



THE OASCR TIMES

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Newsletter

A Quarterly Chronicle of Civil Rights Developments and Stories of General Interest

OASCR Welcomes Penny Brown Reynolds, Ph.D. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Management and Operations



Dr. Penny Brown Reynolds, Ph.D.

Penny Brown Reynolds, Ph.D. was recently named the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Management and Operations, in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. Through this appointment, Dr. Brown Reynolds will bring executive leadership and oversight for all internal general operations, operational decision-making, organizational change management, and managing the reporting and performance of the career SES leadership, as well as employment and program complaint processing for the Agency, including related collection, evaluation, adjudication and investigative process, employee leadership development, special emphasis, and liaising with agency civil rights directors. In addition, Dr. Brown Reynolds will work in collaboration with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Policy and External Engagement Monica Rainge to develop the OASCR strategic priorities and goals.

Dr. Brown Reynolds has dedicated nearly 30 years to public service, civil rights, law and justice through her work as Executive Counsel to Georgia's Governor and

Chief of Staff and Executive Counsel to Georgia's Lieutenant Governor. Her distinguished career in law has included serving for nearly a decade as a state trial court judge, being appointed as one of the youngest judges in Georgia and serving as a Georgia State Assistant Attorney General, an Assistant District Attorney and a judicial clerk for the Georgia Court of Appeals.

With service in all three branches of government, Dr. Brown Reynolds has extensive senior management experience overseeing large departments. She has served as a Chief Legal Officer, Chief of Staff, Senior Policy Advisor on a wide array of issues. In 2019, Dr. Brown Reynolds received a dual appointment with the University System of Georgia where she served as a university professor at Georgia State University, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, where she was named Instructor of the Year.

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Recognized as an intellectually courageous leader, she holds a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice and is one of the nation's preeminent experts and scholars in criminal justice, social justice, civil rights, organizational change management and the courts. In addition, she holds a Juris Doctor, a master's degree and a bachelor's degree from Georgia State University. She has completed post doctorate studies at Harvard Kennedy School. She is a practicing attorney and is a member of the State Bar of Georgia, National Bar Association Judicial Council, American Bar Association, Atlanta Bar Association, and numerous other bar associations.

Dr. Brown Reynolds is a registered mediator and is the founding Chair of the Judicial Section of the Gate City Bar Association, where she was inducted into the Hall of Fame for her distinguished legal career. She has served as President Emeritus of the Georgia Chapter of the International Women's Forum and currently serves on the President's Council. As a Life Member of the NAACP, Dr. Brown Reynolds was the first jurist in history to serve on the Atlanta Chapter NAACP's Board of Directors. She serves on the Board of Directors of the APEX Museum and S.C.L.C. Women.

She is a Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and served as the Scholar-in-Residence at the APEX Mu-seum. Dr. Brown Reynolds authored numerous articles and published several books including, *Women and the Law: A Guide to Women's Legal Rights in Georgia*. *Ebony*, *Jet* and *Essence* magazines and countless national newspapers and outlets recognized her for her accomplishments. □



Penny Brown Reynolds, Ph.D. enters the OASCR suite to begin a new day.



Dr. Brown Reynolds at the OASCR leadership briefing with OASCR Staff.



Announcements

Employee Updates, News, and Information



Many in OASCR are hearing “Can you feel a brand new day” playing in the background of its office. Since the onboarding of Dr. Penny Brown

Reynolds, every OASCR division has presented in-person briefings to her at the beautiful, newly renovated conference suite located in the Jamie L. Whitten Building in Washington, DC. Dr. Brown Reynolds was briefed on the current state and future plans of each division. The briefings not only allowed team members to meet Dr. Brown Reynolds in person, but also allowed several OASCR team members to meet face-to-face for the very first time. It was truly a productive, uplifting, and exciting time for all.

OASCR Announces the Retirement of David Leon King, Executive Director of the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement



After 32 years of federal service, including 13 years within the U.S. Army Reserve, and 15 and a half years of dedicated senior leadership within OASCR, we would like to sincerely thank Mr. King and wish him well in his future endeavors in his retirement.



OASCR Congratulates its Team Members on Their Recent Promotions!



OASCR congratulates Jessica Proctor who tied the knot on October 15, 2022 in Cancun, Mexico with fiancé James Alston. They were surrounded by family and friends. Please join us in welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Alston! We celebrate your union!

- **Robyn Courtney**, Budget Analyst, Program Planning and Accountability Division
- **Sequana Janifer**, Deputy Director, Program Planning and Accountability Division
- **Fonshelle Johnson-Osborne**, Equal Opportunity Specialist, Employment Complaints Division
- **Edward Profit**, Supervisory Equal Opportunity Specialist, Mission Area Liaison Division
- **Hope Woods**, Lead Equal Employment Specialist, Employment Complaints Division

thank you!



We want to give a special thanks to the following individuals for coming in during the height of the pandemic to perform essential work functions.

