

Phyllis Wheatley Times

"I AM COME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY." JOHN 10:10 KJV June 2020

Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, Inc. 1905-2020



Continues our legacy as a safe haven for women in Washington, DC

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Newsletter Editors

Alesha Holliday, Aleshaholliday@gmail.com
Janet Vernon, Jamvernon@msn.com
Linda Irizarry, mslindairizarry@gmail.com



Phyllis Wheatley Young Women Christian Association
115th Anniversary!

Join us as we celebrate 115 years as a safe haven for women in Washington, DC. We invite you to attend our anniversary celebration on October 24, 2020. Visit our website at WWW.PWYWCA.ORG for more information.

Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, Inc.

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"Truth comes to us from the past, then, like gold washed down from the mountains."

Carter G. Woodson



President's Message

Dear Friends:

As we celebrate the 115th Anniversary of the historic Phyllis Wheatley Young Woman's Christian Association, Inc. (PWYWCA), I cannot ignore the overwhelming irony that I experience every time I turn on the television or hear a news report. One hundred fifteen years ago, a group of visionary Black

women saw a need to create an organization to help other Black women. The organization would provide care, housing, and guidance to the hundreds of "Colored" women and girls flocking to the city to seek employment.

At that time, segregation was the law of the land and there were very few options for Black people in Washington, DC. Few agencies existed to help; there was limited access to education and healthcare; no laws protecting against discrimination; few restaurants, hotels, or other businesses, that allowed Black people to partake of their services. Out of this need, the PWYWCA was born and has flourished from a 10-room boarding house on T Street, NW offering temporary assistance and transitional housing to an 84-unit facility on Rhode Island Avenue, NW, where women may reside permanently and receive the supportive services they need to live independently.

Despite our successes, recent events prove that though society has advanced and we have come far, we still have far to go. It is ironic the same issues of racism and disparate treatment that existed 115 years ago, still exist today. Now we have agencies, anti-discrimination laws, and access to schools, healthcare, restaurants, and other businesses, but Black people continue to fight against racism and disparate treatment every day.

The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA Board of Directors will use the 115th anniversary of PWYWCA to re-affirm our commitment to advocate for women who are marginalized and mistreated. We will maintain our founders' vision to provide safe housing and guidance for women in need. We will stand up against racism and all other isms that plague society. Finally, we will honor the women who have come before us and ensure that our namesake's legacy continues into the next century.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Plummer

Patricia L. Plummer



MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION INFORMATION

- INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE PHYLLIS YWCA, INC.?
- ARE YOU A LIFE MEMBER WISHING TO PAY YOUR ANNUAL SUSTAINING FEE OF \$25.00?
- ARE YOU A PATRON WISHING TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
- ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MAKING A DONATION TO SUPPORT THE PHYLLIS WHEATLEY YWCA, INC.? CONSIDER DONATING \$115 TO SUPPORT OUR 115TH ANNIVERSARY!

YWCA Timeline

Significant events in the history of the Young Woman's Christian Association.

1858— YWCA Movement founded in New York City as the Ladies Christian Association.

1860 – First boarding house established in New York City for students, teachers, and factory workers

1866 – Boston was first affiliate to use the YWCA moniker

1889 – First African American branch established in Dayton, Ohio

1894 – World YWCA created by the United States and European countries

1899 – First documented Phyllis Wheatley YWCA established in Hampton, VA

1934 – National YWCA encouraged women to oppose lynching

1936 – First National YWCA interracial conference seminar

1946 – National YWCA began integration

1949— National YWCA conven-

“Without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible.”

History of the Phyllis Wheatley Young Woman's Christian Association, Inc.

The mission of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA is *“to provide affordable housing and programs to women regardless of race, creed, or color. We serve women in transition to prevent homelessness. We also provide outreach services to children in the community. Phyllis Wheatley YWCA operates as an independent living facility.”*

The idea for a YWCA began when Mrs. Rosetta Lawson, a churchwoman and social activist, was inspired by a Chicago YWCA organizer. She invited her literary group, “The Booklovers Club,” to consider organizing a YWCA in the Washington, DC. The invitation was extended on April 5, 1905, at the Berean Baptist Church. As a result, the first YWCA in Washington was organized May 5, 1905, and incorporated June 5, 1905.



