

FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Newsletter of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit

Suite 1020
220 Bagley
Detroit, Michigan 48226-1426
(313) 963-1274 Fax (313) 963-4817
fhcdet2@yahoo.com

Volume 34, No. 3

September, 2011

A NEW LOCATION FOR FHCMD'S 14th ANNUAL FAIR HOUSING LEADERSHIP AWARDS RECEPTION - SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

After 13 years at the Renaissance Club in downtown Detroit, the 14th Fair Housing Leadership Awards Reception, sponsored by the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD), will be held this year in the beautiful law office building of Charfoos & Christensen, located at 5510 Woodward in mid-town Detroit. Like several other Detroit businesses, the Renaissance Club succumbed to economic woes, closing in December 2010. Attorney J. Douglas Peters, Managing Partner of Charfoos & Christensen, came to the rescue with an offer to allow FHCMD to host the reception at their historic building. The hors d'oeuvres Reception will be held on September 21, 2011, beginning at 5:00 PM and concluding by 7:00 PM. Individual tickets, at \$50/each, are available in advance from the FHCMD office, or at the door.

To be honored with Fair Housing Leadership Awards at the Reception are: Independent Management Services, Frank Carswell, President; retired real estate broker, Charles M. Tucker, Jr., and Fair Housing Trainer, Attorney John A. Obee. Former FHCMD Tester, Lynn Willis Hathorn, will be presented the Marvin Thomas Service Award. They will join 43 previous Fair Housing Leadership Award Recipients and 7 former FHCMD testers in this special recognition of persons and firms that have made significant contributions to the cause of fair and equal housing opportunities.

Prior to forming Independent Management Services (IMS) in 1989 Mr. Carswell was Executive Vice President of PM Diversified, where his responsibilities included fair housing training. After IMS became the management company for a housing cooperative that was the defendant in a disability discrimination lawsuit, Mr. Carswell, made sure that employees of his firm (now numbering in excess of 150 persons) regularly receive fair housing training, most often provided by staff from the FHCMD. In 2006, just to make sure they were following fair housing laws, Mr. Carswell asked FHCMD to conduct some fair housing tests of IMS employees, assuring his employees that compliance with fair housing laws "is a condition of employment". IMS provides its services to affordable multi-family housing developments, including over 9,000 residential units, in 9 states. The IMS public description of its purposes, includes an admonition that a successful management organization must include an "emphasis on fair and equal treatment of all persons."

Among those honored with Fair Housing Leadership Awards have been some of the early pioneers for fair housing in the metro Detroit area, including Jack Maddox and the late Harold A. Meininger. This year the FHCMD is pleased to add Charles M. Tucker, Jr., to that list of fair housing pioneers. His list of "firsts" is impressive, including being the first African American owner of a real estate sales firm in the City of Pontiac (1963), and the first African American President of the Detroit Board of Realtors (1987/88). As President and CEO of Tucker Associates, a full service real estate sales firm, he also directed his firm's activities as a multi-family rental management firm that helped to rehabilitate and restore many of the federally insured properties that were experiencing financial difficulties. Mr. Tucker served for five years as the President of the Detroit Real Estate Brokers Association and was a former Director of Housing and Urban Development for New Detroit, Inc. In February, 2011 Mr. Tucker was honored during Black History month by the Pontiac Public Library for his many years of service to the City of Pontiac, including serving as a member of the City Council and, most recently, as the Interim Director of the Pontiac Growth Corporation.

Attorney John Obee, a Partner with the law firm, Wood, Kull, Herschfus, Obee & Kull, P.C., who has been a very active and successful FHCMD Cooperating Attorney and a member of the FHCMD Board of Directors since the mid-1980s, is being recognized with a Fair Housing Leadership Award because of his activities as a fair housing educator and trainer, especially with



Charles M. Tucker, Jr.



Frank Carswell



John A. Obee, Attorney



Lynn Willis Hathorn

Continued on page 3

FHCMD CASE UPDATES

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) extends its thanks and appreciation to the plaintiffs, testers, witnesses and attorneys who have assisted the cause of fair housing by participating in the following litigations. It is understood that in all cases reported in this newsletter the defendant, unless noted otherwise, denies the allegations of discrimination made by the plaintiff and, in "settled" cases, the parties have agreed to resolve the case without a final determination by a jury or court. Some of the tests and investigations conducted by FHCMD were paid for with funds made available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

NEW FILING

Lawrence v Campus Village Communities

FHCMD Cooperating Attorney Mark Magidson has informed FHCMD that he has filed a racial discrimination in housing complaint against Campus Village Communities, a Division of Campus Village Concepts, LLC.. The complaint was filed on behalf of Roland Lawrence, an African American person. The Campus Village Communities units are located in the City of Detroit near the Wayne State University campus. Mr. Lawrence was interested in living at Campus Village Communities in part because he planned to enroll for classes at Wayne State, and in part because he grew up in that community and wished to continue living in that Detroit neighborhood.

