



Pride · Future · Courage · Purpose · Culture

PO Box 290326
Columbia, SC 29229
WeGOJA.org
WeGOJAexecdir@gmail.com

PRESS RELEASE

Coach Dawn Staley and State Senator Kevin L. Johnson Chosen for Heritage Awards

Columbia – April 11, 2022 – Two-time national champion coach Dawn Staley and State Senator Kevin L. Johnson will be recognized for outstanding achievements during the annual Preserving Our Places in History awards luncheon at 1 p.m. on Thursday, April 21, in Columbia. The ceremony is part of the Cultural and Historic Preservation Conference hosted by the non-profit [WeGOJA Foundation](https://www.wegoja.org), scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the South Carolina Archives and History Center at 8301 Parklane Road.

Under the theme “*Historic Preservation: One Step Closer to Social Justice*,” the conference will feature discussions from some of the state’s and nation’s leading historians drawing connections between lessons learned from the past and the pursuit of social justice today. More here <https://www.wegoja.org/popih-awards>.

Staley was selected for the Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr., Trailblazer Award for her strong advocacy for women’s sports and social justice. Under her innovative leadership, she has heightened interest in women’s basketball at the University of South Carolina, leading attendance in the nation at Colonial Life Arena; engaged a network of women’s basketball coaches behind the historic achievements of the late Pat Summit of the University of Tennessee, and continuously inspires young women to be their best. She also allows her players to express their thoughts about social justice issues and is an outspoken advocate herself.

In 2021-22, Staley’s USC Gamecocks were ranked the #1 team in the nation for the entire season, defeated 14 other ranked opponents and won the national championship with a convincing victory over perennial power University of Connecticut. In previous seasons, the team had consistently ranked in the top 10, won Southeastern Conference championships and played in the NCAA Tournament. They also won the national championship in 2017.

Senator Kevin Johnson will receive the Legislator of the Year award for securing funding for three historical markers in Clarendon County that share the story of Briggs vs. Elliott. The case, although defeated in U.S. District Court in Charleston, was instrumental in integrating public schools across the nation as it served as a basis for the landmark Brown vs. Board decision.

Others winning awards at the conference will include:

Student award – Olivia, Evans and Sophia Dozier of Columbia – In 2019, the Dozier children became interested in the history of African Americans who lived on the 1900 block of Henderson Street in downtown Columbia, specifically the story of their great-great-grandfather, William Joseph

Sumter. They acquired a historical marker in 2019 to preserve that story and secured an honorary street name to pay tribute to their ancestor in December 2021. They continue to discover more history of the people who lived there and find ways to preserve and protect their legacies.

Organization or Group award – Arnold Fields Community Endowment in Hampton County – This nonprofit was responsible for the acquisition of five historical markers in rural Hampton County that marked sites of historic schools that served African Americans in the early 20th century. Their most recent acquisition happened in December 2021, when their application for a marker for the Steele Missionary School / Zion Fair Colored School marker was approved. They were also responsible for markers at Rosenwalds and other historic schools in this Lowcountry county.

Individual Award – Maxine Smith – The Individual Award will be presented to Dr. Maxine Smith of Charleston, a retired education administrator and local leader of African American programs and outreach. After a lengthy career in education administration, Dr. Smith remained involved in historical and cultural events in the Charleston area, although working behind the scenes in many cases. She helped organize programs like the national convention of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASAALH) in Charleston in 2019. Additionally, two of her creative works were articles published in the Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association and the *South Carolina Encyclopedia* on Dr. Lucy Hughes Brown, the first African American woman physician in North and South Carolina.

Project Award – the documentary “If These Walls Could Talk” – The documentary centers on the imprint of four small fingers in an antique brick found near the College of Charleston and how other enslaved Africans contributed to the architectural beauty of the college and surrounding sites. It was produced by Dr. Charissa Owens, Director of Diversity Education and Training at the College of Charleston and one of the founders of the 1967 Legacy Scholarship Program. Dr. Owens serves as Chair of the Staff Advisory Committee to the President, and also as Vice President of the Charleston Branch of the Association of the Study of African American Life and History (ASAALH.)

Leon Love Lifetime Achievement Award – Dr. Burnette Gallman of Columbia and Ms. Jannie Harriot of Hartsville – two people will receive the prestigious Leon Love Lifetime Achievement Award at the April 20 luncheon.

Dr. Burnette Gallman is a gastroenterologist in Columbia by trade but is more widely known for cultural activism that spans more than 45 years. Dr. Gallman has taught and lectured throughout South Carolina. His subject matter expertise includes African and African American history and culture, environmental racism, ancient Egypt, the African origin of medical science, mental slavery in people of African origin, biographies of great Black men and women, and other topics. He was a part-time instructor in African and African American history at Columbia Junior College and South Carolina State University. He has also taught inmates at several prisons in South Carolina, and he holds numerous leadership positions in local and national organizations.

Ms. Jannie Harriot is widely recognized as an advocate for the preservation and promotion of African American history in South Carolina. After a successful career in business and education in New Jersey, she returned home to Hartsville in 1990 and was among a team of people who saved historic Butler High School from being razed for development. She also helped found the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission and its supporting foundation (now called the WeGOJA Foundation), serving in leadership positions for both organizations for decades. Harriot was instrumental in developing the

Commission's most noteworthy projects including teacher's guides, webinars and summer institutes; the oral history project "Black Carolinians Speak: Portraits of a Pandemic," the Green Book of South Carolina; a directory of historic African American schools called "How Did We Get to Now?" and a business development guide for cultural entrepreneurs. She has received numerous awards for her decades of volunteer work and is often sought for counsel and advice on starting successful non-profits.

The annual conference is a gathering of historians, archivists, museum and historic site personnel and others interested in African American historic preservation. Prominent historians on stage will include

- Brent Leggs, Senior Vice President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Executive Director of the African American Cultural Action Fund
- Dr. Tonya Matthews, Executive Director of the International African American Museum in Charleston
- Michael Allen, prominent Charleston historian who helped establish the SCAAHC, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park
- Victoria Smalls, Executive Director of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor
- Joseph McGill, Founder of the Slave Dwelling Project.

Registration is \$50 per person and must be purchased in advance by using the [registration form here](#) and mailing to the WeGOJA Foundation at PO Box 290326, Columbia, SC 29229.

###

Editor's Note: Reporters and editors on assignment can attend complementary, but must complete a registration form and send by email to Dawn Dawson-House, Executive Director of the WeGOJA Foundation, at WeGOJAexecdir@gmail.com.