

Still We Rise Materials Packet

PROFILES

To be printed double-sided, flipped on the longside



Bernice Love Wiggins

Bernice Love Wiggins was born on March 4, 1897 in Austin, Texas. She moved to El Paso in 1903 to live with her aunt. She was enrolled at Douglass Grammar and High School where she was praised for her scholarly work, her creativity and divinely inspired use of words in her poetry. Wiggins touched base on subjects such as the church, African heritage, love, women's issues, and gave a glimpse of African American life in a racialized society.

El Paso's ties to the literary activity of the Harlem Renaissance have only recently been discovered and brought to light by the late Dr. Maceo Dailey:

Ms. Wiggins playing a role with her inspired contributions. Wiggins was published in The El Paso Herald, Houston Informer, and the Chicago Defender. Her mentor and Howard educated, Douglass School Principal, Prof. William Coleman, encouraged her self-published book *Tuneful Tales* in 1925 in El Paso and is considered one of the first African-American female poets to achieve this. Her poetry still resonates to many till this day and she is widely praised amongst academics and the literary community.

Barbara Lee

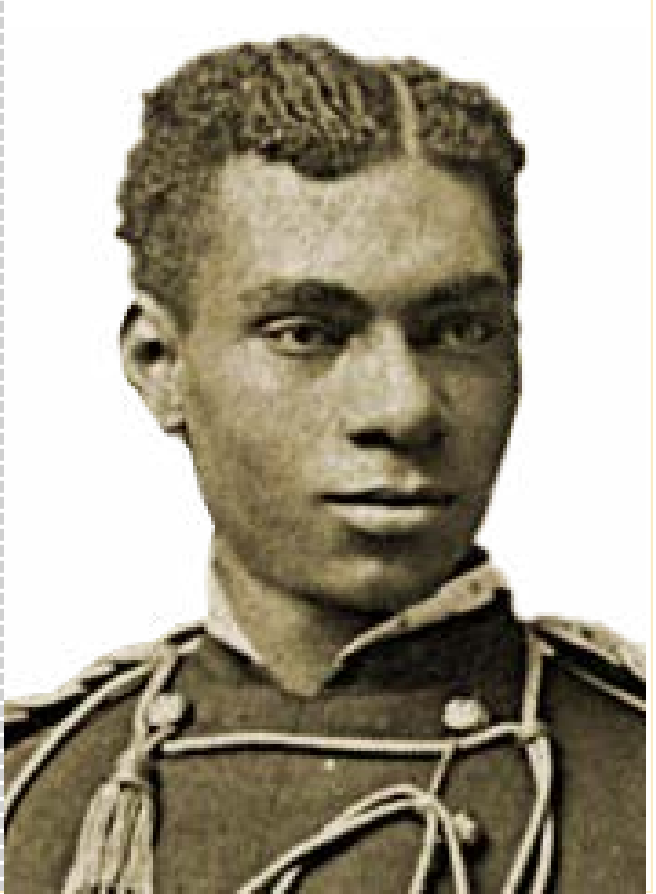
Barbara Lee was born in 1946 in El Paso, Texas. She was the daughter of a lieutenant colonel who served in two wars and an activist mother. She attended St. Joseph's Catholic School and was taught by the Sister of Loretto, an order of nuns who promoted peace and justice. She and her family later relocated to California. She attended Mills College in Oakland, California and was part of the Mills College Black Student Union which led her to activism in the surrounding community. She later received her Masters of Social Work from the University of California – Berkeley and during that time founded the Community Health Alliance for Neighborhood Growth and Education (CHANGE, Inc.). Ms. Lee was elected to the California state senate in 1996. She has authored many bills and resolutions and has been a champion to causes for underserved and underrepresented communities. Ms. Lee is the highest ranking African American woman appointed to Democratic leadership in history.

Dana J.H. Pittard

Dana James Hillian Pittard was born in Okinawa, Japan in 1959. His family moved to El Paso where he grew up and graduated from Eastwood High School. Pittard graduated from the United States Military Academy, Armor Officer Basic Course, Infantry Officer Advance Course, and the Command and General Staff College. He served during the Gulf War and Iraq War during his career, which eventually led him to being commanding Fort Bliss and the 1st Armored Division. Mr. Pittard has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, and the Bronze Star Medal.

