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First-ever Winners of MLK Jr. 'Realizing the Dream' Award Honored

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Winners of the first annual Martin Luther King, Jr., “Realizing the Dream” awards were honored Jan. 18 at the sixth annual MLK Prayer Breakfast, held at St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM). Four winners from St. Mary’s County were honored with plaques and a \$100 check because they embodied exemplary character as described in King’s “I Have a Dream” speech and made significant contributions to St. Mary’s County. Winners included Theodore Newkirk, of Lexington Park, Maryland (from left); Evelyn Holland, of Hollywood, Maryland; Aamon Smith, of Great Mills, Maryland, and Donald Shubrooks, whose mother, Jacqueline Shubrooks, of California, Maryland, accepted the award on his behalf. The winners are congratulated by St. Mary’s College of Maryland acting president, Larry Vote. (Submitted photo)

ST. MARY’S CITY, Md. (Jan. 23, 2010) — The winners of the first 2010 Martin Luther King, Jr., “Realizing the Dream” awards were honored Monday, Jan. 18, at the sixth annual Southern Maryland Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast held at St. Mary’s College of Maryland (SMCM). Four winners from St. Mary’s County were honored with plaques and a \$100 check

because they embodied exemplary character as described in King's "I Have a Dream" speech and made significant contributions to St. Mary's County.

The breakfast, held in the college's Great Room, drew nearly 350 guests who listened to inspiring talks and joyous gospel music while enjoying a full breakfast. The keynote speaker was William Yoast, the high school football coach portrayed in the film "Remember the Titans." John W. Franklin talked of the birth of the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History. A well-loved tradition was the musical performance by the St. Peter Claver Catholic Church Gospel Choir and the inaugural MLK Breakfast performance by the First Missionary Baptist Church of Lexington Park Youth Choir. Singing separately and together, the choirs moved the audience into numerous standing ovations.

State Representative John Bohanan presented the "Realizing the Dream" awards. Aamon Smith, of Great Mills, Maryland, an eighth grade student at Leonardtown Middle School, was nominated for her dedication to leadership activities in and outside of the classroom. Everlyn Holland, of Hollywood, Maryland, received her nomination for serving more than 50 years as a steward for civil rights. Raised in St. Mary's County, Holland attended segregated schools and went on to receive her degree in nursing, becoming a nurse, wife, mother, and civil rights activist. Theodore Newkirk, of Lexington Park, Maryland, received his award for his long-time dedication to St. Mary's County. Newkirk fought discrimination at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, suing the Navy and winning, to bring equal treatment at the job site on military bases across the country. Great Mills High School sophomore Donald Shubrooks, of California, Maryland, was unable to accept his award due to a track meet. His mother, Jacqueline Shubrooks, accepted the award on his behalf.

Later in the program, Coach Yoast discussed some of the trials he faced at a newly integrated high school in the early 1970s: "We realized we were there to correct a mistake made by society. A mistake called segregation." Yoast was depicted in the 2000 blockbuster film, "Remember the Titans," starring Denzel Washington. Yoast, who is white, served as assistant coach alongside head coach Herman Boone, who is black, in the early 1970s when T.C. Williams High School, in Alexandria, Virginia, was first integrated.

"This museum was the dream of black World War I veterans, who wanted their people's history told in a museum in Washington, D.C," Franklin told the crowd. "When I came to the Smithsonian in 1987 there was already a movement to create this museum....The artifacts will be both for the exhibitions you will see and for the research collections to be used by scholars, students, and teachers." Franklin has worked on African American, African, and African

Diaspora programs for the past 22 years at the Smithsonian. He serves on the boards of the Reginald Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History and Culture. He co-authored a book on the Civil-War era with his father, well-known African American historian John Hope Franklin.

Lieutenant Christilene Whalen, who graduated from Great Mills High School during the desegregation era, led the audience in the invocation and benediction. Whalen is the first female chaplain on the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. She graduated from Harvard University and eventually returned to her hometown as a Navy chaplain.

At the close of the program, co-master of ceremony Jim Hanley, of the St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission, explained the significance of Race Relations Study Circles. Community-wide Race Relations Study Circles involve small and diverse groups of eight to 12 people, moderated by trained leaders and focus on local race-relations issues deemed important by the group's members. Meetings are one evening a week for two hours, for about five weeks. The next round of Study Circles begins the week of January 26. For more information, contact Jim Hanley at 301-997-1184 or jhanley62@aol.com.

The documentary film "With All Deliberate Speed: One High School's Story," screened after the breakfast in the Campus Center's Cole Cinema. St. Mary's College professor Merideth Taylor produced the film, which gave voice to those who experienced desegregation at Great Mills High School between 1958 and 1972. The film outlines the difficult transition period of integrating the segregated high schools' communities. Following the film, Taylor led a discussion of the issues it illuminates. The video is available to view on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=smcm#p/u/2/qg7TXldDgYw>. A grant from the PNC Foundation Legacy Project and the Maryland Humanities Council made the documentary possible.

The sixth annual Prayer Breakfast was sponsored by St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's County Board of Education, and the St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission.

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