



BLACK HISTORY AWARDS CEREMONY

A CELEBRATION OF
BLACK HISTORY
in the 4th Senate District



Senator Phil Boyle
New York State Senate
4th Senate District



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Black History Month Celebration
Thursday, February 21, 2013

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us tonight as we recognize Black History Month and honor those who have contributed so much to our communities in the Towns of Babylon and Islip.

As we gather to recognize our honorees this evening, let us also show our appreciation for the countless residents who continue to make innumerable contributions to the culture and quality of all of our lives. We applaud those individuals who are committed to civic engagement and work diligently to further freedom and equality in the areas of education, health care, economic empowerment, and criminal justice.

Each one of our distinguished honorees is an integral part of their community. Please join me in welcoming them this evening as we recognize their achievements and embrace their talents, enthusiasm, and determination in making Long Island a better place to live.



Best regards,

Phil Boyle

Member of the Senate



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**State Senator Phil Boyle
Black History Month Celebration
Awards Ceremony**

Program

Mistress of Ceremonies
Alice Cone

Introduction and Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Remarks
NYS Senator Phil Boyle

Invocation
Reverend Dr. Daris Dixon-Clark

Performance
Venettes Cultural Workshop

Honoree
Jason Baltimore

Honoree
Kiara Don

Honoree
Rev. Dr. Daris Dixon- Clark

Honoree
Deven Kane

Honoree
Virginia Dawson

Honoree
Dr. LaQuita Outlaw

Honoree
Venettes Cultural Workshop

Performance
Angels of Divine Expression

Closing Remarks
NYS Senator Phil Boyle

Refreshments and Networking



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Honorees

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**Jason
Baltimore**



To say that for the past four years Jason Baltimore has been a volunteer at Youth Enrichment Services (YES) would be an understatement. Jason is an outstanding young man who puts others before himself and is always looking for new ways to help his community. Jason participates in every single event at YES, whether participating in a community service event or volunteering daily at the YES after school program at Brentwood East Middle school. He is dedicated and passionate about giving back to the community. Jason has also walked with YES in the Memorial Day Parade and he participates in other events as well such as the March of Dimes and Breast Cancer walks, West Islip Country Fair, Family Fun walks, and Unity in the Community. Jason helps organize and host social teen night Coffee Houses so that his peers have a safe place to go on a Friday night. He also helps to make sure that these events are enjoyable for everyone and tries to come up with innovative ideas that keep people interested. Jason has participated in the YES Inter-Community Service Project by helping clean up garbage around his community. He is a good mentor and role model for the youth in the programs. There is never a time when Jason is unwilling to lend a hand and help others. Without his dedication and hard work, it would be impossible for the events and the programs to be a success. Jason works hard to help make this community a better place for everyone and will not hesitate to stand up for what he believes.

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**Virginia
Dawson**



Virginia Dawson was born and raised on Long Island, with Wyandanch being the first place she called home. She started her early education in the Wyandanch School System and later moved on to Huntington.

In Huntington she began her many years of volunteerism as a candy striper at Huntington Hospital all while attending high school and participating in several extracurricular activities.

After high school, Virginia attended SUNY Farmingdale, at that time called Farmingdale Agricultural College, where she received her Associates Degree in Police Sciences. Virginia was also very active in the David W. Parker Youth Group and NAACP Youth Group.

Shortly thereafter, Virginia spent six years as a Police Community Aide for the Suffolk County Police Department's 1st Precinct. Virginia began her 30 year career with the Suffolk County Department of Social Services in 1971 and remains a dedicated worker today. She is also an active member of the Black Employees of Suffolk County.

Virginia continued her volunteerism and service to her community as a member on numerous organizations and has frequently held official positions. Virginia has been a host mother to inner city children needing a summer respite in the Fresh Air Fund and to troubled children residing at the Madonna Heights Residential Program. She is an active member of the 1st Methodist Church Outreach Program providing food, clothing, and other necessities to needy families on Long Island.

Having moved back to Wyandanch 18 years ago, Virginia is currently Vice President of the Wyandanch Community Neighborhood Watch and Vice President of the South Side Neighborhood Watch. Virginia has been active with Wyandanch Weed and Seed. She also took part in the NAACP's greatest voter registration drive ever, VOTE 2000.

Often known as "the lady with the camera," Virginia uses her passion for photography to touch lives. Virginia receives great joy in sharing special moments captured on film. Being a very caring person who talks the talk and walks the walk, Virginia believes that "if I can help somebody as I travel this way, then my living will not be in vain."

A CELEBRATION OF

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Rev. Dr. Daris Dixon-Clark



Daris Dixon-Clark was born in the the Tar Hill State of North Carolina to Bonnie S. Dixon and the late Andrew W. Clark. He was educated in the Greensboro Public Schools and later graduated from Anacostia Sr. High in Washington, DC.

