

PRESS RELEASE

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FREEHOLDER BRENDAN GILL HONORS THE MONTCLAIR AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Heritage Parade Grand Marshal Katherine Nicholas also Honored by Freeholder Board

(Newark, NJ) – The Montclair African-American Heritage Foundation, which this year is celebrating its 25th Anniversary, was honored by District 5 Freeholder Brendan Gill of Montclair during the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders’ Wednesday, June 25th, meeting held at Montclair Town Hall. Katherine Nicholas, one of the grand marshals for this year’s Heritage Parade, was also honored.



District 5 Freeholder Brendan Gill of Montclair (2nd from right) honored the Montclair African American Heritage Foundation on its 25th Anniversary, as well as Katherine Nicholas (center, holding Commendation), a Grand Marshal of this year’s Heritage Parade, during the Freeholder Board’s Wednesday, June 25th, meeting held at Montclair Town Hall. Foundation members pictured above are (from left to right): James Eason (Entertainment Chair), William Scott, Albert Pelham (Co-Chair) and Clarence Jackson. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

“The Foundation does an invaluable job of encouraging, promoting and chronicling the heritage of Montclair’s African-American community, addressing its needs and instilling a sense of pride”, said Freeholder Gill, who commented that he had the privilege and honor of participating in this year’s parade, as he has since his high school days. “Without the Foundation and all it does, Montclair just wouldn’t be the incredible community it is today, and I thank you for that.”

Albert Pelham, co-chair of the Montclair African-American Heritage Foundation, accepted the Board’s Commendation from Freeholder Gill and introduced other members of the Foundation in attendance (James

Eason, William Scott and Clarence Jackson) and remarked that the Foundation's annual parade is the second-largest in the state, adding, "We're celebrating our 25th year and our objective is to bring awareness to the culture of African-Americans and their contributions to the community. I am very proud to have been one of the co-leaders of this great organization for the last three to four years, and I want to thank Freeholder Gill for recognizing us tonight."

The Montclair African-American Heritage Foundation (MAAHF) is a non-profit organization supported by a diverse committee of volunteers. It builds upon Montclair's rich African-American cultural legacy by supporting local programs and events that provide historical, health and cultural education to strengthen the community as a whole, and by providing academic scholarships. It also works to promote community-building and to address issues affecting Montclair's African-American community, especially its youth.

This year, the Foundation marked its 25th Anniversary at its 3rd Annual Dinner Dance, "Celebrating the Harlem Renaissance", on April 19th at Costa del Sol in Union; its Golf Classic on May 12th at the Glen Ridge Country Club (with proceeds contributed to the MAAHF Scholarship Fund); and its Parade and Festival on June 7th, led by Grand Marshals Katherine Nicholas and Everett Christmas, Sr.

"We also want to give special recognition to one of this year's parade grand marshals, Katherine Nicholas", said Gill. "Katherine, I want to thank you for your contributions to the Township of Montclair, and congratulate you on your well-deserved selection as a grand marshal. You are a wonderful woman in so many ways and a perfect example of the extraordinary people we have here in Montclair."

"I appreciate this award and thank you so much for thinking of me", said Ms. Nicholas. "As I've said numerous times, my work in Montclair is because I believe that as a servant of God, it is what I should be doing, about helping others; that's what I'm here for, and that's what I do." She also thanked the Foundation and parade committee for all they've done for her.

Katherine Nicholas was raised in Montclair and earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Rutgers. She began her career with Head Start in 1965 as a volunteer and advanced through the agency's ranks to be an assistant teacher, head teacher, parent coordinator, deputy director and then Head Start Operations Director, a position she held from 2001 until her retirement at the end of 2010. During her tenure, she presented workshops for parents and staff in positive self-image and parenting, and also worked with the Clara Maass Shelter for Battered and Abused Women. Nicholas is very involved in the community and holds leadership positions with numerous organizations, including: Montclair Grass Roots/Glenfield Task Force, Montclair 40-Plus Club, Patricia Spikes Memorial Scholarship Fund, the Dr. MLK Scholarship Committee, Bright Hope Baptist Church and Grass Roots Do Drop In.

The current members of the Montclair African-American Heritage Foundation are: Albert Pelham, Co-Chair; Bonni Taylor, Co-Chair; Katherine Allen-Curry, Treasurer; Weatau McPherson, Secretary and Ad Journal Chair; Honorable Dr. Renee Baskerville; Lonnie Brandon, Golf Event and African American Film Festival Chair; Naomi Brandon; Christine Brewington, Parade Co-Chair; Marcia Brewington, Fund Raising Chair; TeNijah Bussey, Parade Co-Chair; Alfred Davis; Barry Devone; Don Donato; James Eason, Entertainment Chair; William J. Ewing, Esq.; Diane Graves; Joellen Green, Vendor Chair; Eddie Hall; Clarence Jackson; Rodney Jenkins; Anita Mack; Michelle Miller; Elizabeth Oakley-Thompson; William Scott; Cathy Stephenson Smith, Marketing Chair; Bruce Taylor, Golf Event Assistant Chair; and Bruce Washington, Festival Grounds Chair.

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