

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF
AGING & HUMAN SERVICES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Gabrielle Lawrence -CoChair
Vante Burkes—Co-Chair
Kelsey R.M. Bush, Commission Liaison



COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY:

James R. Guy, President
Eric Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose

Since 1963, the St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission (HRC) has been empowered to promote understanding and harmony of relationships between the people of the county and to use its influence and persuasion to direct the community's efforts to the solution of problems that cause racial and other tensions stemming from acts of discrimination within the county.

Activities

The HRC co-sponsored the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Breakfast held at St. Mary's College of Maryland by attending planning meetings and assisting with public relations. HRC continues to work with St. Mary's College in their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts on campus. The HRC partnered with the SMC Mediation Center and Public Library to help facilitate the "Longest Table" event held over the summer, in which conversations were had with the general public over dinner regarding topics of concern in our community. HRC has also partnered with the Mediation Center and other community organizations to convene community conversations and training opportunities around the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Challenges

The membership continues to struggle with ways to accomplish its goals of advocating for human/civil rights and cultural diversity. Several ideas have been discussed, but a dwindling membership continues to be a challenge, as an active membership is necessary to carry out some of the activities that have been discussed. Additionally, with the new members being added the work has to be done through partnerships and this is still a work in progress.

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Plans

The following are some ideas that were discussed in order to make the HRC more relevant in these turbulent times:

1. Serve as a neutral forum for investigating conflicts in the community, such as within the school system or county government.
2. On behalf of the Board of County Commissioner's assess the diversity, equity and inclusion environment within county government and issue a report and recommendations.
3. Partner with other human services organizations to convene public conversations regarding human relations and conflict resolution.
4. Assisting in the coordination of a multi-cultural event that celebrates the diversity in St. Mary's county
5. Establish a process to address local redress when it comes to the areas that under the charge of HRC

The HRC will be developing these over the course of the upcoming year.

Membership as of December 31, 2019

Joshua Brewster, Co-Chair (2nd Term ends June 2021)
Vante Burkes, Co-Chair (2nd Term ends June 2022)
Joanna Colvin (2nd Term ends June 2022)
Jesus Godinez (2nd Term ends December 2022)
Steve Hall (1st full Term ends Dec. 2022)
Tara Cruz (1st Term ends December 2022)
Gabrielle Lawrence (1st Term ends December 2022)
Cheremie Frisby-Spencer (1st Term ends June 30, 2021)
Adrienne Dilahunt (1st Term ends June 30, 2022)
Ashley Raley (Partial Term- June 30, 2022)
Amy Davis (Partial Term- June 30, 2022)
Sean Wicker (1st Term- December 31, 2023)