

### **Pastor Roosevelt Baums**

Baums, originally from Tuskegee, Alabama, was raised by his grandfather, an impoverished sharecropper who was a victim of the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service to study the natural progression of untreated syphilis in rural African American men. These men thought they were receiving free health care from the U.S. government. Baums had to fight to receive an education, often only attending school a few days a week due to his responsibilities on the farm. Joining the military in 1965 was his way out of the rural farming life, and in 1969 he moved to Syracuse and became active in Rev. Emory Proctor's AME Zion church working on issues such as voter education, employment and fair housing. Baums says, "I consider myself a freedom fighter for equal rights for all people."

### **Jerry Berrigan**

Jerry Berrigan moved to Syracuse with his family when he was five years old. After serving in World War II and studying at St. Joseph's Seminary, he received his graduate degrees at Canisius College and Syracuse University and taught at Onondaga Community College. Inspired by the example of his mother, whom Jerry recalls taking in and feeding homeless people during the depression, he and his brothers became important participants in most of the social movements that changed American society in the 1950s and beyond. During the 1960s, Jerry's commitment to social justice led him to work with a volunteer committee to desegregate schools in the Syracuse school district, protest with CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) for equality in employment and mortgage acquisition, and co-found an agency that provided housing for minorities. He attended the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery demanding civil rights for African Americans. In the latter half of the 1960s, Jerry began to protest the Vietnam War, and by the mid-1970s he began frequently engaging in peace actions at the White House and the Pentagon. Since the 1970s, he has protested at the Air and Space Museum, Griffiss Air Force Base in New York, the Seneca Army Depot, and the Federal Building in Syracuse. He participated in peace actions to protest the School of Americas, the Gulf War, the Iraq War, and nuclear weapons, among other social issues in the United States and abroad. Like his brothers Dan and Phil, he has been guided by his Catholic faith and his social conscience.

### **Mark Briggs**

Briggs, of Homer, NY, was compelled to offer support after seeing events of the Civil Rights Movement unfold on TV. In 1964 and 1965, Briggs took trips to Fayette County, TN to work with the West Tennessee Voter Project. The first trip was organized by Cornell University students and the second by Cortland County. Fayette County was the poorest county in Tennessee, and Briggs recalled being welcomed into the home of local organizer Maggie Mae Horton, her husband and their 10 children during the trip. White organizers from Cornell and other Universities traveled to Fayette County and the black residents welcomed their support. In a 1965 article in the *Cornell Daily Sun*, reporter David Maisel wrote "I used to be ashamed of being a Negro, but no longer. I am now proud of my race because I have something to fight for -freedom," said Herbert Bonner as he spoke last night during the West Tennessee Voter Project's first presentation this year. Bonner, a 41-year-old resident of Fayette County, Tenn. said "The only way to make any real progress in Fayette County is through political means." Many have called Briggs courageous for going to the south, as there was a real threat of violence from white segregationists. Briggs says he was more in denial than acting out of courage. Today, Briggs is a practicing Quaker, the Religious Society of Friends. The religion has a long history of social activism.

### **Delores Brulé**

Delores Brulé, born and raised in Syracuse, was active in the many struggles for racial justice that were occurring in Syracuse in the early 1960s. She participated in the pickets and protests occurring against the Urban Renewal plan to demolish homes and relocate the residents of the old 15th Ward, once a hub of Syracuse's African-American community. She recalled working on a campaign to have the local newspapers include African American brides in the wedding announcements. In 1963, she joined the Catholic Interracial Council's bus to The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. She recalls that upon entering the city and seeing the huge number of security forces, including the National Guard, she knew this was "real." In her words, "I went because I was a mother. I went for my children, my county and for myself."

### **John Brulé**

John Brulé moved to Syracuse in 1956 and by 1965 he was the president of the Catholic Interracial Council. In March of that year, the first Selma march, that quickly became known as "Bloody Sunday," in which the 600 participants were beaten by the police, was broadcast on TV around the world. Martin Luther King had put out a call for white supporters to go to Selma to offer their support. Brulé remembers his future wife, Delores, and Father Charles Brady coming to his house to discuss the trip. He flew on his own to Alabama and joined a group of supporters in a van on their way to Selma. He recalls being incredibly fearful of the possible violence. James Reeb, the white Unitarian Universalist minister from Boston had just been beaten to death by white segregationists. While Brulé was there, he participated in a march from the public housing compound to the courthouse where black residents were being denied the right to register to vote. He was still there on March 15, 1965 when President Johnson gave this Voting Rights Act Address to congress and to the nation on live TV. John was in Selma for a week in total and it was an experience that changed his life forever as he continued to fight for social justice and racial equality.

