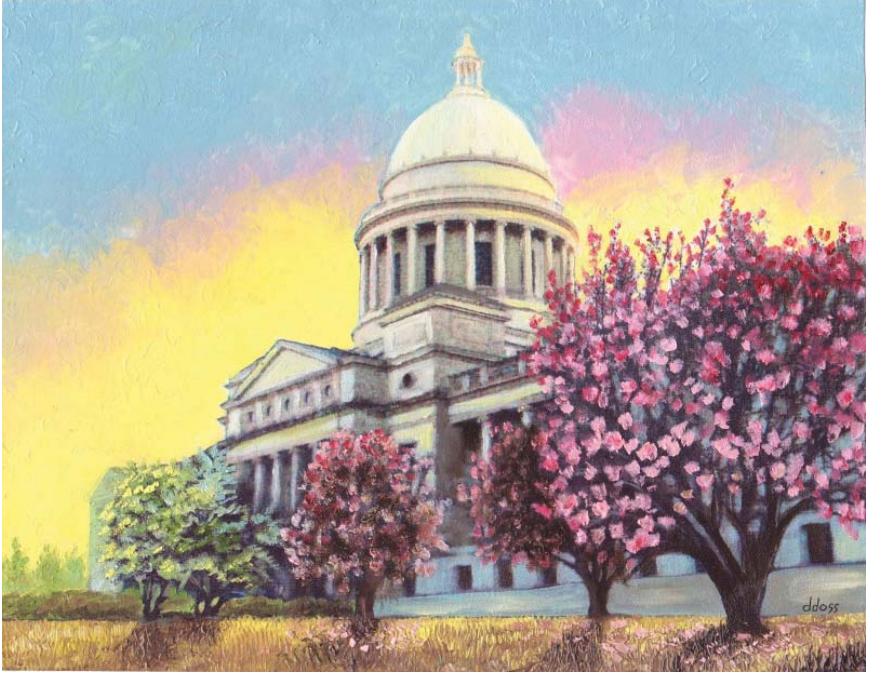




Arkansas  
Citizens First  
Congress



## **2010 Dragon Slayer Award Dinner**

Arkansas 4-H Center

June 26, 2010



# **Program**

Reception and Raffle

Blessing  
Rev. Michael Mattox

Dinner

Welcome  
Curtis Mangrum, Board co-chair

Arkansas Citizens First Congress Overview

Presentation of Awards

**Speaker**  
**Dr. Ozell Sutton**

**Introduced by Walter Kimbrough,**  
President of Philander Smith College

Recognition of board, steering committee and staff

Closing prayer

## Speaker, Dr. Ozell Sutton



Civil rights activist and community leader Ozell Sutton was born on a plantation near Gould, Arkansas. His mother was a widow with four sons who worked as cotton sharecroppers and two daughters who cooked and did laundry.

With no black high school to attend in the segregated town of Gould, Ozell Sutton moved to Little Rock to attend Dunbar High School. When the war began,

Sutton became one of the first African Americans to serve in the United States Marine Corps. After surviving bloody conflicts from the Solomon Islands to Saipan, he returned to enroll in Philander Smith College. Upon graduating, Sutton went to work for the Arkansas Democrat, becoming the first black reporter in Arkansas hired by a white-owned daily.

Sutton and Joanna Freeman were married in 1947 and became the parents of three daughters. Joanna Sutton was a founding member of the Panel of American Women, which formed to facilitate school integration and later became Arkansas Public Policy Panel. With a Masters Degree in education, she continued to move integration forward in public schools by serving as an administrator and supervisor.

Sutton was a confidant of Dr. Martin Luther King and a key player in many of the movement's most critical moments. He was one of the escorts for the Little Rock Nine in 1957. He participated in the 1965 march at Selma.

In 1961, Sutton became director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations where he helped to begin the Community Relations Service. From 1968 to 1970 he served as special assistant to the late Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller where he was the force behind integrating the leadership of Arkansas agencies.

In 1972, Sutton became director of the U.S. Justice Department's Community Relations Service. He helped mediate some of the nation's most important civil rights conflicts. The Department gave him its Distinguished Service Award and cited him three times for his management of racial crisis situations.

Material for this was pulled from The History Makers, The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture, and the Cornell Chronicle.

