

SAN FRANCISCO

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETY

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HISTORICAL &
CULTURAL SOCIETY

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Eldoris Cameron & Ginger
Smyly, Co-editors

Al Williams, President
William Hoskins,
Executive Director

Photos: E. Cameron, G.
Smyly, Unknown

When we say BLACK LIVES MATTER, we mean ALL LIVES MATTER.

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HEAR YE, HEAR YE! 2023 Society Annual Membership meeting to be held:

WHEN: Saturday, December 2, 2023, 2 - 3:30 pm

WHERE: AAACC, 762 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA

PROPOSED AGENDA:

- 2023 Annual Report
- AAACC Closure and Society Relocation
- History Lesson: Hannibal Lodge, Louis Garrett, Sr.
- Buchanan Mall History Walk Project Report
- Election of Directors
- Viewing of Current Exhibit in Society Gallery

EVERYONE INVITED TO ATTEND; ONLY CURRENT AND LIFE MEMBERS MAY VOTE (Dues paid for 2023; its not too late, bring your dues to the meeting)



In this issue of the **PRAISESINGER**:

- ✓ A Word from the Executive Director
- ✓ Book Review: From Juvenile Hall to City Hall: Your Resume Can Change
- ✓ Gift from Mitchell Young Anderson Museum - Jule Anderson homage
- ✓ 95 Years Celebrated! Willfred Ussery
- ✓ Wilma J. Cupp Stroughter, J.D., honored at Law School
- ✓ From the Archive, "Better to Stay Than To Go".... Wedding Dress and Good News!
- ✓ Book Club: Proud Shoes, Pauli Murray
- ✓ Photo Album
- ✓ Black History Month Preview, Events 🍂

**THE SOCIETY
NEEDS YOU!**

Volunteers are essential to the Society. Please consider serving on the Board, taking leadership on a committee or volunteering at the gallery. Contact Al Williams, President, at info@sfaahcs.org or call 415-292-6172.

Get involved. Contact us at: info@sfaahcs.org

**SHAMANN WALTON'S
MEMOIR -- REVIEW**
Highlights Vallejo Icon
Philmore Graham

Shamann Walton, Supervisor on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, has enjoyed a meteoric political career since he first ran for the Board of Education in 2012. Losing that race, his momentum carried him to victory two years later, and in 2018, to his election as supervisor. From January 2021 to January 2023 he served as president of the board.

In February 2023, Walton published his first book, a memoir titled From Juvenile Hall to City Hall: Your Resume Can Change, cowritten with Keisha James. Walton devotes as much space to the people who helped and guided him as he does to his own successes and failures. The hero of the book is neither the author or anyone in his family, but a community leader named Philmore Graham.

Graham, who died in 2014 at age 75, was the founder and longtime director of the Omega Continental Boys and Girls Club in Vallejo, California, where Walton lived as a teenager. A United States Air Force officer, who later became the first and only African American to serve as supervisor of Mare Island's Department of Nuclear Energy in Vallejo, Graham loved working in the community, and especially being a mentor for children.

He started what is now known as the Continental of Omega Boys and Girls Club in 1966, after watching six little boys play football. Over the next four decades, while he and his wife JaMella raised two children of their own, Graham worked with thousands of Vallejo's youth to steer them away from crime and toward education.

Among his protégés was Shamann Walton, who grew up without a father and was in and out of juvenile hall for years until he met Graham. The author describes him as “the permanent male presence in the lives of children ... who missed that voice on the home front.” Graham “... would, at times, pick me up after school or on weekends, always trying to keep me very preoccupied with odd jobs that inevitably kept me away from the temptation of selling dope. When I did manage to find myself in trouble with the law, PG was the person my mom would call, and regardless of the hour, he was ever present to accompany her on the exhausting journey to pick me up. Not once or twice, but countless times.”

- *Max Millard*

“His role in my life cannot be summed up in words on paper, but in who I have become and a great deal of the things I learned along the way.... In my eyes, PG is the epitome of a great man who took many children under his care simply because he saw a little spark that he felt, if given an opportunity, could increase beyond its sheltered space in the world.”

Mainly due to the influence of Graham and his son Montoya, Walton enrolled at Morris Brown College in Atlanta, graduating in 1998. cont. page 4

OUR FUTURE

The strength of democracy depends on all of us being involved and holding our government accountable at all levels, city, state and national. The most effective way of doing this is by voting at every opportunity. It is a fact that politicians are most responsive and interested in the words of the people who vote for them.

For decades, grassroots organizations have worked year around mobilizing voters and building both multi-racial and multi-issue coalitions in opposition to extremist attacks on voting rights and the election systems. These fundamental rights are under attack by a radical Supreme Court, new ID laws, reduced early and mail-in-voting opportunities, confusing new voting laws, mis-and disinformation, lack of enforced voter access laws and last but not least, voter intimidation.

