

The Southside Chronicle

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday May 19, 2017

12pm to 6pm

Fish Fry Fundraiser
Dinners are \$10.00
VFW Hall 1901 Elgin St.

Friday July 21, 2017

12pm to 6pm

BBQ Fundraiser
Dinners are 12.00
VFW Hall 1901 Elgin St.

Board of Directors

Meeting

Saturday July 29, 2017

11pm

At the Oroville Elks Hooker
Oak Lodge 1197
2453 V7 Rd. Society members and the public are invited to attend.

President Massage

By Dr. John H. Rivers

Greetings friends;

It is time to mark your calendar for our ninth annual Legacy Dinner Award ceremony. It will be held on November 4, 2017 at the Feather Falls Casino in Oroville California. Meet old friends, make new ones, and be a part of the continuing narrative on the development of the Black Southside Community. You can request tickets now to attend and help us create another outstanding evening. The dinner tickets will be \$45 per person. Send a check to SOAAHS Legacy Award Dinner, 936 18th St. Oroville, California, 95965. You will receive your tickets and other instructive materials at your designated address.

Sadly, we have lost three of our beloved Board and life members. Admiral Robert Toney (life member and advisor), Mother Bertha Clark Lewis (founding Mother of the Board), and Barbara Stovall Johnson (Board secretary) died during the past year. We will miss their wisdom, support, and faith as we continue the journey toward reaching the goal of constructing an historic center and park to honor our elders, parents and families who built a proud Community and helped develop Oroville.

In regard to the continuing efforts to reach our goal, we have started a building fund and applied for grants. We also conduct fund raising events and ask for donations to grow the financial resources needed for construction. Slowly we are moving in a positive direction and will get it done. We ask that you join us, as some have, in making small or large tax deductible donation to our building fund. Please send any amount to SOAAHS Building Fund, 936 18th St. Oroville, California, 95965. We will send you a receipt so your donation can be used as a tax deduction.

One of our planned fund raising events will be held on May 19, 2017 at the VFW HALL on the corner of Elgin and Lincoln in Oroville. We will be selling full plate fish dinners from 12pm to 6pm. You may order dinners and have them delivered if ordered by May 18th. I hope you will support us and buy dinners for your entire family (no cooking for you that day).

We presented our traveling history program at the Butte County Library and African American Family Cultural Center in Oroville during Black history month. It was well received and we are delighted to be able to achieve part of our mission; that is to present an historical record of Black settlement in Oroville. This part of our mission will be greatly strengthened after the completion of our center and park.

Recently, the Board decided to extend the scope (continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1 Presidents Message)

of our research focus to include the towns of Weed and Quincy. A comprehensive story of Black settlement in Oroville cannot be completed without including the important connections between individuals and families who lived in these locations in Northern California. These connections were forged through work places, friendships, marriages, and kinships. It was not unusual for a Black person or their family to live and interact in all three communities. I hope you enjoy our first presentation of this kind.

Be Blessed and healthy.

John

Gifts from Barbara Stovall Johnson

(From the SAOAAHS Board of Directors)

Barbara Stovall Johnson's gifts to SOAAHS will endure in many of our thoughts. She was a member of the Stovall family, who along with other Southside families help develop a functional and healthy community. Although she has physically left this planet, her contributions to SOAAHS achievements remain, and we are better off because of her work.

Barbara was in charge of decorations for three of our previous Legacy Dinners which was well received and appreciated by those in attendance. Her attention to details and taste added to the effects of the entire dinner event. She was also responsible for obtaining support and participation from various local businesses for the raffle held at each legacy dinner.