The complaint alleges that after noting signs with a phone number for Campus Village Communities, Mr. Lawrence called that number and was informed that studio apartments were available. He made an appointment to view the unit(s), confirmed the appointment by phone shortly before his visit, but when he arrived and was seen by the agents, he was told that they had no record of his appointment and there were no units available for rent. Mr. Lawrence contacted the FHCMD with his complaint, noting the discourteous manner of his treatment, and prompting an FHCMD investigation leading to the referral of Mr. Lawrence to Attorney Magidson. The discrimination complaint, charging violations of the Federal Fair Housing Act, the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1866, and the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, has been filed in U.S. District Court before Hon. Mark A. Goldsmith.



Faye and Michael Olshan

FHCMD ANNUAL MEETING, BOARD AND STAFF NOTES

The following will serve as the official announcement of the FHCMD annual General Membership Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2011. The annual meeting is held to elect members to the FHCMD Board of Directors and to receive and review various program and financial reports. The meeting will be held, beginning at 5:30 PM, in the 10th floor Conference Room down the hall from the FHCMD office in the old Michigan Theater Building at 220 Bagley in Detroit. The meeting will conclude by 7:30 PM. If you let the FHCMD staff know in advance that you plan to attend, free parking in the Michigan Building's parking garage can be arranged (phone 313-963-1274). There is no charge to attend the meeting (light refreshments will be served) however, voting on FHCMD matters is limited to FHCMD members (Individual Memberships, \$15/year; Organizational Memberships, \$50/year.)

Board member Terry Ward is the Chair of the Board Member Nominating Committee and will be pleased to pass on to the Nominating Committee names of persons who may wish to serve on the FHCMD Board of Directors. Mr. Ward can be contacted through the FHCMD office (313-963-1274)

Board member Evelyn Chaise, assisted by Board member Lucy Maddox, is chairing a Committee to review the membership of FHCMD's Advisory Committee. That Committee will be meeting prior to the Annual Meeting and will be happy to consider nominations for the Advisory Committee. Please pass on any nominations for Ms. Chaise to the FHCMD office (313-963-1274).

The FHCMD was pleased, in May 2011, to welcome back Michael Olshan to full-time work at the Center as the Center's Legal Services Coordinator. As many friends of FHCMD know, Mike became seriously ill in October, 2010, but is now fully recovered, with the assistance of his wife, Faye, and is busy helping the FHCMD's work with Cooperating Attorneys, administrative complaints and court actions.

Visitors to the FHCMD office may encounter two new staff persons working as Porgam Administrators on a special FHCMD research project: Andre T. Dudley and Luis Marquez. They join the existing staff of: Bea Paige, Special Projects Coordinator; Darlene Taylor, Administrative Assistant; Tim Davis, Coordinator of Computer Services; James Stevenson, Mortgage/Lending Investigator; Engela Bertolini, Coordinator of Systemic Investigations; Michael Olshan, Legal Services Coordinator; Al Young, Coordinator of Investigations and Testing; and Cliff Schrupp, Executive Director.





Dr. Daniel Krichbaum

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS PROVIDES CREATIVE CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERSHIP

Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the late Kelvin Scott and Hon. Linda Parker, the current Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Daniel Krichbaum, has continued to lead the Department in some very creative ways to help ensure equal rights, including equal rights to housing, in the State of Michigan. Appointed to the position in March, 2010, Mr. Krichbaum quickly called together a meeting of leaders of key fair housing groups in Michigan to coordinate information sharing, complaint investigation and fair housing testing activities. That was followed by a September, 2010 meeting of leaders of civil and human rights organizations in Michigan to discuss actual organizational strategies for strengthening the civil rights movement in Michigan. A follow-up meeting in August, 2011 brought further focus on the leadership role that can be played by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights with similarly concerned groups in Michigan.

Those contacts have helped to produce closer relationships between MDCR and the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) on several mortgage discrimination complaints and the provision of fair housing training by FHCMD staff for housing providers who entered into MDCR negotiated settlement agreements.

Working on an Agreement originally negotiated in 2004, when Linda Parker was the MDCR Director, the FHCMD has continued to provide testing services in complaints referred by MDCR, and has referred many complainants, especially involving persons with complaints based on "disability status", to MDCR for assistance in resolving those complaints.

Most recently, the MDCR has released a very creative media campaign designed to let people throughout the State of Michigan recognize that the MDCR and the Michigan Civil Rights laws protect all Michigan citizens from discrimination based on one of nine protected characteristics: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability status, familial status or marital status. The campaign, called the "Only Fair is Fair" features television, radio and public service announcements. These announcements convey the message that "...everyone in Michigan is entitled to the same basic rights to employment, housing, education, public accommodations and public service." Director Krichbaum added: "MDCR does good and important work. And it benefits everyone. But not enough people are aware of that, or of their basic civil rights and responsibilities. This campaign is a first step toward changing that." Readers who may wish to view the announcements may go to www.michigan.gov/mdcr.