Our first home was two rented rooms at Four and One Half Street and Maryland Avenue, SW. Around 1910 the association purchased a ten-room residence at 429 T Street, NW, to provide care, housing, and guidance to the hundreds of “Colored” women and girls flocking to the city to seek employment. The initial concern, as it is today, was safe, affordable housing for women and providing programs for girls.

The first President was Mrs. Bettie Francis, followed by Mrs. Frances Boyce. Mrs. Julia West Hamilton, shown here, was the third and longest serving President. In 1918, the “Colored” YWCA became affiliated with the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America. The D.C. Central YWCA assumed PWYWCA would be a financial drain and chose to remain separate from the “Colored” YWCA.



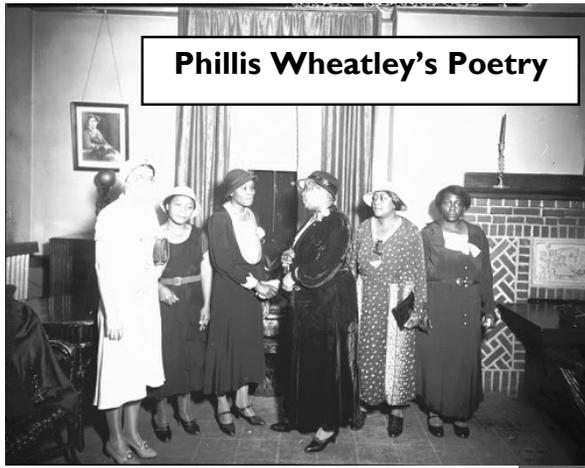
On the corner of Ninth and Rhode Island Avenue, NW, stands a four-story building of eclectic architecture and gracious looks. Within the walls lies a tremendous story that spans nearly one hundred years. The building, named a



National Historical Landmark in 1983, was dedicated December 19, 1920, as one of the first “Colored” YWCAs in the United States of America. In 1923, the organization was incorporated

as the Phyllis Wheatley Young Women's Christian Association, Inc. The building was financed by the War Work Council “to be used as a combination recreation, residence, and administration building.” Prior to integration, the PWYWCA was a hub for social functions and change in Washington – hosting social events, meetings, and conclaves.





The late Dr. Dorothy Irene Height served as Executive Director, 1939-1944. Dr. Height suggested the Mid-Summer Soiree fundraiser after attending a World YWCA garden party in Den-



mark.

Top: *Scottsboro Boys Mothers with Julia West Hamilton 1953.* Bottom left: *Mary McLeod Bethune at PWYWCA 1935.* Bottom Right: *Dorothy I. Height*

The 2000 major renovation expanded the facility to 117 units at a cost of \$3.8 million. Upgrades to the historical section occurred in 2007. Mayor Muriel Bowser participated in a wall-breaking ceremony November 2, 2015, which marked the start of a



complete building rehabilitation that created 84 larger units with comprehensive, onsite services. She returned for the ribbon cutting and official opening of the redeveloped building on June 23, 2017.



The PWYWCA was the recipient of the 2005 "Living the Dream" Award from the District of Columbia Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission. The Centennial was celebrated with a Gala on May 1, 2005. The 105th was celebrated May 1, 2010, with a birthday salute; and the 110th on May 3, 2015. The 115th, delayed due to COVID-19, will be celebrated on October 24, 2020.

Upcoming Events

- July 19, 2020 - Virtual Mid-Summer Soiree
 - September 26, 2020 - Annual Prayer Wall Event (Public Event)
 - October 24, 2020 - Annual Meeting and 115th Anniversary Celebration
- For additional information about upcoming events, visit us on our website WWW.PWYWCA.ORG, Facebook page, or Twitter @PWYWCA

On Being Brought from Africa to America (1768)

By Phillis Wheatley

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land, Taught my benighted soul to understand.

That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye,

"Their colour is a diabolic die."