We thank Barbara and her family members who helped decorate the tables at our annual dinners, and all of the following businesses and individuals who provided raffle items:

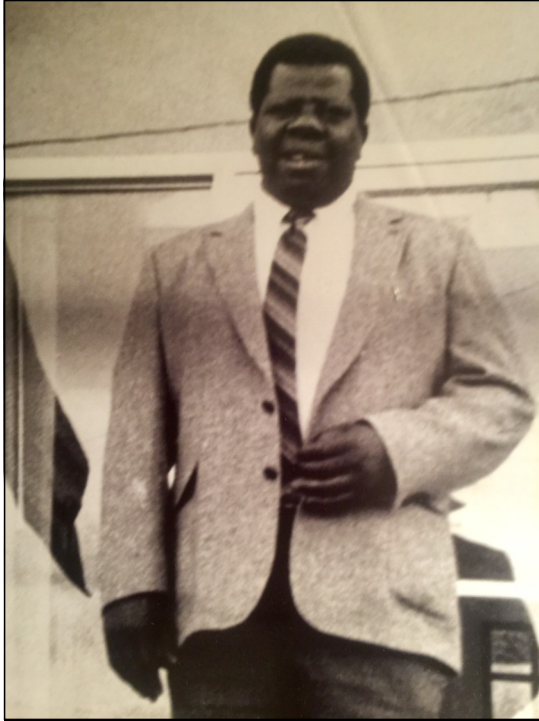


Barbara Stovall Johnson
5-17-1945 / 3-16-2017

Applebee's	Feather Fall Casino
Miner's Alley Brewing	Bath and Body Works (Chico)
Foothill Meat Company	Past Time Car Wash
Better Deal Exchange	Minister Freddy and Brenda Stovall
Briggs Firestone	Good Earth Coffee and Tea Company
R.F. Marcozzi Jeweler's	Comers Print Shop
Katie's Corner II	Starkey Vineyards
Creative Imaging Center	Less Schwab
Tong Fong Low Chinese Restaurant	Cultural Crossroads Jewelry
Lodestar Farms	Emanuel and Barbara Johnson
Lord's Gym	Table Mountain Golf Course
Family Christian (Chico)	Mary Lake Thompson
Raley's	

“First With No Equals”

by Dr. John H. Rivers



The late Charles Byrd.
Former Siskiyou County Sheriff.

Former Sheriff-Coroner of Siskiyou County, Charlie Byrd was indeed a first with no equals. In many ways Sheriff Byrd was unique, principled, courageous, and committed to law and justice. His life narrative is filled with documented outstanding achievements in the field of law enforcement and community service. As a native and life time resident of Weed California, knowledge of his impact on the safety and well being of his community is not well known outside of the State's law enforcement circles.

He was born on July 6, 1947 in Weed. His family was a part of the large study migration of Black people who left the South and Louisiana in particular to escape the debasement and oppression they faced during the first Jim Crow period after the end of the civil war when the southern states reunited with the northern states. A significant number of these families moved to various parts of California, including Northern California. There they found work in lumber mills and established segregated small neighborhoods in Oroville, Weed, and Quincy.

Charles (Charlie) Byrd was an outstanding football player earning the Weed High School “lineman of the year” award in 1965. He attended the College of the Siskiyou and broke the color barrier by working part time as a reserve police officer with the Weed Police Department.

After obtaining full time status in the police department, he went on to be promoted to sergeant and then appointed Chief of Police at age 27 in 1975. He was elected Sheriff of Siskiyou County in 1986 after walking door-to-door through the 6,300 square mile county simply asking for people's vote.

When Sheriff Byrd was asked by the San Francisco Chronicle: “why do you think you won this election”? He responded by saying “People here are concerned with real problems, like drug abuse among the young people, and not about a man's color, I didn't run on the race issue. It just happens to be I'm Black. The only people to bring up the issue are reporters”.

Sheriff Byrd grew up in a town of 3,000 people. He had small town values and yet large ideas to help promote safety, and order in the county. Some residents who knew him say that at times he could be quite cantankerous, others say that he was humble, quiet, loved people and liked serving them. Siskiyou County Supervisor La Vada Erickson observed that “Sheriff Byrd looked upon Siskiyou County as an extension of his personal family, and we were treated as such”.