## Remembering Brownie W. Ledbetter

We are renaming the Dragon Slayer Award – our highest award – the Brownie W. Ledbetter Dragon Slayer Award. Brownie was one of our co-founders and our longtime director of nearly 30 years.

Brownie developed an innovative model of organizing and policy change that we still use today:

1. Community organizing to increase the number of people working to improve local conditions;
2. Coalition building to connect groups across lines of geography, issue, race, class and gender to work together at the state legislature; and
3. Policy development to inform the decisions Arkansans make.



Brownie did not consider herself a dragon slayer and viewed the dragons of racism, sexism, classism and homophobia as alive and well. She constantly called these oppressions a social disease that must be fought vigilantly.

The Arkansas Citizens First Congress was her conception, along with then AFL-CIO director Bill Becker, as they looked for ways to make grassroots Arkansans more effective and disrupt the “corporate flying wedge” of moneyed interests that control the state. She initially called the Congress “the big hoobie-doo” as we planned the then-unnamed coalition.

The crisis surrounding the desegregation of Central High School occurred while Brownie was living in Germany where her husband Cal was stationed in the Army. When Ledbetter returned to Arkansas, she immediately began volunteering with the Women’s Emergency Committee to Save Our Schools (WEC). After the dissolution of WEC in 1963, Ledbetter worked with the Panel of American Women, a nonpartisan forum founded by Sarah Murphy focused on religious and racial diversity in which women



discussed their own personal experiences in an effort to bridge the gap between people of different races and cultures. In 1971 the Panel became the Arkansas Public Policy Panel and expanded its mission to include organizing and assisting grassroots groups.

Other organizations on Ledbetter's résumé include the AR Fairness Council (founder and lobbyist for 15 years), AR Women's Political Caucus (founding member), the ERA/Arkansas Coalition (organizing member, 1973–1978), AR Career Resources, Inc. (founder



and director from 1985 to 1990), the Southern Coalition for Educational Equity (state director from 1982 to 1985), the AR State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the State Federation of Business and Professional Women (legislative director), the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO, co-founder with Bella Abzug) and the Women's Foundation of AR (founding member). She organized the first Planned Parenthood affiliate and clinic in Arkansas in 1984 and spearheaded the defeat of the first statewide ballot initiative to restrict private and legal forms of birth control and abortion. She was an ordained Elder in the Presbyterian Church and active in Church affairs.

She worked with women and minorities from many countries through her service on WEDO and the National Congress of Neighborhood Women. She was a nongovernmental delegate in UN meetings in New York and UN Conferences on the Environment in Rio, Population in Cairo, Women in Beijing, Racism in Durban, and Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Ledbetter also worked with many political campaigns, starting in 1967, when she managed her husband's successful bid for the Arkansas General Assembly and included work for Dale Bumpers, George McGovern and the Democratic Party.



After retirement she continued working on public school issues and served on the board of the Center for the Advancement of Women in New York. She remained an active supporter of the Panel and Congress and leaves a profound legacy of justice.

## Remembering EJ

### The EJ Miller Lifetime Achievement Award



We are pleased to create the EJ Miller Lifetime Achievement Award, given to EJ's family for a lifetime of often under-appreciated contributions to the labor and social justice movements. EJ served as board co-chair of the Arkansas Public Policy Panel for almost 10 years and was a co-founder of the Arkansas Citizens First Congress.

EJ worked as a machinist at Allis-Chalmers (Siemens) in Little Rock after graduating from El Dorado High School in 1969. He soon began working with local 1113 of the International Union of Electrical Workers. He served as Chief Steward and Secretary/Treasury of the Local and was its President for 9 years.

In 1985 EJ became an International Representative for IUE, now IUE-CWA. EJ served as Director of Political Action for the district that included Arkansas. He organized workers for the union from California to Massachusetts, often standing in his cowboy boots outside of plants talking with workers. He played guitar and sang union songs, playing with many of the best labor troubadours in the country.

EJ was a master negotiator and led a number of complicated multi-plant negotiations with employers. He was a master trainer in demand across the country and served as Director of Education for his union District and as an advisor to the Labor Education Program at UALR. His dry wit and brutal honesty on behalf of workers were appreciated by many.

