



City of Gallatin

Mayor Paige Brown

News Release

GALLATIN CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH AVENUE BANNERS

Local Black Residents and Places Highlighted on Avenue Banners

GALLATIN – The City of Gallatin is celebrating Black History Month with avenue banners featuring influential black residents of Gallatin’s past and present. 16 people and places were chosen with the help of the Union High School Museum Board led by historian Velma Brinkley.

“This group represents a cross-section of African-American life,” said Brinkley. “It demonstrates that African Americans are involved in all types of careers successfully.”

The idea of featuring local residents on the banners was mentioned during Mayor Paige Brown’s State of the City address last year. The mayor said the community embraced the banners installed during last year’s Black History Month that included national figures like Martin Luther King, Ida B. Wells and Katherine Johnson.

“Gallatin has a very real connection and appreciation of our history that helps preserve the character of this place,” said Gallatin Mayor Paige Brown. “I’m very thankful that Velma and her team did the research that we can share during Black History Month.”

Brinkley says the banners should be of interest to everyone in Sumner County regardless of race. “There is no such thing as black history being separated from white history. That’s not the way people live. History is a tapestry, a woven tapestry of all persons who were involved and these individuals are very much representative of that.”

The following are portions of the content featured on Gallatin’s Avenue Banners:

Fred Bailey - Founder of nonprofits Children Are People and Susie Brannon McJimpsey Center, Fred Bailey was born in 1953, the 10th of 15 children.

Colored Fair - Purported to be the first African American owned agriculture fairground in America, the Blythe Street Fair was purchased in July 1870 by Mack Randolph, Arthur Banks, Willie Baker, Dock Blythe, John Banks and Henry Ward for \$650.

Dr. William Wilson - Born in Marshall County, Wilson graduated Meharry Medical College School of Pharmacy in 1906. In 1915, he moved to Gallatin where he and I.C. Ramsey, M.D. opened a pharmacy and medical practice.

Dr. J. Deotha Malone - Malone was the first African American woman elected to the Gallatin City Council in 1969 and served for more than 20 years.

Dr. Eric Moore - Moore, a Gallatin native, is the current Deputy to the Commanding General, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

Rev. Hillary Wattwood Key - Key founded the Key Memorial Methodist Church and 13 other churches. He was the incorporator of Lebanon/Gallatin Telegraph Company in 1869. He was elected to the Gallatin City Council on Dec. 5, 1868.

William “Bubba” Dunn - A baseball standout from Gallatin High School and Volunteer State, Dunn was drafted by the Kansas City Royals in 1989.

Union High School - Built on Winchester Street in 1922, the Rosenwald Building was the first high school for black students.

Rev. Peter Vertrees - Born Dec. 16, 1840 in Kentucky, Vertrees was an educator, pastor and Confederate soldier (1861-1865).

John Vertrees Malone - He was active and influential in education, religion, community and civic endeavors. Malone worked 42 years in education at GHS, UHS and Durham's Chapel.

James Herbert White - Born to illiterate parents and grandson of ex-slaves, White graduated from A & I State College in 1924 and later founded a university.

Kenneth Moore – Attorney Kenneth Moore founded Sigma Electronic Discovery Consulting, LLC in 2015 and remains owner. He also serves as Director for the international tech and consulting company HaystackID. Inc.

Bishop Lula Mai Swanson - Bishop Swanson founded and pastored three Jehovah Churches of God. She owned and managed a grocery store and used proceeds from that venture to build a nursing home on Pace Street in 1954.

Onnessia Shacole Head - Rucker Stuart Middle School 2021 Teacher of the Year, Head has been an educator for 16 years. Head presently serves with Leadership Gallatin 2023, Unlimited Potential Food Pantry and Shalom Zone.

Dr. Derrick Jackson - A prominent Tennessee pastor who was born in Itta Bena, Mississippi. Jackson is an entrepreneur, accountant, college instructor, philanthropist, published author and CEO.

John “Bud” Rogan - Born to ex-slaves in Sumner County in 1868, Rogan was the fourth of twelve children. At 8'9.5”he is the tallest African American ever recorded and the second tallest man in world history.

The banners will remain displayed through February and will be replaced in mid-March when the Spring banners are erected.

If you have suggestions for residents who should be honored or would like information about other initiatives in Gallatin, please contact the Office of Mayor Paige Brown at 615-451-5961.

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