



EAST SIDE PRIDE

NEWS AND VIEWS

A New Community Newsletter

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NO. 1

The Afro-American Historical Society Year In Review

Samantha Hollins

2025 represented a prosperous year of community service, collective work and cooperative efforts for the Afro-American Historical Society, WHGE Radio Station and the East Side Pride Recovery Program. Let's rewind and recap some of our most memorable moments. Under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Harmon Carey, we were able to achieve an abundance of prominent events here on the East Side of Wilmington, Delaware.

The program year started with the 36th Annual Children's Birthday Party in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's 96th birthday. It was held on Monday, January 20, 2025 at the Walnut Street YMCA. In addition to a film about the life of Dr. King, the program featured youth entertaining youth. Sarah Hughes performed an interpretative dance and her sister, Sophia Hughes, favored the audience with her beautiful voice. And, the H-FaM Band showed their "stuff."

Throughout the year, the East Side Pride 9th St. Bazaar took place at 9th & Pine Streets on numerous Sundays, to support purchasing a building to establish a recovery house on the East Side.

On Memorial Day, the Historical Society sponsored a graveside program at Mt. Zion Cemetery, in cooperation with the Friends of Mt. Zion Cemetery and the Mt. Zion Cemetery Association.

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I Have A Dream Never Again



The original working title of the speech America now sentimentalizes as "*I Have a Dream*" was "**Normalcy, Never Again.**"
Not *dream*.
Not *hope*.
Not *unity*.

Never. Again.

That matters, because titles tell you intent. And there was nothing soft, polite, or ceremonial about what Martin Luther King Jr. was doing that day. He was not offering America a bedtime story. He was issuing a moral ultimatum.

Does "*Never Again*" sound like some kumbaya, community -service-hours, everybody-just-get-along nonsense? Or does it sound like a man who had seen enough?

"Normalcy" was not neutral.
Normalcy was Jim Crow law.
Normalcy was lynching as public spectacle.
Normalcy was redlining, job exclusion, police terror, stolen labor, and stolen futures dressed up as tradition.
Normalcy was churches full on Sunday and silent on Monday.
Normalcy was respectability politics demanding patience from people already buried under injustice.

And King said **never again** to that.

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Martin ... continued

Somewhere along the way, America did what it always does when confronted with dangerous truth. It softened it. Sanded it down. Turned it into a poster, a quote, a holiday soundbite. They didn't erase King. They edited him.

They renamed the speech after its most poetic passage and pretended the poetry was the message. They took a radical demand for structural change and reduced it to vibes.

But King didn't march on Washington to help America *feel* better about itself. He marched to tell America it was living a lie.

So when politicians quote King to scold protesters...
When school districts teach his *dream* but censor his critiques...
When corporations celebrate him one day a year while exploiting workers the other 364...

Understand what's happening.

They are using a sanitized King to discipline the living.

They want a King who comforts power, not one who confronts it.
A King who inspires without demanding.
A King who smiles, not one who disrupts.

But the real message was never meant to be comfortable.

Never Again doesn't whisper.
It doesn't wait its turn.
It doesn't ask permission.

It declares that injustice, once exposed, loses the right to be called normal.

And that is the King they don't want you to remember.

Year In Review ...continued

Baba EA taught children African drum lessons in front of WHGE radio station beginning in the spring and continuing through the fall.

The 29th Annual African American Family Festival took place September 6th at Kirkwood Park. It was a wonderful event which included many children's activities including horseback riding.

Dr. Harmon Carey spearheaded this EAST SIDE PRIDE NEWS AND VIEWS newsletter, which was first published in September.

On October 30th CLIFFORD BROWN'S 95TH BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE took place at City Council Chambers. It featured a documentary video, "Brownie Speaks" about the life and career of one of Wilmington's greatest musicians.

All during the year, The Historical Society supported the East Side Pride Recovery Meetings held on Tuesdays from 7 – 8:30 pm at Central Baptist Church, 9th & Pine Streets.

Numerous meetings took place all year long to plan and execute all of these events. Our committees worked extremely hard, making historic contributions together. This goes to show that when community members, community leaders and creative people come together we can make a great difference, uplifting our own neighborhoods and our beautiful people.

The Afro-American Historical Society of Delaware, our staff, committee members, sponsors, performers, vendors and volunteers, worked TOGETHER to make 2025 a phenomenal year!! If you are interested in participating in any of these activities in 2026, contact us at (302) 562-4718.

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KATHERINE BUTLER FUNERALIZED

Longtime East Side resident, Katherine Butler, said goodbye to us on November 14, 2025. She graduated from "Old" Howard High School in 1955 after which she continued her education at Hampton University and Washington Technical School which awarded her a Bachelor's Degree. She followed in the footsteps of her Mother, Mrs. Ella Butler, as a community Activist, and of her Father, as a Printer. A devoted member of the Order of the Eastern Star, she was funeralized at Tabernacle Full Gospel Baptist Church on December 17th. The Congo Funeral Home officiated at the funeral service.