### **Roko Sherry Chayat**

Chayat grew up in New Mexico and New Jersey with artist parents who had close friendships with African Americans, and she was largely unaware of the strong racial segregation that existed in much of the country at the time. In 1961, she attended Vassar College and then joined the Organization for Political Awareness, which was loosely a branch of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In the spring of 1962, she joined a "Freedom Ride" with a group of both white and black students who traveled to eastern Maryland to attempt to be served at a segregated lunch counter. When they were forced to leave the restaurant, they held a protest outside on the sidewalk. She remembers singing and holding hands with the other students and that the sight of her holding hands with a black man caused outrage and that the white townspeople started throwing stones. In the summer of 1963, she traveled to Washington DC to attend the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. She remembers the sea of people and sitting on someone's shoulders to see the speakers and singers. She continued to bring important issues to light as the editor for the Vassar student newspaper. In 1967, she joined the Zen Studies Society in New York and in 1985 she was ordained as a Zen priest. She is the current head of the Zen Center of Syracuse, whose mission is to offer the profound yet simple practice of meditation to people from all walks of life, thereby making our community a more compassionate and caring place.

### **Bishop Thomas Costello**

Costello of Camden, NY became an ordained priest in 1954. Costello answered the call for clergy to join Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma after the local activists there were severely beaten by police when they attempted to begin a march to Montgomery demanding their right to vote. Costello flew to Alabama with 44 people from the Syracuse area, including nine clergy. His group joined the third and final march that totaled 25,000 as they approached the Montgomery capitol. He has a clear memory of passing by the Jefferson Davis Hotel in Montgomery and seeing Rev. Emory Proctor from the AME Zion Church in Syracuse, whom he had traveled down with, taunt unsupportive onlookers with the Catholic Interracial Council of Syracuse, NY sign. At the Montgomery Capitol, he heard Martin Luther King Jr. give his famous "How Long? Not Long" speech.

### **Monsignor Charles Fahey**

Msgr. Fahey grew up in Syracuse and was ordained as a Roman Catholic Priest in 1959. He recalls being strongly influenced by Father (later Monsignor) Charles Brady and his work to address racism. He credits Father Brady with making interracial work a priority for Catholics in Syracuse at the time. In 1963, Msgr. Fahey attended the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and recalls being on the steps of the memorial and seeing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. giving his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. He was involved with the work of the Crusade for Opportunity and recalls being involved in the campaign to get Niagara Mohawk to change their discriminatory hiring practices. In 1965 Msgr. Fahey flew to Alabama with other local clergy to attend the Selma to Montgomery March. Today, Msgr. Fahey is considered a leading advocate for and expert on the aging, having worked in the field since 1961.

### **Charles Goldsmith**

Goldsmith grew up in Alabama feeling the effects of racism and segregation and remembers that whites killed blacks and nothing was done about it. Later he moved to Syracuse and became the first chair of the Syracuse chapter of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE). This Syracuse University based Civil Rights group consisted of professors, students and local residents. He knew the group’s founder, Professor George Wiley, well and worked with students and professors from the hill. He worked with CORE in the fight for fair housing and employment for African Americans. CORE was involved in a campaign targeting the Niagara Mohawk Power Company for their discriminatory hiring practices. In 1963, out of their 16,000 NY employees, twenty were black. He recalls the time CORE activists took old cars and blocked the entrance to Niagara Mohawk and students locked themselves with chains.

### **Kathleen Kelly (Sister Rose Maureen)**

Kelly, a Catholic Maryknoll nun and Syracuse native, was living in San Francisco when, on March 8, 1965, the day after the “Bloody Sunday” march in Selma, AL, she received a telegram from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice calling on clergy of all faiths to travel to Selma for the next March. She also received a personal telegram from Coretta Scott King asking her to go to Selma. After returning from the march, she wrote a speech entitled “The Meaning of Selma.” She and others went on a national tour, speaking about their experiences in Selma. In her retirement, she moved to Syracuse where many of her family members live.

