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camden county
Making It Better, Together.



CELEBRATING THE DREAM AND ACTION OF:

**MARTIN
LUTHER
KING, JR.**

CAMDEN COUNTY BOARD OF FREEHOLDERS PRESENTS THE:
**2016 CAMDEN COUNTY
FREEDOM MEDAL**

January 22, 2016

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Camden County Board of Freeholders and Constitutional Row Officers, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2016 Camden County Medal Ceremony.

Camden County is proud to present the Freedom Medal to citizens who have unselfishly contributed their time and effort to better their community in conjunction with the goals of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We are grateful to those individuals who submitted names of outstanding members of their community for consideration. The 2016 selection Committee has chosen 15 recipients to receive the prestigious 2016 Camden County Freedom Medal.

On behalf of the residents of Camden County, we hope that the vision, dream and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will continue to flourish through your efforts. Tonight we recognize your accomplishments and hope that you will maintain the ideals for which you are being honored.

Thank you for your participation. Enjoy the evening!

Sincerely,



Edward T. McDonnell
Deputy Director

Selection Committee Criteria

- Exemplary employment performance does not qualify as community service.
- Nominees must be an exemplary citizen who has demonstrated significant contributions in the areas of community service and must currently live in Camden County.
- Any individual is eligible to submit a nomination.
- Nominators must submit a three hundred (300) word essay supporting his/her nominee's accomplishments. Also, a letter of reference and documentation (i.e., certificates of merit newspaper articles, etc.) may be included with the submission of the application.
- Past medal recipients are not eligible.

Nominee: **CALVERT F. TOLBERT**

Nominator: *Diana Cooper*

Calvin Tolbert is a long-time contributor to the betterment of his Camden County community. He exemplifies Reverend King's dream to create a more just and loving community through his unselfish dedication of time and talent in his volunteerism throughout the county.

He uses his retirement to spend extensive hours volunteering on community service and measurable impact activities throughout the county. Creating opportunities for positive youth development, strong families and strong communities describes much of his service.

Calvin mentors boys ages 8-18 in Winslow Township with an organization called Men Empowering Nations. He is also the treasurer. He serves as chairperson for the Juvenile Conference Committee in Winslow Township and the Camden County Community Parent Advisory Council. In supporting strong families and strong communities, Calvin serves as a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the Municipal Drug Alliance in Winslow Township. He also serves as a member of the Camden County Human Services Advisory Council and has volunteered for 15 years in multiple initiatives with CPAC and the Camden County Covenant for Children.

Calvin is a man of great faith and civic and community leadership who works to help guide young men and families on a productive path and believes you should lead your community in a direction that brings joy and positive energy to those around you.

Nominee: **JASON RAVITZ**
Nominator: *Stuart A. Platt*

Jason Ravitz holds a number of volunteer positions that have contributed greatly to Voorhees and Camden County. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Katz Jewish Community Center in Cherry Hill, where he has helped to implement programs that reflect the mission of the center to promote and enrich Jewish culture, heritage, values and lives by providing outstanding educational, social and health and wellness programs and experiences. He has also helped implement programs that benefit all members of the community, regardless of religion or race.

Jason is a member of the Board of Directors of the Ravitz Family Foundation, a charitable organization that funds after-school programs, summer field trips for needy children and aid to families who do not have sufficient housing. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Alicia Rose Victorious Foundation, an organization that provides activities, programs and events that enhance the quality of life for teens with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Through his efforts, these teens are given a better life experience while they are undergoing treatment.

Jason has a real gift of giving of himself to others who are less fortunate.

Nominee: **LAURA SANCHEZ**
Nominator: *Jerome T. Pipes*

Laura Sanchez moved from rural Pennsylvania to the city of Camden, where she met and married her husband and raised her family. She holds multiple advanced degrees and uses that knowledge in her work in human and social services.

She works to keep people safe in the city with the Camden City Crisis Intervention Team. Her work assisting, preventing and educating people of all ages, races and orientation about domestic violence is unending and has helped many people.

She is a dedicated member of Bridge of Peace Lutheran Church of Camden/Fairview, where she gives her guidance along with her time to the church's food pantry. There you can find her feeding people who need a helping hand.

