

**44<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration  
& Humanitarian Awards  
Tuesday, January 18, 2022**

**One People! One Nation! One Dream!**



## **Welcome and Introduction**

Antoine Wilson

*MLK Committee Chair*

## **Opening Remarks & Master of Ceremonies**

Supervisor Karen Mitchoff

*Board Chair*

## **Entertainment**

Contra Costa School of Performing Arts

Grown Women Dance Collective

## **Keynote Speaker**

Honorable H. Abram Wilson

*Former Mayor of San Ramon*

## **Special Guest**

Honorable Tony Thurmond

*California State Superintendent of Public Instruction*

## **Humanitarian of the Year Awards**

2022 Humanitarian Gigi Crowder

2022 Student Humanitarian Kaia Morgan

### **Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors**

#### **District 4**

Karen Mitchoff

*Chair*

#### **District 5**

Federal D. Glover,

*Vice-Chair*

#### **District 1**

John Gioia

#### **District 2**

Candace Andersen

#### **District 3**

Diane Burgis

### **2022 Committee Members**

Antoine Wilson, Chair

Andi Bivens

Manny Bowlby

Lissette Davis

Jennifer S. Hopkins

Gayle Israel

T'ni Jackson

James Lyons

Vincent Manuel

Savitha Sivakumar

Susan Shiu

Chris Verdugo

Derrick West

Chris Wikler

Shannon Winston

Traci Young



## GROWN WOMEN DANCE COLLECTIVE

Grown Women Dance Collective, established in 2009, creates cross-cultural, intergenerational, and cross-class connections by encouraging dialogue, empowering thought and action, and building cross-racial alliances through concert dance and wellness programs. The group is comprised of retired dancers from world renowned companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Cleo Parker Robinson, and Dance Theatre of Harlem. The performances challenge stereotypes and create artistic work that is relevant, accessible, and inspiring to diverse and under-resourced audiences.



## CONTRA COSTA SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS

The Contra Costa School of Performing Arts mission provides for an outstanding, pre-professional experience in performing arts within a college and career preparatory setting. The school believes in fostering a culture of excellence with the core values of rigor, relevance, resilience, and relationships.

The Spoken Word performance is entitled:

"The Artist Dreams"

*Written by Samara Desmond*

*Performed by*  
Samara Desmond  
Seon Lettsome  
Anthony Josa



## THE HONORABLE H. ABRAM WILSON

H. Abram Wilson is married to Dr. Karen B. Wilson. They have been residents of the City of San Ramon for over thirty years. The Wilsons' have two children, Natasha A. Wilson-Cruz, Esq., and P. Nathan Wilson, and are blessed with three grandchildren.



Wilson was instrumental in setting forth a framework to develop a disaster preparedness plan for the City of San Ramon and businesses, schools, and cities in the Tri-Valley and San Ramon Valley areas. Wilson is the 2005 recipient of the National Music Educator Association, State Legislator of the Year award for his support of music education.

Wilson is a member of the Board for the Sentinels of Freedom Organization that has helped provide services to men and women who have been disabled in Iraq with housing, employment, and transportation. Wilson is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Wilson worked as a federal funds trader at Wells Fargo when he returned to civilian life. He was elected to the San Ramon City Council in November 1999, appointed mayor in 2002, and became the City of San Ramon's first elected and first African American mayor in 2003. He was re-elected in 2005. Wilson was the 2005 recipient of the National Music Educator Association, State Legislator of the Year award "for his support of music education in the schools."

Wilson is a 2007 honoree from the California Congress of Parents, Teachers, and Students for his outstanding service to children and youth. His contribution to the Honorary Service Award Program Fund provides scholarships for students and individuals to further their education.

He also received a Certificate of Support from the East Bay Leadership Foundation for "Making a difference in the lives of Bay Area Students."



## THE HONORABLE TONY THURMOND

Tony Thurmond was sworn in as the 28<sup>th</sup> California State Superintendent of Public Instruction on January 7, 2019.

Superintendent Thurmond is an educator, social worker, and public school parent who has served the people of California for more than ten years in elected office. Previously, he served on the Richmond City Council, West Contra Costa Unified School Board, and in the California State Assembly representing District 15.

Like many of California's public school students, Superintendent Thurmond came from humble beginnings. His mother was an immigrant from Panama who came to San Jose, California, to be a teacher. His father was a soldier who didn't return to his family after the Vietnam War. Thurmond met his father for the first time when he was an adult. After his mother died when he was six, Thurmond and his brother were raised by a cousin who they had never met.