MARTIN LUTHER KING CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

The 37th Annual Children's Birthday Party, initiated by Dr. Harmon Carey, will be held on **Monday, January 19, 2026, 12 noon until 2:00 pm at the Walnut Street YMCA 10th & Walnut Streets.**

The event, Wilmington's longest continuously running Children's Birthday celebration of the great Civil Rights leader will feature some wonderful entertainment performed by children, a film about Dr. King's life/career will be shown, and there will be a special routine by Essence Legacy Drummers and Steppers. This event is **FREE** and refreshments will be served!

Children must be accompanied by adults who will be asked to show identification at the Reception Desk. Sponsorship is a joint venture of the Walnut Street YMCA and the Afro-American Historical Society of Delaware. We urge adults to bring their "younguns" so they will learn about Dr. King's legacy.

SALESIANUM SCHOOL CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF DESEGREGATION



In 1950, Salesianum became the first school in Delaware to admit Black students. The school, then located on 8th & West Streets, accepted five Black students (pictured from the bottom up): Thomas Connell, Alfred Connell, Willie Jones, James Owens and Fred Smith. All, except Mr. Owens, have passed. He attended the 75th Anniversary on November 14, 2025. Now, in his 90's, James delighted the audience by sharing some of his memories about what it was like to attend "Sallies" thereby breaking the color line. He was a boyhood friend of Dr. Harmon Carey, who attended the celebration, and both men were excited to re-unite after not having seen each other for 75 years.

THE ALFIE MOSS – DEXTER KOONCE PROJECT

The Project is headed by Ms. Alfie Moss, a vocalist, and her husband, Dexter Koonce, a pianist who also plays guitar. Other musicians include a trumpeter or saxophonist. The ensemble is one of Wilmington's most well-known and popular attractions. Primarily performing in the Jazz genre, their repertoire includes a variety of other musical styles, such as Soul, R&B and Reggae. They have been performing for over 50 years at concert venues, clubs, weddings, schools and Festivals. They perform many songs by great jazz artists, such as John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie and Wilmington's own, Clifford Brown. With her beautiful voice, Alfie covers legendary artists such as Marvin Gaye, Etta James, Harold Melvin and Nancy Wilson.

Alfie and Dexter live on the East Side and are well known as Community Activists. They also lead the Musical Ministry at Central Baptist Church, and Alfie serves on the Board of Directors of the Afro-American Historical Society of Delaware. They can be reached at (302) 898-5896.

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CONGRATS TO EAST SIDE PRIDE RECOVERY GROUP

The members joined together to sponsor both Pre-Thanksgiving and Pre-Christmas Community dinners on November 25th and December 23rd. Based on the positive responses, the Recovery group envisions sponsoring each of these special dinners in 2026. The Recovery Group meets every Tuesday, 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Central Baptist Church, 9th & Pine Streets.

MT. CARMEL CHURCH DEMOLISHED

The Church at 10th & Lombard Streets, where the great jazz trumpeter, Clifford Brown was funeralized in 1956, has been demolished.

As such, it has met the same fate as Ezion Methodist Church which stood at 9th & French Streets, Mother AUFCMP Church which was located in the 800 Block of French Street, and Mother U.A.M.E., which was located at 12th & French Streets.

Ezion built another Church at 8th & Walnut Streets, and Mother AUFCMP Church re-located to 9th & Franklin Streets. Mother U.A.M.E. built another Church at 5th & Church Streets with the financial support of MBNA. If all goes as planned, some of the stained-glass windows from Mt. Carmel, will find a new home in the Black Art Gallery being built across the street from where the Church stood. More about this Art project will appear in a future edition.

WALNUT STREET YMCA CELEBRATES 85TH ANNIVERSARY

At a special banquet held on October 24th, five community leaders, ALL with roots on the East Side, were honored for their services to the YMCA and the community. Receiving these *Lifetime Achievement Awards* were: Wilmington's first Black Mayor, **Jim Sills**, who for many years lived with his family at 6th and Lombard Streets; **Enid Wallace-Haley**, one of Delmarva Power's top executives who lived for many years at McCaulley Court; **State Representative Stephanie Bolden**, who has lived on the East Side all of her life and was very active in youth activities at the Walnut Street YMCA; **Claire LaMar Carey** who is well known and appreciated for her role as Director of the Black Achievers and Teen Programs at the Walnut Street "Y"; and **Harmon Carey**, who began his involvement with the "Y" when he was 10 years old. After graduating from college, Mr. Carey was active in Membership recruitment and served as Director of the Youth Lounge (also known as the "EL TROC") when Representative Bolden, as a high school student, was one of his most active members.

WHGE-95.3 FM HOSTED GENEALOGICAL HOUR

Congratulations to Dr. Pamela Foster on the successful launch of her Black Genealogical project over WHGE on December 9th. She highlighted a family discussion about Haneef Raulston's book, "The Street Bible". East Side News and Views encourages Dr. Foster to conduct similar programs about family histories in 2026.

GET WELL SOON

"News and Views" extends "Get Well Soon" wishes to longtime East Side resident, Ms. Karin "Toni" Watson. Toni is well known and respected as a Community Activist and Vocalist. She performed at several WHGE fund raisers when this station was in its infancy and at the African American Family Festival. Toni's niece, Deni Knox, is Board Secretary of the Afro-American Historical Society.