Bob Snead

Bob Snead was a celebrated military aviator and earned three purple hearts and numerous other military decorations during his service in the Vietnam War. He relocated to El Paso where he became a celebrated artist, historian and actor starring his one man play, *Held in Trust: The Story of Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper*. His art reflected the struggles of black soldiers and much of the subjects were individuals he researched. Mr. Snead is an inductee of the El Paso International Hall of Fame for Visual Arts and the El Paso Aviation Hall of Fame



Drusilla Elizabeth Tandy Nixon

Drusilla Elizabeth Tandy Nixon was born in 1899 in Toledo, Ohio. She lived in ten different cities before settling in El Paso after marrying Dr. Lawrence Nixon in 1935. She had previously met Dr. Nixon years prior as he was her physician who took care of her severe chronic asthma. Ms. Nixon was very active in the El Paso community and was involved with The Black Women's Club, Black Girl Reserves, Phyllis Wheatley Club, El Paso United Service Organization, El Paso YWCA, Church Women United, El Paso Mental Health Board, and the El Paso Council of Churches. She was a catalyst to the passing of City Ordinance 2698 that required integration of all businesses in 1962. With her efforts El Paso became the first entirely integrated city in Texas. She was posthumously recognized as an honorary member of the El Paso Hall of Fame in 1990.

Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon

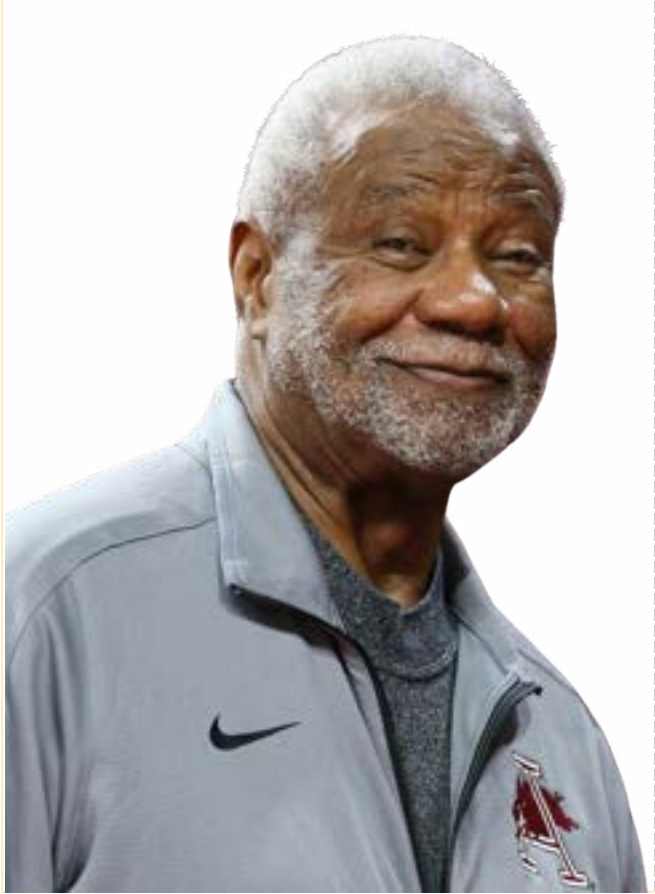
Lawrence Aaron Nixon was born in Marshall, Texas in 1883. He attended Wiley College in Marshall and later graduated from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. He moved to El Paso in 1910 to set up his medical practice for the local African American community. Dr. Nixon quickly became a primary doctor for the African and Mexican American working classes. Much of his services had no specific fees and had a "whatever you could pay" approach for his 50 years of practicing medicine in El Paso. Dr. Nixon was also a civil rights leader way before the larger movement happened in the 1960's. Dr. Nixon was turned away as he tried to vote for the Democratic Party primary in 1924. Upon having all documentation and receipts to cast this vote, he and the NAACP fought this unjust biased based on the color of his skin. After more than a decade of fighting, he was able to vote in 1944 after a Supreme Court ruling in his favor. Dr. Nixon is now heralded as an early crusader for Civil Rights and heralded from scholars and community activists alike.

Henry Ossian Flipper

Henry Ossian Flipper was born in Thomasville, Georgia in 1856. His academic work led him to being accepted to West Point Academy. Upon his arrival, he was ostracized and little to no interaction with his fellow white cadets. He was the first African American man to graduate from the academy in 1877. Flipper became an officer in the 10th Cavalry and served at Fort Elliott, Fort Concho, Fort Quitman, Fort Davis, and Fort Sill. His troubles with fellow servicemen began at Fort Davis where he was appointed quartermaster. Flipper discovered missing funds from his quarters and suspected a systematic plan of persecution and prejudice from fellow white officers. He was court martialled and charged with embezzlement. He was dismissed of service in 1882. Flipper claimed his innocence until his death. He arrived in El Paso after his dismissal and worked as an assistant engineer surveying public lands in Mexico. Being bilingual aided Flipper with multiple offers of work which allowed him to be an expert in court materials, penmanship and how to survey lands.