Superintendent Thurmond's family relied on public assistance programs and great public schools to get out of poverty, and public school education allowed him to attend Temple University, where he became student body president. He went on to earn dual master's degrees in Law and Social Policy and Social Work (MSW) from Bryn Mawr College and began a career dedicated to service.

Much of Superintendent Thurmond's social service work has focused on improving the services provided to foster youth and directing programs that provide job training to at-risk youth. He also led programs to provide help for individuals with developmental disabilities. He has 12 years of direct experience in education, teaching life skills classes, after-school programs, and career training.

Over the course of Thurmond's tenure since being sworn in as State Superintendent, he has championed and created many historic initiatives on behalf of California's students.

Superintendent Thurmond lives in Richmond with his two daughters, who attend local public schools. They are his inspiration and a constant reminder about the promise of our neighborhood schools and the strong future that every child deserves.

## 2022 MLK Humanitarian Gigi Crowder



Congratulations to our 2022 Contra Costa County Adult Humanitarian, Gigi Crowder, an Antioch resident. Crowder is the mother of two biological children, 30 years old twin sons, and has served as a foster mom and mentor to many more through divine interventions. Crowder served for over nine years as the Ethnic Services Manager for Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services and has worked in the Behavioral Health Care field for more than 32 years, after completing her studies at the University of California, Berkeley. As a family member of several loved ones who have received private and public mental health services, she strongly advocates promoting culturally responsive behavioral health services for all peers and family members. She is unapologetic about addressing the needs of African Americans.

Crowder became the Executive Director for NAMI Contra Costa in 2018. She is also the FaithNet Coordinator and has advanced efforts statewide to reduce mental health stigma by training Faith Leaders using the Mental Health Friendly Communities training curriculum she co-designed. Her current focus is addressing the needs of those living with mental illness who are often criminalized for living with a medical condition.

Highlights of her career include being inducted into the Alameda County Women Hall of Fame; developing programs to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with psychiatric challenges; and receiving the 2013 MHAAC Mental Health Achievement Award. She also received the 2016 Multi-Cultural Outreach Award from NAMI California and the 2020 "Making a Difference Award" from the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. Crowder is also credited for positioning NAMI Contra Costa to win the NAMI 2021 Multicultural Outreach Award.

Crowder is being recognized for her impact and work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Contra Costa residents.



## **2022 MLK Student Humanitarian Kaia Morgan**

Congratulations to our 2022 Contra Costa County Student Humanitarian Kaia Morgan of Pittsburg, a senior at Ygnacio Valley High School. After gaining awareness of them online, Morgan became interested in confronting social issues and quickly became passionate about addressing injustices against minorities.

In February of 2020, Morgan was inspired by a class lesson on the harm of Native mascots to use her voice to speak out against racism on a more local level, starting with the Native mascot at her high school. She started the Change the Mascot Committee at Ygnacio Valley High School that month, and as of December 2021, their mascot is now the Wolves. She made a change.org petition and got that circulating widely in our her community. Morgan spoke to the school board and. She helped to organizer her peers and met with me regularly to strategizeto strategize.

Morgan's efforts and those of the students and teachers she inspired along the way resulted in a new measure, passed at the School Board level, where not only did her own school's mascot and racist imagery get the approval for the change, but a district-wide approval was granted wherein all racist and disturbing imagery and mascots throughout the entire district will now behave been removed and replaced with those which truly honor our students and their heritages by no longer using the oppressed as mascots or their oppressors as mascots or inspirations.

Morgan is being honored for demonstrating the determination, perseverance, and strength to create change in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She lives with her parents and two siblings. Morgan plans to attend college in the fall and study psychology.

## **Past Recipients of the Humanitarian of the Year Award**

2021—Velma Wilson  
2020—Tamisha Torres-Walker  
2019—Reverend Donnell R. Jones  
2018—Phil Arnold  
2017—James Noe  
2016—Terri Porter  
2015—Bishop Edwina Perez-Santiago  
2014—Sister Ann Weltz  
2013—Doug Stewart  
2012—Lorraine Sain  
2011—Laura Johnson

## **Past Recipients of the Student Humanitarian of the Year Award**

2021—Kimyatta Newby  
2020—Christina Mazzi  
2019—Yassna Ahmadi  
2018—Sienna Camille Terry  
2017—Paige Godvin  
2016—Davis Bullock  
2015—Tyler Page  
2014—Anand Kannappan  
2013—Casey Leonard  
2012—Andrew Gonzales  
2011—Mario Alvarado

**"Our lives begin to end the day we become  
silent about things that matter."**

*—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS**

County Administrator's Office  
Office of Communications & Media and Contra Costa TV  
Department of Information Technology  
Risk Management  
County Counsel