

(Project Title)  
**“Sharing Stories of Civic Democracy”**

(Sub-Contract Grantee Name/Authorized Signatory/Address/Phone)  
(This is not the same person as the ATP faculty director.)

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(Date this document was submitted)  
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Name of Project: Sharing Stories of Civic Democracy\_ Grant Period: February 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Grantee Name: Auburn University Project Director: Mark Wilson

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**Description of Project:** During the 2011 fall semester, as part of their coursework for CCEN 2000: Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement, ATP students partnered with the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center to record and transcribe oral history interviews related to the historic civil rights case Lee v. Macon County Board of Education. Macon County is one of four distressed counties in the ARC Alabama region, so the opportunity for students to assist with the work of the Tuskegee Center and learn about the history and current economic challenges of Macon County was a good fit for our work.

**Activities:** 1) Community event to announce the project (Aug 31); 2) Each of the six students audio-recorded oral history interviews and prepared transcriptions; 3) Partner visit to campus to discuss work of the Tuskegee Center; 4) Washington, D.C. ATP presentation; principal Tuskegee partner and others viewed live presentation online; 5) presentation to Tuskegee Center, participants, and elected officials/public invited (Feb 4); 6) poster presentation at Alabama Historical Association annual meeting (Apr 12-14)

**Project Outcomes:** In addition to the stated goals of procuring interviews, producing transcripts, and exploring ways to deliver the content to the interested persons, the project has begun a relationship that has proved long-term and promising for future students and citizens in Macon County. Two of the principal participants in the court case were identified through the project, and we have made arrangements to honor these men at this year's high school graduation, since their own commencement ceremony was canceled in 1964 due to the circumstances of desegregation. Also as a result, two of the interviewees became participants in a high school field trip organized by project director Wilson, and they were able to tell stories to students regarding their experiences in the 1950s 1960s in Tuskegee. Additionally, because of our work through the ATP project, we were able to connect additional Auburn University journalism students to the area to write feature stories, which were published during black history month in the weekly *Tuskegee News*.

**Problems Encountered:**

Scheduling interviews around student schedules was challenging. One interview took place in Newnan, GA, so we incurred extra costs associated with the project. We encountered some challenges with audio equipment, and we learned much related to interview conditions and audio capabilities.

**Program Continuation and Sustainability:**

The oral history project begun by students continues, and we have since doubled the number of interviews received, with no end in sight. Collaborations with the Tuskegee Center and AU continue to develop. We will propose an extension of this project for the next ATP cycle.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:**

This ATP project was a valuable way to introduce students to community development in Macon County, Alabama. The project allowed the goals of the ATP, the Tuskegee Center, and the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University to align and students continue to talk about the experience as an important one in their intellectual and social development. Our next project needs to build on the work and connect these oral histories to audiences in elementary and secondary schools in the county. The Tuskegee Center is an important educational institution, and its ability to function is hampered by the current economic situation in Macon County. Our continued partnership, if we continue to develop goals cooperatively, should develop into a longstanding relationship where students can gain important knowledge from research and practice in the community.

**Attachments:**

Flyer  
Newspaper article  
Press release



AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

# Tuskegee Oral History Project

Collecting ~ Preserving ~ Sharing

In anticipation of the forthcoming 50th anniversary of *Lee v. Macon*, the court case that helped end a segregated school system in Macon County and the state of Alabama, the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center and students in Auburn University's College of Liberal Arts Community and Civic Engagement Initiative invite citizens to record their memories related to this period so that history will be preserved and shared with the public and future generations.

Oral history interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient for interviewees. Interviewees will receive copies of transcripts of the interviews, which will be property of the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center. Students will report on the project in Washington, D.C. in December 2011 at a symposium of the Appalachian Teaching Project, a program of the Appalachian Regional Commission.

To participate in the project, contact Dr. Mark Wilson, College of Liberal Arts, at [mwilson@auburn.edu](mailto:mwilson@auburn.edu) or 334-844-6198 or T. C. Coley, Executive Director, Tuskegee Human and Multicultural Center, at [tc.coley@tuskegeecenter.org](mailto:tc.coley@tuskegeecenter.org) or 334-724-0800.

