



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 12, 2018

Bradley Museum celebrates 100th year with Willie McGowan Banquet

McGowan remembered for helping steer Bradley Museum Board of Directors

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. — Willie McGowan will be remembered at a banquet in his honor, Saturday, **March 24**, 2018, as supporters of Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center celebrate 100 years of African-American education. The Willie McGowan Banquet will be held at the museum, 415 S. Academy St. in Murfreesboro, beginning at 6 p.m.

“We are excited to celebrate the centennial of Bradley Academy, which is now a museum, by honoring the man who dedicated so much of his time and energy to preserving the cultural heritage of African-Americans and the Murfreesboro community,” said Vonchelle Stembidge, program coordinator at Bradley for Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department. “Bradley Academy is a cultural resource that serves as an important tourist destination with programming that promotes African American history.”

Tickets for the 2018 Willie McGowan Banquet can be purchased in advance by calling Bradley Museum during operating hours from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. Tickets are available for purchase until the day of the event by calling the museum at 615-962-8773. The annual banquet is the largest fundraiser for the museum, which showcases local and African American history.

Bradley closed as an all-black school in 1955 in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. After being used for office space and storage, the building fell into disrepair and faced demolition. The late Mrs. Dora Rucker went out and spoke to various leaders in the community and found Willie McGowan, who is known as the “Father of the Bradley Academy Historical Association.” The late McGowan spearheaded a movement consisting of the E.A. Davis Elk Lodge #1138, Rebecca Carney Temple #A798, former students, teachers and community supporters to restore the abandoned building by the mid-1990s.

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In addition to celebrating the work and memory of Willie McGowan, the 2018 banquet honorees are Nancy Vaughan, Y. T. Vaughan, Gwen Daniel and Katie Wilson. The keynote speaker for the 100th Year Celebration is Marilyn Massengale, retired educator at Holloway High School.

Bradley Academy was the first educational institution for the State of Tennessee ordered by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1806. The museum structure is listed on the National Registry because it honors James K. Polk, the nation's 11th president. Polk was one of Bradley's earliest students when it opened as a school for white males. From 1884 until the 1950s, it was an elementary and secondary school for African Americans in Rutherford County who struggled to obtain a formal education in the post-Civil War period.

This year's banquet will celebrate honorees whose efforts were critical in the successful movement to preserve the foundation of education for African Americans in the city of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.



Nancy L. Bryson Vaughan has devoted her life to education and community service. A classroom teacher in the Rutherford County Schools for over 28 years, Vaughan also served as director of continuing education at Middle Tennessee State University and as a GED instructor for the U.S. Army in Okinawa, Japan. Her community service includes the American Business Women's Association—Heart of Tennessee Chapter, the board of directors for the Bradley Academy Historical Association, and secretary and publicist for Church Women United. Vaughan is the author of "Bethel," a play about the first Negro preacher in the Bethel slave community in Murfreesboro and "Grandma Anna and Me 1853," Kindle edition. Her numerous recognitions include being named Woman of the Year by the American Business Women's Association; Teacher of the Year at Thurman Francis Junior High School; and being named one of the 100 Women of Rutherford County by the Daughters Rebecca Carney Temple #978, Elks Lodge. A 1953 graduate of Holloway High School, Vaughan earned a bachelor of arts degree from Tennessee A & I State University in 1957 and a master's degree from Middle Tennessee State University in 1979. She is married to Y T Vaughan, retired military; the mother of two sons, a step-son and step daughter, four step grandchildren and two great grandchildren and a daughter-in-law.



Y T Vaughan worked 20 years for Whirlpool Corp., where he also served as a past union president. He also served 26 years in the U.S. Air Force, including Korea and Vietnam, earning the National Defense Medal, Korea War Medal, and Vietnam War Medal. He retired from the Air Force as a Senior Master Sergeant. Vaughan's community service includes being a member of the Rutherford County Crime Stoppers Board, the St. Clair Street Senior Center Citizen Board, a 33 Degree Mason, Past Post Commander of the American Legion, and a national American Legion representative from 2009 to present. For five years, Vaughan served as Ground Manager for the Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center. A member of First Baptist Church, East Castle Street,

Vaughan has been a past chairman of the deacon board and past president of the layman league. He is married to Nancy Vaughan and has a son, daughter, two step sons, four grandchildren, two great grandchildren and a daughter-in-law.