EJ understood the importance of common efforts for all those who do not wield power in the state and the nation. EJ would often remind members of the Citizens First Congress: "We all need to remember that the only thing that really matters is that we came together as a coalition and we need to leave as a coalition." He leaves a lasting legacy within the labor movement and with the ongoing work of the Panel and Citizens First Congress.



# 2010 Brownie W. Ledbetter Dragon Slayer

## Beatrice Shelby

*The best way to help a community is to serve it.*



As a child, Beatrice Shelby learned two very important things: the value of hard work and the importance of family. With four brothers and four sisters who always took care of her, she knew that family was something special, while at the same time, she saw how hard they had to work to make ends meet. That determination and caring helped move her toward a career in community

service that has forever changed the lives of countless people in the small Delta community of Marvell.

Founded in 1978, the Boys, Girls, Adults Community Development Center is more than one might expect to find under just one roof. Not simply a place that provides recreation, the BGACDC as it is known, takes a much larger approach to improving its community. In addition to social activities, the center provides education support, health assistance, housing, and economic development opportunities for low- to moderate income families. Being the third largest employer in Marvell, one can easily say that the center is the truly the heart of this community. But its success would not be possible without strong leadership.

Beatrice Shelby had worked in community development for some time after college, but it wasn't until 1982, when she was contacted by BGACDC that she found her true calling. She knew from the beginning that BGACDC members were committed to doing positive things for the community and that she wanted to be a part of it. Her hard work and dedication has paid off as she has watched the children helped by the center become leaders in their own right. Seeing their success is a true reflection of Beatrice Shelby's own success.

## **Southeast Arkansas Activist of the Year— Wonda White**

*Unless you step forward and put forth the effort, nothing will ever be accomplished*



Growing up in Gould, Wonda “Faye” White knew she had a heart for service. Her original goal was to be a counselor to battered and abused women; however she instead became a hard working mother of three. Her love for helping and for her community remained throughout the years.

It wasn’t until her brother became involved with a small group of citizens called the Gould Citizens Advisory Council that she saw new possibilities for improving her community. She embraced the group’s vision for an informed and united community and helped make several positive changes.

In 2008, White was elected to the Gould City Council where she has taken GCAC’s vision to the city administration. While there is still much to be done, leaders like her are seeing their dream of a better Gould come closer to reality day by day. Of course, other dreams are also within reach as she has come full circle and will soon receive her degree in counseling. There is little doubt that White will use that knowledge to continue helping and serving those who need her most.

## **Southwest Arkansas Activist of the Year— Rev. Mary Purifoy**

*There is a need for people to come together, learn and speak out about issues that affect them.*



Growing up, Rev. Mary Purifoy divided her time between Arkansas and California. Luckily for the Natural State, she ultimately chose to make her home here. After earning a degree in sociology from Ouachita Baptist University, she worked in children’s daycare before turning her focus to the ministry where she has remained for the past 30 years. Rev. Purifoy currently pastors six different congregations within the Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Her ministry naturally led her to help the communities in which she was working, which in turn led her to the Southwest Good Government Commission (SGGC). As chair of the organization, she has embraced her role to urge more people to get involved in their communities. She found that once leadership was established to get the ball rolling, community members started getting on board. And once that happened, they were able to prioritize issues and create action plans.

Membership and accomplishments of SGGC are growing rapidly under Rev. Purifoy’s leadership and she was just elected to be Co-chair of the Panel Board.

## Northwest Arkansas Activist of the Year— Jack White



*I'm doing this for my grandchildren and their grandchildren.*

A native Arkansan, Jack White has seen his share of the world. Working for the oil and gas industry, he traveled to all corners of the globe from Oklahoma and Texas, to Egypt and the Persian Gulf. Yet it wasn't until he returned to Arkansas that he began seeing firsthand the way his former industry was treating Arkansas landowners.

He watched as these companies encroached on private land piece by piece leaving environmental devastation and destruction in their wake, with little regard to the small landowners whose livelihood they were affecting. Seeing this, combined with his strong belief that “we should leave the Earth in as good of condition as we found it,” and a desire to preserve the small family farms that helped build this state and nation, White began promoting property owner's rights for environmental protection.

