattel slavery, which further devalued Black bodies, attempted to totally reconstruct Black culture and Black life, rendering Black people as less than human; and, the American Eugenics Movement, which provided a class basis and then a class and race basis for further devaluing and rendering Black people as less than human. The MIDDLE PASSAGE transported enslaved Africans, primarily from West Africa, West Central, and Southeastern Africa to the Caribbean and the Americas from one part of the world to another by several European countries. Large numbers of Africans died during the process of capturing and transporting these men, women, and children from the land to the ships before the voyage. Approximately 15% of enslaved Africans died at sea. The total number of African deaths directly attributable to the Middle Passage voyage is estimated at up to two million. Chattel slavery is the owning of human beings as property to be bought, sold, given, and inherited. In this context, the enslaved person has no personal freedom or recognized rights to decide the direction of their own lives. While chattel slavery may have developed before the Middle Passage and enslavement in the Americas and the Caribbean, its expansion, based on race, is unique to the Western Hemisphere. Other forms of slavery occurred, but none as dehumanizing as chattel slavery. Eugenics was a second major injustice that supported the inferiority and less-than-human perception of Black people by Europeans. Eugenics Movement is a scientific and social movement that ascribes human behavior to genetic makeup which supported social policies to maintain racial hypnosis. This bigoted philosophy is rooted in the biological determinist ideas of Sir Francis Galton originating in the 1800s. Galton studied the upper classes of Britain concluded that social positions were due to a superior genetic makeup which was biologically determined. Early proponents of eugenics believed that, through selective breeding, the human species should direct its own evolution. Eugenics was widely accepted in the U.S. academic community. By 1928, eugenics was taught in many U.S. institutions of higher education. Some authors falsely reported that Black scholars, like WEB DuBois, supported the Eugenics Movement, which has since been refuted by both Black and white scholars. These three constructs formed the atmosphere that allowed Black men in the Deep South to be exploited, deceived and abused. The legacy of the Middle Passage, chattel slavery and the Eugenics Movement set the stage for the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. These men trusted the medical community so they participated in the Study. In order to further decry the men about the Study, the scientists called the adverse condition which called for repeated doctors’ visits, “Bad Blood.” These men thought that the government and Tuskegee Institute were promoting the common good. Deep South white culture historically, created a relationship between Black and white people such that the common good was for Black people to take care of white people, regardless of the harm to themselves. In the early 1900s, syphilis was rampant throughout the U.S. This infectious disease was at epidemic levels for Black and white people. To use Black people to find a way to help white people overcome the syphilis epidemic undergirded the rationale (cont pg. 7)
In honor of the 623 Fathers, Grandfathers, Uncles, Great Grandfather and Grand Uncles, $600.00 scholarships were awarded to each of these five Academically Outstanding descendants.

Jordan Foster
Great-Grandson of
Mr. David Foster
Freshman
University of Maryland
Silver Spring, MD

Kendall Hoofe
Descendant of
Warren Joshua
Senior
Thornton High School
Holand, IL
2020 Freshman
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY

LeKendric Cashion
Descendant of
Mr. Earnest Hendon
Sophomore
Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, AL

Ryan Joseph Grant Harkley
Descendant of
Mr. Ben Foster,
Mr. Daniel Foster,
Mr. Melba Foster
California State University
Dominguez Hills
Carson, CA

Aljane J. Whitaker
Descendant of
Mr. Albert Robertson
2nd Year Medical Student
University of California
Davis, CA

Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond
Mrs. Bernice Frazier
Mr. Clemmons Johnson
Mrs. Teresa Foster
Mr. Harold White, Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond
Banquet Guests

Second Annual Scholarship Banquet
“Journey Through Generational Healing”

Mr. Clemmons Johnson
Banquet Guests
Dr. Robert Warren, Dr. Lily McNair, Dr. Betty Crutcher, Mr. Harold White, Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond

Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond
Mrs. Bernice Frazier
Mr. Clemmons Johnson
Mrs. Teresa Foster
Mr. Harold White, Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond
Banquet Guests

Preparing for the Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony

Dr. Lily McNair, President of Tuskegee University during remarks to Banquet Guests

Assigning of Speaker
Ms. Bernice Parker-Redmond
Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond

Mr. Glenn D. Person, Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond
Mrs. Deirdre Parker Jackson
Mr. Robert Parker
Dr. Sonjia Parker-Redmond

”Journey Through Generational Healing”
Mrs. Peggy Ferguson Brand, Mrs. Arlita Frazier IV
Mrs. Jennifer Ferguson Brand "Nan"
The Maggie Walker Scholars: "Still We Persist and Sing"
Ceremony Planner
Mrs. Ruby Jones\nDr. Vincent V. Warren

Kendall Hoofe
Aljane J. Whitaker
LeKendric Cashion
Ryan Joseph Grant Harkley
Jordan Foster

Legacies Foundation
Exceptional 2019 Scholarship Awardees

VOICES FOR OUR FATHERS
Legacy Foundation