Laura is a founding board member of New Visions Community Services and also served as a founding board member of Save Our Waterfront. She is one of New Jersey's staunchest advocates for LGBT rights and actively campaigns against the mistreatment of any unsung population countywide.

2016 CAMDEN COUNTY FREEDOM MEDAL CEREMONY

Master of Ceremony
FREEHOLDER JONATHAN L. YOUNG, SR.

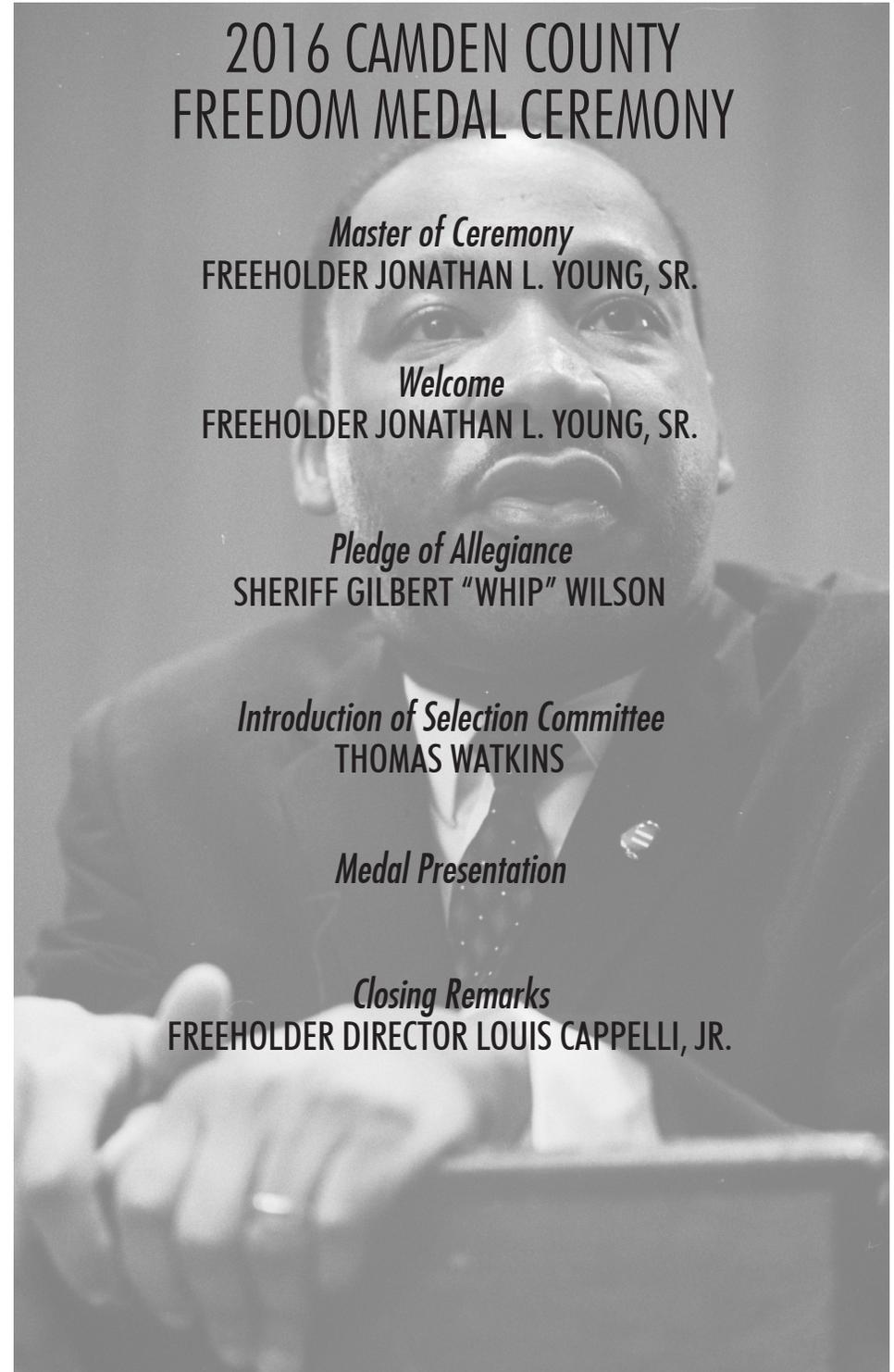
Welcome
FREEHOLDER JONATHAN L. YOUNG, SR.