Since first taking up this cause, he has spoken to countless land owners about making such a bill of rights public policy in the state. “If we can't ensure the integrity of personal property, we're never going to have the type of investment that small farming operations require to get off the ground, and if we don't act soon, there will be none left to save.”

## Agriculture Activist of the Year— Charlotte Wales



*Development happens from the ground up, it doesn't trickle down*

Arriving from New Orleans 30 years ago, Charlotte Wales was drawn to Arkansas's rolling hills and lush surroundings. It was here that she was able to indulge in her love of art, design, and most importantly, helping others.

After several years of living in Arkansas's mountains, she headed South to Monticello in order to be nearer her children. It was here that Wales joined together with other concerned citizens to organize and develop a strategic plan aimed at improving the lives of children living in one of Arkansas's most impoverished areas. This group of citizens, the Arkansas Design Work Group, promotes improvement in many areas, including child nutrition.

When children are underfed, they don't learn as well. Wales is working with local schools to move from processed, canned foods to more organic, fresh and nutritious foods that will give kids the energy they need to grow, learn, and consequently become productive citizens who help the region to prosper.

## **Economic Development Activist of the Year—**

**alt.Consulting**

*Some look at the Delta and see poverty; we see a spirit of hope and determination*

In 1998, business consulting firms were a rare site in rural Arkansas. For small businesses trying to get off the ground, resources were limited when it came to the know-how needed to successfully start, run and market a new endeavor.

The founders of this non-profit saw that the Delta's outlook can improve dramatically by growing businesses and the far reaching impacts that improving the overall community would provide. alt.Consulting got off the ground to ensure that small, rural businesses grow, expand and create jobs.

The recession brought even more change to the Delta when traditional lenders would not lend to entrepreneurs in the area. Out of this problem was born alt. Capital which makes micro loans to individuals based not just on assets, but also on vision and determination. The hope of alt.Consulting is that this new approach to lending will become a model for reaching into rural business communities and continuing the trend of small business growth that they have started.

## **Environment Activist of the Year— Alice Andrews**



*Clean water is a vital asset to Arkansas and its people*

Growing up in Oklahoma, this farmer's daughter knew from an early age just how precious water was and saw firsthand the problems that arose when it wasn't available. It was from these beginnings that Alice Andrews became drawn to water conservation.

After school, Andrews traveled the world from Honduras to Nepal as a clinical laboratory scientist. She saw environmental disasters up close and personal that resulted from harm to local water and wilderness. She vowed that when she returned home she would do everything in her power to fight those same problems.

In Arkansas, Andrews became very involved in Ozark Society efforts to preserve the quality of our natural and scenic rivers, including the Buffalo River. That work led her to being pivotal in reviving the Arkansas Conservation Coalition, which has been a strong voice in addressing the oil and gas industry's unsustainable use of water and the harmful impact that it has had on our natural lands.

Alice is a leader in the Citizens First Congress and her work is a beacon to others that want to see our rivers and streams preserved for generations to come.



## **Public Health Activist of the Year— Rick Collins** *A legacy built on commitment to his community*

Little Rock native Rick Collins didn't start out in the business of empowering citizens, but it didn't take long for him to get there. After spending several years in the corporate world outside of Arkansas, Collins returned in 1989 with a desire to give back to his community. His vision for giving youth and adults the skills to grow and lead productive lives ultimately came to fruition with the co-founding of FutureBuilders, a nonprofit community-based organization that empowers community residents to become self-sufficient through resource mobilization, education and training.

His successful work with FutureBuilders set the stage for his focus on the Arkansas Minority HIV/AIDS Task Force, a priority of the CFC which was created by the state legislature in 2007. As co-chair of the taskforce, he has helped lead the state's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS through education and awareness.

FutureBuilders has targeted nearly every at-risk group for HIV education, including most recently Arkansas's homeless population. Through his work, not only are Arkansas's citizens becoming more empowered, but they will also lead healthier, more productive lives.



## **Civil Rights Activist of the Year— Phi Iota Alpha, Alpha Lambda Chapter**

*Education is the key to a prosperous community*

Established in 1931, Phi Iota Alpha has a history rich in promoting and advancing leadership in the Latino community, and if the 2009 Legislative Session was any indication, that tradition is alive and well in Arkansas.