OASCR appreciates your hard work!

Tiffany M. Jones is an Administrative Management Specialist for the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement Director's Office. She has been with OASCR for 13 Years.

Tiffany A. Jones is an Equal Opportunity Assistant for the Program Adjudication Division. She has been with OASCR for 13 years.

Stephen Sergon is an Equal Opportunity Assistant for the Program Complaints Division. He was a contractor for OASCR for 12 years and has been a Federal employee with us for 2 years and 2 months.

Yolanda Tucker is an Equal Opportunity Assistant for the Employment Adjudication Division. She has been with OASCR since 2008.

Fun Fact: She is a DMV Native.

Robin Self is an Equal Employment Specialist with the Employment Adjudication Division. She has been with USDA for 40 years. Robin was also at FNS for 26 years before coming to OASCR. She has now been with OASCR for 14 years.

Minh Pham is an Equal Opportunity Specialist for the Program Complaints Division. She has been with OASCR for 13 years and USDA for 23 years.

Charles Kingsland III is an Investigator for the Programs Complaints Division and has been with OASCR for 6 years.

Jonathan Clark is an Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist for the Employment Complaints Division. He has been with OASCR for 5 years and 11 months!

Jeffrey Galloway is an Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist for the Employment Adjudication Division. He started at USDA through FAS as a Thurgood Marshall College Fund Intern in February 2018 and joined OASCR in December 2020.

Mayra Cora is an Equal Opportunity Assistant for the Conflict Complaints Division. She started at USDA as a contractor in April 2017 and became a Federal employee in December 2020.

Tanya Bracey is a Program Assistant for the Data Records Management Division and has been with the USDA for 37 years.

Oliver Coleman is a Records Tech for the Data Records Management Division. He has been with OASCR since 1998.



Policy and External Engagement

Monica Armster Rainge

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
Policy and External Engagement

USDA Announces New Members of the USDA/1890 Task Force



Monica Armster Rainge

I am excited to announce that I have been appointed by the Secretary to serve as a member of the USDA/1890 Task Force. This task force seeks to strengthen the partnership between USDA and the 1890 land-grant universities. USDA is also introducing an e-application for the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program, which provides tuition, fees, room, board and work experience to eligible students who attend one of the country's 1890 land-grant universities.

The USDA/1890 Task Force serves as an advisory body for partnership initiatives and ensures the realization of mutual benefits and interests.

USDA/1890 Task Force members:

- Terry Cosby, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (Co-Chair)
- Kevin Shea, Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Daniel Whitley, Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
- Monica Rainge, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR)
- Dionne Toombs, Director (Acting), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Hubert Hamer, Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

USDA partners with the 1890 universities to provide scholarship recipients with full tuition, fees, books, room and board and USDA work experience. Scholarship recipients attend one of the 1890 land-grant universities, and pursue degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. USDA awarded 126 USDA/1890 scholarships in Fiscal Year 2022, the most in one year since the program began in 1992.

The 1890 land-grant system consists of the following 19 universities: Alabama A&M, Alcorn State University, Central State University, Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Kentucky State University, Langston University, Lincoln University, North Carolina A&T State University, Prairie View A&M University, South Carolina State University, Southern University and A&M College, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University and West Virginia State University.

The application deadline for the FY23 USDA/1890 National Scholars Program is February 15, 2023. Learn more and apply at the [USDA/1890 National Scholars Program](#) web page, and email 1890init@usda.gov for questions on the program. □



By Sae Mi Kim

OASCR recognizes its employees are its greatest asset. The purpose of the Employee Morale Task Force (EMTF) advises the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights (DASCR) provides recommendations on issues or challenges which may have a direct impact on OASCR employee morale. Collectively, the Task Force shares ideas, solutions, or recommendations that may benefit the entire office.

The vision of the Task Force is to help foster a work environment of transparency, honesty, and inclusiveness. The Mission of the Task Force is to strengthen the morale of all OASCR employees. The following OASCR employees are members of the Task Force:

- **Monique Simmons (CCRO) and Sae Mi Kim (CCRO), Co-Chairs**
- **Robyn Courtney (PPAD)**
- **Deborah Davis (EID)**
- **Michael Dukes (CCRO)**
- **Natasha Lyles (CCD)**
- **Cecilia Ndounda (PAD)**
- **Jessica Proctor (OSEC)**
- **Steve Sergon (PCD)**

Recent accomplishments of the Task Force

- Created an Action Plan to provide guidance and strengthen intra-office employee engagement and collaboration, to acknowledge strategies for creating diversity and inclusion, and to providing feedback for effective communication between management and employees through voluntary interaction.