Dedication to his community was also a top priority for the Sheriff. He moved relations with the community closer together by making his department more accessible to the community. He had a commitment to youth development which was highlighted by his implementation of drug abuse education which was designed to fight drug use and drug trafficking, and he encouraged young people to continue their education (continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3 **First With No Equals**)

after experiencing some of life setbacks. It is difficult to access the positive influence he made on Black and other youth in the county.

Among the many professional and community organizations that Sheriff Byrd belonged to were: California Peace Officers Association, California Police Chiefs Association, Weed Chamber of Commerce, Weed Rotary Club, Habitat for Humanity, Weed Baptist Church, College of the Siskiyou Foundation Board of Directors, and Western States Sheriffs' Association.

His work in law enforcement was recognized and appreciated by his peers as well. He was named the "most famous Sheriff" at a conference held by California State Sheriff Association on February 21, 2016. His department

First With No Equals) benefitted greatly from the many innovations introduced and guided by Sheriff Byrd. Many of these remain in place today. The extensions and innovations included: new jail, crime lab, and a new forensic technician. All of these innovations enhanced his department's crime fighting capabilities.

His impact was also documented and held in high regard by the other 57 Sheriffs in the State when they elected him President of their Statewide Association, (CSSA). He provided leadership in the areas of training, technology, and crime fighting techniques that are effective today.

Sheriff Byrd began his journey to iconic status from humble roots. He loved his small town and county where he enjoyed fishing and hunting and most of all, his Jobs. His father (Edmund) was born in Mississippi, and his mother (Eddie Bea) was born in LaSalle Parish Louisiana. They migrated to Weed, met and got married in the early 1940s. All of their children were born in Weed. Unfortunately, Sheriff Byrd died at his home on September 23, 2003, just months after losing his bid for another 4 year term as Sheriff. He reportedly died of natural causes at 56 years of age.

He was a man of integrity, loyal, committed, fair, and insisted that order and justice prevail in his county. Former Senator Barbra Boxer got the US Senate to list a memorial statement in the congressional record acknowledging Sheriff Byrd's services and achievements during his life. Assemblyman Duck Dickerson submitted Resolution No. 4202 Praising Sheriff Byrd's achievements and service. It was adapted by the California Legislature November 30, 2002.

With the many recent questions regarding law enforcement/ community relations, and fairness in the judicial system, Sheriff Byrd's 'motto ("we can"), which was used in his department and statewide organizations can provide a pathway and provide hopeful examples of social engagement and mutual benefits for an entire community. Sheriff Byrd's brother, Alfred Bearden, presently serves on the SOAAHS Board of directors. He is advising the Board on events in the Black Community in Weed, known as "The Quarters".



Community Park in Weed, CA named in honor of Sheriff Byrd

Service For The Benefit of Others

by Dr. John H. Rivers

Often, we hear the statement “pull yourself up by your own boot straps”, as the best way for a person to become successful in life. In some cases, and in certain social situations, this philosophy has been true. Such is the story for most people of African descent living in Oroville and Butte County during the early 1900s. Compared to current conditions in Southside there were more living wage jobs available during the early period of Black settlement. Earning a steady living wage and living in a community with others, who shared similar hopes and dreams for a better life, was certainly a supportive pathway to success.

Even though there were reasons for optimism to grow among individuals and families in Southside during the 1940s – 60s, it would take exceptional determination and imagination for progress to be made in business ownership, local elected political positions, employment in non-labor intensive jobs, and receiving city and county services. Some Black residents did move beyond the color wall of the day. They moved toward and through the wall instead of turning back and settling for the limited progress that could be made by Black people in Oroville and in other towns throughout Butte County.

T.C. Dennis was one of those exceptional people who didn't let the “color wall” turn him around only to settle for the reserved place for Black men and Women in Oroville during these times. He moved to Oroville with his family in 1947. His family moved from Texas to Long Beach California where his father, (Theopolis Dennis), worked at a ship building plant during the second world war. T.C. attended grammar school in Long Beach and graduated from Oroville Union High School in 1950. During his teenage years, he and his peers were quite active in segregated youth activities in Southside including those wonderful parties held at Mr. Bell's teen night club on Wyandotte and Columbia where the Community Garden is located today.



