



# Action Council Newsletter

■ APRIL 2022

■ CONFERENCE EDITION

## Message From the **THE PRESIDENT**



*James Starnes, Action Council President*

The 44th Annual Cross-Cultural Conference is upon us. We will meet at the Myrtle Beach Hilton, February 24th through 27th, 2022. As always, we have a stellar group of presenters who are prepared to provide timely training based on best practices.

Please join us in Myrtle Beach and please become a member of the Action Council. Your advice is critical as we continue our efforts to provide high-quality training.

We continue to treasure our rich past. Our readers might find our look back at the conference from four decades ago.



The Fourth Annual Conference on Minorities and Mental Health was held May 2 through May 4 in 1982. The theme was “Developing Strategies in the Midst of Constant Change.” The conference was sponsored by Community Mental Health Services, SC Department of Mental Health, William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute, and Mental Health Association of Mid Carolina. The free community program was held at Wesley United Methodist Church in Columbia. Featured speakers were Louis Ramey of the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta and Lloyd Howard, Executive Director of Tri-County Mental Health Center. On the second and third day, the conference moved to the Carolina Town House. The keynote speaker was Dr. Jeff Morris, Director of Social Services for New York City. The cost of the conference was \$25.00 and included lunch on the last two days.

# From the Editor's Desk ERNEST SHAW, LMSW



Thank you for reviewing this Conference Edition of our newsletter. I am honored to serve as editor and I strive to make each edition informative and accurate. I appreciate the opportunity to continue to document the rich history of the Action Council and the Cross-Cultural Conference.

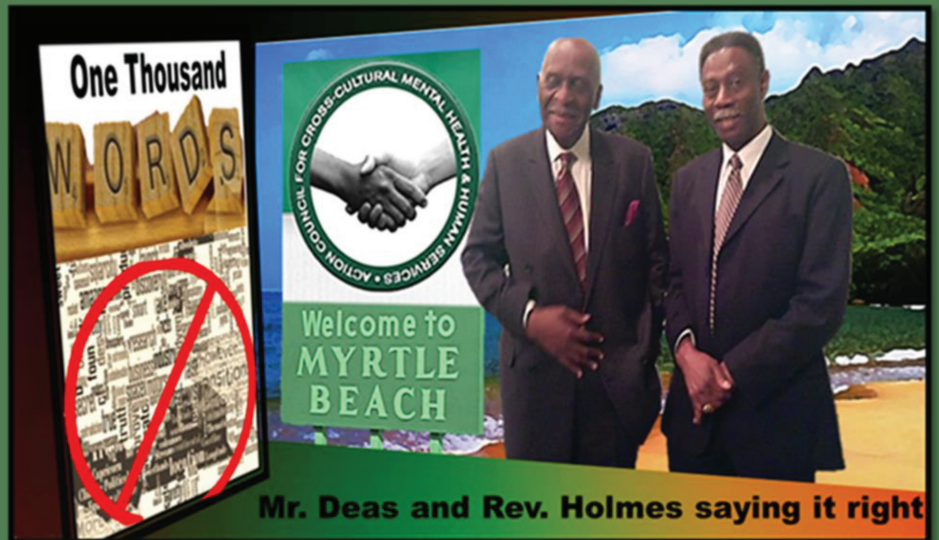
As I write this, the governor of Louisiana has pardoned Homer Plessy who was 7/8 white but was classified as a black man by law. In 1892 he was charged with boarding a train car reserved for whites. Plessy was convicted but appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court upheld his conviction and thus codify the constitutionality of the "Separate but Equal" practice utilized in Southern states. Plessy died in 1925. His conviction has finally been overturned nearly a century later.

Mrs. Maxine McNair, mother of 11-year-old Denise McNair, the youngest girl killed in a 1963 Alabama church bombing died at age 93 on January 2, 2022. The girl's father Chris McNair, was one of the featured speakers at the 2000 Cross-Cultural Conference in Augusta. He died in 2019 at the age of 93. Mrs. McNear, the last parent of any of the four girls who were killed. Today nearly six decades after that ugly incident in Birmingham, I also learned that nine historical black institutions, including Spelman College which is highlighted in this issue, had received bomb threats.

