



Fair Housing News

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Recently Elected

FHCMD is proud to welcome it's newest board members: Karlynn Tucker Scaggs and William G. Deligiannis



Karlynn Tucker Scaggs is VP of Housing at the Volunteers of America.



William G. Deligiannis monitors fair lending matters as the First Vice President at Flagstar Bank.

Thank you for your service and support!

HUD Approves Grant

Operating Funds Critical to The Survival of FHCMD

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit is pleased to announce that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has approved a grant totaling \$930,810 for a three-year term commencing in 2015. The grant will allow for investigations, complaint and systematic testing and enforcement on behalf of victims of housing discrimination.

FHCMD wishes to thank Board of Directors member David Snider, Ph.D. who donated his time to assist the staff in preparing the grant proposal.

Mourning the Loss...

This year, FHCMD lost three people who had contributed much to our success and to the fight for fair housing over the years.

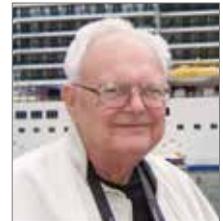
We offer our condolences to their families and extend our gratitude for their service.



*Donald Davis
Chairman, CEO of First Independence Bank and the Co-chair of the 2007 membership campaign.*



*The Honorable Claudia House Morcom
Honored for her decades of work in human rights, civil liabilities, and activism.*



*Rev. Lowell Schrupp
Brother of our founding executive director, Clifford C. Schrupp and a major contributor and supporter.*

In memory of Judge Claudia House Morcom and Clifford C. Schrupp, Dennis Varian of Associated Management lead the first annual employee drive for FHCMD. Associated Management employees donated over \$1,700 to the center.

Thank You!

Education & Outreach

Activities and achievements in activism, education, and networking

Relman Keynotes Fair Housing Training for New Lawyers

On April 22, FHCMD sponsored a litigation seminar for attorneys and future attorneys interested in learning more about litigating fair housing cases. John Relman, a prominent fair housing litigator from Washington, D.C., gave the keynote address. FHCMD cooperating attorneys John Obee, Chui Karega and Steve Tomkowiak gave presentations as well. Former Tester and fair housing litigant, Natalie Waleed also shared her perspectives.

The event was held at New Center One on West Grand Boulevard thanks to the generosity of FHCMD Board Member Freda Sampson and the Michigan Roundtable. More than 40 participants enrolled in the training and several have since signed on to work with FHCMD as cooperating attorneys.



Presenters at the event included Chui Karega, Esq. and Natalie Waleed

National Fair Housing Alliance Conference, Washington DC

Margaret Brown and Mike Olshan represented the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit at the annual conference of the National Fair Housing Alliance.

FHCMD enjoyed networking opportunities with the highest levels of management and operations at HUD and in other fair housing circles.



L to R: Sara Pratt, HUD, Margaret L.M. Brown, FHCMD Executive Director; and Gustova F. Velasquez, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity



L to R: Amy Nelson, Executive Director of the Central Indiana Fair Housing Center; Mike Olshan, FHCMD Legal Services Coordinator; and Nancy Haynes, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Western Michigan

Educational Workshops and Training

FHCMD continues its tradition of providing face to face fair housing training to community organizations and management companies. We participated in Lighthouse's home buyers education seminar series and St. Vincent de Paul Workforce Development Trainings. Village Green's monthly training for new employees has been a mainstay at the Center for many years.

If you or your staff could benefit from training by one of our fair housing experts, please contact us at 313.963.1274.

Appearing on Detroit Public TV

FHCMD staffer Al Young, who is the Coordinator of Investigations and Testing at FHCMD, along with attorney Steve Tomkowiak, whose focus is on lending discrimination and other civil rights issues, were featured on the program, *American Black Journal*.

In the episode, which was titled Housing Discrimination/Sunrise on the Detroit River, host Stephen Henderson spoke with our experts about the state of discrimination in the city today and what measures and tactics are used to protect home seekers and identify violations. The episode originally aired on August 3rd and can be viewed on the *American Black Journal* YouTube channel.

Go to this link: <http://youtube/15mto-3jj3s>.

Partnering Again with University of Michigan Law School Students

The University of Michigan LEGAL ALTERNATIVE WINTER BREAKS program offers service-learning experiences for law school students during the traditional spring break of the academic calendar. The program organized by law students and coordinated this year by Jordan Corrente Beck, who participated last year at FHCMD.

The participants for this year's LAW BREAKS DETROIT program are Megan Richardson, Danielle Angeli, Jingyuan Li and Kristen Escher. Cooperating attorneys Steve Tomkowiak and Stephen A. Thomas assisted with training and opportunities.



Cooperating attorneys Steve Tomkowiak and Michael Olshan in session with the 2014 participants of the Law Breaks Detroit program; a collaboration with the University of Michigan Law School

More Student Project Updates...