- Collaborated with the OASCR Employee Development and Training Committee to develop various methods to support OASCR's mission for employee development and professional well-being by providing various training opportunities for OASCR employees.
- Created a Peer Recognition Program to recognize employees through various methods in efforts to boost morale (in clearance).
- Collaborated with the DASCR to create effective strategies in boosting employee morale by establishing the Brown Bag Lunches by spearheading the agenda and facilitating each monthly session.
- Engaged with OASCR employees at the monthly All- Hands meetings by providing updates on current events and projects, announcements of new activities and programs, and strategies for employee well-being.
- Assumed the role of the liaison to the USDA Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Committee by developing reports to OASCR and developing Action Plans based on each fiscal year report.
- Conducted bi-weekly meetings to develop ideas and strategies for employee engagement and boost employee morale in alignment with OASCR's missions and goals.
- Created the EMTF email box (OASCREMTF@usda.gov) for employees to use to provide feedback, comments, and questions in support of strengthening employee morale and to inform the DASCR of employee concerns.

The Task Force is currently reviewing the FY22 FEVS report and strategizing to develop an updated Action Plan with future activities. □



The OASCR team continues to grow. Please welcome our newest team members. As you are able, take a moment to reach out, introduce yourself, and extend a warm welcome.

By Jonathan Clark—Co-Editor in Chief

[Conflict Complaints Division](#)

Karen Gibson

Ashlee Muse

[Employment Adjudication Division](#)

Kristen Hamilton

Fenyang Stewart

[Employment Complaints Division](#)

Christy Bazemore

[Employment Investigations Division](#)

Florence Duchantier-Diaz

Latoya Kess

[Data & Records Management Division](#)

Michael Dykes

[Mission Area Liaison Division](#)

Paola Nieves (HACU Summer Intern)

[Program Adjudication Division](#)

Heather Peterson

[Program Complaints Division](#)

Charlie Burks

Rafeal Boyd

Jesse Hernandez

Christopher Holley

Benjamin McFarlane

Angela Moss

Kelvin Muhammad

Adrian Outlaw

James Parker

Ashley Sims

Jeanette Williams

Employee Spotlight

Dianne Davis-Wright

By Jonathan Clark



Dianne Davis-Wright

crowd of competing runners at the start of a 5k race. We may have even innocently said it quietly to ourselves while waiting to be seated at a crowded restaurant. Whatever the scenario or life's journey, one could argue there may have been moments in life when we only think of ourselves. On the other hand, anyone who has had the privilege to meet and work with OASCR's Dianne Davis-Wright could easily argue that her 40 years of service in the Federal Government, as well as her life's journey has been the opposite of *Looking out for Number One*.

Born in Saint Matthews, South Carolina and raised in Central Falls, Rhode Island, Dianne Davis-Wright has been with OASCR since 1994. She is currently assisting the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement (CCRE) and the Program Planning and Accountability Division (PPAD) with contract administration tasks. Dianne received her Certificate of Accomplishment in Acquisition from the Graduate School USA in 2008. Dianne truly believes her journey to USDA and her Civil Rights experience was destiny.

While struggling financially as a student at Howard University, she enrolled in the Stay-In-School Program, where she served as an Office Clerk with USDA's Research, Education, and Economics/Cooperative State Research Service, now the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. She quickly found out the money she was making was not enough to stay in school, take care of herself, and help her parents fund activities for three of her youngest siblings; two in high school and one in elementary school. "My siblings were my world growing up in Central Falls. We

overcame prejudice, lack of social services to include housing and food, and the list goes on. With so many struggles in my life, my goal, at age nine, was to "never go down that road again." Therefore, she dropped out of college and applied for a full-time position with USDA Research, Education, and Economics/Cooperative State Research Service.

Dianne comes from a large family. She has an older brother, and four younger sisters. She fondly talks about growing up with 40 first cousins. Dianne had early aspirations of wanting to teach, but being the older sister forced her to place personal desires temporarily on hold. She shared, growing up, her father and maternal grandmother would always tell her, "it's not about you, you have young sisters to teach!" Hearing that motivated her to teach them everything she learned from school, as well as everything she learned from life. Today, one of her sisters is a highly recognized and traveled educator, one is a small business owner, and one is an award-winning actress and producer.

Dianne's service in the Federal government after 40 years will end in March 2023. Her mentorship, wisdom, and presence at OASCR will be missed; however, she will have much more time to dedicate to her family, church, and community. Dianne is recently widowed and has one son. He is a high school teacher at Henry A. Wise Jr., High school in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. He teaches Financial Literacy and Foundation of Technology in the school's Career Technology Education program. Dianne also serves as the Chair of Trustee Ministry at Southern Friendship Missionary Baptist Church and the Secretary to the Windsor Park Homeowner's Association, Board of Directors.

As the years have passed, the wisdom Dianne's parents instilled in her continues to aid her in navigating her way through life. "They got it right, it's not about you, you have others to teach!" □



Davis Family Photo: Dianne is second from the left.

