

July 2012

fa=r
HOUSING
CENTER
of SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

fhcmichigan.org • 1-877-979-FAIR
info@fhcmichigan.org • twitter @fhcmichigan • facebook.com/fhcs
Serving Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw counties

20 Years of Working for Justice

Dear Friends,

This year marks our 20th Anniversary! The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit helped us get started in 1992 with a \$20,000 grant from HUD. The Fair Housing Center of Washtenaw County officially opened for business on February 17, 1992.

In 2002, we changed our name to the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan to reflect our expanded geographical reach. Although we've grown to serve more people in more places, one thing hasn't changed – our mission. We're still focused on enforcement of Federal, State, and local fair housing law.

With the help of our volunteer testers, dedicated board members, and community partners, we continue to

fight housing discrimination and win. Our impressive track record includes:

- the filing of over 75 fair housing cases, 45 of them in Federal court;
- \$1.7 million in settlements for discrimination victims;
- educating over 500 social service professionals through Housing Advocates Training; and
- the investigation of over 2,700 fair housing complaints.

Before 1992, very few (if any) investigations were made on behalf of local discrimination victims. In 2012, we are on track to take 160 new complaints and we've already filed two lawsuits, including our first Ingham County-based litigation.

We look forward to the day our testing and advocacy services are no longer needed. But, until then, the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan will remain a strong force for justice in housing.

Thank you for your continued support,



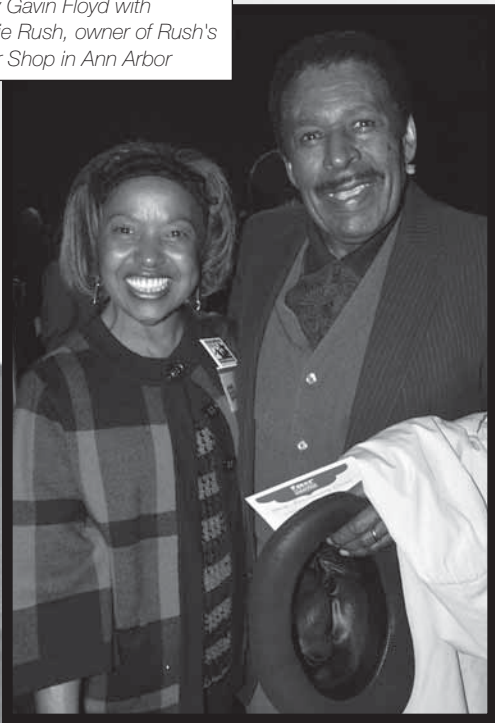
Pam Kisch
Executive Director

we provide advice,
advocacy,
conciliation,
attorney referral,
and
community
education

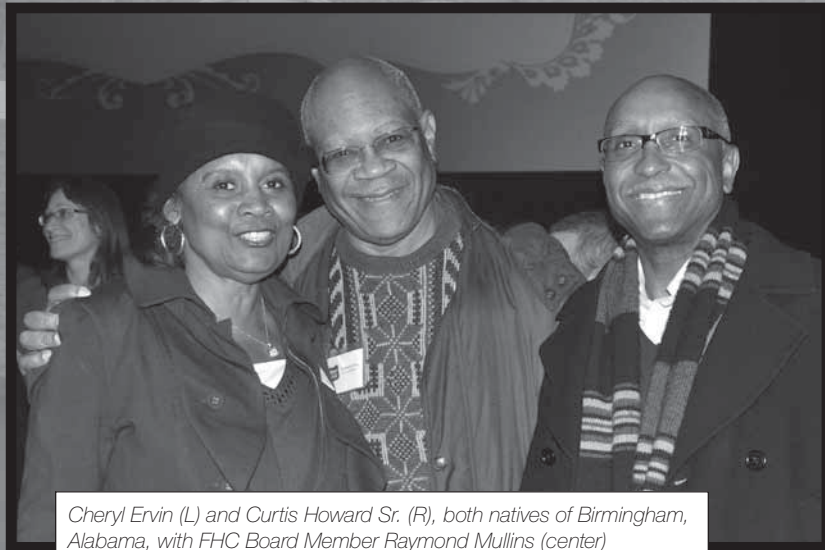
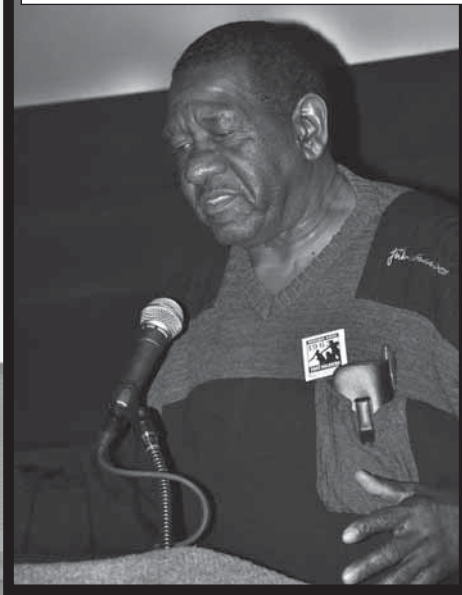


