

# **WOMEN IN NAACP LITTLE ROCK BRANCH VIRTUAL AWARDS CEREMONY**



**VALIANT WOMEN ON THE MOVE  
IN ARKANSAS**

**MAY 1, 2021  
11:30 AM CST**



# NAACP Little Rock Branch Presidential Address

Greetings to everyone:

It is with great pleasure and excitement to be a part of the First Annual Women in NAACP (WIN) Awards for the Little Rock Branch NAACP. Thank you to a wonderful leader and Chairlady, Paulette Lawson, and her extraordinary WIN Committee for laboring to make this event a memorable awards celebration.

Congratulations to the valiant and outstanding women selected for each award and the named awards by the awards committee and to the honoring of the legacy of great women leaders in our local community.

Thank you to our Emcee, Ms. Janie Cotton, and our Special Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Judge Twana Byrd. Thank you again for all you do in and for our community in the capacities that you serve. We are excited to have everyone's blessings as we proceed to build the membership in our branch.

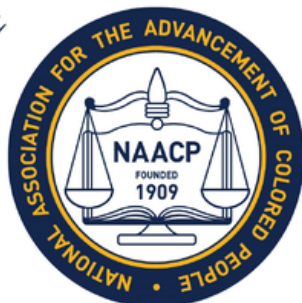
To God be the Glory for all the great things He has done! We are truly blessed to have you be a part of our First Annual WIN Awards Event!

Thank you! Thank you!

*President Dianne Curry*



*Little Rock Branch*  
**NAACP**  
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# NAACP Little Rock Branch

## WIN Committee Chair Address



It is with honor and humility that I serve as the Chairperson of the Little Rock Branch of Women in The NAACP (WIN). It is my sincere desire that this Awards Ceremony will inspire women of all ages, ethnicities, and races. I want to pay a special recognition to the honorees for all their work in their current and past fields, to make a difference in the lives of children and adults, particularly for minorities. I salute each of them!

To our sponsors, this event would not have been made possible without your generous donations. We asked, and you came through for us without hesitation. Thank you so much! If there is anything that the Women of the Little Rock Branch can do for you and your organization, please don't hesitate to let us know. Thank you to everyone who donated any amount to our cause. You have helped us tremendously. May God Bless All of you!

I want to give a special "Thank You" to the Honorable Judge Tjuana Byrd for accepting our invitation to speak, and for the awesome job that she did. You brought it on. Thank you so much Judge Byrd!

I also want to give a special "Thank you" to Ms. Jannie Cotton, who served as our Mistress of Ceremony with such excellence. Thank you for a fantastic job.

This event was certainly a team effort, and there is no way it could have happened without the outstanding committee of women who served so faithfully, and with such excellence. Thank you to the WIN Committee for all that you do. You are the most talented women that I have served with, and I am honored to be your Chairperson. I have learned so much from you.

A special "Thank You" to a gentleman who worked as if he were on the committee, Mr. Scott Green. Thank you for all your support and for all that you did to make this event a success.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you Ms. Dianne Curry, Little Rock Branch President, for your support of WIN. You are there to support us in all that we do, and you always demonstrate your support by example. We are blessed to have you as our President.

*Much Love,*

*Paulette*

# Keynote Speaker

## The Honorable Judge Tjuana Byrd

**The Honorable Tjuana C. Byrd** has spent her adult life in public service. She is passionate about children, women and girls, the elderly, and healthy living. She is the immediate past President of the Women's Foundation of Arkansas. She was previously appointed by Governor Beebe to serve on the State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and by Governor Hutchinson to serve on the Legislative Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force. In February of this year, Governor Hutchinson appointed Judge Byrd to the Arkansas Juvenile Justice Coalition.



She received a degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and a Juris Doctorate degree from the UALR School of Law in 1996. Judge Byrd served as Chairman of Class 27 of Little Rock Regional Chamber's Leadership Greater Little Rock and is a graduate of Class 24.

Judge Byrd was elected Pulaski County Circuit Judge Division 8 in the March 3, 2020 election, and she was sworn into office on January 1, 2021 for a six-year term. Previously, she was in private practice in North Little Rock where her primary focus was juvenile matters. She served as an Assistant City Attorney for North Little Rock (handling HR and truancy matters), the Sherwood Public Defender, and Attorney ad litem representing children in foster care in Poinsett County, Arkansas.

