

**Chair**  
David O. Fakunle, Ph.D.

**Vice Chair**  
Charles L. Chavis, Jr., Ph.D.

**Staff**  
Zenita Hurley, Esq.  
Kristin McFarlane, Esq.  
Stephanie Thompson, PMP

# Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



**Commissioners**  
David Armenti  
Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.  
Simone Barrett-Williams, Ph.D.  
Nicholas Creary, Ph.D.  
Roger Davidson, Ph.D.  
Maya Davis  
Teisha Dupree-Wilson, Ph.D.  
Omar Eaton-Martinez  
Christopher E. Haley  
Kirkland Hall, Sr., Ph.D.  
Elizabeth Hughes  
Izetta Mobley, Ph.D.  
Carl Snowden  
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D.  
Stephanie Suerth

## Monthly Meeting Minutes April 2022

**Date:** Monday, April 11, 2022

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

### Attendance:

David Armenti	X	Kirkland Hall	ABS	
Iris Barnes	X	Elizabeth Hughes	ABS	
Simone Barrett-Williams	X	Teisha Dupree-Wilson	X	
Charles Chavis	X	Izetta Mobley	ABS	
Roger Davidson	ABS	Carl Snowden	X	
Maya Davis	X	Marshall Stevenson	X	
Omar Eaton-Martinez	ABS	Stephanie Suerth	ABS	
David Fakunle	X	Stephanie Thompson	ABS	
Chris Haley	X	Zenita Hurley	X	
Nicholas Creary	X	Kristine McFarlane	X	
Charles Chavis	X	(Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran)	X	

### Members of the Public Present:

Jack Del Nunzio, Linda Shopes, Lisa Kraft, Nick White, Turna Lewis, Victoria Heyliger, Karen Stone, Annie Wood,

### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Fakunle at 11:37 a.m.

### Approval of Minutes:

Chair Fakunle announced that the minutes from the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will be approved in the May meeting.

**Public Comments:** n/a

### Committee Reports:

#### Research Committee- Commissioner David Armenti

Commissioner Armenti reported that the joint research and logistics committee meeting held on Monday March 21<sup>st</sup> where several commissioners and members of the public were present. There were updates

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regarding where research collaboration stands between the commission, Heritage Associates, and partner coalitions in various counties. Issues also discussed include:

- The need for communication to outside entities such as organizations that the commission wants to be involved in the hearings or organizations on the research side, or individuals that may not know their connections to the victims in the history that is being studied. According to Commissioner Armenti, if there are communication efforts externally, that would help with public engagements. He therefore, urged that these outreach efforts should have the commission's backing. Commissioner Armenti further informed the meeting Chair Fakunle had initially provided some letterheads which will be used to drive the engagement efforts.

He also confirmed the existing schedules in terms of hearing. June 4<sup>th</sup> is a firm date for Baltimore County coalition. Anne Arundel county hearing may come up in late June. Commissioner Armenti concluded his report stating the need to prioritize research goals.

- Still on the Research Committee report, Dr. Tyler added that there is an ongoing effort to strengthen public outreach to reach some of the descendants. He stated that the outcomes of the genealogical research are not yielding the desired results. The committee is therefore, working very hard to produce actionable plans that will be shared by next week. This new plan puts an emphasis on outreach. He added that the Committee will be using MLTRC stationaries, public media, and internet sources. The overall goal is to build a broad-based sustainable awareness of the activities of the commission in search for these descendants. He posited that Ms. Liles will be providing some names of identified descendants who are willing to be interviewed and recorded.

In Anne Arundel County, they are focusing on Henry Davis. Research work on Henry Davis will commence within the week.

In Prince Georges County, the PGC Lynching Memorial Project have been helpful with individuals providing helpful information on where Juricks may be buried and conducting some research on the Chapel Hills community.

In Queen Anne's community, they have identified Asbury Green's parents and siblings. Also, for Ashbury Green they found people on ancestry and will be coordinating with them.

In Harford County, Lewis Harris' family members have been located, but the family are not responding. Correspondence from Heritage Associates has been sent, and Chair Fakunle also wrote to them, yet there are no responses. Another relative has been contacted via Facebook and hoping that that would yield some success.

In St. Mary's County, there was a conversation with Karen Stone regarding Benjamin Hance trying to find out what church the sacramental records may be and where he may be buried. There is some resistance by the churches to give out information however, they will continue to pursue for more information.

Commissioner Armenti added that interns from George Mason and Heritage Associates are still arranging individual meetings with county coalition representatives. More information will be shared as things develop. He further stated that the Soil Collection event was very impactful and commended Dr. Barnes and her team for an incredible job.

- Commissioner Eleanor Thompson told the meeting that she has some information about Ashbury Green as she is his descendant.  
She also informed the meeting that she has helpful information on Anne Arundel County lynching. According to her, Henry Davis is at Brewer Hill cemetery. Wright Smith has two death certificates and is in Mount Auburn cemetery. His body was sent to Baltimore after he was lynched. She will provide some helpful articles.
- **Logistics Committee- Commissioner Maya Davis**  
There were no updates from Commissioner Davis.

#### **Reconciliation Committee- Co-chair Charles Chavis**

Commissioner Chavis informed the meeting that he met with representatives from Equal Justice Initiative and will be moving forward to work along-side EJI to engage with various community projects that they support throughout the state. He added that they will continue to strengthen the relationship between the commission and the communities and get the working relationship with EJI clarified. Also, they are working to schedule meetings with representatives of coalitions as preparations are made to rebuild relationship with individual communities.

