

SEGREGATION AND RE-SEGREGATION OF CHARLOTTE'S SCHOOLS

Event shines light on legacy of Mecklenburg County's Rosenwald Schools

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Oct. 10, 2017 – During the Jim Crow era, Mecklenburg County had more Rosenwald schools for African-American children than any other county in America. Today, Charlotte schools are re-segregating. What can we learn from the experiences of students who attended Mecklenburg's Rosenwald Schools? Can their observations help us address 21st-century school re-segregation?

On Oct. 30, The Charlotte Museum of History hosts a special fundraising dinner to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Rosenwald School Fund. Event speakers, including community historian Dr. Tom Hanchett, explore the legacy of the Rosenwald Schools and what they teach us about Charlotte schools today. Alumni of local Rosenwald schools will be on-hand for the event.

All proceeds benefit the Save Siloam School Project, a partnership of Silver Star Community Inc., The Charlotte Museum of History and others to save an endangered Rosenwald-plan school in East Charlotte.

"Historic preservation has been at the heart of The Charlotte Museum of History since its founding," notes Mary Newsom, chair of the museum's board of trustees. "The Siloam School gives us all a window into the educational, agricultural and community perspectives of early 20th-century African-American families. These Siloam stories, though 100 years old, will strike familiar chords for 21st-century listeners."

The Oct. 30 event also honors Dr. Ron Carter, president of Johnson C. Smith University, and the late Dr. George E. and Marie G. Davis, for their invaluable contributions to the advancement of African-American education in Charlotte.

Speakers are:

- Author and educator **Marshall Washington-Cabiness Abuwi** overviews the legacy of his great-grandfather, Dr. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), founder of Tuskegee University and a co-founder of the Rosenwald School Fund. Abuwi is a professor of history in the University System of Georgia, an academic research consultant and a visiting lecturer at Augusta University.
- Author and journalist **Stephanie Deutsch** discusses the philanthropy of her husband's great-grandfather, Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932). Deutsch is author of "You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South."
- **Dr. Tom Hanchett**, community historian, explores Mecklenburg County's Rosenwald tradition and the current re-segregation of Charlotte's schools.

About Rosenwald Schools

In the early 20th century, educator Dr. Booker T. Washington conceived of a program to build high-quality, free schools for African-American children throughout the segregated rural South. He enlisted the aid of Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., to finance the effort, and on Oct. 30, 1917, they created the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The program offered matching funds and architectural plans to communities that wanted to build schools for black students. The partnership produced more than 5,000 schools in the South in the early 1900s – 813 of them in North Carolina and 26 in Mecklenburg County, the most of any county in America. By 1928, one-third of the South's rural African-American school children and teachers were served by Rosenwald Schools. The late Dr. George E. Davis, who will be honored at the event, was the Rosenwald agent in North Carolina.

How to Go

"Segregation & Re-Segregation of Mecklenburg Schools: The History and Legacy of the Julius Rosenwald Fund in North Carolina" takes place on Monday, Oct. 30 at 6:00 p.m. at The Charlotte Museum of History at 3500 Shamrock Drive.



Tickets and registration are at CharlotteMuseum.org. Tickets are \$35; sponsored tables are available for \$350. Contact the museum at 704-568-1774 to purchase a table.

About The Charlotte Museum of History

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. To learn more, visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on Facebook and Twitter (@CLThistory).

About Silver Star Community Inc.

Silver Star Community Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is community outreach with a commitment to providing a resource and opportunities of cultural, social, and ethical value. Silver Star has partnered with the community in Newell, N.C. on ongoing efforts to preserve and restore the Newell Rosenwald School and is currently working on efforts to preserve Star St. Matthews Lodge No. 566 in Matthews, a property that recently received historic landmark status. You can follow Silver Star Community Inc. on Facebook @SilverStarCommunityInc.

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