'Welcome to the 44th Annual Conference during a defining moment in our history. So it is even more important now for us to persevere. A detailed account of the 2021 Conference can be found in the 2021 Annual Edition. We will preview the 2022 Conference in this edition. We appreciate all participants who braved continuing challenges to be here. We asked that everyone exercise the utmost caution during this event. We want to see you at our 45th Annual Conference.

We will also note the passing of individuals who were central characters in the cross-cultural movement and key contributors to our efforts to continue the legacy of Dr. Corbitt. We will even look in on his family. Please review what is written and help me improve the quality of the newsletter by submitting stories of interest for future editions. Let us know about your lives, the triumphs, and the losses. I have been involved with the Action Council and the conference for half of their existence and I have done extensive research on the early history of our movement. Nevertheless, there is so much that I do not know. There are individuals and events that I should know about but don't. So, give me a name and I will attempt to bring you a story.

I will close by saying that despite the fact we have differences, we all have more qualities that are the same. Therefore, I would like to celebrate some examples of cooperation, collaboration, and my belief that we can get more done if we work together in spite of differences, real or imagined.







LOOKING BACK AT 2021

## Looking Back at the 2021 Conference

### 43RD ANNUAL CROSS CULTURAL CONFERENCE



**EMOTIONAL PPE:**  
Equipping Diverse Populations  
In Crisis



### How Did We Do?

Attendees rated each presentation on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 indicating perfection. The average score for all presentations was 4.64.

