

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA**

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**The Southern District of West Virginia Celebrates
National African American Heritage**

Each year, Americans observe National African American Heritage in the month of February by celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of African Americans. In the Southern District of West Virginia, court employee Tamara Roach spearheaded a Soul Food Luncheon on Friday, February 26, 2016, assisted by her co-workers, Tony Riley, Marquitta Wilborne and Sophia Tran.

In addition to posters with pictures and brief historical text of prominent African Americans strategically placed in the lunch room, the agenda included prepared remarks by Ms. Roach with regard to two prominent African Americans who had ties to the State of West Virginia, Carter G. Woodson and Booker T. Washington.

Historian Carter G. Woodson (December 19, 1875-April 3, 1950) spent his formative years in West Virginia. He was a historian, an author, and a publisher who began the systematic collection and dissemination of black historical information. He was often called the "Father of Black History."

Born to parents who were former slaves, in Buckingham County, Virginia, December 19, 1875, Woodson spent his early life in Virginia. The family moved permanently to Huntington, West Virginia, in 1893 after Carter and his brother, Robert, had migrated to West Virginia to work in the coal mines. Working in Fayette County, Woodson was influenced by association with Oliver Jones and other miners to whom he read books and newspapers.

Woodson attended Douglass High School in Huntington, graduating in 1896. He studied at Berea College in Kentucky and returned to Huntington as principal of Douglass in 1900. In 1903, Woodson accepted an administrative and teaching assignment in the Philippines; during 1906–07, he traveled around the world, studied at the Sorbonne, and returned to continue his education at the University of Chicago and at Harvard, receiving a doctorate from the latter institution in 1912.

From 1919 to 1920, Woodson served as the Dean of Liberal Arts at Howard University after working as a public school teacher and principal in Washington. His final professional appointment in West Virginia was as the Dean of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, now West Virginia State University, from 1920–22. He then returned to Washington. Though he never lived or worked in West Virginia again, Woodson maintained his family ties and came back to the state for speaking engagements and to visit in Huntington. He remained attentive to his family's needs and aided them financially for many years.

Carter G. Woodson died in Washington. The Carter G. Woodson Memorial Foundation erected a life-sized statue of him on Hal Greer Boulevard in Huntington.

Another great African American man with ties to West Virginia was Booker T. Washington (April 5, 1856 – November 14, 1915), an African-American educator, author, orator, and advisor to presidents of the United States. Between 1890 and 1915, Washington was the dominant leader in the African American community. Known as "Booker," he migrated to West Virginia after slavery was abolished and married a lady from Malden named Fannie M. Smith. Malden is the same Kanawha River Valley town where Washington had lived from age nine to sixteen. He maintained ties there all his life. Washington and Smith were married in the summer of 1882. They had one child, Portia M. Washington. Fannie died in May 1884. Booker T. Washington was responsible for West Virginia State University moving to the Kanawha Valley and was the keynote speaker for their first Commencement.

District Clerk employees also played a game called "Who Am I?" in the form of the "Soul Train Scramble Board." This was an interactive activity that engaged employees in learning about some famous African Americans and their historical contributions by listening to clues and unscrambling the letters to form their names.

Next, live entertainment was provided by Jamela "Northstarr" Brown, who performed original spoken word (poetry), "Take You Back," and William Jackson III, Melody Jordan and Tamara Roach, who sang a song called "I Just Can't Give Up Now."

<http://www.wvsc.uscourts.gov/southern-district-west-virginia-celebrates-national-african-american-heritage>

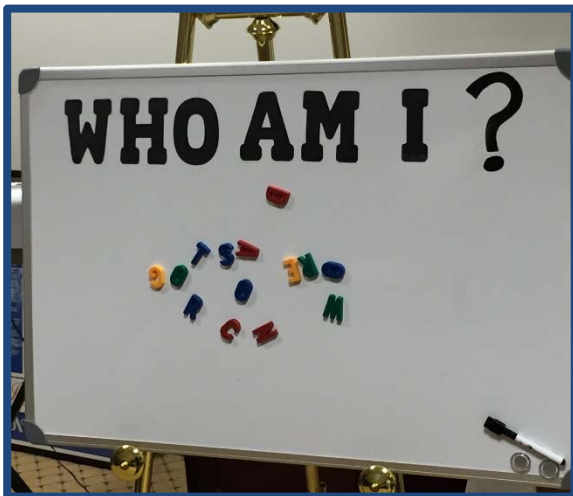
Finally, the participants partook of "soul food" to conclude the celebration.



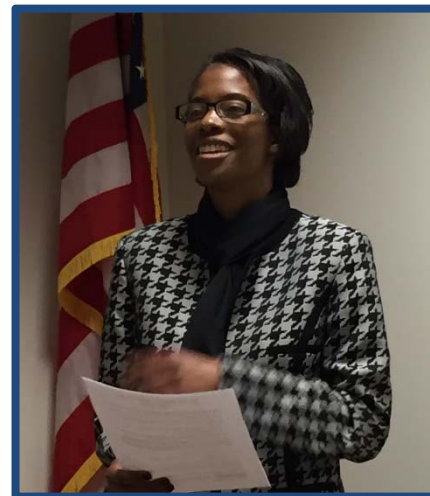
District Court Employees attend National African American Heritage Celebration



Court Employee Tamara Roach and friends Melody Jordan and William Jackson III perform "I Just Can't Give Up Now"



"Who Am I?" Soul Train Scramble Board



Court Employee Marquitta Wilborne hosts the "Who Am I?" Soul Train Scramble