Shirley Gavin Floyd, Robin Fryday, James Revis, and Vanessa Jenkins at the FHC's 20th Anniversary Event at the Michigan Theater

Shirley Gavin Floyd with Johnnie Rush, owner of Rush's Barber Shop in Ann Arbor



James Revis, foot soldier of the civil rights movement



Cheryl Ervin (L) and Curtis Howard Sr. (R), both natives of Birmingham, Alabama, with FHC Board Member Raymond Mullins (center)



Anniversary attendees join hands to sing "We Shall Overcome"





Event moderator Professor Ronald C. Woods

ACLU Legal Director Michael J. Steinberg; FHC Executive Director Pamela A. Kisch; and Chief of the Civil Rights Unit of the Civil Division in the Eastern District of Michigan, Assistant U.S. Attorney Judith Levy



Joined in song at the close of the 20th Anniversary program

DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM
MICHIGAN
PREMIERE

THE BARBER OF *Birmingham*

FOOT SOLDIER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT



SPONSORED BY
Zingerman's
Community of
Businesses

fa=r
HOUSING
CENTER
of SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
www.fhcmichigan.org

GUEST SPEAKERS

The evening's program will feature:

ROBIN FRYDAY, Director/Producer

SHIRLEY GAVIN FLOYD, Alabama Civil Rights Activist

JOHN A. OBEE, Attorney and Civil Rights Worker

DR. SILAS NORMAN, Civil Rights Activist and Freedom Fighter

Moderated by Professor Ronald C. Woods

MICHIGAN THEATER SCREENING ROOM

Free, Donations Accepted

6:00PM FHC Members' Reception
6:30PM Doors Open to Public
7:00PM Documentary Short Film
7:30PM Speaker Program

RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

734.994.3426
info@fhcmichigan.org

Fair Housing Center
of Southeastern Michigan

20TH Anniversary

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

FHC 20th Anniversary Event - A Night to Remember!

The FHC marked its 20 year anniversary at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor on February 15th. We held a screening of the Academy Award nominated documentary film *The Barber of Birmingham*, followed by commentary from esteemed guests (see biographies below), including the film's producer.

Audience members packed the theater to follow the film's portrayal of the life of James Armstrong, an African-American barber and activist, up to the election of Barack Obama, the first African-American President.

The event also included a voter registration booth, food from Zingerman's Community of Businesses and Sparrow Meat and Produce, as well as haircut giveaways from local barbers. The evening ended with Dr. Silas Norman leading us in singing "We Shall Overcome".

Shirley Gavin Floyd, Civil Rights Activist

Shirley was born in Birmingham, Alabama and was 10 years old when the Birmingham civil rights movement began. She marched at that time but did not fully understand why she was marching.

She later realized the impact that the civil rights struggle made on the entire nation and dedicated herself to finding those "warriors" who blazed the paths for freedom. She began working for the Civil Rights Activist Committee in Birmingham, Alabama, interviewing, recording, and publishing the untold stories of the foot soldiers' of the civil rights movement.

Today, Shirley travels with Director Robin Fryday to events and film festivals, screening *The Barber of Birmingham* and using the documentary as a tool to motivate citizens to register to vote.

Robin Fryday, Director/Producer

Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Robin now lives in California. *The Barber of Birmingham* is her first documentary film. She collaborated with award winning filmmaker Gail Dolgin.

In 2008, inspired by the potential nomination of Barack Obama as the first African-American president, Robin traveled to the South to explore the impact of the nomination on aging civil rights activists.

A subsequent research trip to Alabama confirmed her belief that the stories of those who fought for the right to vote in the 1960s needed to be captured and preserved. Robin recognized that African Americans who lived through this tumultuous era had stories specific to struggles in the South not existing anywhere else in the country.

Silas Norman, Jr., MD, Civil Rights Activist and Freedom Fighter

Born and raised in Augusta, Georgia, Silas began his formal involvement and leadership in civil rights activities while at Paine College. He held positions with the NAACP and The Congress for Racial Equality while a student at Atlanta University, and then the University of Wisconsin. He heeded the call to return to the South and, in the summer of 1964, accompanied a Literacy Project team to Selma, Alabama. He remained in Selma after the summer and became a field worker for The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In the Spring of 2011, he was a Freedom Flame awardee at the annual jubilee celebration of the 1965 March from Selma to Montgomery. He is a Professor of Internal Medicine and the Associate Dean for Admissions, Diversity and Inclusion at the Wayne State University School of Medicine.



Shirley Gavin Floyd, Robin Fryday, and Dr. Silas Norman joined in song at the Fair Housing Center's 20th Anniversary Event

anniversary event

John Obee, Attorney

John's civil rights work began in 1968 when he traveled to Mississippi to teach in a Freedom School and wound up working on a voter registration/voter education drive. He later worked for the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, while also attending Wayne State University Law School as a night student, graduating in 1978.