Tuskegee's artist-in-residence Dr. Ronald Scott McDowell is back in Tuskegee after spending the past 18 months in Los Angeles. It was productive visit for the talented artist. As a sculptor and painter, McDowell is known for his life-like pictorials, which capture the range of human emotions and the essence of the human spirit. For that reason, Creative Arts has commissioned him to paint larger-than-life size image of performers—like Louis Armstrong, Stevie Wonder, Curtis Mayfield, Count Basie and Ike and Tina Turner—on the ceiling at the Creative Arts Building in Los

(See MCDOWELL, P. 9)



Ronald McDowell presents painting to Katherine Jackson.

and Sunday, Feb. 12 at 1:30 p.m. Among participating schools are Tuskegee, Howard, Fisk, Cheney and Wilberforce universities. The purpose of The Black College Quiz is to promote not only an appreciation of African-American heritage, but also to showcase African-American intellectual activity and solidarity among HBCUs that is often overlooked by mainstream media. This year's competition will be hosted by Greg Williams, co-star of "Remember the Titans." Each student competitor carries the reputation of his or her respective University on their shoulders. Smith will

engage in a battle of wits and willpower against some of the brightest students in the nation. When asked how he felt about the pressure of representing Tuskegee, Smith responded, "It is definitely an honor to have been selected for this opportunity. It lets me know that I am a valuable student. I am glad that Tuskegee has put its faith in me to win the national championship." Smith, a veteran competitor on

(See STUDENT, P. 9)

# Oral History Project preserves historic Tuskegee events

**Editor's note:** The following article is one in a series of stories about Tuskegee's rich history written by Auburn University students in Associate Professor Nan Fairley's feature writing class. The series will appear during February as part of Black History Month.

By KELLY NICASTRO

It was a hot and sticky day in Tuskegee in the mid 1960s when Lanice Middleton dropped her parents off at the local courthouse. As she watched her parents cross the street, she saw her mother look behind her to realize she wasn't following. Her mother walked back to the car, leaned into the window and stared into Lonice's eyes before she began to speak. She told her that she would never understand how many people had given up so much, some even their lives to do what they were about to do that day.



Contributed photo

**Auburn University student** Marian Royston, right, interviewing Anthony Lee as part of the oral history project.

She turned around and continued on towards the courthouse. Since that day, Lanice Middleton has never missed the chance to vote. This was only one of the many "bedtime stories"

Angela Cleary, senior in Spanish and interdisciplinary studies at Auburn University, said Middleton shared with her.

"It really did feel like I was a little kid listening to a bedtime story when Ms. Middleton spoke," Cleary said. "But instead of just reading a story in a book, I actually got to be face to face with the character."

Cleary and five other Auburn University students have partnered with the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center to preserve the oral histories of citizens in like Middleton.

Their focus has been memories surrounding the court case *Lee v. Macon County Board of Education*, which integrated the high school in Tuskegee and, eventually, all schools in Alabama not already under court order.

The project is a part of the Appalachian Teaching Project, sponsored by the Appalachian Regional

(See ORAL HISTORY, P. 9)

## Tuskegee native finds niche through self-publishing

By FELICIA HILL

Tuskegee News Correspondent

Born and raised in Tuskegee and now a resident of Opelika, Shani

nurse like her mother. She's not a nurse, but does work as a medical transcriptionist at East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika. Shani became fascinated with



## 'Sarge' Whitehead hurt in fall

By JACKIE CARLISLE

Community News Editor

VictoryLand vice president and former Tuskegee City Councilman Willie "Sarge" Whitehead slipped and fractured his right

# Oral History (From Page 1)

Commission, a group of colleges and universities working to promote community development in the ARC by focusing on the issues that matter to the citizens.

In the fall of 2011, Cleary, Marian Royston, Joseph Evans, Angel Garrison, Andrew Odom and Mary Afton Day conducted and transcribed interviews focusing on what it was like to live in Tuskegee during the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to Middleton, interviewees to date include Helen Brown, Gwendolyn Butler, Sally Joiner, Anthony Lee, Hatlie Miles, Della Sullins, Algenia Thomas and Willie Wyatt Jr.

Dr. Mark Wilson, coordinator of community and civic engagement projects in the College of Liberal Arts and a Teaching Fellow with ARC, seized the opportunity of Auburn's proximity to the city and invited Executive Director T.C. Coley and Managing Director Deborah Gray to work with students on the Appalachian Teaching Project opportunity.

"I went to the Multicultural Center and told them we wanted to collaborate because we believe in what they do in Macon County," Wilson said. "So they started thinking about what they've been working on, the upcoming 50th anniversary of *Lee v. Macon*, and extending an oral history project begun by Dr. Robin Sabino from college a few years ago.

On Dec. 4, Wilson and the students traveled to Washington D.C., to present their oral histories at a symposium of the Appalachian Teaching Project. As a whole, the students presented nine interviews, which fell into the Heritage Tourism section of the conference, including pictures and audio clips of their interviews.

Angel Garrison, sophomore in anthropology, said their presentation truly captured the essence of what they learned from the different oral histories they had taken.

