

Newsletter of the LCHR and BRCHR

Louisiana Council on Human Relations and the
Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations

Volume 2015_2

April, May, and June 2015

Your Dues May be Due

The LCHR Board has decided that since the Annual Meeting of the Council is held in June, dues will become due on July 1st of each year. Since the BRCHR often holds a joint Annual Meeting with the LCHR, this same policy will apply for the dues of the BRCHR. Some of you may have recently sent contributions. But if you have not paid dues since early this spring, you should consider that your dues are due. Several members of the LCHR and the BRCHR have given financial support beyond the \$15.00 single membership or \$20.00 family membership fee. We are very grateful for that support. Your dues are used mainly for the cost of Newsletter mailings and for the purchase of plaques for persons being honored at the Annual Humanitarian Award Programs (awards given by both the LCHR and the BRCH).

LCHR and BRCHR Hold Joint Annual Meetings: Humanitarian Awards and Forum on Education, Health and Law Enforcement

The Louisiana Council on Human Relations and the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations held combined Annual Meetings on June 27 at the Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church Family Life Center in Baton Rouge.

The program featured a forum entitled “Justice for All: Education, Health and Law Enforcement.” Dr. Chauna Banks-Daniel, BR City Councilwoman District 2, served as moderator. The Forum was followed by humanitarian awards by the two councils.

The Forum

Discussing the challenges facing education were Mr. J. W. Vaughn, retired educator and administrator in the West BR Parish School System, and Mrs. Barbara Freiberg, member and Past President of the East BR Parish School System. Mr. Vaughn described his experiences and what he had learned working with

youth in school settings over the years. Mrs. Freiberg emphasized that while the vast majority of students in EBR public schools are on free or assisted lunch programs and many come from environments not conducive to education, the schools are better than the reputation they have been given and continue to improve.



Mrs. Gloria Hall, Dr. Chauna Banks-Daniel and Mr. Joseph Dennis

Two family practice physicians, Dr. Raynando Banks and Dr. Holley Galland, discussed health issues. Both expressed concerns that the number of family

practitioners are declining. Dr. Banks recalled how he sometimes treats three or even four generations of the same family. He called for more clinics and social workers to help individuals address their healthcare needs. Dr. Galland began her presentation by stating that the number one cause of illness worldwide is poverty. Until people have the means to access healthcare, the poor will suffer disproportionately.



The Panel

Deputy Earl Wright, Special Services/Research & Planning Baton Rouge City from the Constable's Office, and Captain Frederick L Thomas, commander over Scotlandville Substation, discussed law enforcement and the interaction with the public. Both stressed that a better understanding of the role police officers play generally, and especially in stressful situations, would go a long way towards improving public safety. These two, along with everyone else agreed that the breakdown in the family is a major source of the problem.



The forum promoted an excellent discussion of the various topics introduced. The Program Committee, chaired by Gloria Jordan Hall, with members Thelma Deamer and James Cross, is to be commended for an interesting and informative program.

The Humanitarian Awards

The recipients of the Oliver/Sigur Humanitarian Award were Melvin "Kip" Holden, Mayor of Baton Rouge, and Anthony G. Navarre. The recipients of the Powell/Reznikoff Award were Mrs. Patricia Haynes Smith, LA State House of Representatives District 67, and John Abel. Mayor Holden and Mrs. Smith could not be present due to previous engagements. They were both being recognized for the manner in which they have given public service.

Anthony Navarre

Anthony Navarre received the 2015 Oliver/Sigur Humanitarian Award.

Among his many honors, Anthony received Police Officer of the Year (Lafayette Optimist Club), Trail Blazer Award (Greater Southwest Black Chamber of Commerce), and the Rosa Louise Parks Courage Award (Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Lafayette Parish Council, Lafayette Citizens for Common Sense).



Anthony Navarre and John Abel

His extensive charity work includes, among others, mentor to at-risk youth, Lafayette Parish Substance Abuse Shelters, St Paul's Catholic Church Community Outreach Program, and St Joseph's Diner.

LCHR is proud to honor Anthony Navarre for over 60 years of service, his dedication to civil rights, and his

continued commitment to improving human relations in his community and in Louisiana.

John Abel

Mr. John Abel, a resident of Baker since 1985, was selected for the Powell/Reznikoff Award. Mr. Abel has distinguished himself for his humanitarian deeds. In 2013 the City of Baker recognized his outstanding service to the City, and to mankind in general, in selecting him as Citizen of the Year. It has been said that "a friend in need is a friend indeed". Mr. Abel has made himself conspicuous as a friend to mankind. He has received special recognition for providing assistance to his neighborhoods in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, helping to put out the fire of his neighbor's house, and assisting in various veterans' activities. As a public servant, he has served on the City of Baker Civil Service Board for 17 years. Mr. Abel has a special talent as a mechanic, having served on active duty in the Air Force for 8 years as an airplane master mechanic, retiring after 26 years as a Master Sergeant in the Army Reserves and working for almost 34 years as an Aviation Safety Inspector for the FAA. He now uses his talent as a mechanic by repairing and donating wheelchairs to disabled individuals. Mr. Abel has been married to his wife Linda for 54 years. His wife says of him "he is always busy doing something for somebody. I'd go crazy trying to keep up with all he's doing. If someone needs help, he helps them; if something is broken, he fixes it."

In 1978, the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations began recognizing citizens in the Baton Rouge area who have made significant contributions toward improving human relations. The award was named after the late Fr. Elmer S. Powell, former Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, and the late Rabbi Marvin M. Reznikoff, former spiritual leader of Liberal (now Beth Shalom) Synagogue, both who served on the Board of the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations. The activities of Mr. Abel are helping to achieve the vision of these two humanitarians.

Meeting of the LCHR Board of Directors

The LCHR Board of Directors met at the Home of Anthony Navarre in Lafayette on July 25, 2015. Discussions were held on possible activities to be undertaken during the coming year. Much of the discussion involved the subject of "Prison Reform". The national initiatives being advocated on Prison Reforms by members of both the Democratic and Republican parties, and by both Conservatives and Liberals were noted. The main concern is the number of persons in prison for non-violent crimes, the length of the sentences and the high cost. The LCHR wishes to encourage this activity. The next Board meeting will be held in Baton Rouge during October.

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