



DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

PEGGY LARNEY AND AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE DAY: THE STRUGGLE TO EDUCATE AND DECOLONIZE DALLAS COUNTY

By Jerry Hawkins

On September 19, 2017, during a meeting of the Commissioners Court of Dallas County, Texas, on a motion made by District 4 Commissioner Elba Garcia and seconded by District 1 Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel, a special and groundbreaking resolution was adopted. The resolution closed by affirming that the “Dallas County Commissioners Court

does hereby recognize and observe American Indian Heritage Day in Dallas County and extend their appreciation to Larry and Peggy Larney for the resources, education and cultural events provided through their non-profit organization American Indian Heritage Day enriching all the generations of all cultural backgrounds with enjoyment and knowledge.”



Peggy Larney at a Dallas Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation event.

So who is Peggy Larney and what is American Indian Heritage Day? Peggy Taylor Larney, a full blood American Indian and a Citizen of the Choctaw Nation, is one of the most important figures in the recent history of Dallas County. A well-respected tribal elder, civic leader, advocate, educator, and small business owner, Mrs. Larney is also an originator of an unprecedented Texas state bill designating the last Friday in September as American Indian Heritage Day in Texas and co-founder of two Dallas-based non-profit organizations: American Indian Heritage Day in Texas and Indian Citizens against Racial Exploitation (I C.A.R.E.).

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**The Chronicle Publication Committee*

UPCOMING DCHC MEETINGS

- Wednesday, November 16, 2022
- Wednesday, December 21, 2022



HONORING ANDERSON BONNER

By John Roppolo

Juanita Nañez, as chair of the Dallas County Historical Commission, presented dedicatory remarks at the unveiling and dedication of the Texas State Historical Marker and the public art of the “Sankofa: Anderson Bonner Memorial” on Saturday, September 10, 2022, honoring Anderson Bonner. The park bearing his name is located in North Dallas on Park Central Drive just south of I635 and north of Medical City Hospital.



Anderson Bonner marker dedication attendees.

She credited Remembering Black Dallas and their dedication to telling the untold stories of African Americans in early Dallas. She praised Anderson Bonner, a former slave and early Dallas pioneer who amassed almost 3,000 acres of land in North Dallas and Richardson as well as the land that now holds Medical City and its many buildings. She said that his entrepreneurial legacy will forever remain a significant part of the history of our community. Also representing the DCHC at the ceremony was John Roppolo, co-chair of the Marker Committee which recommended the application to the Texas Historical Commission.

Dr. George Keaton of Remembering Black Dallas presided and presented speakers from Dallas County, City of Dallas, The Richardson ISD Board of Trustees and the family of Bonner. The ceremony included the Flag Presentation by the Lake Highlands High School Junior ROTC; singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" led by Joe Mangrum, Berkner High School Senior; and a monologue speech from *A Free Man of Color* by actor, Daniel Saunders. Artist for the “Sankofa” memorial sculpture, Andrew F. Scott, spoke about the meaning of his sculpture established at the park.

The unveiling of the marker immediately followed Ms. Nañez’s remarks and was performed by Dr. Keaton and Nepha B. Love, great granddaughter of Anderson Bonner.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Dedication Ceremony of the Texas State Marker for the

JOHNNY GRAHAM & GRAHAM'S BARBER SHOP

Monday, November 14, 2022

11:00 a.m.

Graham's Barber College

3016 Al Lipscomb Way

Dallas, TX 75215

RSVP to Johnny Crawford

at (214) 331-1578



THIS DAY IN DALLAS

OCT.

Oct. 16-17, 1959: Former President Harry S.

Truman visits Dallas and makes a speech at Dallas Memorial Auditorium escorted to podium by Senator and future President Lyndon B. Johnson.

PEGGY LARNEY AND AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE DAY

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According to The Library of Congress: “Following enactment of the Indian Relocation Act in 1953, more than 20,000 Indians representing 90 tribes had moved from across the country to the Dallas/Ft. Worth area by 1970.” Peggy Larney was one of the thousands of American Indians that relocated to Dallas through the Relocation Program. With the support of American Indian activists and organizations like the Trinity Mission, the Dallas Indian United Methodist Church, the Singleton Baptist Church, and the Open Door Bible Church, the Dallas Inter-Tribal Center, also known as the Urban Inter-Tribal Center of Texas opened in 1971. The center was located in Oak Cliff, the area of Dallas County which became home to the largest number of American Indians, and it provided basic outpatient health care for relocated American Indians. The center later provided job development, legal aid, social services, emergency aid assistance, mental health services, immunizations and computer training programs.

Peggy Larney is also a retired leader of Dallas ISD's American Indian Education Program, where she served for over 20 years. Dallas ISD states that the American Indian Education Program, which is housed in the district's Social Studies Department, “is designed to address the unique education and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students, including preschool children, so that these students can achieve the same challenging state performance standards expected of all students.” During her tenure, Mrs. Larney, her son, Brian Larney and other American Indian activists fought to remove racist American Indian names and mascots from ten Dallas-Fort Worth area schools. At a 2011 UT Arlington event for Native American Heritage Month, Peggy Larney explained that “Native American images and nicknames have remained fairly common in American sports and can be seen used by teams at all levels from elementary schools to a professional level.” She was instrumental in increasing American Indian students' Dallas ISD high school graduation rate, and increased the higher education entrance rate for American Indian students. You can view a 1991 KXAS clip of Peggy Larney and the Dallas ISD's American Indian Education Program in action [here](#).

After writing a Facebook post where she shared her thoughts about observance of Columbus Day and the contrasting erasure of American Indians in Texas, Peggy and her husband Larry Larney organized a small support group, including the Southwest Jewish Congress, to discuss and imagine what could be possible. They created a committee to draft legislation, of which Jodi Voice Yellowfish of MMIW Rematriate Texas helped co-write, for Rep. Roberto Alonzo to present to the Texas House of Representatives. The legislation called for the last Friday in September to be a day to recognize the historic, cultural and social contributions of Texas' American Indians. The grassroots efforts of this small but mighty committee, led by Peggy Larney and bolstered by a partnership with University of Texas at Arlington, navigated House Bill 174 through the Texas State Legislature to the governor's desk. On May 10, 2013, Texas Governor Rick Perry signed HB 174 into law, recognizing and establishing the last Friday in every September as American Indian Heritage Day, and as a civic holiday.

Today, Peggy Larney still dedicates her efforts to decolonize Dallas, and works to continue making Dallas County a place where the American Indian community can feel safe, live and thrive.