Daris Dixon-Clark graduated from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. He then made a commitment to ministry by completing his Master of Arts in Theology at Northeastern Theological Seminary in Rochester, NY. On July 17, 2011 Rev. Dixon-Clark received an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity Degree from St. Thomas Christian College and Theological Seminary of Jacksonville, Florida.

Rev. Daris Dixon-Clark was ordained in the Gospel Ministry on December 11, 1988 in Philadelphia, PA and embarked on a career with a goal to provide emotional and spiritual support to individuals and families.

He began as a youth counselor and chaplain at New York State's Louis Gossett Residential Center for Youth in Lansing, NY where he provided weekly religious services, bible studies and counseling to residents. He then was appointed Senior Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, in Ithaca, NY. Daris Dixon- Clark moved on to the Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church in Syracuse; and then to the historical Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Buffalo, NY.

On March 27, 2011 Rev. Dr. Daris Dixon-Clark was called to pastor the great congregation of the First Baptist Church of Bay Shore, NY. Since his arrival, he has promoted partnership as the key to a healthy and successful church and community. The church has spun new life and growth and continues to be a beacon of light in the Bay Shore community through its food pantry, political action committee, weekly bible study, prayer meetings and its spirited weekly worship services and other community activities.

Throughout his career Dixon-Clark has lead his congregations with an energetic spirit of enterprise mixed with hardheaded practicality. He has performed the good work of revitalizing the Women's Ministry at the church called 'Empower H.E.R.', also a Marriage Ministry called 'Marriage Works Ministry', and a mid-day bible study class. Dixon-Clark believes if we are to be successful in ministry there must be an effort to address the totality of human need.

Rev. Dr. Daris Dixon-Clark is deeply committed to the church and he knows that with God, all things are possible. His message and direction is clear, 'with God on our side and the body of Christ working together we can reach the lost and strengthen the believer.' His personal mission is to "glorify God through effective preaching and teaching of God's word and living a life that is a full expression of his God given gifts."

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**Kiara
Don**



Kiara Don is a Senior at Amityville Memorial High School where she is currently President of the Tri-M Honor Society, and also an Honor Society Parliamentarian. She is also active on both the varsity soccer and softball teams.

In December 2012, Kiara was recognized as Rotary Club Student of the Month and has also received the Suffolk Zone Award for outstanding participation, leadership and character in physical education.

Kiara is involved in many extracurricular activities, including the Town of Babylon Youth Court and also the Town of Babylon Project Citizen.

Kiara has ambitions for a college major in pre-law and law, and would like to continue her education at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Her life goals include becoming a corporate attorney and to one day opening her own law firm.

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**Deven
Kane**



Deven Kane is a certified English teacher and the lead female vocalist for a prominent international band. She has earned a Bachelor's degree with honors in Communications and a Master's degree in Secondary Education from Dowling College.

She currently teaches English Language Arts at Wyandanch High School, where she also works to cultivate emerging writers in her role as the advisor of their creative writing club. In addition, Ms. Kane works with middle school and high school aged students in local districts in a variety of after school programs offered by Youth Enrichment Services, a program geared toward improving the quality of life for children. Deven also worked with the Urban League of Long Island GEAR UP program to prepare disadvantaged students for college. She also participates in a number of other community service events and volunteer efforts. Ms. Kane is dedicated to serving and empowering youth and families in an effort to advance our communities.

Deven Kane grew up in and graduated from West Islip High School. She still lives in West Islip and is the proud mother of a son, currently a senior at West Islip High School.

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LaQuita Outlaw



Born in Jamaica, Queens, NY and raised on the Peninsula in Far Rockaway, NY, LaQuita Outlaw saw that life is what you make of it. Growing up in the socio-economically challenged community of Far Rockaway developed her determination to become a successful professional. That determination was birthed when her fifth grade teacher prophesied that she was born to be an educator. As her educational experiences continued, it became evident that students who have little economically should not receive less because of their unfortunate circumstances. LaQuita vowed to provide every child with the best education possible. Working studiously, LaQuita Outlaw acquired the skills needed to reach her goals.

After graduating from Queens College, LaQuita began teaching in the New York City Chancellor's District, K263 in Brooklyn before going to IS 8, located in Jamaica. Working as a middle school English teacher in a district where the school was in danger of being taken over by the state, challenged her to assist students in realizing their highest potential. After two years, she decided to further her influence by pursuing a graduate degree at Mercy College and by accepting a position as an English teacher at Bay Shore High School. Upon completion of a Masters of Science in Administration and Supervision, she sought an administrative position within the Bay Shore district. After her selection as the Instructional Supervisor

for Bay Shore Middle School, LaQuita worked closely with teachers and students to develop their instructional and academic skills. Earning a doctorate degree was an outgrowth of her desire to develop professionally and provide the best service to staff and students.