Showing Up and Putting Her Best Foot Forward Has Led to An Amazing Journey

By Joelle T. Bowers



Angeline Dyer

In this month's issue, we take a journey with Angeline Dyer, the new Deputy Director of the National Finance Center USDA, from a GS-5 to an SES. Ms. Dyer is a lifelong resident of New Orleans, Louisiana. She is an honors graduate with a bachelor's degree in Information Technology

from American Inter Continental University, Key Executive Leadership graduate of American University's School of Public Affairs, certified SAP associate, graduate of the Federal Executive Institute, and USDA's Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

Recently, I had the honor of speaking with Ms. Dyer. During our conversation, she walked me through attributes and practices that have shaped her development into a senior leader within this organization.

What is the greatest contributor to your professional growth and development?

The greatest contributions to my professional growth and development have been continual learning. I feel there is always something new we can learn. Opportunity and confidence. There have been a few leaders along my journey that saw something in me that I didn't always see in myself. They pushed me to do things outside of my comfort zone but having confidence in myself and wanting to always be a good job motivates me to be the best me I can be. And lastly, resilience, I have been knocked down a few times. I allowed myself time to process, picked myself up, and got back at it. We have to develop the ability to carry on in the midst of setbacks. The other contributor is patience, I started with the Federal Government as a GS-5, in a term position. The road from a GS-5 to an SES isn't a short one and I didn't get every job I applied for either. I took each setback as an opportunity to learn, patiently awaited the next opportunity. I applied, learned what I could, assisted and contributed to the

team – always giving my best. As other opportunities presented themselves, I would ask myself if I would add value or not. If so, I would apply or volunteer. In the absence of opportunity, I would ask for training to help sharpen my skills. I am a knowledge seeker.

What sort of guidance would you offer someone striving to rise from a GS employee to a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES).

I believe anyone who has a desire to become an SES should: 1) consider leadership positions because it helps build the necessary leadership skills to move to the next level (decision making, conflict resolution, negotiation, communication and team building); 2) volunteer for projects and assignment opportunities to broaden your business knowledge and customer relationship skills; 3) get a mentor and/or a coach, they are different, serve a different purpose but should offer unbiased feedback; and 4) most importantly, show up and always put your best foot forward in everything you do. Let your work speak for who you are.

What are the biggest challenges you faced in career advancement?

One of my biggest personal and professional challenges was becoming more emotionally intelligent. As a woman in the workplace, we are often labeled as emotional. I have taken a few classes and read books about emotional intelligence to help dispel that stereotype. The other challenge was making the transition from peer to manager. I now lead many of the people that I have worked along side with for years. Often internal promotions cause angst and discontent among staff that are vying for the same positions. It can be difficult transitioning from someone's co-worker and peer to becoming their supervisor. The climate can be a bit uncertain and contentious for a time while your ability to perform is being tested. In the end, you have to regain trust and gain the confidence of the team as a new leader.

What traits do you look for when assembling your leadership team?

The traits I look for in a leadership team have to align with the attributes I strive to live up to. I look for honesty. Being honest even if the message is difficult to deliver. Acceptance. I accept people for who and what they are. I know everyone brings something unique to the team. Communication. Ensuring the message, vision, and goals are clear and concise avoids mistakes or misunderstandings. Listening. I listen to understand and without interruption. Trust. I earn and maintain the trust of the team. *Continue on page 11.*

In Honor of Native American Heritage Month: Can You Crack the Code?

By Sae Mi Kim

“Wo-la-chee.” “Besh-lo.” Do you know what these terms mean? Apparently, not a lot of people did and this secret communication was instrumental in the Allied forces winning the war during World War II. What was this code, and how did it help us to win the war?



Navajo Code Talkers Pioneered a New Type of Intelligence System. Source: www.history.com

Every country during war needs secret communication methods. It is crucial these messages they are encoded so the opposing side about strategies and plans. During World War I, the Choctaw and Cherokee languages were used in the transmission of secret tactical messages. It was instrumental in a successful surprise attack against the Germans. However, Japan and Germany sent students to the United States after the war to study Native American languages and cultures. The U.S. was now in need of a new way to encode their messages. That's when the complex Navajo language was looked at in a new light.

Philip Johnston, who grew up on Navajo reservations where his parents served as missionaries, recommended to the U.S. military to try creating a code using the Navajo language. The U.S. Marine Corps approved a pilot project with 30 Navajos and allowed Johnston to enlist and participate in the program.

The Navajo language proved to be the perfect option as a code because it is not written and very few people who aren't of Navajo origin can speak it. The code talkers made it virtually unbreakable by further encoding the language with word substitution. For example, when there was no word in the native language to describe a military word, code talkers used descriptive words, such as “besh-lo” which directly translates into “iron fish”, signifying a submarine which does not have a direct Navajo word. Another type of code they created, Type 1 code, consisted of 26 Navajo terms that stood for individual English letters that could be used to spell out a word. For instance, the Navajo word for “ant,” wo-la-chee, was used to represent the letter “a” in English.