She began her legal career with the Pulaski County Public Defender's Office. In 2002, Attorney Byrd opened a small firm in North Little Rock, and later formed a partnership with Lott Rolfe, IV as Byrd and Rolfe Law Offices. The practice focus was primarily criminal defense, but other areas of practice included family law, civil law, personal injury, and juvenile cases.

Judge Byrd, a Life Member Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, is a member of Beta Pi Omega chapter and the Ivy Foundation of Little Rock, the non-profit fundraising arm of Beta Pi Omega chapter. She is a life member of the NAACP and is actively involved in the North Little Rock Chapter. An active member of St. Mark Baptist Church, she serves as a large group leader/storyteller in children's church and a Director for the Watson Primary Ensemble choir for children ages 3-11.

She is a member of the Pulaski County Council for Youth Services Advisory Board, and a child-focused organization, Continental Societies, Incorporated.

In addition to the community and church activities in which she is involved, she enjoys travel, exercise and fitness, outdoor activities, and attending and watching sports events.

Ms. Byrd is not married (yet), but happily attached to the love of her life, Michael Manning who has two sons with whom she is quite smitten, and she is the auntie and godmother to many.

# Award Ceremony Program

Welcome

Devotion

About Women In NAACP (WIN)

Entertainment

## *Presentation of Awards*

**Rosa Parks & Daisy Bates Award of Activism**

*Dr. Anika Whitfield, Honoree*

**Annie Abrams Education/Community Service Award**

*Dr. Katherine Mitchell, Honoree*

## **Keynote Speaker**

*The Honorable Judge Tjuana Byrd*

**The Francis Hooks WIN Founders Award**

*Senator Linda Pondexter-Chesterfield*

**Erma Hunter/Lottie Shackelford Trailblazer Award**

*Senator Joyce Elliot*

Entertainment

Special Presentation

Remarks

**Mistress of Ceremony**

*Jannie Cotton*



# *Dr. Anika Whitfield*

## *Rosa Parks & Daisy Bates Award of Activism Honoree*

**Dr. Anika Whitfield** is a native of Little Rock, Arkansas, and the grateful daughter of Mr. R. L. and Constance Whitfield. Her parents, who were both public school teachers, are strong supporters of public education. After graduating from LR Hall High School in 1991, she continued her education at Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri), Spelman College (Atlanta, Georgia), and St. Lawrence University (Karen, Kenya, East Africa), earning a Bachelor's of Art in African and African-American Studies from Washington University in 1995.

During her undergraduate studies, Anika volunteered with the Y-Read program serving as a mentor and tutor. Determined to become a licensed, practicing Podiatrist, Anika completed her doctoral studies at Dr. William Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine (Chicago, IL) in 2000, earning a Bachelor's of Science in Natural Sciences and a Doctorate of Podiatric Medicine. After her residency at Howard University Hospital, she was honored to serve as the first African-American female podiatry resident within our Central Arkansas community.

Dr. Whitfield shares that part of her life's purpose involves supporting African American students in appreciating and realizing their individual and collective value(s) and potential(s). She decided to take a year off from practicing podiatric medicine to serve as a substitute teacher in the Little Rock School District (LRSD), where most students are Black. Dr. Whitfield is committed to serving her community by volunteering, mentoring, tutoring, and supporting students, parents, and schools within public school systems. Along with being a licensed podiatrist, she is also a community organizer and activist, gardener, and an ordained Baptist minister who walks in her gifts of healing, praying, encouraging, teaching and preaching. Dr. Whitfield serves as co-chair of Grassroots Arkansas and the Arkansas Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is a part-time Mid-Atlantic Regional organizer for Journey for Justice Alliance and is grateful to be a part of the National Opportunity to Learn Network.

# *Senator Linda Pondexter-Chesterfield*

*Francis Hooks*

*WIN Founders Award Honoree*



**Senator Linda Chesterfield** represents District 30 and currently serves as Assistant Pro Tempore. She was elected to the House of Representatives in 2003 and served through 2008. In November 2010, she was elected to the Arkansas State Senate and sworn in January 2011. She also serves as vice-chair of the Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Systems.

A native of Hope, Arkansas, Senator Chesterfield was the first African American to graduate from Hendrix College in Conway. She and her husband, Emry, own a consulting firm, Pondexter Chesterfield Consulting. She and her husband are members of a local Baptist Church.

