

## **JNA's Black History Month Reception Recap by Rosie "Peppy" Parke**

On Sunday, February 27, the **Jamaican Nationals Association (JNA)** hosted their annual Black History Month Reception in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland. It was a beautiful day and scores of people came out to join the association in honoring and recognizing five individuals (**Norman Brissett, Finiana Joseph, Dermot Hussey, Von Martin, and Loughton Sargeant**) who are making significant contributions in the Washington, DC community and beyond. The keynote speaker for the evening was Dr. Claire Nelson, the founder of the Institute of Caribbean Studies.

The event was hosted by **Rosie "Peppy" Parke** who is the public relations officer of JNA and the host of her own talk show, PEP Talk! She started off the evening by welcoming everyone who had decided to spend their evening with the JNA and requested that they applaud themselves for deciding to celebrate Black history. True to form, Ms. Parke opened the program by giving the audience a pep talk -- "this evening is not about me or the JNA; it is about all of us who are present and what Black History means to us." Ms. Parke invited vice president of JNA, **Moreen Wallace** to update the audience on some of the 2011 projects of the JNA, after which the Jamaican National Anthem was sung and an Invocation done. To kick off the evening, Ms. Parke encouraged the audience to share Black History stories and also provided them with index cards and requested that they name persons they felt should be recognized for doing their part to shape Black History. The open forum was a hit and the audience did not hold back on their responses. First to speak was JNA's parliamentarian, **Milton Nicholas** who contributed the "real story" of one of Jamaica's National heroes, Sam Sharpe. First time attendee at a JNA event and a teacher since 1969, **Dionn Gordon Owens** made a firm commitment to do her part in continuing to shape and create Black history. Many others shared and folks also stated that they were happy to have made the decision to attend the event. The general consensus was that "we each have a responsibility to document our collective history so that no one else can tell OUR story."



During the sharing exercise, the following names were submitted as those deserving of recognition: **Dr. Winston Anderson, Dr. Kevin Asher, Jennifer Asher, Tony Carr, Irwin Coke, Rev. Kortright Davis, Leo Edwards, Magalee Emile, Lance Hibbert, Robert Grandison, Kumasi Johnson, Carl Malcolm, Jillian Moore, Rosie "Peppy" Parke, Claire Robinson, and Fitzroy Scott.** The JNA will be collecting additional information on the persons named as part of the selection process for next year's honorees.



Norman Brissett (Jamaica), Loughton Sargeant (Nevis), Finiana Joseph (St. Lucia), and Von Martin (Trinidad & Tobago) With the exception of Dermott Hussey (Jamaica), all the honorees were present and expressed gratitude for being selected.

**Norman Brissett** who migrated from Jamaica to the US in 1968 is a police officer who has received numerous awards and honors over the course of his career. He was visibly emotional about being recognized by “my own people” and thanked the association for taking the time to notice the work of hardworking individuals in the area. **Ms. Finiana Joseph** who is of St. Lucian heritage and the co-founder of the Caribbean Professional Network (CPN), thanked the association for the award and shared why community service is important to her. A firm believer in being all-inclusive to all Caribbean islanders, she shared various sayings from many islands and reiterated her passion to serve the Caribbean community. A communications veteran for over 35 years, **Von Martin** was “very happy that JNA has honored me.” He thanked the association for honoring his wife, Brenda Martin many years ago and encouraged those who had been around for a long time to work closely with the younger generation to effect positive changes and strengthen the inter-generational communication. **Loughton Sargeant** who is the executive director of DC Caribbean Carnival and the band leader for the Image Band had high praises for the organization and thanked them for hosting the event and recognizing individuals who were making significant contributions in the Washington DC area.



JNA executive team and the honorees

The awards were presented by JNA's members **Vanessa Johnson, Moreen Wallace, Beverley Thomas, and Moyo Stephenson.**

**Dr. Claire Nelson** had the audience actively engaged during her keynote address on the ongoing relevance of Black History month – how the contributions of persons such as **Harriett Tubman, John Brown Russwurm** and **Marcus Garvey** laid the foundation for us to build our future. Her closing words were “in the spirit of Sankofa, we must look back at the footprints of the past so we can build a better future.”

1. For past event photos, please link this labeled JNA's Black History Celebration, February 2010 to  
[https://picasaweb.google.com/DENEARLE/JNABlackHistoryReception2011?authkey=Gv1sRgCPHZ9qzR\\_dWh5QE&feat=email#](https://picasaweb.google.com/DENEARLE/JNABlackHistoryReception2011?authkey=Gv1sRgCPHZ9qzR_dWh5QE&feat=email#)

Also add these for the 2010 JNA Student Reception to link here:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=251706&id=249269954878>

1. Include a Facebook tag at the bottom or someplace visible and connect it to [www.facebook.com/jnaofdc.org](http://www.facebook.com/jnaofdc.org)
2. Please update the current executive body with the following. We have to delete the photo that we currently have so for now, please use the one attached with the president shaking a member's hand.

- **President**  
Claudette Henry
- **Vice President**  
Moreen Wallace
- **Executive Secretary**  
Doreen Hyde
- **Recording Secretary**  
Moyo Stephenson
- **Treasurer**  
Rukie Wilson
- **Assistant Treasurer**  
Vanessa Johnson
- **Parliamentarian**  
Milton Nicholas, Sr.
- **Public Relations Officer**  
Rosie "Peppy" Parke
- **Immediate Past President**  
Jacqueline Payne