The Alpha Lambda Chapter of Phi Iota Alpha is the first Latino fraternity in the University of Arkansas system, and has quickly established its role as a leader in bringing various parties together when it comes to Latino issues. When the Dream Act, a CFC priority, was first proposed, they saw it as an issue that they could help drive at the State Capitol. For Phi Iota Alpha members, the Dream Act represented not only an opportunity to promote higher education in the Latino community, but more importantly, to promote access to education regardless of immigration status.

Though the Dream Act did not pass in Arkansas, a national movement is afoot to include the measure as part of a national education reform, and Phi Iota Alpha is continuing to build support for it in the Natural State.

## **Education Activist of the Year— Arkansas Education Association**

*Public education is the gateway to opportunity*



Organized in 1869, the Arkansas Education Association was created to promote the cause of public education and the education profession in Arkansas. It merged in 1969 with the seventy-one year old Arkansas Teachers Association which was organized to represent the interests of African-American teachers and students in the fight for equal and better educational opportunity in Arkansas' racially segregated schools.

Today AEA is the state's largest and most influential organization of education and support professionals and serves as the voice of education professionals. The Arkansas Education Association remains committed to a quality public education for all children in Arkansas, and is a key ally in the CFC's work on the achievement gap.

## **Election and Government Reform Activist of the Year— Gould Citizens Advisory Council**



*Our people are committed to making our community better*

After years of frustration over problems in their city, the Gould Citizens Advisory Committee (GCAC) organized to bring Gould's citizens together to plan

for much needed improvements. In 2008 they sought potential candidates who would be willing to support their platform and recruited seven individuals to run for city office. They applied to the Arkansas Electoral Commission to send a monitor to ensure fair elections, and received one of only two awarded.

Six of the seven GCAC candidates were elected to office. The election monitor dealt with problems that arose on election day and made recommendations for correcting irregularities in the future. GCAC followed up on these and today, GCAC is working with their county election commissioners to recruit poll workers, provide better training and create a polling site that ensures fair elections for the whole community.

GCAC's model for strengthening their community is now being copied elsewhere across the state. They are proving that when people are willing to stand together, plan strategically and take action, real change can happen.

**Thanks to all of our supporters!**

## **Sponsors**

Arkansas Canoe Club

The Ledbetter Family

White River Environmental Protection Assn.

## **Allies**

Alice Lightle

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Barbara Miles and Hank Bates

Susan Hardin & Barry Haas

Boys, Girls and Adults CDC

Connie & Bill Bowen

Clinton School for Public Service

Gould Citizens Advisory Council

Kathy Webb

National Center for Appropriate Technology

Phi Iota Alpha

Schott Foundation for Public Education

The Office of Community-Based Public Health

UAMS College of Public Health

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Lucy Abraham

Rosalind and Robert Abernathy

Scott County Organization to Protect the Environment

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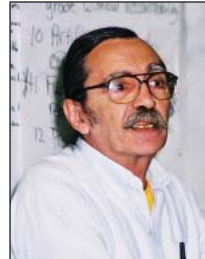
**Thanks to Debbie Doss for her beautiful painting of the Arkansas Capitol which graces the cover of this program as well as the awards being presented tonight.**

# Arkansas Public Policy Panel Board

Chandra Anderson ♦ Alejandro Aviles ♦ Betty Cole ♦ Fannie Fields  
Rev. Howard Gordon ♦ Barry Haas ♦ Curtis Mangrum, *co-chair*  
Rev. John Owens ♦ Rev. Mary Purifoy, *co-chair* ♦ Margarita Solorzano

## Honoring outgoing Board members

Linda Carnahan ♦ Perry Hayes ♦ Basil Kyriakakis



## Arkansas Citizens First Congress Steering Committee



(pictured left-to-right)

Ruby Graham-Emerson, *co-chair* ♦ Rev. Kenneth Anderson ♦ Ines  
Polonius ♦ Rick Collins ♦ Kathy Wesho-Bauer ♦ Rev. Earnest Nash ♦  
Regina VonTungeln ♦ Anthony Scott ♦ Kate Althoff ♦ Debbie Doss

(not pictured) Bruce Lockett, *co-chair* ♦ Kara Wilkins ♦  
Rafael Arciga-Garcia ♦ Daniel Diaz ♦ Randi Romo