Pledge of Allegiance
SHERIFF GILBERT "WHIP" WILSON

Introduction of Selection Committee
THOMAS WATKINS

Medal Presentation

Closing Remarks
FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR LOUIS CAPPELLI, JR.



Recipient: J. DAVID ACKLEY

Nominator: Mae F. Robinson, Principal, Timber Creek High School

David Ackley makes South Jersey better by volunteering to help others in a variety of organizations and towns. He works with the Saints Prison Ministry Athletes in Moorestown, where he enthusiastically devotes his time to travel with soccer and basketball teams to correctional institutions in the region. These games help in prisoner rehabilitation and promoting social skills through this faith-based program.

David volunteers as a music team member and youth group co-leader at Christ Community Church in Lindenwold. He also provides technology support, managing Google Apps accounts and the donor database for the non-profit Camden County Chapter of Child Evangelism Fellowship in Haddon Heights. Throughout the school year, David volunteers his time to mentor and tutor male student leaders for the Men's Club at Timber Creek High School, helping them to improve and showcase their academic abilities and athletic talents.

For his selflessness and dedication to the youth of our communities and to incarcerated people who had difficult backgrounds and needed to be part of a positive community, David deserves the Camden County Freedom Medal.

Nominee: BETTY ALI

Nominator: Farhat Biviji

Betty Ali is an integral part of the South Jersey community. She is an active member of the Muslim American Association and the Jewish Catholic Muslim Dialogue of Southern New Jersey. Betty is a dedicated activist for interfaith understanding and education. She unstintingly devotes time to promote goodwill and harmony within our communities. Most recently, Betty was an integral part of the planning of the Stand Up For the Other rally in Trenton, which brought faith and interfaith organizations together to encourage peace and tolerance.

Through her wisdom, her understanding of the different faiths and her inherent kindness, Betty has greatly enhanced the quality of the dialogue between local Jews, Catholics and Muslims. She is a dedicated and sincere worker who gives of herself without any reservation. Betty has a deep-seated sense of justice and fair play and works unceasingly for the underdog. She has influenced those around her to achieve to the best of their abilities, and has impressed those who know her with her wisdom and dedication to the truth. Betty is fully qualified to receive the Dr. Martin Luther King Freedom Medal.

Nominee: JOHN "JOSH" KEENAN

Nominator: Terry Armbruster

John Keenan stepped up and volunteered to be a school board member for Sterling High School Regional School District, which receives students from Stratford, Somerdale and Magnolia. It also receives tuition students from Laurel Springs and Hi-Nella. John remained a member of the school board for over 20 years, where he greatly enhanced the students' experiences at the school. He was able to funnel his education and experience in high school administration to help Sterling continue to be a shining example of a fine high school in Camden County. During part of his tenure, John was president of the school board. He and other board members helped improve the facility with expansions to the main building, including a new gymnasium, additional new upgraded classrooms and science labs. The library was expanded to include a media center, and the local school cable channel became a reality during his tenure, bringing residents insight into the school and community events.

He helped create a new arm of the school called South Jersey Technology Partnership (SJTP). This shared service organization has provided services to many schools, municipalities, counties and even the state of New Jersey. With the revenue derived from SJTP, taxes were able to become stabilized for the municipalities.

Nominee: MICHELLE NOCITO

Nominator: Stuart A. Platt

Michelle Nocito puts service above self and has had a considerable impact on the residents of Voorhees Township, where she lives. She is currently in her third year of serving on the Parent Faculty Association at ET Hamilton Elementary School and her second year serving as Co-President of the PFA. She believes children are our most valuable asset and is determined to ensure that the children of Voorhees receive the best educational experience they can. Michelle also serves as a member of the Voorhees Township Planning Board, where she has guided the proper development of Voorhees for the past several years and has been engaged in the completion of a number of redevelopment and "smart growth" projects which have improved the quality of life for the residents of Voorhees and Camden County. She is the President of the Voorhees Cultural and Diversity Foundation. Voorhees is home to a diverse community that runs the gamut of almost every religious and ethnic background. As president of the foundation, Michelle has led efforts to ensure all residents know they are valued members of the community.