### **Lou Kriesberg**

Kriesberg came to Syracuse in 1962 to join the department Sociology at Syracuse University, which housed the Youth Development Center. In 1964, with funding from federal grants through President Johnson’s War on Poverty, Syracuse University created the Community Action Training Center. Syracuse was one of the first cities in the country to get this federal funding and then one of the first to lose it. This program was designed to train students and community members to help organize the poor to help lift themselves out of poverty. Through this program, Kriesberg recalls organizing tenants living in public housing and being active in hosting activists from Selma who were learning and sharing with activists in Syracuse. CATC attempted to help people living in low-income areas of Syracuse identify the causes of poverty and then create their own services and programs to overcome those causes. CATC was controversial because it tried to bypass the local power structure and place power directly in the hands of the residents. CATC was discontinued by Syracuse University in 1965.

### **Judge Langston McKinney**

Judge McKinney moved to Syracuse in 1968 to attend Syracuse University Law School. He had earned his undergraduate degree in Chemistry from Howard University between 1961-1965 in Washington DC, and while the Civil Rights Movement was heating up he largely stayed away to concentrate on his studies. When he began Law School in Syracuse, he began with the intention of becoming a corporate patent lawyer, but with the cultural shift of the late 60s Judge McKinney started “hanging with the freaks and hippies.” With a fellow law student, he founded the SU Chapter of the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council, (LSCRRC) the first multi-racial law student run organization in the United States. Through the LSCRRC’s Summer Internship Program, Judge McKinney worked with the pioneering African American civil rights lawyer, Chevene Bowers “C. B.” King in Albany Georgia. It was then that Judge McKinney committed himself to improving the lives of others. In 1986, he became Syracuse’s first African American Judge. Before that, had been a partner with two other lawyers in Syracuse’s first black law firm. Previously he worked representing the poor with Onondaga Neighborhood Legal Services and the Frank H. Hiscock Legal Aid Society.

### **John Murray**

John Murray, originally of Yonkers, NY, joined the Crusade for Opportunity on anti-poverty issues in the early 1960’s. He also worked with Father Charles Brady, a local leader in the fight for racial equality, and served as President of the Catholic Interracial Council (CIC). In August of 1963, Murray worked with CIC to organize a bus from Syracuse to Washington to DC to attend the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Murray remembers being thankful to his wife, Nancy Murray, for allowing him to make the trip while she stayed in Syracuse to take care of their eight children. Murray remembers being spellbound by seeing Martin Luther King Jr. as he gave his now legendary “I have a Dream’ speech to the crowd of 250,000 people.

### **Marshall Nelson**

Nelson grew up in Syracuse, and in 1948 he and his brother became the first African Americans to attend St. John’s Catholic School. He received a full scholarship to Kings College in Pennsylvania, and when he returned to Syracuse in 1957 he became involved with the work of Father Charles Brady and the Catholic Interracial Council (CIC). In the early 60’s the CIC was partnering with Syracuse University to research the hiring practices of top local employers. Their research revealed that of the 16,000 Niagara Mohawk employees in New York, only 20 were African Americans. In 1965, Nelson joined the picket lines calling for Niagara Mohawk to change their discriminatory hiring practices. At the time he was employed as a Field Representative for the New York State Division of Human Rights, investigating discrimination in education, employment, and housing. Under such public pressure, Niagara Mohawk agreed to change its hiring practices, and in 1968 Nelson took a Human Resources position with the company, making him responsible for hiring new employees. He went on to become the Director of Employment. In 1998, the National Grid Minority Employees Advisory Council established The Marshall A. Nelson Urban Minority Scholarship Fund. In their words, “Nelson’s bold and persistent efforts benefited an untold number of women and minorities, helping them to gain access to corporate America.”

### **Liz Page**

Page, a Syracuse native, became a member of CORE as a freshman at Syracuse University in 1961. At the time, there were only seven other African American students in her class. As a member of CORE, she joined the pickets and protests, and recalls a protest in which firefighters threw apples and oranges at protesters as they called for more racial diversity on the Syracuse Board of Education. CORE also demanded more racial diversity in the hiring of police, firefighters, teachers and college professors. At the time, there were only two African American Professors at Syracuse University. She also was part of a campaign that sent out white couples and black couples to try to rent housing. To no one's surprise, the black couples were always turned down, proving that housing discrimination was real. In 1965, following the Selma March, Page was involved in organizing what was called the "Reverse Freedom Ride" in which Civil Rights activists from Selma came to Syracuse to share with and educate local activists about their involvement in the movement. Page received her Master's in Social Work from Columbia University, and in 1969 went on to found the Syracuse Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers. Today she is an active volunteer in the redevelopment of the New Dunbar Center.