In the past 25 years, John has handled a significant number of fair housing litigation matters, resulting in awards and settlements in excess of \$1,000,000. John is a member of the Board of Directors of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit and is Vice President and shareholder at the law firm of Wood, Kull, Herschfus, Obee & Kull, P.C. He is a recognized expert in civil rights, real estate, and property law.

Ronald C. Woods, Professor

A former Legal Services attorney in Cincinnati, OH, Ronald is now a professor of African American Studies at Eastern Michigan University. Previously on the Board of

Directors of the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan, he currently is Vice President of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission.

He and his wife have five children and seven grandchildren, and have lived in Ann Arbor for over 40 years. Ronald is a lifelong beneficiary of barbershop wisdom, including the punditry and wit of his wife's three uncles and the barbers of Washtenaw County.



Robin Fryday, Silas Norman, John Obee, and Ronald Woods at the Fair Housing Center's 20th Anniversary Event

cases filed

First FHC case filed in Ingham

Hargraves v Spiridakos

Plaintiff Matthew Hargraves contacted the Fair Housing Center after a property owner in Okemos refused to allow him to rent a house because he has four children. FHC testing supported his claim of discrimination based on familial status. FHC Cooperating Attorney Jonathan Weber filed on behalf of Mr. Hargraves in U.S. Federal District Court in February, 2012. The case is assigned to Judge Robert Holmes Bell. This is the first Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan-aided fair housing suit from Ingham County.

Service dog denied in Livingston County

Ball v Wenger

Peg Ball has a disability and uses a wheelchair. She relies on the assistance of a trained service dog named Deniro. She called the Fair Housing Center to report a Livingston County property owner who said he would, under no circumstances, take a tenant with a dog. We advised Ms. Ball to write a letter to the owner explaining that Dinero was a service animal and not a pet. At the same time, the FHC tested the claim of disability discrimination and confirmed the no service animal policy. FHC Cooperating Attorney Jonathan Weber filed on behalf of Ms. Ball in March, 2012. The case is assigned to Judge George Carem Steeh.



New FHC staff Joseph Jones

Fair Housing Center Staff + Volunteer Update

Joseph Jones, Assistant Coordinator of Investigations, began at the FHC in May. Joe recently graduated with a Master of Urban Planning and a graduate certificate in Real Estate Development from the Taubman College of Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. He also holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Michigan Law School. Joe brings experience with municipal governments through internship positions at the Office of Economic Development in Washtenaw County and in the City of Los Angeles as part of the Mayor's Economic and Real Estate Development Team. He lives in Ypsilanti with his fiancée, two cats, and dog.

We are pleased to announce that **Karen Hawver** has accepted the part-time position of Staff Accountant at the FHC. Karen brings years of experience in financial management.

Please join us in welcoming Karen and Joe!

The FHC wishes **Palar Fort** the best of luck in her future endeavors! Palar was a volunteer at the office during winter semester as part of her Women and Community class at the University of Michigan



Palar Fort at the Fair Housing Center's 20th Anniversary Event

FAIR HOUSING CENTER BOOK GROUPS



Ann Arbor
AUGUST 28, 2012
12-1 PM, brown bag lunch

The Ann Arbor FHC Book Group meets every two months in the AnnArbor.com Community Space, 301 East Liberty, First Floor. The space is handicap accessible. Visit our website for book deals and coupons.

Lansing
AUGUST 29, 2012
12-1 PM, brown bag lunch

The Lansing FHC Book Group meets every two months at EVERYbody Reads, 2019 E. Michigan Ave. Parking is available in the back and the Center is handicap accessible. Visit our website for book deals and coupons.



WE ARE READING **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD** BY HARPER LEE.

What's Inside?

- Photos from 20th Anniversary event, *page 2*
- First Ingham County case filed in Federal Court, *page 6*
- Welcome to new staff, *page 7*

**board of
directors**

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| Ann Routt, <i>President</i> | Larry Richardson |
| Michael Appel,
<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i> | Gayle Rosen |
| Paul Haynes | Delphia Simpson |
| Mark Mitshkun | |
| Kim M. Moore | |
| Ed Moorman | |
| Raymond Mullins | |

staff

- Pamela A. Kisch, *Executive Director*
 Kristen J. Cuhran, *Associate Director*
 Jessica Ortiz, *Coordinator of Investigations*
 Joseph Jones, *Assistant Coordinator of Investigations*
 Karen Hawver, *Staff Accountant*
 Ruth L. Kraut, *Special Projects Coordinator*

*Photography by Amanda Maria Edmonds
 20th Anniversary and Book Group posters by Patricia Claydon,
 Ballistic Design*

membership drive

Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan

You can also donate safely and securely at fhcmichigan.org

Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Fair Housing Center • P.O. Box 7825 • Ann Arbor, MI 48107 • 1-877-979-FAIR • fhcmichigan.org

New Member - yes, I want to become a member of the Fair Housing Center!

Renewing Member

\$35 \$50

\$75 \$125

\$250 \$35

\$ _____ (other)

Senior citizens or the unemployed may request a waiver/reduction in dues from the FHC Board.

Your Donation Is 100% Tax Deductible