Through the City of Detroit's Summer Employment Solutions program, Krystal Lewis, Pamela Miramontes, and Josey Nguyen worked with FHCMD to organize communications and help with community outreach. All back in school now, we wish them success in their studies.

FHCMD Can Be Your Secret Shopper

Management Companies: You can avoid lawsuits, improve customer service and uncover training deficiencies by using the FHCMD Secret Shopper program. Let us put our Testers to work for you with a program that is specific to your needs and areas of concerns. We can provide written reports and recommendations for customer service improvement and legal compliance. Please call (313) 963-1274 to learn more about our Secret Shopper program.

Seventh Annual Attorney Appreciation Awards Reception

Honoring Attorneys John P. Relman and Pamela Thompson, Retired Judge Claudia House Morcom

FHCMD held its annual bench and bar awards reception honoring both judiciary and trial lawyers. The event was held during the month of April in recognition of national Fair Housing Month and as a tribute to the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Retired Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Claudia House Morcom, Washington, D.C. trial lawyer John Relman and recently retired Assistant United States Attorney Pamela J. Thompson were honored.

Judge Morcom served on the Wayne Country Court from 1983 to 1998, becoming the first African American woman to be appointed to that office. Previously, she was a prominent civil rights lawyer both in the north and south in conjunction with the National Lawyers Guild. She also chaired the FREE ANGELA DAVIS chapter in Detroit and had been an advocate in civil and human rights matters around the world (Judge Morcom passed away shortly after the event).

John Relman is one the superlawyers in the United States having successfully won numerous fair housing cases, first with the Washington Chapter of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and since 1998 his own firm Relman, Dane & Colfax.

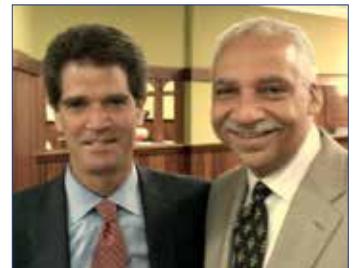
Pamela J. Thompson served as an Assistant United States Attorney for nearly 38 years. She litigated several fair housing cases in the 1990's and while serving as Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney continued to be involved in major fair housing litigation. Afterwards, Ms Thompson headed the Hate Crimes section of the U.S. Attorney's office and obtained several convictions of Ku Klux Klan members and other hate-mongers directed at African Americans.



The late Honorable Claudia House Morcom, honoree & FHCMD staff Engela Bertolini



Judge Levy, AUSA Stafford, U.S. Attorney Barbara MacQuade, Judge Parker and Pamela Thompson, retiring AUSA



Honoree Attorney John Relman and Attorney Saul Green

17th Annual Fair Housing Awards Reception

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit held its 17th Fair Housing Awards Reception at the Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle. The honorees were: United States Senator Carl Levin; A posthumous award to the late Donald Davis, former Chairman and CEO of First Independence Bank, and a giant in the recording business; John C. “Jack” Schwab, a fair lending specialist at Flagstar bank and a member of the FHCMD Board of Directors for several years.

Also honored were two of the most outstanding retired testers who represented the spirit and legacy of the late Marvin Thomas, who served as the Coordinator of Testing and Investigations from 1980 to 2004, Mary Ratkowski and Bradley Hoth, who also served as a member of the FHCMD Board of Directors for many years.



L to R: Bradley Hoth co-honoree of the Marvin Thomas Service Award and his fiancé; Gail Govaere (center), receiving the FHCMD Award on behalf of U.S. Senator Carl Levin; Lynn Hathorn, FHCMD board member, and Margaret L.M.Brown, Executive Director of FHCMD



Jack Schwab, former board of directors member, recipient of the 2014 Fair Housing Awards reception flanked by Noel Saleh and James Stevenson



Personnel from the First Independence Bank honoring the late Donald Davis



Kiko Davis, widow of Donald Davis, receives the posthumous award for her late husband Donald Davis from Anthony Adams, Esq. and former Deputy Mayor of the City of Detroit

Kerlyne Alexis-Pinkins joins the FHCMD staff as the Project Administrator



Kerlyne Alexis-Pinkins, Esq.

Kerlyne Alexis-Pinkins has joined the FHCMD staff as the Deputy Director/Project Administrator. She is a graduate of both the undergraduate and the law school at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. Ms. Alexis-Pinkins is admitted to practice law in States of Michigan and Massachusetts as well as the United States District Court of Eastern Michigan.

A native of New Jersey, she is married to Carron Pinkins, also an attorney, and the couple have four children. In addition to her professional pursuits, Kerlyne is a runner, having recently completed the Detroit Free Press International Marathon in under six hours.

Guest Editorial:

[Tim Greer on Ex-Offender Housing](#)

Providing housing for reentering citizens has become a hot topic in the fair housing community. While prisoners and ex-offenders are not protected under the law, they represent a growing segment of the population, particularly in urban areas.