In addition, the fact that November is National Native American Heritage Month, highlights the need for all of us to work together towards achieving common goals. The struggles of the indigenous people of this country have always mirrored the struggles of other minority groups. Working together, voting together and sharing common goals will make a difference.



I would like to encourage and extend a cordial invitation to visit the current exhibits, **Voting and Obama: Legacy of Hope**. The final day of the exhibit will be December 9, 2023. Current open hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays 1-4 pm. Additional hours are available by request.

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Restaurant of the Month: The Voodoo Love restaurant, 56 Belden Plaza (between Pine and California,) a Black-owned restaurant specializing in creole nouveau cuisine offering tantalizing appetizers.

- William Hoskins,
Executive Director



COVID, FLU and RSV

While the COVID 19 pandemic is over, COVID is still among us. Older adults and people with immune comprised status are urged to get “spiked” with the latest booster. And, remember, influenza kills more people than you would expect every year. If you are high risk, consider the RSV and pneumonia immunizations as well. You should have little or no cost since these are vaccines provided by the US government (our tax \$s) to protect us all. Seniors with Medi-Care should have no money worries and if you need assistance check out the San Francisco [Department of Public Health’s website](#) for help.

Stay safe and well as we enter into the holiday season, with Black History Month 2024 soon thereafter! There is much to enjoy if you are healthy.



Walton Memoir, cont. from page 2

Upon return to San Francisco, he started working for the city in 2008 while pursuing a master's degree in public administration. He became executive director of the Young Community Developers (YCD). Located in Bayview-Hunters Point, YCD helps low-income high school graduates enter college, among its many services.

Most of the book deals with Walton's early struggles to break out of his environment and make the most of his talents. Philmore Graham was always there to encourage and support him. The book is an inspiring testament to the power of one person in a community to be able to change the lives of innumerable youths for the better... From reading this book, one anticipates that Walton will always find ways to overcome obstacles and continue his career of public service.

[From Juvenile Hall to City Hall: Your Resume Can Change](#) is available in both hardcover and paperback from [Amazon.com](#)

SOCIETY LEADER



The late Jule Anderson



Mitchell Young Anderson Museum, Thomasville, GA

- Eldoris Cameron

Several months ago, the Society received a significant donation from the remainder of the **Mitchell Young Anderson Museum, a vision of the late Jule Anderson, past president of the Society's Board of Directors**. This was a welcomed gift as the Society transitions into the New Year and possibly a, temporary location. The boarding home of Jule's family and her residence in Thomasville, Georgia was purchased after slavery in 1887 and transformed into the museum following Jule's passing on May 1, 2014. The museum's focus was on the history of African Americans, Thomasville, and the post-Reconstruction era.

During Jule's active career in San Francisco as a mother and wife, her community service was extraordinary: Member of the Board of Education, NAACP President, Society President, Friends of Library, member of Bethel AME Church, Aid to Retarded Citizens, United Nations Association, George Washington & McCoppin School PTA presidents, etc... Jule's activities in Atlanta and Thomasville were no different when she moved back to Georgia in the 2000s. Jule's love for the Society had no bounds. Friends from the Society even visited and were guests in her Bed & Breakfast Guest House/home in Thomasville in the 2000s.

The museum closed after 5 years of operation. William Alladaye, play-son and president, Mitchell Young Anderson Museum, ensured that the Society was the beneficiary of this gift.

Thank you to the late Jule C. Anderson for being such a loving an extraordinary soul!

95 Years Celebrated!



l-r: Norman Brown, Maxine Ussery, Wilfred Ussery, Dr. Oba T'Shaka, Cynthia Dorsey

Wilfred Ussery's 95th Birthday was celebrated at Geoffrey's Inner Circle in Oakland on Sunday, October 8, 2023. He is a man for all seasons and so well fit!

Civil rights activists and friends joined in giving Wilfred accolades for his tireless contributions to Civil Rights in the African American community in the Bay Area and around the country particularly during the 1960s thru 1980s. As part of the celebration, guests enjoyed jazz music and delicious soul food.

The previous Sunday, members of Bethel AME Church in San Francisco sang **"Happy Birthday"** to Will and wished him well!

Geoffrey Pete, Proprietor of Geoffrey's made guests feel welcome at the celebration. Maxine Ussery, wife of Wilfred, planned the event near the *Post News Group* office where she is Chief Operating Officer. Paul Cobb, publisher of the *Post News Group* officiated at the event. ***Happy 95th Birthday to Wilfred Ussery!***



WILMA J. CUPP STROUGHTER, J.D.



