

Newsletter of the LCHR

Louisiana Council on Human Relations

James D. Wilson, Jr., Editor
Paul Y. Burns, Assistant Editor

Volume 46, Issue 1
October, November, December 2009

LCHR Board Member Brad Pollock Dies at age 54



Bradley H. Pollock
March 16, 1955 - October 1, 2009

University of Louisiana at Lafayette History Professor Bradley Pollock died on October 1. Pollock had served on the board of directors of the Louisiana Council on Human Relations for the last several years. A specialist in African American history, Professor Pollock gave several notable presentations before the LCHR, including a stirring poem written to commemorate the inauguration of President Barack Obama, which he delivered at the 2009 annual meeting. Pollock also wrote the original draft of the LCHR's position paper on Institutional Racism.

Pollock was remembered by colleagues as a kind, gentle, and thoughtful friend who played a vital role in the UL History department. He joined the UL faculty in 1984, teaching a range of important classes in United States, African, African American, and Global History. Pollock had long been a respected teacher and a highly sought after community activist. From the time of his M.A. thesis on W.E.B. Dubois and the Dilemma of the Racial Dialect, Professor Pollock dedicated his professional career to the discussion and consideration of minority affairs and the importance of African American culture.

Pollock graduated from James H. Brown High School in Chicago, earned a B.A. from Oberlin College of Ohio in 1977, and an M.A. in History from UL Lafayette (USL) in 1980. He continued his graduate studies in the Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. In 2001 Pollock published *Zamani to Sasa: Readings on the Black Quest for Freedom, Identity, and Power in America*.

One of Professor Pollock favorite statements was "De-colonize your mind" - meaning free yourself from the materialism and the many other negative traits that resulted from past racism and injustices. In his book Pollock suggested that "for *E Pluribus Unum* (from many, one) to work racism must die! . . . The goal is a new day; a new society where not only can Benny Goodman play Jazz but also a Miles Davis could be C.E.O. of IBM and Zora Neal Hurston could be President of the United States!"

Brad Pollock is survived by numerous relatives including his wife Tammie Sterling Pollock. His teaching and wisdom will live on through the many students and colleagues that he influenced.

REMINDER:
LCHR Board of Directors
Quarterly Meeting
January 16, 10am
University Presbyterian Church,
3240 Dalrymple Drive
Baton Rouge, La.

LCHR Board of Directors

Joseph Dennis, Lafayette, President

Thelma Deamer, Baton Rouge, Vice President

Doris White, Plaisance, Corresponding Secretary

Richard Haymaker, Baton Rouge, Membership Secretary

John Mikell, Lafayette, Treasurer

Eva Baham, Slidell

Peter Bonhomme, Breaux Bridge

Rose Mae Broussard, Franklin

Paul Y. Burns, Baton Rouge

Barbara Connors, Lafayette

James E. Cross, Baton Rouge

Julia Frederick, Lafayette

Marjorie Green, Baton Rouge

Ted Hayes, Lafayette

Hector LaSala, Lafayette

Elnur Musa, Baton Rouge

Joe McCarty, Lafayette

Anthony Navarre, Lafayette

Rogers J. Newman, Baton Rouge

Huel Perkins, Baton Rouge

Eileen Shieber, Baton Rouge

Toni Simms, Lafayette

Richard Webb, Baton Rouge

Doris White, Plaisance

Cecil Wiltz, Lafayette

James D. Wilson, Jr., Lafayette

BRCHR Board of Directors

Glorious Wright, President

Tamikia Jones, Vice President

Gloria Hall, Secretary

Bridget Udoh, Treasurer

Cynthia DeMarcus Manson, Immediate Past President

Richard Haymaker, Membership Secretary

Thelma Deamer

Nathan Gottfried

Majorie Green

Laurabeth Hicks

Lillian Jones

Valerie Jackson Jones

George Lundy

Eileen Shieber

Bobby Thompson

MiJa Thompson

Myrtle M. Wade

Human Rights Day Celebrated Dec. 10

Each year the world celebrates Human Rights Day on December 10, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations sixty-one years ago. The declaration is long (29 articles), and can be found on the Internet under "Human Rights Day." Article One states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." There were no notable activities to mark Human Rights Day anywhere in Louisiana.