Most code talkers worked in pairs within a military unit. One person would operate the portable radio while, and the second person would relay and receive messages in the native language and translate them into English. The code talkers successfully translated, transmitted and re-translated a test message in under three minutes, whereas without using the Navajo code, it could take hours for a soldier to complete the same task. Their work was highly dangerous especially in the Pacific, because Japanese soldiers would deliberately target officers, medics, and radiomen. Code talkers had to change locations as they transmitted their messages.

Around 400 code talkers, selected from Navajo and 14 other native nations, were essential to allied victory in World War II. They were present at many important battles, including at Utah Beach during the D-Day invasion in Normandy, France, and at Iwo Jima, Japan.

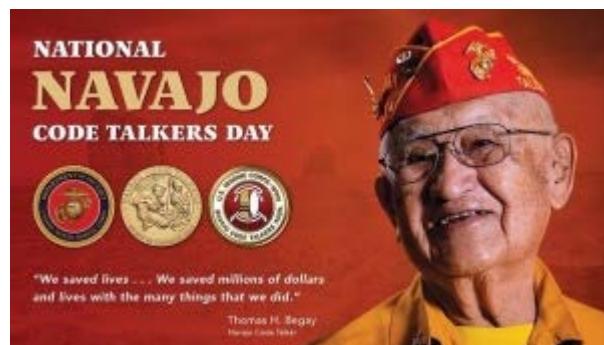


Photo Courtesy of lakepowelllife.com

The U.S. military wanted to keep the program classified in case the code talkers were needed again in future wars so the hard work of the Navajo Code Talkers was not recognized until after the declassification of the operation in 1968. They couldn't even tell their family about their work because of the secrecy of their important work. President Ronald Reagan gave the Code Talkers a Certificate of Recognition and declared August 14 "Navajo Code Talkers Day" in 1982. In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed a law which awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the original 29 Code Talkers. On July 26, 2001, President George W. Bush presented gold medals to the four surviving Code Talkers at a ceremony held at the Rotunda, U.S. Capitol.□



President George W. Bush presents medals to 21 Navajo Code Talkers during a ceremony honoring their military service at the U.S. Capitol. Photo: National Archives

Continued from page 9.

Be transparent. Credible. I mean what I say and deliver on what I promise. Make sure your words and actions align. Be knowledgeable. Continue to learn and share what we know with each other to help strengthen the team.

What reading would you recommended for professional/personal development?

I would recommend John Maxwell – The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership and The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork (I had my team read this book), Marshall Goldsmith – What Got You Here Won't Get You There, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis - Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence, and Michelle Obama – The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times.

Do you have a hobby outside of work that helps you be a better leader?

Yes, I have a few hobbies that have helped me along my journey to become a better leader. I line dance and have taught line dancing. The teacher in me comes out. I volunteer my time with organizations through mentoring and oversight roles, managing my daughter's soccer team and serve as a committee member for the local credit union – finance skills, organizational skills, networking and communication skills are put to the test, and I also read for fun and development and growth (mental acuity, stress reliver, learning). Finally, along my continual learning journey I am learning a foreign language.

AgTip from USDA

By Semira Bullock

Winter, spring, summer, and fall are four seasons that affect agriculture in the United States. Farmers across the nation harvest crops during certain times of the year based on the ripeness of the plant. The produce grown in the nation is not only the freshest, but also usually the cheapest when bought in-season. The supply of produce is the highest during in-season harvesting, which can decrease the demand which lowers the prices.



Many fruits are best kept in the crisper drawer of a refrigerator set to 40 degrees Fahrenheit or less, on June 8, 2020, in San Antonio, TX. (USDA Photo by Lance Cheung)

USDA provides online resources that can assist you when purchasing produce and other groceries. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has Local Food Directories that provides regularly occurring markets where people can purchase locally sourced food from nearby farms. USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) provides menus, recipes, and nutrition education on their website. SNAP-Ed has an extensive Seasonal Produce Guide that shows you what produce is in-season.

As the holiday season approaches, USDA can help you choose the freshest produce for the gatherings that you may host or attend. Whether you decide to go to your local grocery store, supermarket, or farmers market to purchase your groceries, USDA has accessible information to aid in your overall food shopping experience.

Listed below is this season's produce list, as well as the resources provided by USDA.

Winter Seasonal Produce List:

- Apples
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Beets
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Collard Greens
- Grapefruit
- Herbs
- Kale
- Kiwifruit
- Leeks
- Lemons
- Limes
- Onions
- Oranges
- Parsnips
- Pears
- Pineapples
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Rutabagas
- Sweet Potatoes & Yams
- Swiss Chard
- Turnips
- Winter Squash

Local Food Directories: National Farmers Market Directory

<https://www.usdalocalfoodportal.com/>

SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education

<https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/snap-ed-works/nutrition-education>

SNAP-Ed Seasonal Produce Guide

<https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide>



Sang Lee Farms staff pack community supported ag (CSA) shares for members, in Peconic, New York, November 5, 2021.