"The audience was very enthusiastic," Wilson said. "One professor from Appalachian State University, whose mom lives in Montgomery, said that she's going to the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center on her next visit to Alabama."

Cleary said that everyone really enjoyed how the project strand out because of the in-

TUSKEGEE HUMAN & CIVIL RIGHTS MULTICULTURAL CENTER



(Contributed photo)

**Oral History Project participants** shown at Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center. From left are: Blake Evans, AU student; Mary Afton Day, AU student; Anthony Lee of *Lee v. Macon* court case; Dr. Wayne Flynt, historian; Angela Cleary, AU student; T.C. Coley, executive director of the Multicultural center; Marian Royston, AU student; and Jamecia Crenshaw, AU student.

# Student (From Page 1)

Tuskegee's Honda Campus All-star Challenge (HCAC) team — the school's official quiz bowl team — believes his greatest competitor may be Fisk University.

"I've met Fisk's challenger and he's extremely talented. Through HCAC, Tuskegee has developed a rather intense rivalry with Fisk and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical Univer-

sity (A&M)," Smith said.

The grand prize consists of a \$5,000 scholarship with \$2,500 and \$1,500 scholarship prizes for second- and third- place, respectively. Three IPads were given away to three lucky audience members. The community is encouraged to view the championships on Feb. 5 and 12.

# Hurt (From Page 1)

hip while trying to answer the telephone at his house this past weekend.

The 90-year-old retired Command

days, it depends on how well he does," she said. "We just ask the community to continue to pray for his recovery."

Whitehead and Public Safety Com-

and the first African American to complete all four years and graduate from Auburn University.

"It's incredible for the students to be able to understand and hear what it was like for the people who made history 50 years ago," Wilson said.

Royston felt most interested when Lee said he always knew he would be the one to have a big role in his generation because his family's civic engagement prepared him for it.

"He told me how important it is to remember all the sacrifices and people who went out on a limb to do things to make the present better than the past," Royston said. "And you never know when you can be the one to step out and make a big change, too."

Getting children to recognize the sacrifice was also a common theme and goal in Cleary's interview with Middleton. She believes that it's imperative to preserve these oral histories because hearing the stories is one thing, but the fact that today's youth will never know what it's like is a completely different side of the coin.

Cleary said that Middleton sometimes feels like she's speaking two different languages with her grandson because he will never be able to fully understand some of the things that she's been through.

"She said her grandson is never going to know what it's like to walk onto the bus and have to walk to the back and have a curtain drawn so you can't even see the front," Cleary said. "He'll never be able to know what it's like to have to walk on the other side of the street because you're skeptical about what other people in your community are going to do to you."

Just like how her mother had stressed the importance of seizing the rights you've been given, Middleton stresses to her grandchildren that you can't take those rights for granted and you need to think about the sacrifice.

"She teaches that it might not have been you, it might not have been your parents, but someone somewhere has given their life so you can vote," Cleary said.

Wilson said a recurring concern he heard from African American people in Tuskegee



Example of unexpected, positive outcome related to  
ATP project.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Class of '64 Students Revisit Attempted Integration of Public Schools in Macon County**

Anthony Lee and Willie Wyatt Jr., two of three seniors who attempted to integrate Macon County High School in Notasulga in 1964, will discuss their experiences related to the event on Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center at 2:00 p.m.

Lee and Wyatt were among local students who filed the suit, Lee v. Macon County Board of Education, which desegregated Tuskegee High School in 1963. That event led to the closing of the school by then Governor George Wallace, the establishment of Macon County Academy, and eventually integrated all elementary and secondary schools in Alabama. That case also desegregated all of the institutions and facilities then under the supervision of the Alabama State Board of Education.

In February 1964, school officials divided the group to attend Shorter High School and Macon County High School in Notasulga. Some white students in Notasulga resisted integration and responded with violence, which was reported nationally. Only six students remained after the white students departed from Macon County High School - three of whom received diplomas without a graduation ceremony.

The Macon County Board of Education has invited Lee, Wyatt and a representative for the now-deceased third student Robert Judkins, to participate in the 2012 graduation ceremony at Notasulga High School.

The public is invited to attend the 2:00 p.m. event with Lee and Wyatt, who will recount their experience. Participants will also hear recently discovered audio recordings of ABC News correspondent and journalist Paul Good, which includes a first-hand account of the violence and an interview shortly thereafter with the mayor of Notasulga. The lawyer that represented the students in the lawsuit, Attorney Fred D. Gray, will also be in attendance at the event.

This event stems from a collaborative and ongoing project between the Community and Civic Engagement Initiative in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University and the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center to document and preserve citizen memories related to the desegregation of public schools in Macon County.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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