T.C. Dennis Exalted Ruler of
Oroville Elks Hooker Oak Lodge 1197

He attended Yuba College for two years and began working, got married, and started his family in 1953. T.C. has earned a work history that is an example for anyone who aspire to fulfill their human potential. What is notable about his success and achievements is the many years of hard work, and the extent of his service to both local and fraternal communities.

T.C.'s work history is impressive and instructive. Impressive because of the variety of jobs which required a variety of skills, all of which he learned from others. His range of low skill labor intensive jobs include work in the building construction field, cooking, baking, and meat cutting. When he started working for California Water Service Company his first job assignment was digging ditches. He worked in and learned the duties of every position in the Oroville District. In 1988, he evolved into professional management when he earned the position of District Manager for the Oroville/Marysville districts.

T.C. has a serious work ethic as his work history has demonstrated, but he also has a commitment to service for others as demonstrated by his volunteer work in various community organizations, and in local, state, and national fraternal organizations.

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5 **Service for The Benefit of Others**)

As a member and once President of the Oroville Rotary Club he worked on many Rotary projects which enhance the quality of life for families; including the Kitchen and Gazebo at Sank Park, Rotary park, and the Band Shell at Martin Luther King Park. The Band Shell was his project when he was President of the Oroville Rotary Club.

His time, work, and service in fraternal affairs is unmatched. He has been a member in Oroville Elk Hooker Oak Lodge 1197 for 64 years, severing as Exalted Ruler for over a total of 60 years. During this time, he also held high level leadership positions in regional, state, and national Elk Lodges. He is a third-

degree Mason in the Oroville Lodge No. 103. Hooker Oak Lodge has been a rich asset for the Southside Community. The Lodge has initiated, sponsored and provided support for youth and young adult activities, including the vital leadership support for the segregated Cub and Boy Scouts Pack 63 during the 1950s.

T.C. involvement in local political affairs is also extensive including service on:

- Board of Directors for Lake Oroville Area Public Utility District (35 plus years)
- Commissioner of Sewer Commission Oroville Region (31 plus years)
- Butte County Special Districts Association
- Served on Oroville Downtown Business Association Board
- Served as a director of the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce three times for three years each terms.

T.C.'s service for the benefits of others also include other organizations and special activities, such as;

- Served on the Oroville Area General Plan Revision Committee
- Oroville High School budget review committee
- Oroville dollars for scholars
- A.A.N.P.C. (This group promoted the Oroville Blues and Cultural Festival)
- Served on the Butte County Code Enforcement Advisory Committee
- Served on butte Community Action Agency
- Currently serving as trustee of Oroville Hospital
- Currently serving as trustee of Oro Health Corporation

Perhaps this breath of work and community involvement might lead one to ask the question, "what does he do in his spare time"?

He enjoys fishing, bowling and fellowship with his contemporaries. He married his current wife Esther, in 1981 and together they have seven children, ten grandchildren and one great grandchild. Service for others can be fulfilling and also a benefit for the giver!!!



Gathering at Mr. Bells Night Club for Young Adult and Teens

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE'S CORNER

by Van Bilbo

This is our 9th year in existence. There have been many challenges along the way. Over the years, membership support has been a key reason for our success. I would like to thank all of our loyal members who have been supportive of our efforts.

March 1, 2017 was the membership renewal date for all members. Many of our members have renewed their membership, but not all members. Membership dues are the major source of financial funding. SOAAHS would not be able to function without the support of membership dues. For those who have not renewed please do so at your earliest convenience.

We currently have 85 members. Over the years membership has fluctuate between 75 and 110 paying members. We are always looking for new members. An increase in membership means that SOAAHS can put more effort into fact finding and doing historical research. If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining SOAAHS, call 530 533-7388 and leave the person's contact information or a membership application can be downloaded from our website at soaahs.org.

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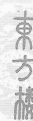


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