Senator Chesterfield is a retired teacher, past president of the Little Rock School District Board and the Pulaski County Association of Classroom Teachers. She also served two terms as president of the Arkansas Education Association. Senator Chesterfield has served on the following: NEA's nine-member Executive Committee, NEA Black Caucus, treasurer of the Arkansas Democratic Black Caucus and is the Connection Chair of the Beta Pi Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. She is a former chair for both the Senate Transportation Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee and Senate Efficiency Committee.

Senator Chesterfield advocated and sponsored legislation for a tax exemption for single parents with two or more children. She has also supported legislation that promoted growth at Pulaski Technical College and other two-year institutions in Arkansas while appropriating funds for Historical Black Colleges and Universities.

Senator Chesterfield shares with us, "Education and economic growth are inextricably intertwined as we move forward in Arkansas to reach our full potential as a state."



# *Dr. Katherine Mitchell*

## Annie Abrams Education-Community Service Award Honoree

**Dr. Katherine Mitchell** earned her Doctorate in Higher Education at the University of Arkansas in May 1978, a Master of Education degree at Cleveland State University in August 1973, a Bachelor Degree in English at Philander Smith College in May 1965, and earned graduate hours at the University of Wisconsin in July 1966. She is also a proud graduate of the Horace Mann Senior High School Class of 1961 in Little Rock, Arkansas. At present, she is a volunteer Grant Writer and Community Servant. She retired from Philander Smith College as Professor of Education and Dean of Development Studies in May 2005.

Dr. Katherine Mitchell is a former President of Shorter College from November 1989 through 1997. She worked to ensure accreditation, built a new gymnasium, and revised the curriculum of the child development center.

While employed at Watershed, Inc, she was Director of Programs. As Chief Planner at Central Arkansas Consortium in Little Rock, she managed a contract from the U.S. Department of Labor providing research data to the planning council of the consortium and the funding source. She worked as an Assistant Professor at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas, and as an English Teacher at the State of Alabama, including a professorship at Alabama A&M University; Division of Institutes of Higher Learning in Huntsville, Alabama. Dr. Mitchell served as a proud mentor of students seeking their GED while also inspiring those who desired teacher accreditation. She was elected and served on the Little Rock School District Board for twenty years, where she fought tirelessly to ensure quality and equitable educational opportunities for all children. Dr. Katherine Mitchell is a member of many organizations, most notably as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society, Delta Kappa Gamma, Little Rock Pan-Hellenic Council. She holds a life membership and is an Officer at Ward Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

# *Senator Joyce Elliott*

## *Erma Hunter/Lottie Shackelfor*

### *Trailblazer Award Honoree*



**Senator Joyce Elliott** is a Southerner by birth and by choice. She grew up in the tiny community of Willisville, Arkansas, where she graduated from high school in a class of nine students.

Sen. Elliott is the immediate past chair of the Legislative Black Caucus where she has been a member since 2001 (except the two years she was out of office between being term limited from the House and her election to the Senate).

A former State Representative, Senator Elliott was elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives in November 2000. In December January 2007, she finished her final term in the House due to term limits. During her tenure in the House, she served on the Committees for the Judiciary; Aging, Youth, and Families; and Education, where she chaired the Subcommittee on Higher Education; State Agencies; and Budget. In her final term, she was Chair of the Education Committee and served on the Committees for Insurance and Commerce; Budget; Personnel; and Energy. In her second term, 2003, she was named by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette as one of the Ten Best Legislators of the General Assembly. In her third (and final term, 2005), the Democrat-Gazette once again named her as one of the Ten Best.

In November 2006, Governor-elect Mike Beebe named Senator Elliott to his Transition Team of four individuals. She was elected to the Arkansas State Senate in November 2008 where she currently represents District 31. She will be term-limited from the legislature at the end of 2022. In the Senate, Ms. Elliott serves on the Education, (where she is vice-chair); Insurance and Commerce; Budget; and Retirement Committees. Senator Elliott acknowledges, "Like any place, Arkansas has it flaws, but I am far from being defined by those flaws alone. More pronounced in my life are the Arkansas people who made me, who loved me; the opportunities afforded me; the country roads on which I learned to drive; the red soil of Southwest Arkansas where I walked country roads, and the endless trails that led to the next stream. It seems all my life I have inherently understood the promise of my state. I am forever grateful many saw the promise in me. As a result, I consider it a privilege and a duty to make whatever contribution I can to humanity, first and foremost, to Arkansas."

Having grown up in a world of savage unfairness and inequality, Joyce is guided by her deeply held, personal belief about all humanity: "When my days on Earth end, I hope I will be remembered for relentlessly working, without exceptions, for fairness for everyone. My vow is to do all I can to make sure everyone, no matter their station in life, has an equitable opportunity to succeed."

