



# Reconciliation Dinner

Shreveport

## 2018 Shreveport Reconciliation Dinner Participants

*The Steering Committee solicited nominations from the community for the 2018 Shreveport Reconciliation Dinner, seeking a diverse group of participants who have advocated for change.*

*Our 2018 participants have spoken out against economic, environmental, racial, and social injustice and empowered others to do the same; improved their neighborhoods through art, education, faith, and service; forged friendships and partnerships across lines of race, class, gender, and sexual identity; and dedicated themselves to laying the groundwork for a truly reconciled community that recognizes and protects the dignity of each individual.*

*These short biographies are drawn from the nominations received by the Steering Committee. They provide a glimpse into the transformative impact that the 2018 Reconciliation Dinner participants have had on our community.*

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### **T.D. Antoine**

Mr. Antoine directed the documentary film *Beyond Galilee*, incorporating rare footage and photographs of key figures and seminal moments of Shreveport’s civil rights movement. Some of these events include Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech at the Old Galilee Baptist Church, Shreveport police officers riding their horses into Little Union Baptist Church, and the boycotting of Stan’s Record Shop.

### **Louis Brossette**

Mr. Brossette participated in the struggle for civil rights in Shreveport in the 1960s and has continued his community advocacy and leadership in his Allendale neighborhood and across the city. A natural leader, he was recruited to build and buy one of the first Allendale homes constructed by the Fuller Center for Housing and is the current vice president for Allendale Strong. In this capacity he has spoken out against plans to route I-49 through the neighborhood and has inspired others with his grace and charm. He also volunteers his time with Community Renewal International and the Volunteers of America.

**Njeri Camara**

Ms. Camara is a longtime advocate for children and youth in state custody, having served on task forces and commissions at both the state and national level to address issues of mental health, addictive disorders, and developmental disabilities. She has been actively involved with the NAACP, the League of Women Voters, and Community Renewal International. She is pastor of Restoring Broken Lives Outreach and is a member of the Willis-Knighton Health System Clergy Roster for Pastoral Care.

**Michael Chisum**

Mr. Chisum was a recipient of the 2016 Northwest Louisiana Prism Award from the *Shreveport Times*, honoring allies, advocates, and supporters advancing equality for LGBT people in Northwest Louisiana. Each year, he coordinates a memorial service for transgender victims of violence and also participates in PACE's Pride in the Park, setting up an area where he registers voters, collects items for the Renzi Art and Education Center, and reads books to children.

**Larry Clark**

Mr. Clark is chancellor of Louisiana State University – Shreveport and has made racial justice and equality a central tenet of his career in education. As an LSUS faculty member in the 1980s and 1990s, he assisted in the writing of the Biracial Commission Report (edited by former state representative Lydia Jackson) and called for a renewed commitment to the findings of that report during his interview process for chancellor in 2014. He is working to strengthen LSUS's strategic engagement in the community and is active with Step Forward, the United Way, and the Strategic Action Council.

**Deborrah "Cookie" Coleman**

Ms. Coleman is a leading member of the Red River Coalition for Community Gardeners and has been a tireless advocate for community garden projects throughout the city, especially those geared toward young people. She founded the Highland Community Garden and has been instrumental in the We Grow Together garden education project, always emphasizing the importance of putting neighbors needs and concerns first while bringing together people from different backgrounds.

**Curtis Davis**

Mr. Davis is the executive officer in Shreveport of Voice of the Experienced, or V.O.T.E., an organization assisting ex-convicts in reintegrating into society and specifically in reestablishing their right to vote. His personal experience after a wrongful conviction and long prison term has made Davis a grounded and effective advocate for others dealing with the challenges of reintegration.

**Jada Durden**

Ms. Durden uses her platform as a blogger and social media influencer to bring people together at unique and diverse events (usually involving food!) in the Shreveport-Bossier area. More importantly, she uses the same platform to highlight social and racial justice issues and raise important questions about access, exclusion, and the persistence of racism in the community. She has participated in the YWCA's Dialogue on Race and is committed to encouraging honest dialogue both online and in person.

**Angelique Feaster-Evans**

Ms. Feaster-Evans is the founder of Mahogany Ensemble Theatre, a theatre company focused primarily on presenting plays by or about African-American women and on exploring the themes of the plays with a diverse audience. She has served as president of the Shreveport Mayor's Women's Commission and inspired members of the commission to come together to serve Shreveport's women and youth. She also serves as a board member for the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition and the YWCA.