La. Man Pleads Guilty to Hate Crime Arson

Johnny Mathis of Lecompte, La. recently pleaded guilty in federal court to chasing three Hispanic men from their rural home with a shotgun in 2008 and then burning the house to the ground.

"These victims were targeted and subjected to acts of violence for no other reason than their race and national origin," U.S. Attorney Donald Washington said in a written statement.

Mathis lived across the street from the victims and later confessed he ran them out of their home because of their race, the Department of Justice said in the statement. Mathis will be sentenced Jan. 13 to a mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison, the statement said.

Louisiana Segregation Activities

by Paul Y. Burns

Immediately after the American Civil War, during the era of Reconstruction, civil rights of the newly-free slaves were provided to some degree, but when federal troops were withdrawn in 1877, southern states began passing “Jim Crow” laws that prohibited blacks from using the same public accommodations as whites.

In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court, in Plessy vs. Ferguson, upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation if the facilities were equal for blacks and whites. Naturally, leaders of southern whites made sure that the facilities were separate, but better for whites than for blacks.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in Brown vs. Board of Education that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” As a result, *de jure* racial segregation was ruled a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Court ordered that the states end segregation with “all deliberate speed.” Although “deliberate speed” was often slow, this paved the way for integration and the Civil Rights Movement. In the South, however, strong opposition to desegregation arose quickly among white citizens.

In the 1950s and early 1960s it was illegal in Louisiana to have racially integrated meetings except in churches and private homes. The La. Council on Human Relations (LCHR) was formed in 1964, mainly in response to the federal government’s Civil Rights Act, passed that year. The Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations was started in 1965.

In Baton Rouge the public schools managed to maintain racial segregation for forty-five more years after the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. Whites in control would not give up their power. Racial segregation continued for a few years in restaurants, public swimming pools, churches, private schools, and country clubs.

Louisiana law was followed in 1958 by the architects of LSU’s new library building. When the building was completed there were two drinking fountains,

side by side, on each floor. One had a sign “Colored,” the other “White.” (LSU students quickly took the “Colored” sign down and added the word “Trash” under “White.”) The two side-by-side fountains remain.

Governor Jimmie Davis threatened to close the public schools in Louisiana to keep them from being integrated. In 1960 the Louisiana legislature “went crazy” trying to maintain racial segregation. A group of sixty-six LSU professors signed a petition to the legislature and governor asking them to keep the public schools open. This resulted in a bill passing the Louisiana House and Senate, creating a Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities. At that time in the South, opposition to forcible racial segregation was considered by right-wing whites to be “Communistic,” or at least “Un-American.” Only one legislator, Sen. J.D. Deblieux, known as the “conscience” of the Senate, voted against creating this committee. Several years later, Deblieux joined LCHR. The committee prepared to investigate LSU faculty members but never took action.

One of the investigators was Baton Rouge Atty. Jack Rogers. In August of 1961 the late Wade Mackie, leader of the local Quakers and Baton Rouge director of the American Friends Service Committee, who lived a few blocks southeast of LSU, discovered a wire tap on his telephone which he traced to the home of his neighbor, Jack Rogers, who was one of the committee’s investigators. Also wiretapped were the Rev. Irvin Cheney, former pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, who had resigned under pressure; and the late Rabbi Marvin Reznikoff of the Liberal (now Beth Shalom) Synagogue. In 1965, Mackie and Reznikoff joined the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations, and later its annual humanitarian award was named for them.

On the Internet, under “Jerry P. Shinley Archive: Origins of Louisiana Un-American Activities Committee,” there is more information, including a statement that in 1966 the U.S. government dropped the charges against segregationists La. Senator Wendell Harris and private investigator Lawrence W. Hall, Baton Rouge, charged with making public the information gained from the wiretaps.

Killing Raises Racial Tensions in Small La. Town

HOMER, La. (AP) — For 73 years before his February 2009 killing by a white police officer, Bernard Monroe's life in this little town was as quiet as they come — five kids by the same wife he had for five decades, all raised in the same house, supported by the same job. But this black man's death is making far more noise than he ever did, and raising racial tensions between the black community and the police department.