#### **Outreach to Local Coalitions:**

Chair Fakunle stated there were assignments for various commissioners in different regions of Maryland that have plans for Hearing sessions. He explained that there is a need to update the assignments to commissioners as well as have a reset of how to approach the reconciliation of these relationships. He acknowledged commissioners who have been actively involved in cultivating these relationships and encouraged everyone to see this reassignment as an opportunity to better design and craft an approach that all commissioners can use for the purpose of cultivating relationships with local coalitions. Chair Fakunle added that there have been teaching moments and lessons learned on the processes of the work so far and would like Commissioners to share those lessons in terms of what has worked, what has not and areas of improvements. This would help create a new game plan of engagement with the coalitions.

- Commissioner Davis responded stating that what has been helpful is clear communication and not sending mixed messages, in other words, messages are sent from one principal place.
- Commissioner Snowden shared the need to develop a line item in the budget that local coalitions can access, with clearly defined purpose for the funds. He said one of the feedback items that he got from local partners is that they wanted to be compensated for some things. For example, for public hearings, there may be need for refreshment or fliers.

Chair Fakunle responded stating that there was a line item in the proposal from the Department of Justice although the commission could not use the funds in the ways that they wanted as DOJ did not allow for the execution as planned.

Co-Chair Chavis added that one third of the funds from DOJ have been set aside to support the recommendations that come out of the work of the commission. He further explained that there are additional funds that they are looking into to support local coalitions, however, there is a need to ensure that they are going through the proper channels. More information will be shared as progress is made.

Chair Fakunle concluded by saying that the commission can explore ways to ensure that some parts of the funding can connect with local coalitions in some sort of fashion.

- Commissioner Armenti discussed turnover in coalitions. According to him, for newer commissioners, if they have not been assigned a county or held any meetings with any county, then the Commission leadership should approach that. This will ensure active participation of all the commissioners. He further posited that some feedback from local coalition partners is the need to see commissioners physically present in the communities. He therefore, encouraged Commissioners should try to engage in activities in the county.
- Commissioner Davis discussed the importance of taking into consideration peoples locals and where they live versus where they are assigned. If commissioners are assigned in places that are far away from their locale, it may be more challenging to commute to their local coalitions.
- Commissioner Creary reminded the commission of the urgency in getting things running and encouraged that the emails to commissioners be sent sooner than later. He also advised the commission to tap into the resources from the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project and to see if they can work with the commission and to collaborate on some events.

Chair Fakunle provided the next steps and action plan. According to him, he will send emails to all commissioners to provide information about what their current affiliation is as well as what coalition they have been assigned. If there are no current assignments, then one would be established. As part of the email, there will be questions regarding where commissioners live, and this will inform the assignment and reassignment. He asked Co-Chair Chavis to reconnect with EJI and have an up-to-date contact information of local coalitions.

#### **New Business:**

- There is a vacant Commissioner position. Chair Fakunle informed the meeting that the commission should have 18 commissioners but there is currently 17. There is a need to replace Commissioner DeNeen Brown who left the commission last year. The process of filling commissioner spots was to do a call of interest and interested folks will submit applications, then the commissioners will vote for those that they wanted and then the final selection will be sent to the Governor's office for final confirmation. The focus will be on regions in Maryland that are underrepresented.  
The Chair moved the motion to adopt this search strategy, Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. There were no oppositions.

#### **Announcements:**

- Commissioner Armenti reminded the meeting that there will be logistics/ research committee meeting next Monday April 18<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Commissioner Davis and himself are formulating an agenda. He also informed the meeting that there is a May 14th event in Kent County led by the James Taylor Justice Coalition, he encouraged commissioners to attend and use the opportunity to connect with the local coalitions.
- Commissioner Snowden stated that on the evening of April 1t, there will be a salute for Justice Jackson who was the first Black woman on the Supreme Court. He discussed the importance of controlling the narrative so that future generations are certain about past events. He encouraged commissioners to attend the celebratory event in honor of Justice Jackson and to celebrate other Black people.

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- Commissioner Haley informed the meeting that he was at the library of congress manuscript division and saw an article on the Matthew Williams lynching of 1931. He will make copies of the article and share with the commission and encouraged commissioners to research on earlier lynching under the title 'Never Know More.' He also informed the meeting about a reading of African American Poems centered on Civil rights tomorrow April 12<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged commissioners to attend.
- Commissioner Creary informed the meeting that Baltimore Sun published an apology for their hand in contributing to a climate that not only enable but encourage lynching to happen. He explained that it is worthwhile to contact other Black journalists to get their opinions on the appropriate reparations to be given in these circumstances. He requested for copies of letterheads so he could start sending words out to journalists and getting their feedbacks. Co-Chair Chavis added that it would be great to reach out to Dr. Benjamin Davis and those who represent the Black Press Associations. Co-Chair Chavis pledged his support to Commissioner Creary.
- Chair Fakunle confirmed the hearing at Baltimore County on June 4.
- Chair Fakunle reminded the meeting that the minutes of both March and April will be approved in the May meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: Chair Fakunle thanked the commissioners for their time and adjourned the meeting at 12:40pm.