**Chris Gabriel**

Mr. Gabriel is executive vice president for the Volunteers of America North Louisiana. Before joining the leadership team for the organization, he was a longtime supporter of and volunteer in the VOA's LightHouse program and other services designed to provide the academic and community support that local at-risk students need to stay in school and graduate, giving them a chance to break the cycle of poverty that traps so many. He has also positively influenced many in our community, especially children, through his long-time involvement in local theatre productions.

**Cedric Glover**

Mr. Glover currently represents District 4 in Caddo Parish in the Louisiana House of Representatives, returning to a position he held from 1996 to 2006. In November 2006, he was the first African-American mayor elected by the city of Shreveport, serving two terms until 2014. Prior to serving as mayor and as a state representative, he served on the Shreveport City Council for six years.

**Shelley Ryan Gray**

Ms. Gray is a registered nurse and works for the Louisiana Office of Public Health as the regional maternal and child health advocate. Her work gives her first-hand experience with the inequalities in health outcomes for the most vulnerable people in Shreveport and Caddo Parish, and she has routinely spoken out to link these inequalities to poverty and racism. She has convened a group of women to discuss and study the issue of toxic stress and its effects on mothers and babies in Shreveport and is working as part of a national study examining the racial disparity in child mortality rates in North Louisiana.

**Kristin Hammit**

Ms. Hammit was one of the initiators of and vocal advocates for the Take It Down Caddo movement, starting a petition to remove the Confederate monument at the Caddo Parish Courthouse and using social media to publicize and report on the public monument hearings and Citizens Advisory Committee meetings. She was instrumental in organizing Shreveport's Vigil for Charlottesville, a vigil at the "lynching tree" on the Caddo Parish Courthouse grounds, and Resistfest, an event bringing together African-American, environmental, and other activist groups in Shreveport. She helped establish the local chapter of V.O.T.E., spearheaded an African-American studies club and African-American performance arts society at Byrd High School, and has participated in voter registration drives.

**Ashley Hazelton**

Ms. Hazelton spent three years at the Norton Art Gallery building expertise as a civil rights oral history archivist, learning how to put strangers at ease, developing a memory-evoking questionnaire, and identifying some of the legacies of racism that make people reluctant to share their stories. She has brought this knowledge to her current work overseeing the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition's oral history project and has trained two other team members to help build an oral history archive for the North Louisiana Civil Rights Museum currently housed at the main branch of the Shreve Memorial Library. She and her team are working to transcribe and edit dozens of interviews and will soon be making these stories available to schools, organizations, and churches to educate citizens about Shreveport's rich civil rights history.

**John Henson**

Rev. Henson is an ordained minister who founded Church for the Highlands to minister to residents of the racially and economically diverse Highland neighborhood, many of whom are at the fringes of society and are struggling to find their place at the table. Under his leadership, Church for the Highlands created a clothes closet, installed a low-cost ATM for use by neighborhood residents, and created the Highland Blessing Dinner, a collaboration of more than ten churches that provides a weekly free meal open to anyone in the community. He is active in many interfaith organizations working for justice and equality for all people.

**Omari Ho-Sang**

Ms. Ho-Sang is the founder of ASAP (All Streets, All People), a non-profit organization that tries to address the systemic causes of crime, drug abuse, and homelessness by advocating for jobs and education. She reaches citizens through roundtable discussions, call-to-action meetings, neighborhood canvassing, and awareness demonstrations. She has made impassioned speeches to the Caddo Parish School Board and at public events, arguing for inclusion and equity in education as a stepping stone out of poverty.

**Juan Huertas**

Mr. Huertas is senior pastor of Grace Community Methodist Church and is involved in numerous community organizations, including Common Ground in the Cedar Grove neighborhood. He pastors a racially and culturally diverse congregation and promotes a message of acceptance, bringing all groups together to build a stronger and better community.

**Lee A. Jeter, Sr.**

Mr. Jeter is executive director of the Fuller Center for Housing of Northwest Louisiana and an advocate for fair and equal justice. He has served on the advisory committee with the Louisiana Campaign for Equal Justice to help develop a blueprint to reform Louisiana's public defense funding model and worked as a community liaison for the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force, leading to the passage of the Louisiana Reinvestment Act.