Rendered mute after losing his larynx to cancer, the 73-year-old retired power company lineman was in his usual spot on the mild February day last year: a chair by the gate that led to his Adams Street home. A barbecue cooker smoked beside a picnic table in the yard as a dozen or so family members talked and played nearby.

Bernard Monroe's son, Shaun, 38, was in his pickup in front of the house, talking to his sister-in-law. And that's when it all started. In a report to state authorities, Homer police said officer Tim Cox and another officer they have refused to identify chased Monroe's son, Shaun, from a suspected drug deal blocks away to his father's house.

Shaun Monroe, who had an arrest record for assault and battery but no current warrants, quickly drove up the driveway and went into the house. Two white police officers followed him. Within minutes, he ran back outside, followed by an unidentified officer who Tasered him in the front yard. Seeing the commotion, Bernard Monroe confronted the officer. Police said that he advanced on them with a pistol and that Cox, who was still inside the house, shot at him through a screen door.

Monroe fell dead along a walkway. How many shots were fired isn't clear; the coroner has refused to release an autopsy report, citing the active investigation.

Police said Monroe was shot after he pointed a gun at them, though no one claims Monroe fired shots. But friends and family said he was holding a bottle of sports water. They accuse police of planting a gun

he owned next to his body.

"Mr. Ben didn't have a gun," said 32-year-old neighbor Marcus Frazier, who was there that day. "I saw that other officer pick up the gun from out of a chair on the porch and put it by him." Frazier said Monroe was known to keep a gun for protection because of local drug activity.

Despite the chase and Taserings, Shaun Monroe was not arrested. He and other relatives would not comment on the incident.

Monroe's gun is being DNA-tested by state police. The findings of their investigation will be given to District Attorney Jonathan Stewart, who would decide whether to file charges.

The case has raised racial tensions in this northern Louisiana town, led to FBI and state police investigations and drawn attention from national civil rights leaders.

"We've had a good relationship, blacks and whites, but this thing has done a lot of damage," said Michael Wade, one of three blacks on the five-member town council. "To shoot down a family man that had never done any harm, had no police record, caused no trouble. Suddenly everyone is looking around wondering why it happened and if race was the reason."

Homer, a town of 3,800 about 45 miles northwest of Shreveport, is in the piney woods just south of the Arkansas state line. Many people work in the oil or timber industries; hunting and fishing are big pastimes. In the old downtown, shops line streets near the antebellum Claiborne Parish courthouse on the town square. The easygoing climate, blacks say, masked police harassment.

The black community has focused its anger on Police Chief Russell Mills, who is white. They say he has directed a policy of harassment toward them. Mills declined interview requests, saying he retained a lawyer and feared losing his job. But after the Monroe killing, the Chicago Tribune quoted him as saying, "If I see three or four young black men walking down the street, I have to stop them and check their names. I want them to be afraid every time they see the police that they might get arrested."

“Word got around on what the chief said and things really boiled up again,” said Willie Young, president of the Claiborne Parish NAACP.

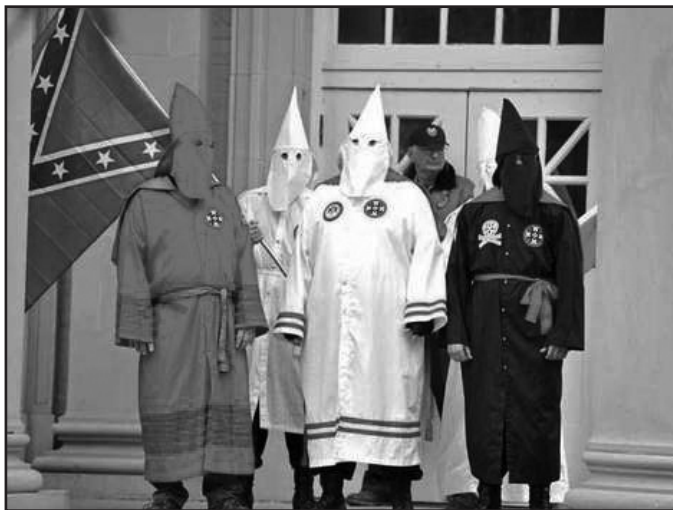
Mills describes his policing style as “aggressive” but denies making the statement to the Tribune. He would not permit interviews with his officers. The FBI and state police said they received no complaints about Homer police before the shooting.

