

New Hope's grand finale: A Celebration of Black History

PHOTOS BY AL WHITE

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

New Hope Baptist Church presented a month long observation of Black History as each Thursday during February they presented events that helped to showcase their 9th annual "Back in the Day" celebration.

Attorney Constance Slaughter-Harvey, a Tougaloo College graduate, was the speaker for the grand finale, held Feb. 27. It was at Tougaloo where she met civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

Harvey stated in her address

that it was the 1963 murder of Evers that, along with values instilled in her by her parents, and the racial injustices she witnessed, inspired her to join the civil rights movement.

Several classmates who graduated with Slaughter marched in and were seated together in support of their classmate. As she looked over the audience she said that many individuals in the audience participated in movements as well.

She spoke on the subject "Movements Change, but Commitments Remain the

Same." She acknowledged the importance of registering to vote and voting.

Slaughter told the audience "we must stay vigilantly, we can't take a break." She was referring to voter suppression and other injustices that still exist today.

Slaughter recognized her classmates from the class of 1967 who walked with her in activism and fights against racism and discrimination.

Slaughter received a standing ovation for her heartfelt speech.

Flonzie Wright, chairperson

for the month-long Black History celebration, said she was very pleased with the entire month of "Nine Years of Telling the Story."

During week one, Dr. John A. Peoples, was the featured speaker. Peoples served as president of Jackson State University from 1957 to 1984. In addition to numerous achievements, in July 2012, Peoples was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal as one of the African-American Marines of World II who was trained at the racially segregated Montford Point Camp of Camp

Lejeune, North Carolina.

During week two, tributes were given to Mississippi Civil Rights Living Legends, Rep. Alyce G. Clark, Rev. Edwin King, Euvester Simpson and Hezekiah Watkins.

During week three, a Youth Talent Showcase Explosion was held where New Hope Christian School students made presentations. Praise dancers performed and the MIME Ministry of Greater Bethlehem Temple and the Tougaloo Concert Choir performed.

Pastor Jerry Young, during

his remarks, said less than a year ago, a group asked him what he thought they should do about the upcoming election. Young said today his response would be to make sure in 2020 that we vote and that 'we vote our hopes and not our fears.'

The celebration was sponsored by the Black History Ministry at New Hope, where Wright serves as program director. It was financially assisted by the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Mississippi Humanities Council.