Average: **4.64**



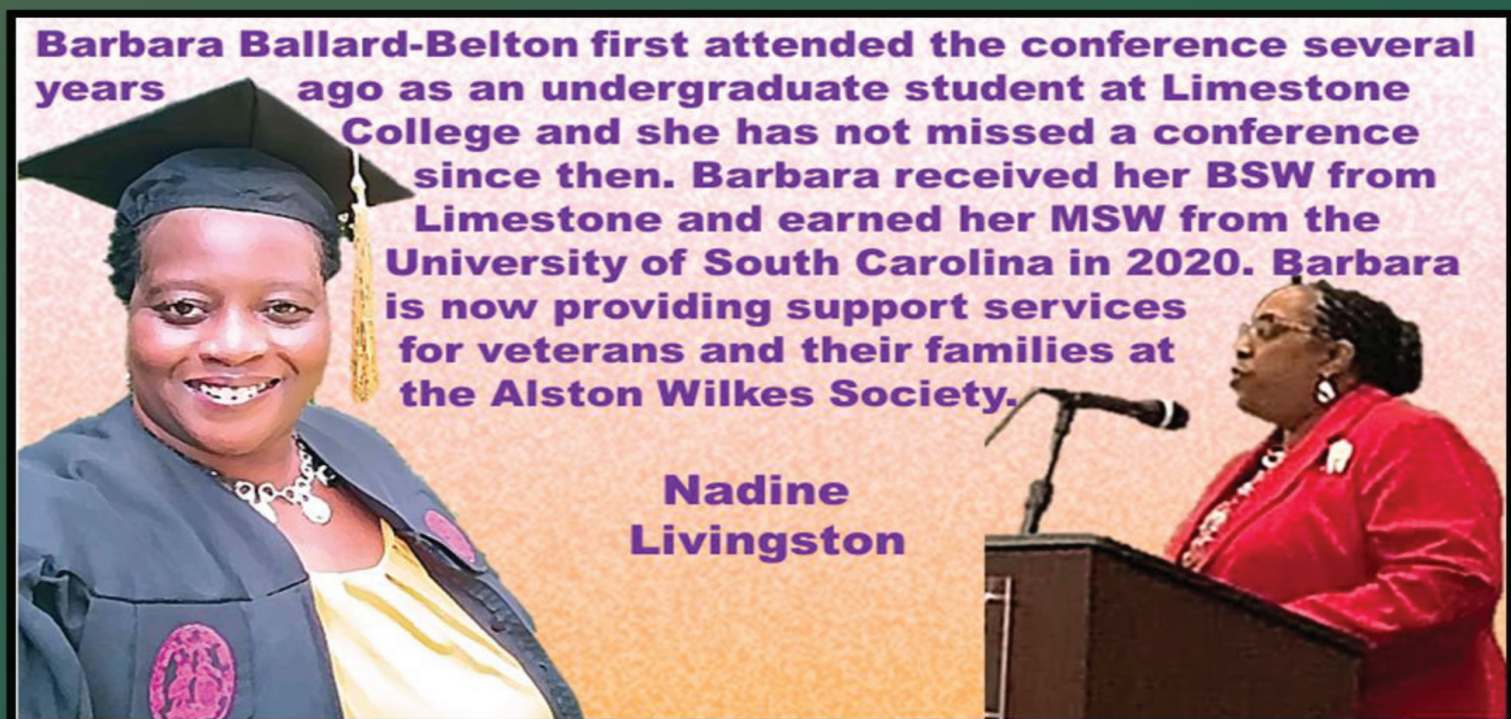




# COLOR IT ORANGE

Orangeburg, South Carolina is a college town that is rich in history. However, it is so much more. In past editions of our newsletter, we highlighted the contributions of so many individuals from Orangeburg and we should continue to do so. Dr. Wanamaker served as President of the Action Council and Dr. Doris Cantey served as treasurer. Dr. Carl

Jones, a transplanted Orangeburger served as President. Dr. Carol Apt served as vice-president while associated with South Carolina State University. Their colleague Carrie Houser James was actively involved in the work of the Cross-cultural Conference. She was a frequent presenter at our events and contributed her scholarly writing to this publication. George Greene is a long-term member of our board and his wife, Dr. Ghussan Greene has presented at numerous educational events sponsored by our organization. Dr. Wanamaker and Dr. Cantey were associated with the Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center when they also devoted their talents to the cross-cultural movement. Bessie Abraham and Willie Priester followed Dr. Wanamaker, and both were supporters. Willie Priester recently retired as Director of Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center, and we wish him well in his retirement. The new Director of Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center is Dr. Natasha Smith who began her career with the SC Department of Mental Health at the Aiken-Barnwell Mental Health Center in 2004. In 2018 she became Executive Director at the Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center. We look forward to a continuation of the relationship between the entire Orangeburg community and the Action Council.







# Mrs. Corbitt: The Lady Behind the Dreamer

We have profiled the remarkable life of Dr. Otis Corbitt many times on these pages. However, this story will highlight the

wife who stood behind him and the children that the couple gave to the world. Betty Harris Corbitt is a Fairfield County native, and her family were members of White Oak Baptist Church No. 2 in Ridgeway, SC. She is the daughter of Shelton and Juliet Jones Harris. Her grandmother and parents are buried in the church cemetery. This is a church with a rich history.

Dr. James Peter (J.P.) Neal, Jr. an educator, television host, public servant, and community developer served as Director of Community Relations and Special Assistant to the State Commissioner for Minority Affairs at The SC Department of Mental Health at a time when Betty Harris Corbitt's husband Dr. Otis Corbitt and others were working to realize a dream. Dr. Neal was ordained as a minister in 1975 and he served as pastor of several Baptist churches in the area including the White Oak Baptist Church No. 2.

Betty Harris earned an undergraduate degree in education from Benedict College and later earned a master's degree from the University of South Carolina. She married Otis A. Corbitt, a native of Salley, SC who had come to Columbia to attend Allen University located across the street from Benedict. Mrs. Corbitt supported her husband's efforts to envision, create and sustain the work that we continue in his name. The children of the Corbitts are Monica Corbitt Rivers and Aubria Diane Corbitt. Aubria is a 1983 graduate of Columbia's Keenan High School. She attended the Governor's School at the College of Charleston. She earned a juris doctor degree from the University of Virginia School of Law. Aubria is an attorney in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Monica Latrese Corbitt graduated from Columbia's Keenan High School as salutatorian and continued her education

at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia where she graduated magna cum laude. She then earned an M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in clinical psychology from Vanderbilt University. Monica is a psychologist in Durham, North Carolina. She is also the wife of Rev. Prince Rainey Rivers, the pastor of Union Baptist Church in Durham.

Dr. Otis Corbitt died in 2009 and the Action Council has worked to continue his legacy. He was survived by his wife and daughters. The President of the Action Council and the editor of this newsletter decided that we should provide our readers with an update on Mrs. Corbitt. "My mother has fared well over COVID but experienced several health challenges prior to 2020.

Consequently, my sister and I moved her to Durham, NC, to be closer to us. She received excellent care from Duke University Medical Center, but still now needs 24-hour care. She is still as sweet as ever, but her illness is progressive. My sister and I are grateful for the care that she receives and ask for your prayers for her that she will remain safe during this latest surge." Her daughter Monica noted.