Tim Greer, MS, is a FHCMD freelance paralegal, an advocate and former prisoner. In his Master of Science essay, entitled *Employment, Public Benefits, Housing, & Family: The Impact of Free Legal Services on Prisoner Reentry* (2013), Greer shares his insights into the plight for housing and other social services for this segment of our population. We invite you to read the full essay on our website.

FHCMD is proud to highlight the insights and opinions of our fair housing community. Contributors opinions are that of the writer and not necessary those of our board of directors, staff, members or sponsors.

Moving On:

[Staffers James Stevenson and Tanya Cofield](#)

James Stevenson, Coordinator of Mortgage Investigations, has resigned from FHCMD. Readers will recall that James was a successful plaintiff in the very first fair lending federal court jury trial in 1995 that rendered an award of \$130,000, which is still the highest award in the United States. After that jury trial, he was a volunteer and consultant on fair lending matters and in 2008, funding from a HUD/PEI grant that enabled him to become a staff member.

Tanya Cofield resigned her position with FHCMD in June of this year. Ms. Cofield made significant changes in the administrative and program management for the agency in many respects. She has moved on with the City of Romulus as Director of Parks & Recreation Department.

FHCMD thanks both James and Tanya for their service and wish them the very best.

FHCMD Profile:

Meet Cooperating Attorney Stephen A. Thomas, Esq.

Stephen A. Thomas is one of our newer FHCMD cooperating attorneys; he is a native of Detroit and graduated from Cass Tech in 1979.



Stephen A. Thomas, Esq.,
FHCMD Cooperating
Attorney

Stephen's college career included the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City where he obtained an Associate Degree in 1983 and Howard University where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1985. In 1989, Attorney

Thomas graduated from Detroit College of Law (now Michigan State School of Law) and he was admitted to practice in Michigan in 1990.

Attorney Thomas also served in the Merchant Marine as an Officer 3rd Assistant Engineer. Steve is also a pilot and he enjoys international travel. He is fluent in Spanish and is a black belt in Tae Kwando.

Welcome to the FHCMD family, Steve!

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit profiles its staff, board members, supporters and cooperating attorneys. If you would have a submission for this section, please email info@fairhousingdetroit.org.

Out and About:

Staffers and Board Members Enjoy Events



Timothy Davis, FHCMD Coordinator of
Computer Services & Lucy Maddox, FHCMD
Board of Directors member



FHCMD Board of Directors member Vernon
Shadd with his wife, Karen

The UN Reports on the Status of Human Rights in the U.S.

The United Nations reported on the status of race in the United States in a special report issued in August. The UN committee noted many achievements that have occurred over the years while also noting how much work is yet undone. Read the full report on our Facebook page or by visiting our website at fairhousingdetroit.org.

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 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.

Settlements

ROBINSON V. ARMSTRONG

Lisa Robinson, the mother of bi-racial children, one of whom is with disabilities, was threatened with what appeared to be a racially-motivated eviction by her landlord, who informed her that the African American father of her children was not allowed to visit her and his children, although similarly white residents were not threatened. Furthermore, Ms. Robinson had also inquired if she could bring a kitten to her home for the benefit of her disabled child, for therapy purposes and the defendant refused, white families were allowed to do so. Although Huron County is not a part of the FHCMD service area, this office does not refuse to assist a victim of housing discrimination, and upon being contacted by Ms. Robinson, FHCMD staff referred the matter to Lakeshore Legal Aid and assisted the organization with sample pleadings and briefs. Alicia Bianchi, a Lakeshore Legal Aid attorney represented the Robinson family in the 73B District Court and obtained a non-disclosed settlement and the eviction proceeding were dismissed

AUSTIN V. CITIMORTGAGE

FHCMD Cooperating Attorney Steve Tomkowiak reports that his action of behalf of Brandi Austin against CitiMortgage, Inc., involving an attempted racially-motivated foreclosure by the defendant, in violation of numerous mandates and federal statutes by refusing to allow Ms. Austin to obtain a modification of her mortgage in violation of the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP). After nearly three years the case settled. The terms of the settlement are non-disclosed. The matter was filed in federal court and assigned to the Honorable Paul Borman.

UNITED STATES V. VANDERVENNEN

The staff of the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan (FHCWM) in Grand Rapids was crucial in gathering evidence and assisting the United States Department of Justice in the filing of a sexual harassment in United States v. Vandervennen. The case settled for \$510,000 to be paid by the defendants to victims of the defendant as well as a \$40,000 civil penalty to the federal government. Congratulations to the FHCWM and the DOJ attorneys for obtaining such an outstanding result.

LUCAS V. OAKMONT LIVONIA, et al

Lauren Lucas, accepted a settlement of \$35,000 as a result from filing a complaint on April 20, 2013 with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) alleging that she was injured by a retaliatory termination of her employment as a result of the fair housing issues she raised relative to policies and practices by the respondents which is a "senior living and independent and enhanced care community." Ms. Lucas informed the owners and administrators that the policy of the regular collection of medical data for applicants and current tenants which were used to discriminate on the basis of disability.