On September 22, 2023, **Wilma J. Cupp Stroughter, J.D.**, was one of twenty-two African American alumni and faculty honored on the **Royce and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor** at the University of Houston School of Law in Houston, TX.

Wilma J. Cupp Stroughter was a product of the San Francisco Unified School District including George Washington High School and City College. She was a former member of the San Francisco African American Historical and Cultural Society, and daughter of Society Charter Member, Lucy Mae Cupp (Pickens.)

THE LAW, COMMUNITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE on September 22 featured twenty-two permanent portraits on the wall dedicated to recognizing the exceptional achievements and contributions of alumni and faculty at the University of Houston School of Law.

In December, 1972, ***Wilma was the first African American woman to earn her Doctor of Jurisprudence at the UH Law Center.*** While Wilma and her mother are deceased, their legacies live on.

Wilma J. Cupp Stroughter is the sister of Society members, Mae Cupp Threadgill and Eldoris Cupp Cameron.



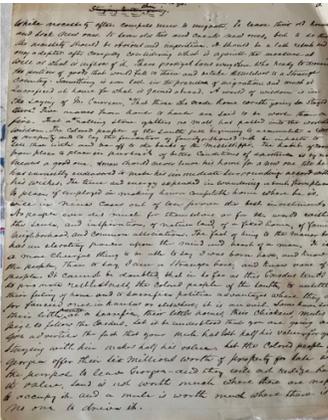
- Eldoris Cameron

[NOTE: The UH Law Center located Wilma's family through the Society.]

FROM THE ARCHIVE

“Better to Stay Than To Go”... excerpt from an essay found in the archive.

“While necessity often compels men to migrate, to leave old homes and seek new ones, to sever old ties and create new ones, but to do this the necessity should be obvious and imperative. It should be a last (resort) and only adopted after carefully considering what is against the measure and as well as what is in favor of it. ... Something is ever lost in the procedure of migration and much is sacrificed at home for what is gained abroad. ... Five moves from house to house are said to be worse than a fire. ... The colored people of the South, just beginning to accumulate a little of property and to lay the foundation of family, ... The habit of roaming from place to place in pursuit of better conditions of existence is by men is by no means a good one. A man should never leave his home for a new one ‘til he has earnestly endeavored to make his immediate surroundings accord with his wishes. The time and energy expended in wondering about from place to place, if employed in making him a comfortable home where he is, in nine cases out of 10 prove the best investment. No people ever did much for themselves or for the world without the soul and inspiration, of native land, of a fixed home, families, neighborhood, and common associations. ...It is a more cheerful thing to be able to say. I was born here, and I know the people, than to say, I am a stranger here, and I know none of the people. It cannot be doubted, that in so far as this Exodus tends to promote restlessness, the colored people of the South, to unsettle their feeling for home and to sacrifice positive advantages where they are for fancier ones in Kansas or elsewhere, it is an evil. Some have lost their little at a sacrifice, their little homes, their chickens, mules and pigs, to follow the Exodus. ...Let the colored people of Georgia offer their six millions worth of property for sale with the purpose to leave Georgia and they will not realize half its value. Land is not worth much where there are no people to occupy it, and a mule is worth not much where there is no one to drive it.”



Item# 607, handwritten essay, “Better Stay Than to Go”

- Ginger Smyly

Likely near 100 years old, this essay describes the beginning of the Black Migration and predicts ultimate losses to the wealth and well-being of “Colored” persons residing in the South.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

 This year marks the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington, an amazing event, one of the first to be fully televised, which demonstrated the will and the perseverance of African Americans to be treated equally with other citizens, laying the groundwork for the great achievements of the Civil Rights Movement and giving example of the “power of the people.”

BOOK CLUB RETURNS:

Proud Shoes

**AFRICAN AMERICAN
FAMILY LEGACY**

BOOK CLUB

- Program Committee

Register now for a discussion of Proud Shoes, by Pauli Murray, December 12 at 6 pm via zoom. This book is readable!

Our October discussion on The Cooking Gene was lively. The book is at once a history of the south and slavery (did you know slave shipments were geared to the agricultural seasons?), a genealogy journey, a memoir of an overweight, queer, Jewish, Black nerd who became a food historian and gained notoriety with his crowd-funded Southern Discomfort tours, the story of indigenous, African and European food ways blending into southern (black) cooking and a cook book. We shared our own memories of southern cooking which mirrored foods mentioned in the book.

REGISTER NOW and get a free book as long as supplies last. You will receive a link for the meeting after registration.