Monica also said "I would love to be on the mailing list for the Action Council and conference and certainly hope that Omicron won't interfere with this year's meeting. I can't thank you enough for your care for my mom and commitment to sustaining my dad's legacy. You all meant so very much to him. I am eternally grateful."







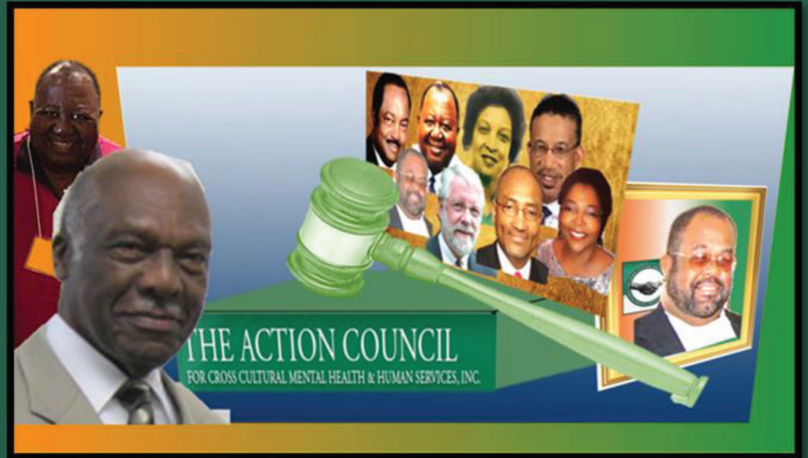
# The Thread Connecting it All

*Ernest Shaw, LMSW*

During this conference, President Starnes will call the meeting of the Action Council to order. Our meeting and future board meetings of the various agencies whose staff are present here will be conducted according to a prescribed order published by a South Carolinian nearly 150 years ago. New board members may be elected during our meeting and, some of us may even

be unsuccessful in our reelection efforts. When the order of the meeting veer off course, board members and veteran parliamentarians like Mr. Bethune or Mr. Reardon will get it back on course.

Interestingly, they will cite rules written by the son of a man who helped to establish two flagship historical colleges including one that educated the daughter of Dr. Otis Corbitt, the founder of the Action Council and the Cross-Cultural Conference.



Joseph Thomas Robert was born in 1807 in the Robertville community of present-day Jasper County, SC. His father was pastor of the local Baptist Church, and the community was named for the family. Joseph Thomas Robert attended Yale Medical College, Charleston Medical College, and Furman Theological Institute. In 1835 he was appointed pastor of Black Swamp Baptist Church in Robertville, where most of the members were the slaves of the Roberts and their neighbors. His son Henry Martyn Robert was born in Robertville two years later. Joseph Thomas Robert pastored churches in Kentucky, Ohio, and Georgia before returning to Robertville in 1849. In 1850 he owned 23 slaves. However, he was conflicted, and, in 1851, he sacrificed his fortune when he freed his slaves and moved his family north to become pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Ohio.



Joseph taught at Burlington University and the University of Iowa in Iowa. In 1869 he was appointed President of Burlington. However, he felt the need to return South. Two years earlier, Augusta Baptist Institute was founded by William Jefferson White, a mixed-race Atlanta Baptist minister, to train newly freed male slaves as ministers. Ironically, White's half-brother, a former slave named James Tate, was one of the founders of the future Atlanta University in 1865. Alice Hurley studied at Atlanta University under Dean of Social Work, Whitney Young, future president of the National Urban League and the National Association of Social Workers. Atlanta

University merged with Clark College in 1988, and Action Council Board Member Dr. Carl Jones served as an administrator at Clark-Atlanta for several years.

In 1871, Joseph Thomas Robert joined Augusta Baptist Institute and is listed as its first president by some historians. In 1879 the school moved to Atlanta and merged with Atlanta Baptist Seminary. In 1880 Robert's profession was listed as "Superintendent of the Baptist College."



# The Thread Connecting it All

## *Continued*

In 1881, two Massachusetts teachers were given \$100 by a Baptist Church in that state. With their fortune and the support of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, the teachers came south and opened Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary in the basement of Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Robert was involved with the female seminary as well.