**Roxann Johnson**

Ms. Johnson has worked many years for social justice, economic empowerment, and inclusion for people of color. For a number of those years she focused on the issue of domestic violence, and in 2016 was part of the steering committee that created the first Shreveport Reconciliation Dinner. Her advocacy includes speaking at churches, conferences, and recently at the *All Y'all* live storytelling event in Shreveport, where she shared a story about teaching her children how to respond to exclusion and how to treat others always with compassion and love.

**Ralph Johnson**

Mr. Johnson served as the volunteer chair for the Caddo Parish Commission's Citizens' Advisory Committee on the removal of the Confederate monument at the Caddo Parish Courthouse. In this role, he was responsible for maintaining order and enforcing parliamentary rules at several public comment meetings, collecting all public comments for submission to the Caddo Parish Commission, and helping the committee create a final recommendation regarding the status of the monument. He maintained a professional demeanor throughout a difficult and stressful process and his leadership weighed favorably in the Commission's eventual decision to vote to remove the divisive monument from the courthouse grounds.

**Frances Kelley**

Ms. Kelley is a community activist focusing on environmental and LGBT causes, working with Louisiana Progress Action, Equality Louisiana, 350 Louisiana, and others. Along with fellow Reconciliation Dinner participant Dr. Brian Salvatore, she developed a grassroots action campaign that successfully prevented the open burning of military waste at Camp Minden. She is a past recipient of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award, given annually to an individual or organization in the wider community that embodies and exemplifies the principles and values of liberal religion.

**Karen LaBeau**

Ms. La Beau is an accomplished artist and enthusiastic champion for the local arts community. She welcomes a diverse group of artists into her home as a co-leader for HOSTS (Highland Open Studio Tour Sundays), stimulating the local creative economy and building a warm, inclusive community. She has also helped organize the vending artists for the Highland Jazz & Blues Festival, been active with the Krewe of Highland, and taught art at various after-school programs in the Highland neighborhood. Her artwork embodies the diversity of her community and gives her a platform to advance conversations about racial and gender equality.

**Hosea “Big D” Levingston**

Mr. Levingston is the owner of Big D’s BBQ in Shreveport, a place that one admirer described as “a melting pot where people of different class and racial backgrounds come together over good music and barbeque.” During a time when many other local all-age music venues were closing their doors, he opened his business to musicians who were diverse in race, age, genre, and walks of life. One of these young musicians, now working for a social justice organization in Memphis, nominated Levingston for the Reconciliation Dinner, noting that their friendship and their conversations about politics, local civil rights history, and current events “had a profound effect on my concept of racial justice.”

**Nathaniel Manning**

Mr. Manning, a professor of economics, is passionate about educational equity and community service. He has worked on projects to improve fairness in standardized testing and to increase disadvantaged and under-represented students’ participation in Advanced Placement course offerings. As a facilitator for the YWCA’s Dialogue on Race program, an executive board member of the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition, and president of the West Caddo/Shreveport Alliance, he is consistently seeking common ground across racial lines and helping to educate groups and individuals about the value of diversity.

**Cassie McDaniel**

Ms. McDaniel co-organized the Take It Down Caddo movement and developed key relationships with several Caddo commissioners that helped to increase public awareness of the level of support for removal. She co-organized the Shreveport vigil for Charlottesville and gave an impassioned speech on racial justice and white accountability that was recorded and shared by the *Shreveport Times*. She was also instrumental in organizing the Lynching Victims Remembrance Vigil, Resistfest 2017, the Lest We Forget art installation, V.O.T.E., and the North Louisiana Earth and Water Justice group. A YWCA Dialogue on Race participant, she consistently speaks out on racism, classism, and other issues that create division in Shreveport.

**Kim Mitchell**

Mr. Mitchell is an advocate for meaningful community engagement, historic preservation, and local economies. He has had a distinguished career as an architect, planner, civic leader, and community advocate, and currently serves as the director of the Center for Community Renewal. He is also a strong advocate for the Allendale community, tackling issues such as the food desert, community building, neighborhood planning, and blocking the I-49 extension through the neighborhood. He is a member of the core development team for the “Strategic Doing” discipline, a model of non-hierarchical servant leadership that he has shared with government agencies, community groups, and non-profits in Shreveport-Bossier City.

**Lee Morgan**

Dr. Morgan taught English literature at Centenary College for 44 years and is now an emeritus professor and the College’s historian. In the 1950s and 1960s, he spoke out against legislation that preserved school segregation and other Jim Crow laws in Louisiana and had a cross burned in his yard in response. He has shared his experiences and recollections of Shreveport’s civil rights movement as a discussion panelist in conjunction with screenings of the documentary *Beyond Galilee*. The next opportunity to see *Beyond Galilee* and hear from Dr. Morgan and others who lived its events is Tuesday, February 27, at Centenary.