### **Ella Mae Potter**

Potter was born in Georgia and moved to Syracuse in the 1950's. She lived in the 15th ward where her husband was a neighborhood business owner. She marched with CORE in the picket lines protesting the Urban Renewal project to demolish the neighborhood, and remembers when students and Rev. Emory Procter blocked the parking lot of Niagara Mohawk in protest of their discriminatory hiring practices. She participated in the 1963 Christmas Boycott when the community was asked to boycott the downtown department stores because African Americans were never employed as store clerks but instead only hired to work in the back. Potter continues to be a community activist on the Southside of Syracuse. In 1994, she founded Citizens for a Crime-Free Community with her daughter Robin Potter-Butler. They also created the annual "Christmas Miracle with Grandma Potter" which distributes Christmas presents to children who have a parent in the Justice Center.

### **Dr. William Schiess**

Dr. Schiess went to Selma after "Bloody Sunday" to offer medical assistance to support the efforts of the marchers in a group with Episcopal priests from Syracuse. He went to the hospitals of Selma and Montgomery to insure that the children in those hospitals received proper care. While he was in Selma, he participated in a protest march at the house of Selma's Mayor. He was arrested with a group of other religious people and spent a day in jail. In Selma, he met Dr. King at a motel where Dr. King was preparing to give a speech to SNCC supporters. His memories of Selma stayed with him forever, and he has the photographs he took of Dr. King and Brown Chapel AME Church on the walls of his home.

### **Betty Bone Schiess**

Schiess was active in civil rights work and in eliminating discriminatory practices within the Episcopal Church. In 1947, she and her husband, Doctor William A. Schiess, lived in Algiers for several weeks and when they returned from their travels she wrote that they were determined to "do something about the plight of the Negro." In 1957, Syracuse's Grace Episcopal Church welcomed members of St. Philip's – a historically black Episcopal Church – establishing Grace as one of the first fully integrated Episcopal churches in the nation. Grace became an important meeting place for those involved in local civil rights efforts. Schiess remembers being told that male supporters of the civil rights movement were more important in Selma than women supporters. This exclusionary attitude helped spark her feminist feelings. In 1974, Schiess created national controversy as a member of the "Philadelphia Eleven," eleven Episcopal women who were ordained as priests. It was considered an act of disobedience, since the church hierarchy had not yet consented to the ordination of women. She later became an associate rector of Grace Episcopal Church.

### **Walt Shepperd**

Shepperd, originally from New York City, moved to Syracuse in 1963. While a teacher at Madison Junior High School, he was asked by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to recruit upstate teachers to attend the training sessions in Oxford, Ohio for what were to be "Freedom Schools"--free alternative schools for African Americans during "Freedom Summer" in Mississippi in 1964. Shepperd originally only planned to train teachers in Ohio, but after the three Freedom Summer volunteers went missing (it was later confirmed that they were murdered by the Klan), Shepperd felt more compelled to go. He considers his experiences that summer and fall (he stayed until Thanksgiving) life altering. When he returned to Syracuse, he was hired by Community Action Training Center, and organized on local issues of poverty, housing and jobs. In 1976 he founded The Media Unit, the award-winning production and performance group for youth. The Media Unit has a long history of creating work on social justice issues including their 2008 play "From the Back of the Bus," a musical production about teens, racism and racial healing.

### **Ann Tussing**

Tussing came to Syracuse from San Francisco in 1958 with her husband Dale. She became active in CORE and the protests against the demolition of the 15th Ward. She recalls bringing all her children with her to the protests, and has a cherished photograph that shows her with her three children, and pregnant with her fourth, at a CORE protest. Tussing recalls attending CORE meetings at Syracuse's Grace Episcopal Church and that when the church, which was one of first integrated Episcopal churches in the nation, received bomb threats, CORE began to meet at the People's AME Zion Church on East Fayette St. Today Tussing is active in the project to save and restore this historic African American church.