Senator Joyce Elliott is the mother of one son, and a granddaughter.

# *Diamond Sponsor*



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# Platinum Sponsor



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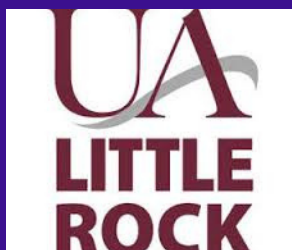
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### Silver Sponsor

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Arkansas  
at Little Rock*



# WIN Award Ceremony

## Mistress of Ceremonies

### *Ms. Jannie M. Cotton*

**Ms. Jannie M. Cotton**, MS, LPC, is the first black woman in Arkansas to serve as Chief Executive Officer of a major mental health organization with six locations in Pulaski, Lonoke, and Prairie Counties. She recently retired as the CEO of Professional Counseling Associates (PCA) in North Little Rock, AR, serving 13 years in this role. While working with children and families for the past thirty-nine years, she received her bachelor's



degree in Child Development from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and her master's degree in Counseling from the University of Central Arkansas. She is a licensed professional counselor and has consulted for the last 33 years in the development of shelters, outreach programs, and children services in the state.

Some of Ms. Cotton's successes at PCA include serving as the Director of Outpatient Services, expanding children services and early childhood services to the most extensive programs in the agency, establishing a specialized team of clinicians and case managers, and securing over \$4 million in grant funding for the agency.

As if her accomplishments and awards are not enough, Ms. Cotton indeed serves as a role model to all. She has overcome many obstacles and trials, many of which most do not know about because she rarely talks about them, always choosing to focus on the positive. A couple of things you will not hear her talk about often are the battles she fought against racism and sexism. Also, she earned her master's degree while being a divorced single parent of three children, and she even battled cancer over 27 years ago while continuing to work and take care of her family.

Today, she is a motivational speaker and leadership consultant. She is an advocate for cancer survivors, clients with mental illness, abused women and children, and anyone that is less fortunate and needs love and support. Her primary focus is to advocate for those without a voice because God has a place for everyone. Ms. Cotton is very outspoken and has a passion for serving others. She is a member of the National and State Association of Black Social Workers and past president of the Little Rock Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., serving as president for four years and a financial member for 46 years. She currently serves as Vice-Chair on the board of directors for the Delta Presents Outreach Foundation.

As she travels all over the world, she is excited to mentor and serves the needs of others by helping them focus on the positive and fulfilling their purpose in life.



*Little Rock Branch*

**NAACP**

CHARTERED  
Nov. 1918



## Our Objectives

- To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens
- To achieve equality of rights and eliminate race prejudice among the citizens of Little Rock
- To remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes
- To seek enactment and enforcement of federal, state, and local laws securing civil rights
- To inform the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination and to seek its elimination
- To educate persons as to their constitutional rights and to take all lawful action to secure the exercise thereof, and to take any other lawful action in furtherance of these objectives, consistent with the NAACP's Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution.

## Our Vision

To ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights without discrimination based on race.

## Our Mission

To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.

## NAACP

The **LARGEST** And The **OLDEST**,  
The **BADDEST** And The **BOLDEST**,  
The **MOST LOVED** And **MOST HATED**,  
The **MOST FEARED** And **REVERED**,  
The **MOST CUSSSED** And  
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## Get in Touch

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# *Special Acknowledgement Program Contributors*

José Holloway, Musical Performer



Off the Cuff Band

Katelyn Doyne, Poet

Marques Holt, Media Producer  
Native Sound Media Productions

Scott Green, Photo & Videographer  
Urban Media Group

The Honorable Judge Tjuana Byrd, Guest Speaker

Jannie Cotton, Mistress of Ceremonies

WIN Committee  
Members & Chair

# *Women In NAACP (WIN)*

## *Commitee Members*



*Paulette Lawson, NAACP LR Branch WIN Chair; Audrene Ellis, PhD; Natalie Parker-Holliman, PhD; Diane Curry, NAACP LR Branch President*



*Barbara Lunon, Deborah Surttlar, Missie Bogard, Evelyn James*



*Doris Williams, Brenda Woodard, Ardelia Walker*



# WOMEN IN THE NAACP LITTLE ROCK BRANCH VIRTUAL AWARDS CEREMONY



**VALIANT WOMEN ON THE MOVE IN  
ARKANSAS**