Sang Lee Farms, transitioning to third generation, grows more than 100 varieties of specialty vegetables, heirloom tomatoes, baby greens, herbs. They continue to feature Asian produce, growing many varieties of Chinese cabbages, greens, and radishes. (FPAC photo by Preston Keres)



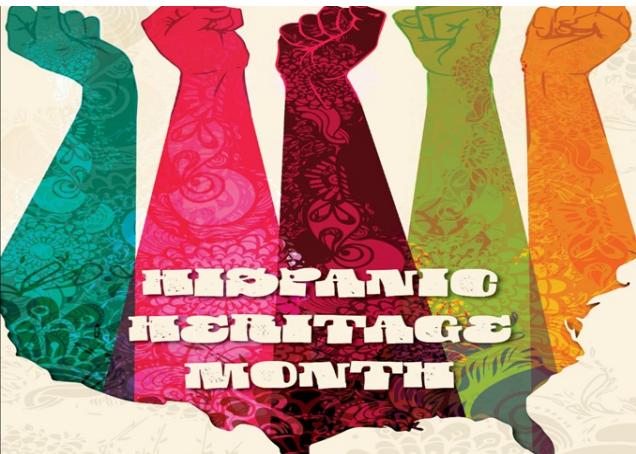
By Laura Vega, OASCR HACU Intern

Just as fall starts, so does National Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM), a time to celebrate and learn about Hispanic heritage, history, and culture. Let's discuss the theme of the month, learn about two Hispanic stories, and discuss how to celebrate HHM the USDA way. Since 1988, HHM is observed from September 15 to October 15. These dates are significant because Columbus Day / Indigenous People's Day and the independ-

the metaphorical table and included in key decisions, the entire community benefits from greater solutions that address the concerns of all people. These improved decisions support the greater good and minimize any negative impacts to marginalized communities." As this theme suggests, remembering history and the representations of Hispanics is a crucial part of HHM celebrations as we acknowledge the power of this community. Today, we remind ourselves of their contributions by highlighting the stories of Gabaldon and Huerta.

Guy Gabaldon was a Mexican American marine who served in War World II and captured over 1300 Japanese soldiers. However, in a movie about his accomplishments, he was portrayed by Jeffrey Hunter, an Anglo-American actor. The misrepresentations of Hispanic veterans in Hollywood helped to erase their contributions and caused the American public to forget the significant Hispanic impact on the war. Today, 6.9% of veterans are Hispanics, and this is projected to double in the next twenty years.

Dolores Huerta co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), the predecessor of the United Farm Workers' Union. She worked as a lobbyist to obtain Aid for Dependent Families and disability insurance for farm workers in California. She also led a consumer boycott of grapes resulting in the groundbreaking California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975. This was the first law of its kind granting farm workers in California the right to unionize and secure better wages and working conditions.



Picture Courtesy of National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers.

ence anniversaries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile are celebrated within these 30 days.

This year, the 2022 HHM Observance Theme was "Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation." The National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers supports the process to select the annual theme federal agencies use to conduct their HHM observances. This winning theme was nominated by Supervisory Accountant Ms. Ily Soares at the Farm Credit Administration who stated: "One uniting factor within our Hispanic community is our desire to be included and represented in all aspects of American society. As has been proven, when different voices are sitting at

A film showing the life of Dolores Huerta, was one of the many in-person and virtual events hosted by USDA to celebrate HHM. Other activities encompassed a USDA Presidential Appointee Hispanic Panel, an APHIS-led section on recognizing unconscious language barriers and accent biases. Then, to close out the month, a discussion with Dr. Annette Chapman on insightful advice for interviews. As we move on to other celebrations, let's keep in mind this theme of inclusivity through the incoming year to ensure that all those who strengthen our country are recognized, represented, and included in decision-making. □

OASCR'S 2022 CIVIL RIGHTS FORUM DRAWS HUNDREDS!

By Jessica Proctor

Hosted at the beautiful United States Institute of Peace, located in Northwest Washington D.C., on September 15 and 16, 2022, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil rights welcomed USDA civil rights professionals to its third annual Civil Rights Forum.



Monica Rainge (left) greets Deputy Secretary Jewel Bronaugh.

This year's theme was Respecting, Achieving, and Creating Equality for Success. Individuals also had the option to join virtually. The goal was to create a platform for civil rights professionals to interface and discuss important civil rights topics. The Civil Rights Forum Committee, led by Winona Lake Scott, worked diligently to put on this amazing event! Other committee members included Kelli Reynolds, Joelle T. Bowers, Jonathan Clark, Jessica Proctor, Sae Mi Kim, Monique Simmons, Semira Bullock, Edward Profit, David King, and Gwen Edmonson. Kudos to these superstars on a job well done!

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Policy and External Stakeholder Engagement, Monica Rainge hosted a Fireside Chat with Civil Rights Directors Dr. Sharese Paylor, Roberto Contreras, Sheron Jernigan, and a few others, including Diversity and Inclusion Specialist Jeremy Woods.