### **Dale Tussing**

Tussing moved to Syracuse in 1958 with his wife Ann to attend graduate school at Syracuse University. In 1963 he was arrested while participating in a protest against the demolition of the 15th Ward. He was one of many faculty members and students who had volunteered to be arrested in order to bring attention to the Urban Renewal decision that would devastate the African American community by destroying their neighborhood. Also that year, Tussing attended the March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs, and traveled to DC on the bus that CORE had organized. Tussing was a great admirer of George Wiley, the Chemistry professor at SU who started the CORE chapter in Syracuse in 1960 and the National Welfare Rights Organization in 1966.

### **Peter Wirth**

Wirth, originally from New York City, moved to Syracuse in 1967 to become a student at Syracuse University. In the winter of 1970, he responded to an open call for students to travel to Port Gibson, MS to assist in the mayoral campaign of Jimmy Smith who, if elected, would have become the first black mayor. Wirth traveled with 9 other white students and participated in canvassing, mass meetings and attended the "Christmas Parade" which was the first political march in Port Gibson history organized by blacks. Jimmy Smith lost the election to the white incumbent Bill Gordon despite the town having a black voting majority. As a fellow SU student and Daily Orange reporter, Paula Fabian wrote in 1970 about the election, "Many of the voters were afraid to support the black candidate, afraid of losing their jobs and having their property destroyed. One unidentified voter called Jimmy Smith on Election Day and asked for four guards for his house-he wanted to vote black." For Wirth, the experience was truly eye opening. Wirth stayed active in social justice work and became involved in the anti-war movement. In 1999, Port Gibson elected their first African American mayor, Amelda Arnold.

### **Akosua Valerie Woods**

Woods grew up in Springfield, MA where her parents were active members of the NAACP, working on issues such as police brutality and voter registration. Her parents brought her and her siblings to many Civil Rights protests while visiting family members in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. To her these were “vacation marches,” and she would often pack her own picket sign. In September, 1963, she was in Birmingham, Alabama, and on her way to the 16th Street Baptist Church when a bomb exploded and killed four girls and injured many others, including her cousin Lisa. By the age of twelve, Woods was a seasoned activist and remembers feeling a sense of responsibility to the other children whose parents brought them to the protests. After parents of other children were arrested at a protest, she remembers keeping watch over the children as she waited at the jailhouse for her aunt to come pick them up. Growing up with politically active parents instilled in her a sense of social justice that has remained active throughout her life. She brought her own children to protests such as those organized by the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP). She currently works as a Human Rights Specialist for the NYS Division of Human Rights.

### **Rev. LeRoy Glenn Wright**

As a student at Fisk University in Nashville, TN, Wright was deeply inspired by activist Diane Nash and the Nashville fight against segregation. In 1961, at the age of 19, he became a Freedom Rider as he took a bus headed south to challenge the illegal segregation of public buses. When he arrived at the Trailways bus station in Jackson, MS, the media was everywhere and when he entered the “white” waiting room he was arrested for “breach of peace.” He was jailed for three weeks and feared for his life while in the jail. Wright moved to Syracuse in 1962 and continued to stay connected to the national movement. In 1963, he took the bus with the Syracuse Catholic Interracial Council to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and was active in the Crusade for Opportunity. In 1966, he attended the March Against Fear, also known as the Meredith March, that occurred after a white gunman shot the African American civil rights activist, James Meredith, during a solitary march in Mississippi.

### **Mary Ann Zeppetello**

Zeppetello, originally from Syracuse, frequented the jazz clubs in the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward as a teenager. It was one of few places where whites and blacks could mix socially. As a teen, she was a member of the Young Progressives of America, a youth organization of the Communist Party, and recalls being strongly impacted by their anti-lynching campaign. In 1949, at the age of 18, she traveled to Washington DC to attend the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) “Freedom Crusade.” She recalls traveling with her African American friend, Jim Jones, who had to be sneaked into their hotel room because he was traveling with whites. Several thousand people attended the event, and Zeppetello recalls an address and performance by legendary performer Paul Robeson. The CRC soon became a target of the House Committee on Un-American Activities and was disbanded in 1956. Zeppetello believes that the red-baiting of the 1950s helped to stall the progress of the Civil Rights Movement. Zeppetello continued to be active in Syracuse, joining the picket for the 15th Ward. Seeing the connection between racism and militarism, she also protested the Korean and Vietnam wars.