MICHIGAN ROUNDTABLE TO ESTABLISH A TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion (Roundtable) is one of the Detroit area civil rights organizations working to further fair housing opportunities by helping to create more welcoming and diverse communities in the metropolitan Detroit area. To assist in those efforts the Roundtable has announced plans to form a nine persons, non-governmental Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "...patterned after similar Commissions in the U.S. and throughout the world, including South Africa." A similar commission examined racially related incidents in Greensboro, North Carolina.

According to Thomas Costello, President and CEO of the Roundtable, the Commission "...during its 18 - 24 month existence will work with individuals and organizations to identify patterns and practices of racial inequities that historically existed, and even contributed to, the 1967 civil disturbances in Detroit. They will be charged with identifying actions taken to change and correct unequal practices while also identifying policies and practices that need to be changed to achieve racial justice and reconciliation." Some of the policies and practices expected to be examined include unlawful housing discrimination and actions that are being, or can be, taken to affirmatively further fair housing.

A Selection Committee is currently meeting to identify, recruit and select the nine persons who will constitute the Truth Commission. FHCMD Board member, Ben Davis, III is the FHCMD's representative on the Selection Committee. Newly selected FHCMD Board member Freda Sampson, is a key staff member at the Roundtable and has been closely involved with the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is expected that the members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be announced, and they will begin their work, in November, 2011.

LEADERSHIP AWARDS RECEPTION *(continued from page 1)*

members of the real estate sales industry. He has made numerous fair housing presentations to members of the National, Michigan and local Association of Realtors; several real estate sales firms have relied on his fair housing knowledge to train their sales agents; and lawyers who represent both plaintiffs and defendants in housing discrimination lawsuits have benefitted from his legal and fair housing skills and experience. As an Adjunct Professor at the Michigan State University Law School, his classes on fair housing have added a sense of realism to the academic experience of many law school students. Noted for his great storytelling ability, his gripping accounts of two cases in which he was the attorney for the plaintiffs (Chapp v Bowman and Patrick v Mihaiu) were published by the American Bar Association in a 2009 publication of *The Urban Lawyer*.

Since the death, in 2004, of former FHCMD Coordinator of Investigations and Testing, Marvin Thomas, the FHCMD has included in the Fair Housing Leadership Awards Receptions, a presentation of the Marvin Thomas Service Award to a retired FHCMD tester whose testing experience was particularly significant for fair housing and FHCMD. This year, the FHCMD is pleased to honor Lynn Willis Hathorn with the 2011

Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit

220 Bagley, Suite 1020
Detroit, Michigan 48226-1426



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Detroit, MI
Permit No. 1341

Return Service Requested

LEADERSHIP AWARDS RECEPTION *(continued from page 3)*

Marvin Thomas Service Award. Ms. Hathorn served as a tester from 1985 - 1993, helping to investigate over 50 complaints of housing discrimination, and developing the reputation with Mr. Thomas as one of the Center's most reliable and effective testers. Her testing experiences were instrumental helping to resolve four FHCMD assisted housing discrimination lawsuits. In addition, Ms. Hathorn, who graduated from Wayne State University, conducted several research projects for FHCMD, gathering complaint information from the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Currently, Ms. Hathorn is President of "Special Therapy Care", providing health care services to homes for recovering persons with disabilities, and is the owner of a Gourmet Healthy Coffee & Green Tea Franchise.

As in past years, FHCMD has invited firms, businesses and organizations to become sponsors for the Reception. With MANY THANKS from FHCMD, this year's sponsors include:

- Flagstar Bank (Gold)
- Independent Management Services (Silver)
- Lautrec, Ltd. (Silver)
- Southeast Michigan Coalition for Fair Housing (Silver)
- Caise Associates (Bronze)
- L.R. Management Services (Bronze)
- Michigan Association of Realtors (Bronze)
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (Bronze)
- Village Green Companies (Bronze)
- Wood, Kull, Herschfus, Obee and Kull (Bronze)
- Fourmidable (Patron)
- Green Hill Apartments (Patron)
- Group Five Management Co. (Patron)
- The Habitat Company (Patron)
- Real Estate One (Patron)
- River Bend Apartments (Patron)
- Shore Mortgage (Patron)
- Unified Management Services (Patron)
- Volunteers of America (Patron)
- ACCESS (Friend)
- Fidelity Bank (Friend)
- Pearl Insurance (Friend)

Once again, Taslimah Bey will provide very relaxing music for the Reception and Golden Spice Catering will have some very tasty refreshments for those in attendance. Please contact the FHCMD office (313-963-1274) for tickets or more information about the Reception.
