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David Harris

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David N. Harris

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David Harris

By David N. Harris with Kelli Johnson

David Nathaniel Harris was born to a large family of 8 children [Mary, born 1937; Dorothy, born 1948; Richard, born 1954; Adrian (deceased); Lawrence (deceased); Turner Jr. (deceased); Susan (deceased)] in Huntington, WV on 12/10/1944 to Josephine Wigglesworth Harris Miller who was born in Prattville, Alabama and Turner Harris who was born in Milledgeville, Georgia. His mother was married a second time to George Miller who was born in Chicago, Illinois. He was named for his maternal grandfather, David Wigglesworth, his paternal great-uncle Nathaniel Harris, and his paternal uncle Nathaniel Dean. Harris attended Barnett Elementary School and [Douglass Junior/Senior High School](#); both were all black schools in the City of Huntington. Just before Douglass closed in the early 1960s, David transferred to, and graduated from Huntington High School. He attended Marshall University earning a bachelor's degree in Business Management and a master's degree in History. Harris was the first African American to earn a master's degree in history at Marshall University. To get to Marshall University each day, Harris would cross the railroad tracks that ran between 7th Avenue and 8th Avenue. One day Mr. Leroy Nicholson told him to stop crossing the tracks and gave him money to catch the city bus. Of course, young David Harris continued to cross the tracks and used the money for lunch!

Harris is a Vietnam-Era veteran. After leaving Marshall, Harris became a commissioned officer with the United States Army also becoming the youngest African American Company Commander at that time. He also served as a Supply Officer and was ultimately promoted to the rank of Captain. Harris received an honorable discharge from the Army in 1967.

Harris married Wilma Nicks in February of 1967. They raised three young men (son Phillip, born 1968, son Craig, born 1971, and nephew Arick, born in 1969 and live with the Harris family since 1980). David and Wilma divorced in December of 1989.

After leaving the Army, Harris became a personnel manager and compliance officer at Inco Alloys in Huntington while also teaching History at Marshall University. He worked at Inco for 21 years and for Basic Supply in Huntington for 7 years. Harris became the Equity Programs Director and Associate Human Resources Director at Marshall University in 1998. He also taught Business Administration at both Marshall University and Mountwest Community and Technical College (formerly Marshall CTC).

Harris has always been a community champion and volunteer and did not stop after retirement. He coached and volunteered with Little League for 43 years. Harris has been or is involved in the following:

Kappa Alpha Psi member;

Marshall University Black Alumni, past President and current member;

Southwest Community Action Council, Chair of the Board of Directors;

Huntington Police Department Civil Service Commission, former Board member;

A.D. Lewis Community Center, President of Advisory Board;

Huntington Little League, Coach, volunteer, Board member;

Babe Ruth League, former President;

Huntington Prep basketball program, Board member;

Carter G. Woodson Memorial Foundation, President;

Cabell/Huntington NAACP, Board member;

Fairfield Community Development Corporation, Board member;

Huntington Human Relations Commission, Board member

Cabell Huntington Hospital, Board member

United Way of the River Cities, former Board member;

Barnett Child Care Center, former Board member;

Tri-State Transit Authority, former Board member;

The West Virginia Private Industry Council, former Board member;

West Virginia Health Systems Agency, former Board member;

West Virginia State Bar Legal Ethics Committee, former member;

Workers Compensation Performance Council, former member;

Tri-State African American Coalition, former member;

Tri-State Literacy Council; former Board member

Prestera Center, former Board member;

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), President
Huntington Area Chapter;

Goodwill Industries, Board member.

Awards and recognition:

Outstanding Alumni, MU Black Alumni

Mover and Shaker Award, Huntington Herald-Dispatch

Community service Award, Veterans Administration

History Hero, State of West Virginia

David Harris Way designated in City of Huntington

Hometown hero Award, WSAZ

Member of the Black High School Hall of Fame

Little League Volunteer of the Year Award (named the David Harris Volunteer of the Year Award)

Steven Ferguson Community Service Award

Listen to David Harris' oral history interviews on Marshall Digital Scholar @

https://mds.marshall.edu/african_american_oral/ and

https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/54/.

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THIS CERTIFIES THAT

David Jones

Shirley Jones

IS A STUDENT AT
HUNTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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