Dr. King had a vision of a society where race was not an issue in how people were treated and live their lives. Michelle exemplifies this vision through her volunteer work.

Nominee: BETH GLENN
Nominator: *Joan Cohen*

Beth Glenn has spent most of her life using the power of the arts to transform the lives of underserved children. Her efforts have been a game changer for the children of Camden. As a volunteer for the Camden County Boys and Girls Club, she has served Thanksgiving Dinner to families, acted as a judge for the Youth of the Year Competition, planned activities for their Saturday pajama parties and had them make blankets for the Anna Sample Women's Shelter. When she discovered the Boys and Girls Club did not offer after-school arts activities, she taught the students poetry and art. She exposed them to the American Ballet Theatre by inviting members to Camden to audition children and connected a young jazz saxophonist to one of the premier sax teachers in Philadelphia, who is now his mentor.

Working with Mayor Redd's Youth Leadership Program to counter violence in the city, Beth used her skills as a filmmaker to make a documentary with the children interviewing each other. The goal was teaching leadership skills, positive self-expression and college readiness. From this project, Beth realized how important it was to each child to be heard and to not be limited by the circumstances of where they live. Beth fanned the flames of their interests by finding them mentors and experiences to expand their horizons.

Nominee: MERYL GREENE
Nominator: *Eric Kipnis*

As a volunteer and Chapter Leader for Organizing for Action South Jersey and Team Leader for SJ Citizens for Change, Meryl Greene has spent the last seven years as a tireless advocate on the front lines, organizing others in Camden County and advocating for multiple social justice issues, including affordable housing, quality healthcare, gun violence prevention, women's issues, immigration reform, LGBT rights and more.

In June, Meryl was recognized by the Camden County Chapter of the New Jersey Federation of Democratic Women as a Woman of Valor. In their words, "Meryl is the voice of Democratic Women to all. She is a consummate visionary and proudly stands up for the values that serve us all." She has also been involved in volunteering for multiple charitable events, including the Cooper Foundation's Teal Magnolias Brunch.

Nominee: BILAL ALKIYAL
Nominator: *Owais Lari*

Bilal Alkiyal is a shining example of the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A resident of Cherry Hill for the past 24 years, Bilal is a vibrant member of the community and has been contributing his time and effort selflessly for the promotion of diversity in Camden County, making this county a model for others to follow the dreams of Dr. King.

He is an activist and facilitator for his fellow community members, which is a key and vibrant component of the diversified cultural life within our community. He also serves as a mentor, role model and sponsor for positive social and cultural programs within the community. In addition, his concern for and devotion to children is obvious by the many youth organizations to which he devotes his time and talent. Bilal serves as a mentor, role model, and sponsor for positive social and cultural programs within the community. He has been a terrific frontline volunteer in aiding those who have been victims of disasters both here at home and around the world. Two examples of those he has helped are people who were affected by Super Storm Sandy, and the Syrian refugees seeking new homes.

Nominee: ASSEMBLYMAN ARTHUR BARCLAY
Nominator: *Assemblywoman Patricia Egan Jones*

Assemblyman Arthur Barclay is a perfect example of someone that the young men and women of the city of Camden can look to as a success on and off the basketball court.

Born and raised in Camden, Arthur was a basketball star, known as one of the highest point scoring players on the Camden High School team. He helped put the city on the map by leading the team to the state championship and tournament champion titles, serving as captain his junior and senior years.

He continued his basketball career at the University of Memphis, where he graduated with a degree in sociology. A few years later, he returned to Camden and immediately began giving back to the community. He is a volunteer coach for Camden High School's Men's Basketball Team, serving not only as a role model for the boys on the court, but also as a mentor, friend and father figure for them off the court. Arthur is a volunteer with the Below the Rim Basketball Program, South Jersey Rising Stars and the Boys and Girls Club of Camden. He has touched the lives of countless young people and has also been a public servant at multiple levels. He is a vocal advocate for improving the quality of life for the residents of Camden City.

