



## More Than 200 Attend MLK Community Celebration

From: Staff Reports

### JULIUS L. CHAMBERS SPEAKS AT ST. ANDREWS MLK EVENT

"Dr. King asked us to protect the poor," said Julius L. Chambers, renowned North Carolina attorney and civil rights activist, "Can we count upon you for that effort? Dr. King's efforts were successful, but he told us that we have just begun the fight."

Chambers' comments came during the annual celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day sponsored Monday by St. Andrews Presbyterian College. More than 200 people attended the event.

"Dr. King pleaded for all Americans to join with him in the fight for equal opportunity," said Chambers. "It seemed 'right' for a lot of us. One thing Dr. King asked us to remember was that those who were relegated to second class, we had the right to protest."

Chambers reminisced about his times with King including litigation in Danville, Va.

"I was thinking about my experience in civil rights legislation. I was sent to Danville to defend King and demonstrators. More than 7,000 demonstrators had been charged," remembered Chambers. Over time, Chambers said that all of the cases were eventually dismissed.

During the Danville cases and afterward, Chambers said he and others argued in the court system for equal protection, equal opportunity and due process under the law. He described this fight as ongoing today.

Chambers was joined by Jacqueline Dove-Miller, a St. Andrews graduate, who gave a special poetry reading. Both the St. Andrews Concert Choir and the MLK Community Celebration Choir performed during the event. Samuel Hemingway III, a senior at St. Andrews, emceed the event. The celebration was coordinated by the Special Events Committee at St. Andrews.

Rep. Garland Pierce presented Paul Baldasare, St. Andrews president, with a resolution adopted by the State Legislature recognizing the college's efforts for the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Dove-Miller talked about the inspiration behind her spoken-word piece.

"In the first half, it describes how I felt here at St. Andrews," she said. "The second half describes how I felt after leaving St. Andrews with the impact of Dr. King."

Her poem begins:

I want to matter.  
Despite what I look like,  
Or where I live  
How poor I am, how fat I am  
or my skin tone...  
Despite my kinky hair or my balding head,  
How stooped my shoulders,  
Or if I'm well read.  
Even though I may not speak with eloquence  
Or possess 10 extraordinary talents  
I want my presence on this earth to matter  
To at least one other human being.

"The Martin Luther King celebration is a special event not only for St. Andrews but also for our community," said Rona Leach, as-

sistant professor of education at St. Andrews. "I think it's an opportunity where the community can come together and we can fellowship together while remembering Dr. King's legacy. His legacy has an impact on each of us."

The national holiday marks the birthdate of King on the third Monday of every January. King's actual birthdate was Jan. 15. President Ronald Reagan signed the bill creating the holiday on Nov. 2, 1983, in a special ceremony in the White House Rose Garden.



Jacqueline Dove-Miller. Photo courtesy of Rooney Coffman



Julius L. Chambers speaks to the community. Photo courtesy of Rooney Coffman

## THREE NORTH CAROLINA ARTISTS RECOGNIZED WITH SAM RAGAN AWARD

From: Staff Reports

The legacy of Sam Ragan, the late ardent supporter of the North Carolina arts, continued Thursday night with the 28th rendition of the Sam Ragan Fine Arts Awards given by St. Andrews Presbyterian College.

Three artists were recognized -- writer Charles Blackburn Jr., musician Barbara Geer and sculptor/designer Thomas Sayre.

Throughout the evening, references were made to Ragan, the former publisher of *The Pilot* newspaper. St. Andrews seniors Mason Tate and Ian Burkett read their personal favorites from Ragan's poetry.

Ron Bayes, writer-in-residence and distinguished professor of creative writing emeritus, remembered first learning about Ragan in the early 1970's through an article in *The Charlotte Observer* where Ragan described renown American poet Ezra Pound as one of his favorites. This resulted in a fan letter from Bayes to Ragan in Southern Pines.

A strong friendship developed from there. The friendship spread to include St. Andrews and its students, staff, and faculty. The advent of the Sam Ragan Awards came soon afterward with the support of A.P. Perkinson Jr., then the president of St. Andrews.

Thursday night's award for Blackburn came with a special meaning.

"I feel like Sam and I have come full circle," said Blackburn. "The last time I spoke here was as part of the Sam Ragan bust campaign." The efforts of Blackburn and others resulted in the commissioning of a bust of Sam Ragan that now presides over the North Carolina Literary Hall of Famed at the Weymouth Center in Southern Pines.

"It was really because of Sam that I served on several boards and writing groups," said Blackburn.

Sayre agreed with Blackburn on Ragan's impact with writers and artists in North Carolina.

"As a member of the State Arts Council, I've come to know how incredible the support is in this state for the arts," he said. Ragan served as the first N.C. Secretary of Cultural Resources, first chairman of the N.C. Arts Council and a member of the founding commission and original board of trustees of the

N.C. School of the Arts.

The support for the arts in North Carolina has enabled Sayre to make a career out of creating artwork out of concrete. His works of art typically weigh up to several thousand pounds and can be seen in interior and exterior locations.

Bill McConnell, assistant professor of music at St. Andrews, introduced one of the three recipients, Barbara Geer -- a St. Andrews graduate.

"Her work as an educator and as a leader in arts education positions her on the vanguard of arts advocacy for all of our citizens," said McConnell. "Our honoree is doing what she was taught to do at St. Andrews Presbyterian College. Through her work she has changed the lives of children and adults through the power of music. Through her leadership, she has brought attention to the vital role of music in our society and in our civilization. She is changing the world, and she is making her alma mater proud."

Upon realizing that many people did not know the words to the National Anthem, Geer and others from the MENC -- National Association for Music Education provided leadership to a project to teach people the words. This effort culminated in a gathering of 5,000 students on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, singing the National Anthem. Geer also asked those attending the Thursday awards to stand and sing the National Anthem with her. Geer is the president-elect for the MENC.

The evening also featured a short film interview with the late newsman David Brinkley who reminisced about Sam Ragan shortly after the latter's death. Ragan gave Brinkley his first newspaper job at *The Wilmington News-Star*.

The evening ended with Ron Bayes at the microphone, smiling and saying quietly and simply, "Well, Sam's still with us. Come back again."



Sam Ragan Award recipients: Barbara Geer, Thomas Sayre, and Charles Blackburn Jr. with President Paul Baldasare, and Prof. Ron Bayes. Photo courtesy of Rooney Coffman.



Barbara Geer accepting her award from President Paul Baldasare. Photo courtesy of Rooney Coffman.

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