Estine Davis

Ms. Estine Davis was born in 1932 in east Texas and moved to El Paso when she was 6. She attended Douglass school which at the time was the only school black children could attend in El Paso. At the age of 18, she moved to Tyler, Texas to attend barber school. Upon graduating from barber school, she returned to El Paso to cut hair on Ft. Bliss, and charged \$1.50 for a haircut. In 1959 she started to work at a barbershop that was owned by her godfather, and by the mid-1970's he had turned over the keys to her. Ms. Davis founded Estine Fashion Models and was a proponent to the Miss Black El Paso Pageant. In her seven decades of work, she has cut hair for, Little Richard, the Harlem Globetrotters, Dana Pittard, Ron Stallworth, Chief Greg Allan, Marc Carter, Nolan Richardson, and countless servicemen that have been stationed at Ft. Bliss. Her work ethic and service to her community has been revered by many. Her humble barbershop on Piedras is the last remaining business in what was once El Paso's black commercial corridor.



Major General Edward Greer

Major General Edward Greer was born in Gary, West Virginia in 1924. His army career started almost immediately after his eighteenth birthday when he joined the Army Reserve. He served in three wars that include World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. General Greer conducted himself with great valor during continuous combat missions and his heroic efforts were awarded with Silver and Bronze Star medals, Legion of Merit, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star. He continually rose through his ranks with hard work and dedication to his country, leading him to becoming Major General in 1976. General Greer retired in 1976 and is known as one of the most distinguished soldiers to retire with honor. For his service, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the nations highest military service award that is given in the name of the President of the United States. General Greer moved to El Paso, Texas in 1976 and became a realtor in 1977. He has served as Director of the Board of Realtors, and served in the board of directors for organizations such as the American Cancer Society, The Visiting Nurses Association, The Association of U.S. Army, and Chairman of the Officers Retiree Council for Fort Bliss.

Ron Stallworth

Ron Stallworth was born in Chicago, Illinois but raised in El Paso. He is a 1971 graduate of Austin High School. Stallworth's book, *Black Klansman*, detailed his investigative experience with white supremacists trying to start a new chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in Colorado Springs. It was later adapted into an award-winning film produced by Spike Lee and Jordan Peele.

Leona Ford Washington

Leona Ford Washington was born in 1928 in El Paso, Texas. Her family relocated here from Mississippi for health reasons as her mother suffered from tuberculosis. She grew up in the Segundo Barrio neighborhood and attended Douglass Grammar and High School where she later worked as a teacher. Her activism and leadership for the African American community led her to founding the McCall Neighborhood Center in 1983. Her efforts to preserve El Paso's black history led to community activities, events, and finding artifacts that reflect and tell a story of the community's triumphs and tribulations. Ms. Washington is also credited with creating and copyrighting the song "El Paso", which was later recognized as the city's official song in the 1980's.

Nolan Richardson

Nolan Richardson Jr. was born in 1941 in El Paso, Texas. He was raised by his grandmother in Segundo Barrio along with his two sisters. He graduated from Bowie High School and later attended Texas Western College (now UTEP), playing basketball during his junior and senior years under Don Haskins. He was a coach at Bowie High School from 1968 to 1977. He later coached at the college level at Western Texas Junior College, the University of Tulsa, and the University of Arkansas. He led the University of Arkansas men's basketball team to win the NCAA championship in 1994. Richardson also served as the head basketball coach for the Panama and Mexico international teams. Mr. Richardson is now retired.



Tyrone Bobby Joe Hill

Tyrone Bobby Joe Hill was born in Highland Park, Michigan and moved to El Paso to attend college at Texas Western (now UTEP). He was the point guard for the integrated Texas Western basketball team and was integral to their 1966 NCAA Championship. The victory is considered one of the most important wins in sports history as Texas Western was an all African American starting lineup going against and all white lineup. The importance of the win lead to calls for the desegregation of collegiate sports throughout the country. Mr. Hill remained in El Paso after graduating Texas Western and became an executive at El Paso Natural Gas. He and fellow players were immortalized in the 2006 film 'Glory Road' which showcased their achievement despite the obstacles they faced, to a broader audience.

Thelma White

Thelma Joyce White was born on January 10, 1936 in Marlin, Texas. She moved to El Paso with her family when she was a toddler. She attended Douglass Grammar and High School where she graduated as the class valedictorian in 1954. After applying to Texas Western College (now UTEP) during the 1954-55 school year, she was denied entry due to the color of her skin. In 1955, lawyers acting on her behalf filed suit in federal court to allow her admission into Texas Western. Federal District Judge Robert Thomason issued a judgement on her behalf that Texas Western could not deny her or the any other African American student from studying at Texas Western College. She was uneasy about attending Texas Western due to possible hostility because of the lawsuit and studied at New Mexico A&M instead. The result of the ruling subsequently allowed twelve African American students to enroll into a now desegregated Texas Western College.