An early benefactor of the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary was wealthy Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller. Robert died in Atlanta in 1884 at the age of 76. 1884 also saw another significant development when Atlanta Baptist Seminary moved to its current location on land donated by Rockefeller who was a Baptist. Henry Lyman Morehouse, an official of the American Baptist Rockefeller and his wife Laura Spelman Rockefeller. The Spelmans were longtime activists in the abolitionist movement before the Civil War. John and Laura Spelman Rockefeller donated ten percent of their income to charity, including substantial donations to the school whose name was changed to the Spelman Seminary in honor of Laura Spelman in 1884.



Home Mission Society is credited with securing the generous and enduring support of the Rockefellers. In 1913, Atlanta Baptist Seminary was renamed Morehouse College in honor of Henry Lyman Morehouse. Spelman College, the first college for black women in the U.S. along with Morehouse have long served as the crown jewels of Historical Black institutions of higher education. Graduates of these institutions have made immeasurable contributions to the improvement of the human condition.

Notable graduates of Spelman include Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker, Children's Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman, and politician Stacey Abrams. My cousin Danica Tisdale Fisher is the daughter of Dr. Henry Tisdale who served as President of Claflin University in Orangeburg, SC. for a quarter of a century. Danica is a 2001 Cum Laude graduate of Spelman. In 2004 she was the first African American Miss Georgia and, she later finished in the top ten in the Miss America Pageant. Danica worked for Marian Wright Edelman's Children's Defense Fund and was recently appointed Graduate School Assistant Dean of Diversity at Yale University. Our founder Doctor Otis Corbitt's daughter Monica is a proud graduate of Spelman.

Morehouse men include civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Julian Bond; politicians, US Senator Raphael Warnock, and the first African American mayor of Atlanta Maynard Jackson. Olympian Edwin Moses, former Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan, and former Surgeon General David Satcher graduated from Morehouse. Samuel L. Jackson and Spike Lee are Morehouse men. Our own SC State Senator Marlon Kimpson and former representative Bakari Sellers both graced the halls of Morehouse.

Joseph Thomas Robert's son, Henry Martyn Robert, graduated from West Point. He served in the Union Army during the Civil War, a fact that did not compel Union General Sherman to spare Robert family South Carolina property when he came through the area in 1865. Henry Martyn Robert rose to the rank of Brigadier General in the Army Corp of Engineers. He worked on several notable projects. However, he is best known for his response to the embarrassment he experienced while trying to preside over a meeting that he was ill-equipped to handle.

In 1876 he published the first edition of Robert's Rules of Order. His little book became "The Bible" of parliamentary procedures.

Board meetings of The Action Council and others are conducted in accordance with the rules drawn up by a man who was born in South Carolina in 1837. Robert died in 1923 at the age of 86 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The 12th Revision of Robert's Rules of Order was released in 2020.



**Rev. Robert's son, Henry Martyn Robert, 1837-1923, published *Robert's Rules of Order* in 1876.**

**Rev. Joseph Thomas Robert, 1807-1884, Helped establish HBC Morehouse & Spelman.**

**ATLANTA**

**ROBERTVILLE**

**MOREHOUSE COLLEGE**

**Spelman College**

**ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**

**Looking Back**

**Wesley United Methodist Church**

**First Baptist Church**

**Dr. Chris Corbett**

**Mental Health Conference Opens In Greenville**

**Conference Hears Consultant On Blacks' Mental Health Needs**

**Churn: Blacks Have More Problems**

**Murray Chesson, MD**





# THE ACTION COUNCIL

FOR CROSS CULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, INC.




John Morris, Willie Bethune, and Dolores Macey in 1997

## Continue telling our story...

**Collaboration** [kə labə rāSH(ə)n]

**Working with someone to produce or create something**

# Dictionary



The SC Drug and Alcohol Commissions were established by the legislature in 1972 to plan for and administer state and federal funds allocated for the treatment and prevention of substance use and dependence.

In 1985 Horry County Council established the Horry County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. In 2000, the program's name was changed to Shoreline Behavioral Health Services.

Shoreline has been a supporter of the Cross-Cultural Conference. Their professional staff have served as presenters at many of our conferences.

**Shoreline's CEO John Coffin honored at 2018 conference.**



**THE ACTION COUNCIL**  
FOR CROSS CULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, INC.



# The 2022 Conference is at Hand!