The Claiborne Parish District Attorney recently stepped away from this case to avoid any conflict of interest, and State Attorney General Buddy Caldwell agreed to take the case to a grand jury in January.

Klan Holds Rally Before LSU-Ole Miss Football Game

About a dozen hooded Ku Klux Klan members rallied briefly at the University of Mississippi before the November football game with LSU. The members of the Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan spent about ten minutes waving flags, displaying Nazi-style salutes and occasionally gesturing at a group of about 250 hecklers that included young children. They were protesting the school’s decision to drop a pep song that included Dixie.

Some fans had been ending the song by chanting, “The South will rise again.” Chancellor Dan Jones asked the band to stop playing the song after fans ignored a request to drop the chant. The Klan said it was protesting over lost Southern symbolism at Ole Miss, which has been rocked by racial strife before.



Klan members protest before LSU-Ole Miss game.

LCHR Members Defend Interracial Relationships

Tangipahoa Parish justice of the peace Keith Bardwell created a nationwide stir in October when he refused to marry an interracial couple, saying he believed neither blacks nor whites would accept their biracial children.

LCHR Board Member Doris White says her reaction was, “All I wanted to do was show them my kids.” One is dean of a law school, another a law professor, another a doctor of philosophy. “And they’re all nice looking, too,” she said. She is white. She married Marion White, who is black, more than forty years ago in Washington, D.C. At the time, Louisiana still outlawed interracial marriage; the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1967 that such laws were unconstitutional.

News about Bardwell “did bring back memories of it being against the law,” White said. “You would think that by now, especially with all the interracial couples, they would have put that behind them.”

White said being the child of an interracial marriage might be an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Her children “got to know two cultures.”

Prejudice against interracial couples and biracial offspring still exists, but not like forty years ago. “Things are changing, but remember, they’re changing slowly. That means that a lot of prejudice still remains,” said Dianne Mouton-Allen, a member of Lafayette’s diversity commission and Lafayette chapter director of the National Coalition Building Institute. Incidents like the Bardwell one make it seem like prejudice against interracial couples is greater in Louisiana and in the South, but it’s not, she said. Racism is just more covert elsewhere. “Someone in another place may refuse for exactly the same reasons, but they won’t actually tell you that, so it’s more difficult to pinpoint,” Mouton-Allen said. Her reaction to the Bardwell incident was, “Oh. Someone actually admitted it.”

LCHR member Bill Quigley summed up the incident by suggesting that “perhaps Bardwell’s worried the couple’s kids will grow up and be president.”

Newsletter of the BRCHR

Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations

Tamikia Y. Jones, Assistant Editor

Volume 45, Issue 1

LSU Hosts First Black Alumni Reunion

About 150 black LSU alumni, including graduates from the 1950s to the 2000s, came to the first Black Alumni reunion to be sponsored by LSU. Activities included "The Legends Forum," a panel of black alumni who discussed their experiences at LSU; participants included A.P. Tureaud, Jr., who in 1953 became the first African-American undergraduate to attend LSU. Carolyn Collins, retired associate vice chancellor of University College, and Thomas Durrant, retired professor of sociology, were honored as Living Legends for 36 years of service each to LSU.

Willis Reed, Sr. Dies in October

Willis Reed, a longtime community activist in Baton Rouge, passed away October 8, 2009 at the age of 95. He was the owner and operator of the *Baton Rouge Post* newspaper from 1982 to 2007. In 1953 he played an important role in organizing the Baton Rouge bus boycott. He chaired the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations from July 1984 through June 1986, and he received the BRCHR's Powell-Reznikoff Humanitarian Award. In 1998 Reed nominated the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations for the YWCA's annual Racial Justice Award.