When her mother inquired about why she worked so hard, she informed her that she would not stop until she had a doctor in the family. After a year and a half of serving as the Instructional Supervisor, LaQuita Outlaw was hired as Assistant Principal in the Bay Shore Middle School. This allowed direct contact with students who were academically, socially, and behaviorally challenged; thus offering the chance to produce positive educational experiences for students and their teachers. Growing as an administrator, she met the rigorous academic challenges necessary to complete a doctoral degree at St. John's University in Oakdale, in 2004.

Many mentors guided LaQuita in realizing her dreams. LaQuita states that "With all that I have acquired and have yet to attain, my goals have not changed. Every child deserves nothing but the best education. Providing students with the foundation needed to be successful professionals requires dedication and hard work. Now, I have an opportunity to impact many students through my involvement with teachers."

A CELEBRATION OF

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History of the Venettes Cultural Workshop



The Venettes Cultural Workshop was founded by Mary (Suarez) Baird in 1967. Mrs. Baird grew up in Spanish Harlem and the Bronx. She was always theatrically inclined and decided to pursue dance at age nine attending various dance classes throughout Harlem and the Bronx. Mrs. Baird received a 4-year French scholarship at City University and pursued her dance career at the same time.

She excelled in dance and later became the founder of the African-Brazilian duo- "Bibeau and Suarez." Mrs. Baird was a professional dancer for seven years. She studied under the Graham and Dunham techniques, as well as famed African instructors.

Mrs. Baird moved to Long Island and realized that within her community there was a lack of activities geared toward youth. She decided that she would use dance as her tool to inspire youth to achieve their best. With thirteen students, she began to teach dance classes in her home. The word began to spread and before long, Mrs. Baird needed to find a place to rehearse.

Our Lady of Miraculous Medal opened their doors to Mrs. Baird in 1968 under the leadership of Father Hull. Mrs. Baird held dance classes on Saturday mornings for the students. She not only taught the students dance techniques, she related dance to the everyday world. Mrs. Baird took ill in October of 1992. She asked her daughter, Vanessa, if she would continue the Venettes, and Vanessa obliged.

Vanessa Baird-Streeter has been directing the workshop since 1992. She has continued to follow in her mother's footsteps. The Venettes now consist of a Dance, Charm, Voice, and Drama Division. The Venettes have classes at both the Town Hall Annex and a joint venture partnership with the Wyandanch School District. The Venettes continue to perform and travel throughout the United States. The students are also the recipients of many national dance awards and accolades.

Vanessa has expanded the scope of the Venettes to include more academic scholarships, scholarships for additional dance training of students and teachers, college counseling services, career development, leadership, and cultural awareness.

Vanessa envisions the Venettes continuing to grow. She would like to expand programs and hopefully obtain a building for the Venettes. The Venettes Cultural Workshop continues to grow because it is a community effort of parents, teachers, staff, alumni and friends.

To accomplish all of this, the assistance of the staff of the Venettes Cultural Workshop is very critical. They are all dedicated to the students and give up numerous hours of their lives to assist students in many ways.

Remember we must embody the African Ideology: It Takes A Village To Raise A Child. We, at the Venettes pledge to Inspire...to Support...to Achieve...with the youth of our communities.

History of Black History Month

Black History Month is a nationally recognized celebration of the culture, contributions and traditions of Black Americans. Officially, Black History Month began in 1976 and is celebrated in February and recognizes and honors all the historic events and landmark contributions from 1915, wherein the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States abolished slavery in America.

It was Dr. Carter Woodson who started the “Negro History Week” to focus people’s attention and to bring notice to the role and contribution of Black Americans in American history. Dr. Woodson was a Black American who completed his PhD from Harvard University. He found the need to express the voice of Black Americans who were wrongly represented and harshly treated in early times. Unofficially, it was around 1926, that Dr. Woodson initiated the celebration of Black History Month in February. He chose this month, as February is marked by the birthdays of two great Americans who had an enduring influence on changing the social standing and condition of Black Americans, former President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Fredrick Douglas.

Among prominent Black Americans who have been of great influence are General Colin Powell, the first Black American to hold the office of Secretary of State; Condoleezza Rice, the first Black woman to hold the office of Secretary of State; Rosa Parks, the brave woman who refused to give up her seat on a bus, sparking the civil rights movement in this country; Martin Luther King Jr., the nation's most influential leader leading anti-violence civil rights demonstrations across the country; the great author and poet Maya Angelou; Marian Anderson, an opera singer and first Black American to sing at the Metropolitan Opera; Billy Holiday, one of the most famous Jazz singers of all time; Muhammad Ali, one of the greatest boxing champions in our lifetime; and Jackie Robinson, the first Black American to play in a Major League Baseball game.

Through strong values of family, faith, hard work and service, Black Americans have given our communities a positive and everlasting influence. In our communities, they are doctors that heal our sick, educators that teach our children, small business owners that create jobs, and public servants that work for the common good. They are a part of our armed services protecting our borders and freedoms at home and abroad. We celebrate Black History Month in their honor and thank the members of the Black American community for their courage, culture contributions and sacrifices.



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