



ON FAIR GROUND

A SEMIANNUAL FAIR HOUSING NEWSLETTER OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Outstanding Achievement in Fair Housing Awards

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act, one week after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and during a period of civil unrest and violence in our major urban areas.

This important legislation was one of a series of civil rights laws that sought to secure the rights of individuals and extend the full civil rights of equality in voting, employment, housing and public accommodations. The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.

Our Nation has come a long way in forty plus years, yet our journey to justice is not complete. That is one of the reasons the Commission created its **Outstanding Achievement in Fair Housing Award** to recognize individuals and/or organizations that have shown exemplary per-

formances in fair housing practices. These individuals and organizations have profoundly impacted the way that fair housing is conducted over the course of their entire lifetime or have made significant contributions that support the spirit and letter of Fair Housing Laws which they have demonstrated through words, deeds, business policies, or other means.



Executive Director William Wharton, Karen Mundy, RCHF President, Judy Craft, LBAR President and Rabbi Marc Kline, Commission Chair

We have two awards this year. First is the Lexington-Bluegrass Association of REALTORS® (LBAR) and the second is Mrs. Lillian Gentry.

LBAR has been a valued partner with the Commission in promoting fair housing

and equal opportunity in our community. LBAR created a non-profit arm, the REALTOR®-Community Housing Foundation (RCHF), whose goal is to empower low in-

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2008 National Fair Housing Policy and Training Conference

From April 8-11, 2008, Commission staff attended the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2008 National Policy and Training Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Representatives from state and local government agencies, private fair housing organizations, the banking and financial industries, real estate associations, bar associations and disability organizations attended the conference.

The Conference theme of "On the Sunlit Path" was in keeping with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Federal Fair Housing Act. This phrase was taken from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous March on Washington speech where Dr. King discussed the realization of the "sunlit path" to racial justice.

The opening ceremony was held at the Geor-

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FY2008 Second and Third Quarter Summary

Compliance

During the Second and Third Quarters of FY2008, the staff received 19 new housing complaints to investigate. Staff closed twenty-one (21) complaints, seven (7) of which were non-monetary settlements and three (3) with monetary benefits totaling \$5,350 for the complainants.

Community Relations

During the Second and Third Quarters of FY2008, the staff attended ten (1) community meetings or events related to fair housing, attended one (1) training session and conducted three (3) training sessions or presentations on fair housing. Staff also conducted four (4) site visits during the period.

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come families and strengthen neighborhoods by assisting homeowners in need with modifications and repairs necessary for them to stay in their homes. These programs provide home repairs for low-income elderly home owners, install accessible ramps for people with disabilities and/or mobility impairments and to help single-parent graduates of the Virginia Place program become first-time home owners. The Housing Foundation has grown its programs to help more people in need with effective community partnerships including the Remodelers Council of the Home Builders Association of Lexington, the Mortgage Bankers Association of the Bluegrass, the business community such as the Lowe's Stores of Lexington, faith communities including volunteers from Immanuel Baptist Church and Shiloh Baptist Church and many others in the housing industry, and community-at-large in Central Kentucky.

LBAR also supports the community with many REALTORS® volunteering and serving on many boards and commissions as representatives of their organization. LBAR supports other diversity and cultural initiatives in our community by providing monetary donations and/or volunteers.

For many years LBAR has partnered with the Lexington Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission to provide fair housing training to members of the Association. In addition, LBAR offers cross-cultural training programs for members to learn about doing business with clients from other countries. Chinese/Japanese, Latino, Indian/Pakistani and Middle Eastern training have been offered.

The Commission is deeply honored to present this award to LBAR because of its significant contributions and support for the spirit and letter of Fair Housing Laws which they have demonstrated through words, deeds, and business poli-

cies and practices.

Our second award winner is Mrs. Lillian Gentry. Mrs. Gentry is a well-known community volunteer. She has served and still serves the community in many capacities. She is a leader in her neighborhood association, her church and several other organizations such as the NAACP, the Downtown Lexington Corporation, the Lexington Fair Housing Council and others.

From 1992 to 2006 Mrs. Gentry volunteered and served with Community Reinvestment Alliance as a volunteer Board member, a volunteer counselor and later as an underpaid employee. Over the years, Mrs. Gentry has attended many community meetings and housing workshops promoting the importance of homeownership and her organization's home buying assistance programs. Mrs. Gentry has participated and supported the Commission's fair housing programs and initiatives.



Mayor Jim Newberry, Mrs. Lillian Gentry and Rabbi Marc Kline, Commission Chair

As a counselor she has mentored and nurtured first time homebuyers in realistically evaluating their readiness for a home purchase, understanding their financing and down payment options, and navigating what can be for many extremely confusing and difficult process. She also counseled individuals to remain homeowners after purchase so that they could remain in their homes.

The Commission is deeply honored to present this award to Mrs. Gentry for the way that she was profoundly impacted this community by the way that she has conducted herself and made significant contributions to this community in her support the spirit and letter of Fair Housing Laws in which she continues to demonstrate through words, actions and good deeds.

News

Former Fayette County Judge Joseph Johnson Dies

The Commission notes the passing of former Fayette County Judge Joe Johnson on March 28, 2008. Judge Johnson was instrumental in creating the joint Lexington-Fayette County Human Rights Commission and was a strong supporter of the passage of our community's first "open housing law" in 1966, making Lexington one of the first states in the south to pass such a law. By comparison, the federal fair housing act was not passed until 1968, one week after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee during a period of great racial and civil unrest.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Judge Johnson's family and our sincere thanks for his contributions in making this community a welcoming place to live.

Fair Housing Month Proclamations

On April 18, 2008 Commission Chair Rabbi Marc Kline, Commissioner Faye Liebermann and Executive Director William Wharton along with representatives of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights attended the Gubernatorial Fair Housing Month Proclamation Signing in Frankfort, KY.



During the April 29, 2008 Council Work Session, Mayor Jim Newberry presented Commission Chair Rabbi



Marc Kline and Executive Director William Wharton with a Proclamation proclaiming April as Fair Housing Month.

Harrison Elementary Fair Housing and Cultural Diversity Program

As part of the Commission's Fair Housing and Cultural Diversity Program at Harrison Elementary School, on January 25, 2008, Senior Office Manager Tami Reed



and representatives from Lexington Apartment Association and Stoney Falls Apartments held the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. T-shirt Design Contest with fifth grade students at Harrison Elementary School. In observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, the students learned about Dr. King's devotion to civil rights and designed a t-shirt to show what his message meant to them.

Conference *continued from pg. 1*

gia Aquarium and it welcomed the conference attendees to Atlanta and introduced them to the conference's theme and its relevance to fair housing. The highlight of this session was the introduction and remarks by Marian Williams who filed the first fair housing complaint in 1968. Mrs. Williams's description of the events and her heartfelt comments surrounding her ordeal were inspirational and set the tone for the rest of the conference.

The Conference speakers were leaders in government, housing, and civil rights. Workshops covered such topics as historical perspective of the fair housing act, homeownership, exotic loan products, credit scoring, foreclosures, testing, damages in fair housing complaints, fair lending, accessible and disability rights, zoning and fair housing, immigration, inclusive and diverse neighborhoods, entitlement communities and affirmatively furthering fair housing, gentrification issues and legal update.



Information at your fingertips!

Visit the Commission's Web Site for information on the Commission and its Fair Housing Program.



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