<https://sfpl-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkcu6urDMvGtJuNUzIGBihkSn3of4jgkPz>

MORE ON THE ARCHIVE:

- WEDDING DRESS
- GOOD NEWS

SEE: rare photo of WW I. African American soldiers, last page

- Ginger Smyly


ITS NOT OVER 'TIL... In our Summer edition of the *Praisesinger*, the mystery of a 19th century silk dress was discussed. The Society has received an update that definitively clarifies the origins of the dress and opens yet new mysteries. In August, Drew Howard visited the Society. He identified the dress as a 2004 gift from his family. Photos of his daughter wearing the dress and shawl – an exact match to the dress in question confirmed his assertion. Drew is researching and writing an article for the Lick-Wilmerding High School alumni newsletter on the subjects of the wedding dress, its original owner, the circumstances of her emancipation, her marriage and her descendants. We hope Drew will share this with the *Praisesinger*.

GOOD NEWS...After many years, several objects have been returned to the Society archives. Our thanks to the intermediary and the party who returned the items of immeasurable historic and cultural value. Both persons have asked to remain anonymous and the Society is okay with that. If you are safeguarding items from the Society archives and collections, please consider returning them, no questions asked.

This news and lists of acquisitions and gifts found in old editions of the newsletter, highlight the importance of the archive inventory and documentation. We must understand what has been collected and how these items singularly and collectively represent African American history and embody a legacy of San Francisco African Americans.

Please join the archive project volunteers – everyone can contribute something. contact Ginger at info@sfaahcs.org.

SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS & OTHER INFO

Visit us at www.sfaahcs.org

- ✓ Society Library & Gallery open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, pm or by appointment
- ✓ "Obama: Legacy of Hope and Vote," exhibit, Society Gallery, through December 9
- ✓ Genealogy Resources Workshop, November 18, 11-12:30, Society Offices, please register
- ✓ Season of Black Art, AAACC, Saturdays, November 18, December 9, January 13, 6-10
- ✓ Annual Membership meeting, Saturday, December 2, 2 – 3:30 pm
- ✓ Society – AA Center Book Club: Proud Shoes, Pauli Murray, December 12, 6 pm, via ZOOM

- ✓ REGISTER NOW FOR:
<https://sfpl-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkcu6urDMvGTJuNUzIGBi hkSn3of4jgkPz>

- ✓ **2024 Annual Black History Month Kick-Off**, Friday, February 2, 2024, noon

For more information 415-292-6172 or [email](#)



Check our [website](#) for events, resources and stories

Goodbye, Richard Roundtree, the great actor known for his action character, SHAFT! We will miss you.

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FYI: Mitchell Young Anderson Museum Donation: The provision to gift the remainder of a non-profit organization to another non-profit also exists in the Society Constitution and Bylaws.

PRAISESINGER ONLINE:

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

(Your annual membership term is January 1 through December 31.)

LIFE members, your donation is appreciated

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Please sign me up as a:

_____ Student	\$15	_____ Organizations	\$250
_____ Senior	\$25	_____ Small Business	\$350
_____ Adult	\$50	_____ Large Business	\$700
_____ Family	\$10	_____ Donor	
	0		

**If you do not plan to be an active member, please make a donation

Donation: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Membership fees and contributions are tax deductible

Make Your Check Payable/Mail To:

San Francisco African American Historical & Cultural Society

762 Fulton Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
415.292.6172

I am interested in serving on the committee(s):

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ Development | _____ Library/archives |
| _____ Membership | _____ Programs |
| _____ Black History Month | _____ Communications |
| _____ Volunteer/Reception | _____ Other |



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU AND YOURS!



PHOTO ALBUM – PHOTO ALBUM -- PHOTO ALBUM – PHOTO ALBUM -- PHOTO ALBUM – PHOTO ALBUM



Norman Brown, Maxine Ussery, Wilfred Ussery, Dr. Oba T'Shaka Cynthia Dorsey



Paul Cobb, Wilfred Ussery, Gaye Cobb



Ussery's and son, Wilfred R. Ussery



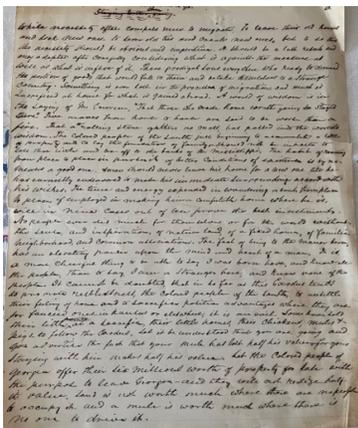
Ussery, Sophie Maxwell



Usserys, Dr. Oba T'Shaka, Geoffrey Pete



Ussery and son, Wildred R. Ussery



"Better to Stay"



WW I. soldiers at ease at Presidio (?)