**Alma Brown Petteway**

Dr. Petteway has been an advocate for education, community improvement, justice, and equality for more than 50 years. She served on the team that created and executed the plan to end racial segregation in Caddo Parish and was the lone educator to integrate Woodlawn High School. She works to improve the quality of her community with Get out the Vote efforts, mentors young women, and organizes activities to help youth build a positive approach to their future. She serves as secretary for the Southwest Caddo Parish Sewerage Board and is treasurer for Church Women United of Shreveport/Bossier City.

**John Ratcliff**

Mr. Ratcliff has been active in civil rights and racial justice for much of his adult life. He serves on the board of the North Louisiana Civil Rights Coalition and has also been a facilitator for the YWCA of Northwest Louisiana’s Dialogue on Race series. He was a member of the Caddo Commission’s Monument Citizen Advisory Committee, which held public hearings on whether the Confederate monument in front of the Caddo Parish Courthouse should be relocated and deliberated on a course of action. He is also active in promoting civil rights and social justice in Mississippi, his place of origin. He is a retired attorney.

**Jordan Ring**

Ms. Ring has displayed a commitment to her community and a desire to advocate for excluded or neglected people since her days as a student at Centenary. During her time at the College, she served as a student diversity advocate, volunteered at the Martin Luther King Health Center, and won an educational trip to Lebanon after interning with the Model Arab League. After graduating from Centenary, she moved to Austin, Texas, where she volunteered with Allies Against Slavery, an organization fighting human trafficking. Since returning to Shreveport in 2016, she has volunteered with the FREE Coalition, the YWCA, and the Downtown Lions Club. In December 2017, she joined the MLK Health Center as director of development and strategic communication.

**Brian Salvatore**

Along with fellow Reconciliation Dinner participant Frances Kelley, Dr. Salvatore developed a grassroots action campaign that successfully prevented the open burning of military waste at Camp Minden. He is now working to stop the open burning of toxic waste in the rural community of Colfax. A vocal opponent of the I-49 connector “through the heart” of Shreveport, he has provided factual, scientific information to city leaders and the public regarding the potential negative health effects on our city and the residents of Allendale if the highway is built. He has spent countless hours educating the public, testifying in front of legislative panels, meeting with EPA/DEQ officials, and publishing scholarly articles about the long-term effects of unregulated pollution on the people of Louisiana.

**Lois Scheib**

Ms. Scheib was a social worker for many years and is a longtime advocate for racial equality. She is a co-founder of To-WWN, the Together We Win Network, a group that meets monthly in downtown Shreveport and is focused on creating dialogue within a diverse community of people working for change in our city. To-WWN sponsors the “More Alike than Different” storytelling show, coming up this year on March 13, 2018, at First Presbyterian Church. Ms. Scheib is also active in Interfaith and the League of Women Voters.

**Ruth Schlichtemier**

Ms. Schlichtemier is president of the Red River Coalition of Community Gardeners (RRCCG), an organization whose vision, mission, and actions promote food justice and the well-being and unity of our entire community. She is a strong advocate for food equity and social justice and delivers garden-based nutrition education lessons each week to people of all ages who live in a low-income neighborhood. She actively engages the neighbors in a variety of activities including gardening, neighborhood beautification, and educational events. She is a proactive and visionary leader who encourages the RRCCG to focus on social justice, racial equality, and community change.

**Lynn Stevens**

Since moving to Shreveport ten years ago, Ms. Stevens can always be found volunteering, organizing events, and working to learn more about how to improve the community. She recently testified to the Shreveport City Council on the ALICE survey, which shed powerful insight into racial injustice and challenges faced by families who fall into the category of the “working poor.” As the chief operating officer for the United Way of Northwest Louisiana, she has helped make these issues a top priority for the organization. Ms. Stevens is also a strong advocate for disability rights and often speaks locally and statewide on disability equality and overcoming prejudice.

**Dorothy Wiley**

Ms. Wiley is president of Shreveport’s most diverse neighborhood association, Allendale Strong. As the neighborhood continues to fight plans to build an I-49 connector through Allendale, she has led marches and led groups to speak out at City Hall against the oppressive redlining of Allendale homes. Her positive attitude, strength, and grace provide inspiration and encouragement to her neighbors and allies as she leads the struggle against institutional racism in Shreveport.