Panels included a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Panel led by Leslie Weldon, USDA DEIA Officer. Steven Brammer and Emily Tasman from the Office of General Counsel held an extremely insightful and informational panel on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity Discrimi-

nation Prevention. This amazing duo also led a separate panel on the Intersection of social media and Civil Rights. Other Panels included Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, led by Daria Neal and Dr. Sharese Paylor, the Environmental Justice Panel led by Jeff Knishkowy, the Reasonable Accommodation Panel led by Kerry Leibig, and a panel on Alternate Dispute Resolution, led by Joyce Mitchell from the International Academy of Mediators.

Elyssa Santos Abrams, Attorney Advisor at the Federal Sector Programs EEOC provided a legal update. The honorary keynote speaker, Deputy Secretary Jewel Bronaugh, delivered a heartfelt speech and was graciously recognized by Ms. Rainge who thanked her for her time and wisdom!

Overall, the Forum was a major success! This Forum was a great start in discussing the importance of cross-agency collaboration and the need for a continued platform in which civil rights professionals can gather to exchange and share knowledge! Stay tuned for 2023!



Left to right – Cyrus Salazar, Denise McKinney, Monica Rainge, and Joyce Mitchell moderated the ADR panel.



Conference committee members left to right – Sae Mi Kim, Joelle Bowers, Jonathan Clark, Winona Lake Scott, and Semira Bullock.

Congratulations to Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson First Black Woman Supreme Court Justice

By Joelle T. Bowers

On June 30, 2022, Ketanji Brown Jackson made history as she was sworn in to the position of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.



Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is sworn in by Chief Justice John G. Roberts while her husband, Dr. Patrick Jackson, holds the bible. (Fred Schilling/Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States)

history. Since 1789, 115 justices have served on the Supreme Court. All but six have been white men. The first Black justice, Thurgood Marshall, was appointed in 1967, and the first woman, Sandra Day O'Connor, was appointed in 1981.

So who is Justice Jackson? Judge Jackson was born on September 14, 1970, in Washington, D.C. She was raised in Miami, Florida. Born to a family that stressed the importance of service and education, both of her parents are graduates of HBCUs. Her father, Johnny Brown, attended North Carolina Central University. Her mother, Ellery Brown, was a teacher who eventually became principal of a magnet public high school in Miami. Her father and her brother are attorneys. While a senior in high school, she was voted “Most Likely to Succeed,” elected class president three times, and was a star on the school’s debate team. In her senior year book, she expressed a desire to be appointed to the judiciary.

She received an A.B., magna cum laude, from Harvard-Radcliffe College in 1992, and a J.D., cum laude, from Harvard Law School in 1996. She served as a law clerk for Judge Patti B. Saris of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts from 1996 to 1997, Judge Bruce M. Selya of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit from 1997 to 1998,

Her nomination and eventual appointment would be the culmination of scholarly excellence, over two decades of legal practice, and a determination to persevere through whatever challenges she would face.

Long overdue, her appointment serves as one of the most significant moments of this judiciary’s

and Justice Stephen G. Breyer of the Supreme Court of the United States during the 1999 Term. After three years in private practice, she worked as an attorney at the U.S. Sentencing Commission from 2003 to 2005. From 2005 to 2007, she served as an assistant federal public defender in Washington, D.C., and from 2007 to 2010, she was in private practice. She served as a Vice Chair and Commissioner on the U.S. Sentencing Commission from 2010 to 2014. In 2012, President Barack



Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., looks on as Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson signs the Oaths of Office on June 30, 2022, in the Justices’ Conference Room, Supreme

Obama nominated her to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, where she served from 2013 to 2021, making her one of two sitting justices (with Justice Sonia Sotomayor), to have served as a federal trial judge.

She was appointed to the Defender Services Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States in 2017, and the Supreme Court Fellows Commission in 2019. President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. appointed her to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 2021.

Her appointment to the Supreme Court was a proud moment for many and not only further diversifies the court, but imbues it with a unique and exceptional talent, and a role model to all, especially women, black, and brown people around the world. □



This viral photo of Judge Jackson testifying at her confirmation hearing features her daughter, Laila Jackson, proudly smiling at her mother. SARAHBETH MANEY/ THE NEW YORK TIMES

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITIES

By Sae Mi Kim and Edward Profit

Every October, the United States celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) for the contributions of America's workers with disabilities past and present, and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices. In recognition of the important role people with disabilities play in a diverse and inclusive American workforce, the theme for the 2022 NDEAM was 'Disability: Part of the Equity Equation.'