Gwyn Daniel has served her community as a licensed cosmetologist and instructor for more than 20 years. For 16 years, Daniel worked for Bonners Brothers Hair Care Co. of Atlanta, Georgia, as a licensed instructor and platform artist, traveling the U.S. and West Indies teaching students. Her experience includes working with Willie Morrow, the maker of the California Curl and the California Green. Most recently, Daniel has been the owner of her own salon, Daniel's Salon. Her community service includes past president of the Tennessee Beauticians and Barbers Nail Techs of Tennessee, treasurer of the Holloway High School Alumni Scholarship Association and member of the O.E.S. Venus Chapter of the Eastern Stars and the Rebecca Carney Temple 798 of the I.B.O.P. of Elks. A member of Elder's Chapel United Methodist Church, Daniel serves as chair of Pastor Relations and assistant treasurer and secretary of the United Methodist Women. A graduate of Swafford's School of Cosmetology, Daniel attended Tennessee State University and is a 1966 graduate of Holloway High School. She is married to William T. Daniel. The couple has a son and daughter and two grandchildren.



Katie Wilson retired in 2007 after 31 years of service with the State of Tennessee as a social Worker/mental retardation program specialist for the Department of Finance and Administration, Bureau of TennCare in Nashville. Her work includes serving as a complaint and investigation coordinator for people with mental retardation for the Department of Health, Division of Maternal and Child Health; social worker MR program specialist 3 with Children's Special Services and in the Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation at Clover Bottom Developmental Center. Prior to working for the State of Tennessee, Wilson served as county director for the Stones River OEO and Mid-Cumberland Community Action Agency, where she also served as a neighborhood outreach specialist and resource specialist from 1968-1978. Her community service includes the Greater Nashville Regional Council for Area Agency on Aging and Disability; the Murfreesboro Branch of the NAACP since 1970, including current Branch President; a member of the Mid-Cumberland Action Agency Board of Directors since 1993; appointed by Mayor Ernest Burgess to represent the Public Sector for Rutherford County; and a member of the Board of Directors for the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County, Inc. A member of Berry Chapel AME Church in Lynchburg, Tennessee, Wilson serves on numerous church boards and missionary organizations. Wilson is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University with a degree in Social Work and graduated from Holloway High School in 1964.

Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center celebrates African American history with several featured exhibits, including an interactive history completed by MTSU History professor, Dr. Brenden Martin and public history students in the Spring of 2017. "Education and Empowerment: African American Education in Rutherford County" was unveiled at a reception celebration May 26, 2017.

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The new interactive exhibit features two touch-screen monitors filled with images of Bradley and Holloway educational history. The exhibit chronicles how local African American schools served as a beacon of empowerment and activism in the 19th and 20th centuries. The history is told through a first-floor wall display that includes oral histories, photographs and material culture.

The City of Murfreesboro and the Bradley Academy Historical Association, Inc. signed an agreement in 2015 to transfer management and operations of Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center to the City of Murfreesboro. Managing and operating the museum is part of the City Parks and Recreation Department's preservation and programming mission. Under the agreement, the department manages, operates and provides programming for the museum facility. The Bradley Board and Association serves as an advisory/friends group providing fundraising and volunteers for special programs, exhibits and events.

The non-profit Bradley Academy Historical Association, Inc. has long worked to restore the landmark to preserve the history of its contribution to the community. Bradley Academy, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was founded in the early 19th-century as a school for white males. The 1917 building is an example of standardized, early-20th-century schoolhouse architecture.

For more ticket information, contact **Vonchelle Stembridge** at 615-962-8773 or visit www.murfreesborotn.gov/parks.

For city news online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photos attached submitted:

1. *Bradley Academy Museum & Cultural Center Logo.jpg*
2. *Willie McGowan.jpg*
3. *Nancy L. B. Vaughan.jpg*
4. *Y. T. Vaughan.jpg*
5. *Gwyn Daniel.jpg*
6. *Katie Wilson.jpg*

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