



State of Florida

Florida Commission on Human Relations

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Rick Scott
Governor

4075 Esplanade Way • Room 110 • Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(850) 488-7082

Web Site <http://fchr.state.fl.us>

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Governor Rick Scott Selects Three Inductees for the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott announced the selection of Dr. Arnett Girardeau, Willie H. Williams, and Patricia Stephens Due to the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame. Governor Scott chose these three individuals from a list of 10 distinguished nominees selected by the Florida Commission on Human Relations for making significant contributions to the improvement of life for minorities and all citizens of the great State of Florida.

Dr. Arnett Girardeau, 88, of Jacksonville, led civil rights efforts in the Florida Legislature. After serving in the military, Dr. Girardeau received a dental degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. and returned to Florida. In 1976, Dr. Girardeau was elected to the Florida House of Representatives, serving until elected to the Florida Senate in 1982. Dr. Girardeau became the first African-American Senate pro Tempore and was a founding member and chairman of the Florida Conference of Black State Legislators. He also led civil rights movements in his community as a founding member of the Jacksonville Anti-Poverty Program, Vice President of the Jacksonville NAACP, President of the Community Urban Development Council, and a member of the Mayor’s Task Force on East Jacksonville Civil Disorder.

Willie H. Williams, 85, of Orlando, was the first African-American hired in the engineering department of Martin Marietta Aerospace (now Lockheed Martin), in Orlando. Following his service in the United States Air Force, Williams pursued a bachelor’s degree at Florida A&M University. Williams has served as President of the Orange County NAACP and Vice President of the NAACP Florida State Conference, and remains a Golden Life Member of the NAACP. Williams held an influential role in strengthening NAACP relations with local and state government and corporations, including Walt Disney World, and has been honored with the NAACP President’s Award and Outstanding Service Award. He was also recognized with the Meritorious Achievement Award from Martin Marietta for his advocacy for employment equality within the company.

Patricia Stephens Due, (1939-2012), formerly of Quincy, is revered as a pioneer of the civil rights movements in Florida. While attending Florida A&M University, Due and her sister, Priscilla, established a local chapter of Congress of Racial Equality and led nonviolent civil

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rights demonstrations throughout the South. She inspired peaceful activism and voter education by holding civil rights workshops in communities across the nation. Her tireless efforts were noted by the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and she has been recognized with the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Outstanding Leadership, the Gandhi Award for Outstanding Work in Human Relations, and the NAACP Florida Freedom Award. In 2003, Due and her daughter, Tananarive, wrote *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir for the Civil Rights*.

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