

Community Outreach:

October 10, 2009: *Tracking Our Ancestors III 2009*

The annual genealogy seminar sponsored by the Bloomfield Hills Family History Center featured Society members: DeWitt S. Dykes, Jr., presenting *African American Genealogy: Sources & Methods* and Rochelle E. Danquah, presenting *Visions of Freedom: The Underground Railroad Movement in Farmington, Michigan*.

October 29 - 31, 2009: *International Black Genealogy Summit – Reconnecting Lost Links*

FHWGS members Maurice Sanders, Doris Ray and De Witt S. Dykes, Jr. attended the conference held at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

November 7, 2009: *FHWGS 30th Anniversary Celebration: Celebrating the Legacy of Margaret McCall Thomas Ward, De Witt S. Dykes, Jr., 2009 Margaret McCall Thomas Ward History Maker*

The program opened with greetings from the planning committee chair, First Vice President Felicia Lewis-Williams before Society members, family, friends, and colleagues of the honoree, and other guests. A beautiful selection of songs from the Project DayDream Girls Ensemble preceded a heartfelt keynote address delivered in a video message sent by the Honorable Samuel “Buzz” Thomas III, Michigan State Senate. Immediate Past President, Peggy Sawyer Williams spoke about the personal and professional achievements of the Society’s First President and Founding Member, De Witt S. Dykes, Jr., as well as his significant contributions to the development of the Society’s organizational framework, By-laws, formation and election of the Board of Directors, and the attainment of incorporation and 501 C (3) status. Society President, Leslie C. Williams presented Mr. Dykes with the very first Margaret McCall Thomas Ward History Maker Award in recognition of his superior service as a founding member and First President of the Society. Remarks from family member Helen Moore, representing Mary A. Edmond, and Dr. Karen Miller, representing Oakland University, extolled Mr. Dykes’ considerable accomplishments as an eminent scholar, genealogist, educator, author and historian. Resolutions and citations were also presented from the Office of the Governor, the Michigan State Senate and the Detroit City Council.

FHWGS Founding and Charter Members, Life Members, Elder and Youth Members, and volunteers in the audience received Certificates of Recognition in a special ceremony. Felicia Lewis-Williams presented a Posthumous Honor saluting the contributions of deceased Board Member, Lester Johnson, and Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Resolutions to members Peggy Sawyer Williams, Joann Marie Davis, Ron Burgess and Doris Williams.

President Leslie C. Williams announced the launching of the ***Margaret McCall Thomas Ward Genealogy Legacy Fund*** established in memory of the Society’s beloved founder. Annual gifts in honor or memory of a loved one will enable the Society to continue its commitment to producing special programs, major projects and publications documenting African American family history, life and culture. Joann Marie Davis introduced the moving *Margaret McCall Thomas Ward Tribute* video produced by her and videographer, Ron Burgess. A monetary gift in Margaret’s memory was presented by President Williams to Romie Minor, Burton Historical Collection, representing Jo Anne Mondowney, DPL Director.

The program closed with acknowledgements from Anniversary Committee Chair, Felicia Lewis-Williams and President Leslie C. Williams. Board member, Tonja J. Stallings delivered a beautiful invocation. Guests, who purchased luncheon tickets, moved to the Old Fine Arts Room for a sumptuous luncheon where family, friends, colleagues, Society members and other guests enjoyed visiting with honoree, De Witt S. Dykes, Jr., and looking at the exceptional historical displays created by member Doris Williams. On behalf of the membership and guests, I offer our deep appreciation and thanks to our Anniversary Celebration Chair, Felicia Lewis-Williams, Joann Marie Davis, Peggy Sawyer Williams, Doris Williams, Ron Burgess, and all other committee members for your indispensable planning and assistance in support of the program. The 30th Anniversary Celebration was made possible with generous donations from sponsors Joann Marie Davis, Maurice Sanders and an anonymous donor.