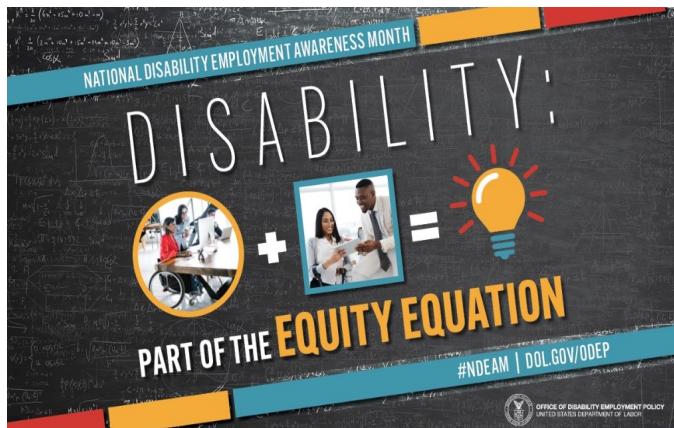


Photo courtesy of: dol.gov

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has designated excepted service appointment authorities to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the Federal Government.

There are two types of hiring processes. In the non-competitive hiring process, agencies use a special authority (Schedule A) to hire persons with disabilities without requiring them to compete for the job. In the competitive process, applicants compete with each other through a structured process.

Two of the Schedule A authorities are:

- Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), for hiring people with severe physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and intellectual disabilities. This excepted authority is used to appoint persons with severe physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and intellectual disabilities. Such individuals may qualify for conversion to permanent status after two years of satisfactory service. Severe physical

disabilities include but are not limited to blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing limbs, epilepsy, dwarfism, and more, and

- Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(l) for hiring readers, interpreters, and personal assistants. This excepted authority is used to appoint readers, interpreters, and personal assistants for employees with severe disabilities as reasonable accommodations.

OPM also administers entitlement to veterans' preference in employment under title 5, United States Code, and oversees other statutory employment requirements in titles 5 and 38.

Recognizing their sacrifice, Congress enacted laws to prevent veterans seeking Federal employment from being penalized for their time in military service. Veterans' preference recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served their country in uniform, restores veterans to a favorable competitive position for Government employment, and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled veterans. By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over others in hiring from competitive lists of eligible and also in retention during reductions in force. In addition to receiving preference in competitive appointments, veterans may be considered for special noncompetitive appointments for which only they are eligible.

Preference in hiring applies to permanent and temporary positions in the competitive and excepted services of the executive branch. Preference does not apply to positions in the Senior Executive Service or to executive branch positions for which Senate confirmation is required. Veterans' preference does not require an agency to use any particular appointment process. Agencies have broad authority under law to hire from any appropriate source of eligible candidates, including special appointing authorities. An agency may consider candidates already in the civil service from an agency-developed merit promotion list or it may reassign a current employee, transfer an employee from another agency, or reinstate a former Federal employee. In addition, agencies are required to give priority to displaced employees before using civil service examinations and similar hiring methods. For more information on this topic, please visit:

www.opm.gov, www.usajobs.gov, and www.usda.gov.

Around Town

By Winona Lake Scott

With winter well underway, lets take some time to explore the DMV and enjoy some of the many events and venues that are sure to uplift and inspire.

Downtown Holiday Market

The free-to-frequent downtown bazaar is centrally located in front of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery, the beloved market stretches across two blocks of F Street between 7th and 9th streets. Scope out eclectic wares from dozens of pop-up tents with seasonally flavored music performed live in the background. Locally roasted coffee and crafted-before-your-eyes mini-doughnuts inspire a cold-weather appetite, creating a holiday atmosphere you won't find anywhere else in DC.



12-8 p.m. daily | Free admission
F Street between 7th and 9th Streets NW,
Washington, DC

ZooLights

ZooLights is back at Smithsonian's National Zoo! Free admission with a timed entry pass allows you to peruse the zoos beautiful light displays, shop, and take in live performances and tasty treats after dark on select nights between Nov. 25 and Dec. 30. For a full list of dates and to reserve an entry pass, please visit the zoo's website.



Delight at the sights of this Winter Lantern Festival

For the first time, the popular Winter Lantern Festival is bringing its stunning display to the DMV, setting it aglow in a sight that's never been seen before!

After dazzling New York City with 150,000 annual guests, 3 years in a row, the Winter Lantern Festival now be in the DMV beginning Friday, December 16. The Lerner Town



Square at Tysons II will be decked out in a dazzling array of over 1,000 handcrafted Chinese lanterns by illustrious artists.

Go ice skating in DC

DC's year-round temps are pretty moderate, but during the winter – when cold Canadian winds whistle down the Potomac and Anacostia rivers – Washingtonians bundle up for a day (or a night) on the ice. Public ice skating rinks can be found in multiple neighborhoods in DC proper, so check out the best places to hit the ice in the nation's capital.



Experience The Museum of Illusions

Opens Dec. 13 The sensation that has already swept more than 30 major cities has touched down in the District. At the Museum of Illusions, visitors can be immersed in trickery, learn about how the human brain works and sharpen their vision and perception.



The Museum of Illusions, 925 H Street NW,
Washington, DC 20001