Southern University Play Looks at Racism

"The Story," a new play by Tracy Scott Wilson, premiered at Southern University on November 18, officially opening the university's newly renovated Performing Arts Theatre. "The Story" explores several levels of racism through the story of a young, black reporter named Yvonne. Theater professor Dr. Aileen Hendricks said that "The main character of this play wants the privileges she perceives that white people have. She distances herself from black people, and she wants success and will do anything to get it."

Baton Rouge Integration Students Have Reunion

In 1963 twenty-eight black Baton Rouge high school seniors volunteered to leave their black schools and to attend white high schools as part of the initial efforts to desegregate the Baton Rouge public schools. In November the group held a 45th anniversary reunion at the Louisiana State Museum. Among the participants were Freya Rivers, Charles Burchell, Marion Greenup, and Gail Vavasseur-Jones. They recalled that white students wouldn't talk to them, some spat on them, and they were not allowed to go to the prom or to participate in extracurricular activities.

Freya Rivers is the daughter of the late Dr. Dupuy Anderson and Mrs. Inez Anderson, members of the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations. Dr. Anderson was one of the most significant leaders in efforts to overcome racial discrimination in Baton Rouge.

Roberta Madden Retires and Moves Out of State

Long-time member of the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations Robbie Madden recently retired from her job as the YWCA's Director for Racial and Social Justice and moved to North Carolina. She received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Baton Rouge Early Risers Kiwanis Club at its September 30 meeting. Madden's many Baton Rouge friends will certainly miss her! Her position at the YWCA has been filled by Jessica Young. A La. Delta Services Corps volunteer and 2005 B.A. graduate of Vassar College, Young received her Master's degree in Africana Studies from Cornell University.

The LCHR / BRCHR is Online at:
www.brchr.org

Controversial Statue Recalls Uglier Time in U.S. History

Since 1974 the LSU Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge has had at its entrance a life-size statue of a black man doffing his broad-brimmed hat; in fact, it is the first statue of a black man ever erected in the United States. The statue recently has drawn national attention; it was ranked No. 46 in a list of the “100 Most Notorious National Monuments.” The director of the museum said that “It’s a relic, an artifact of our past. It is not a pretty part of our history, but it’s important to remember—even if it’s just so we don’t repeat it.”

The statue was first erected in Natchitoches, La. and called the “Good Darky Statue.” It later became known as “Uncle Jack.” During the Civil Rights Movement participants demonstrated against the statue, which was loaned to the Rural Life Museum in 1972 and donated in 1975. Although Natchitoches has subsequently requested to have the statue returned, LSU intends to keep it.



Controversial statue.



CATS Raises Fares, Cuts Service

The Baton Rouge Metro Council voted in December to raise fares for disabled public transit users, combine some bus routes and trim nighttime transit service hours.

The Capital Area Transit System’s board of directors proposed the changes, saying they were necessary to balance the budget for 2010. Without the changes, CATS was facing a \$700,000 shortfall.

The fares for paratransit services are being raised from \$1 to \$1.75 per trip, the same rate as regular service. The paratransit system is a door-to-door service for disabled riders who are unable to use a regular bus. Such services are required under the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act.

Bus system managers also are ending bus services about an hour earlier than current evening schedules. The last buses will leave their home terminals between 8 p.m. and 9:45 p.m., depending on the route.

Jim Mitchell, of the Baton Rouge Riders Advisory Group, said after the meeting he wanted to address the council on the changes, but wasn’t able to get Mayor Pro Tem Mike Walker’s attention in time.

“I’m very disappointed,” said Mitchell, who is blind and relies on the bus system for transportation. “I don’t think the council understands that this is like taking my rights away, the right to participate in the community in the evening.”

Membership Information

(for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009)

Single Membership \$15.00

Family Membership \$20.00

Student / Low Income Membership \$1.00

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Email _____ **Telephone** _____

**(Baton Rouge area residents make checks payable to BRCHR,
other residents make checks payable to LCHR.)**

**Send all payment to:
Richard Haymaker
254 Nelson Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70808**

The Louisiana Council on Human Relations
254 Nelson Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit 413
Baton Rouge, LA**