

Clarksdale Advocate

"FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY"

BROWN FOUNDATION PRESENTS

JOSEPH R. BIDEN

PRESIDENT'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Honoring Excellence: Six Clarksdale Natives Awarded President's Lifetime Achievement Award

Josephine Pradia Rhymes

Josephine Pradia Rhymes, a Lake Charles, Louisiana native, retired as the immediate past Executive Director of Tri-County Workforce Alliance after 25 years of dedicated service. She's the first black elected County Judge in Arkansas, serving in Washington County for two terms. Rhymes is a tireless advocate for education and children, having served extensively on boards and received numerous awards for her contributions.



With degrees from Southern University & A & M College and the University of Mississippi, her impact spans from founding organizations to enhancing community parks. Her commitment to service and leadership continues to enrich Clarksdale and Coahoma County.

Dr. Vanessa Rogers Long

Dr. Vanessa Rogers Long, a beacon of leadership within Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, has propelled the South Eastern Region to unparalleled success. Elected as the youngest Regional Director in 1994, she revolutionized communication channels, introducing initiatives like the Cluster Ambassadors Team and "The Ivy Post" newsletter. Dr. Long's visionary leadership fostered cooperation, organization, participation, and edification, encapsulated in her COPEsmplatform.



Under her stewardship, the South Eastern Region pioneered the implementation of the international signature program, Partners in Mathematics and Science (PIMS), setting a standard of excellence and innovation within Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Guyna G. Johnson

Global Ratings, embodies a legacy of impactful leadership and public service. With over 20 years in the industry, she excels in strategic planning, team management, and fostering collaboration across global platforms. Guyna's expertise in financial acumen and coalition-building has led her to spearhead the analysis of over \$5.1 trillion in rated fixed-income portfolios. A dynamic leader, she serves as Board Chair for the Jackson State University Development Foundation, driving significant



fundraising efforts exceeding \$1.6 million. Guyna's commitment to mentorship and philanthropy resonates through her extensive involvement in empowering youth and women's financial independence.

Henry Espy Jr.

Henry Espy, a pioneering figure in Mississippi politics and civil rights, embodies a legacy of leadership and community service deeply rooted in Clarksdale's history. From breaking barriers as the first African American on the school board to historic terms as mayor, Espy's dedication to inclusive governance has shaped local and national discourse. As owner of Century Funeral Home and Burial Association, he continues to serve his community beyond politics.



Espy's influence extends to his family, including his brother, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, and son, Mississippi State Representative Chuck Espy, reflecting a multigenerational commitment to public service and progress.

Chuck Espy

Chuck Espy, Clarksdale's Mayor and former Mississippi House Representative, prioritizes family and community. During his legislative tenure, he championed impactful bills like the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), ensuring healthcare for Mississippi children. Dedicated to equity, he founded The Chuck Espy Foundation to support families in crisis. Espy, a spiritual leader, is active in various organizations including the NAACP and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. With a Bachelor's in Business Management



from Southern University and an MBA from Bethel University, he also presides over Century Funeral Home and Burial Association, a family legacy spanning generations.

Jeremy A. Simpson

Jeremy Simpson brings over 20 years of IT industry expertise, specializing in business solutions, software applications, fleet management, CCTV surveillance, and access control systems. With roles as a system administrator, network manager, and technical consultant for corporate, government and healthcare organizations, he has implemented IT services in various sectors. Jeremy holds degrees from Coahoma Jr. College and Alcorn State University. Actively involved in initiatives like the FBI Citizen Academy, Habitat for



Humanity, United Way, NBA Read to Achieve Program, MSCS Career Ready Advisor and providing computer training to underserved individuals. As President/CEO of Systems Technologies, Inc., Jeremy embodies the ethos of "Service is Power" and believes in empowering others through technology!