Nominee: ANITA BRAUN

Nominator: *Steven C. Burch*

Anita Braun is a true treasure to the residents of Camden County. Through selfless dedication, she helps the residents in our community who need it most - the working poor, the homeless and the disabled - by making sure they have personal dignity and good nutrition. Anita coordinates a personal hygiene product drive that accepts donations 365 days a year for those who would otherwise have to do without.

She promotes a sock and underwear drive through her church, with the donations going to those most in need. She donates much of her time at the Camden Neighborhood Center as a member of the Board of Directors, but is definitely known for rolling up her sleeves and doing the hard work at the Center, too. She helps coordinate the Center's annual fundraising gala and she volunteers at their pop-up grocery store. Anita helps coordinate a food drive at her place of employment, with the donations benefiting Camden County's neediest families. Anita also maintains an annual tradition of preparing and serving a traditional Thanksgiving meal to those residents who would not otherwise have that luxury, which most of us take for granted. She serves almost 100 people annually.

Anita exemplifies the true meaning of what an outstanding community member should be.

Nominee: STEPHEN DRAYTON

Nominator: *Steven C. Burch*

Stephen Drayton really understands what it means to give back to others. Steve is co-captain of the Danzeisen and Quigley bike team. He created a local bike team with the support of our local bike shop. The team motto is "Cycling with Purpose," and it encourages participation in local charity bike rides. Steve has ridden for 20 years in the MS City to Shore charity bike ride, which raises money to help local residents living with Multiple Sclerosis. The ride averages 150 miles per year, so that would be 3,000 miles of cycling in this race alone!

He rides in the ACS Bike-a-Thon, which raises funds for the American Cancer Society. He also rides in the ALS Express and Pedal for Promise. Steve is a coordinator of Dining Out for Life, and has been actively involved with this annual event that raises funds for local AIDS service organizations. He has also been a captain for AIDS Walk Philly. Steve is a member of the Pastoral Care Committee at his church, reaching out to members of the congregation who may need help due to injury or illness. He is always willing to "roll up his sleeves" when someone is in need and embodies the values of MLK.

Nominee: BILL BROWN

Nominator: *Carlton Chin*

Bill Brown has been an ongoing treasure to the Haddonfield community. In 2006, Bill founded the Haddonfield Japan Exchange program. This fully volunteer program sends 20 local students to Japan - and hosts 20 Japanese students - in alternating summers.

Feedback on this program has been overwhelmingly positive from students, parents and schools. Over the years, Bill Brown's program has created a value of almost \$2 million for about 400 students.

While the Japan Exchange has been a "labor of love" for Bill, this is just one of his many volunteer projects. He was instrumental in helping to organize the Mabel Kay Senior Center, serving as its first volunteer director. Today, the Senior Center serves the active senior citizen community, organizing regular activities for dozens of seniors.

Bill served as president of the Haddonfield Tennis Association and was instrumental in building a fifth tennis court and a clubhouse. He was also co-founder of the Haddonfield Soccer League, helped organize the Girls' Pigtail Softball League and served as vice president of the Little League.

Bill has held leadership volunteer positions with the Indian King Tavern, 65 Club and served as the President and Chairman of the Markheim Art Center.

Nominee: LAVAR EDWARDS

Nominator: *Ajeenah Riggs*

Lavar Edwards uses his own time and money to provide encouragement and assistance to the children of the City of Camden through his organization, Clock Chasers, which is a track club for children 4-18 years old. Tutoring is also an important component. He gives his time and his heart to the 100 children he trains.

Many times, Lavar has used his own money to purchase uniforms, sneakers and even food for some of the children involved. He never turns anyone away and is always a source of encouragement not just for the children, but for their parents.

Camden Clock Chasers meets every weekday except Friday and Lavar has worked tirelessly for three years and funds much of the organization himself. What is equally amazing is the smile he always wears.

Lavar is deserving of this award because he is someone who was born and raised in Camden City, served his country and volunteers his time to coach children in track and help them to believe that they matter.

Without much of a budget, he does not draw a salary. He takes his role as a mentor very seriously. All of us should strive to give back the way Lavar Edwards has.