

NATIONAL FANNIE LOU HAMER MEMORIAL STATUE DEDICATION AND UNVEILING



**Friday, October 5, 2012
Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden
Ruleville, MS**



FANNIE LOU HAMER
STATUE COMMITTEE

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Independent Scholar Denver, Colorado

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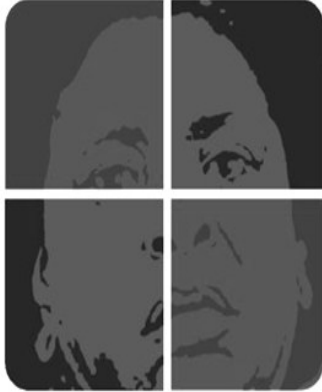
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Ms. Gloria Steinem, *Author & Activist*
Mr. Tracy Sugarman, *Author & Illustrator*
Ms. Eleanor Walden, *SCLC, SNCC, SSOC*

***National Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue Committee
Welcome and Thank You!***



On behalf of the National Fannie Lou Hamer Statue Committee, we welcome you to this historic event: The dedication and unveiling of the ***Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue***. This is a momentous occasion and we are pleased that you have joined with us to honor legendary human and civil rights advocate, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer.

This has been a long and sometimes difficult process, but we stand here today and proudly proclaim that we have completed this project. From all walks of life and from different regions in the country, dedicated committee members committed their personal time and resources to assure that this permanent monument would be erected and gifted to the ***Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden*** in the City of Ruleville. We firmly believe that Mrs. Hamer's activism during the civil rights era was of historical significance to the nation's fight for freedom and social justice, and that her acts of courage, heroism and personal sacrifice should never be forgotten.

We are deeply appreciative to all of those who helped to make this day possible: The City of Ruleville for its willingness to accept and remain permanent custodians of the gift; the National Black United Fund, Inc., our fiscal sponsor; Sunflower County for its support and help in preparing the monument site; Brian Hanlon and Hanlon Studios, for their enthusiastic support of the statue project, and for their willingness to complete the statue in time to mark Mrs. Hamer's 95th birthday; The ROAR Foundation, Inc., organizer of the National committee, and, to our donors, both large and small, whose financial support and contributions were the essential ingredients to make it all happen. We never would have made it without you.

We have concluded our work as the organizing force of the statue drive. For all of us, it has been a memorable journey. We now turn to the citizens of Ruleville and ask that they remain the permanent caretakers of the ***Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue*** for members of the community, as well as the countless visitors from the State of Mississippi, the United States of America, and from supporters of the Hamer legacy from throughout the world.

Sincerely,

Patricia Reid-Merritt

Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt, Chairperson

National Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue Committee

1917-1977

*“All my life I’ve been sick and tired.
Now I’m sick and tired of being sick and tired.”*



Fannie Lou Hamer was among the most significant participants in the struggle launched in the latter half of the twentieth century to achieve freedom and social justice for African Americans. Born October 6, 1917, in Montgomery County, Mississippi, she was the last of the twenty children of Lou Ella and James Townsend. They were sharecroppers, and since sharecropping generally bound workers to the land (a form of peonage), most sharecroppers were born poor, lived poor, and died poor.

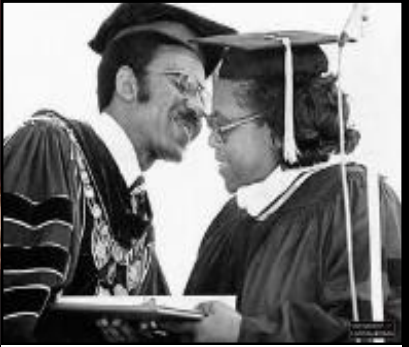
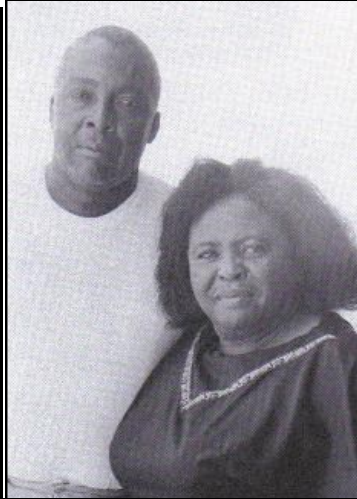
At age six Fannie Lou joined her parents in the cotton fields. By the time she was twelve, she was forced to drop out of school and work full time to help support her family. At age 27, she married another sharecropper named Perry “Pap” Hamer.

In August 1962, Mrs. Hamer attended a meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in her hometown, Ruleville, Mississippi. This is where she made the fateful decision to attempt to register to vote. For this decision, she was forced by her landlord to leave the plantation where she worked. In June of the following year, she and several SNCC colleagues were brutally beaten in a Winona, Mississippi jail by law enforcement officers. This beating left her blind in her left eye and her kidneys permanently damaged.

Mrs. Hamer’s historic presence in Atlantic City at the 1964 national convention of the Democratic Party brought national prominence with her electrifying testimony before the Convention’s Credentials Committee. Here, as a representative of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) that was formed in April 1964, she sought to prevent the seating of the all-white Mississippi delegation. While this effort failed, the Democratic Party agreed that in the future no delegation would be seated from a state where anyone was illegally denied the vote. Approximately, a year later, the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed.

After her Atlantic City experience, Mrs. Hamer increasingly turned her attention increasingly to building strong institutions for addressing problems at the local level. She took an active role in anti-poverty programs, especially Head Start, and in 1969, she founded the Freedom Farms Corporation, designed to help poor farming families—black and white—become economically self-sufficient; in 1971, she sought to become a Mississippi State Senator as an Independent.

The last six years of Mrs. Hamer’s life were marked with severe health problems. Still, it was a period during which she received numerous honors and awards. Finally on March 14, 1977, she passed away. Her funeral in Ruleville drew a cross section of national dignitaries who came to sing her praises, pointing out that her legacy will and should endure forever. Her legacy will serve as a beacon illuminating the pathway to eradicating poverty, suffering, oppression and racial intolerance—alleviating the ills of the world.



**Dedication and Unveiling of Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Statue
Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden
Ruleville, MS
Friday, October 5, 2012
10:00 AM**

Mistress of Ceremony.....Mrs. Bobbie Allen

National Anthem....."Star Spangled Banner".....Ruleville High School Band

Invocation.....Rev. Johnny Hill

Welcome.....Mrs. Hattie Robinson-Jordan

Black National Anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing".....Audience

Libations.....Dr. Molefi Asante, Professor, Temple University

Introduction of Committee Members.....Ms. Patricia Thompson, National Coordinator

Philanthropy and Giving.....Mr. William T. Merritt, President/CEO
National Black United Fund, Inc.

AcknowledgmentsMr. Charles McLaurin, Project Director

Reflections.....Mississippi State Senator Willie Simmons

Remembering Fannie Lou Hamer:.....Dr. Julianne Malveaux, Journalist, Economist

Solo.....Mrs. Vergie Hamer Faulkner, Daughter, Fannie Lou Hamer

Dedication and Presentation of Gift.....Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt, National Chairwoman
Distinguished Professor, Richard Stockton College of NJ

Acceptance.....Ruleville Mayor Shirley Edwards

Song....."This Little Light of Mine".....Audience

Adjournment

Presented by
The National Fannie Lou Hamer Statue Committee, NBUF and ROAR
www.fanniелouhamer.info

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Entergy Mississippi

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Dr. Maulana Karenga & Tiamoyo Karenga

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***In Memoriam**



Fannie Lou Hamer

"Nobody's free until everybody's free."

Fannie Lou Hamer



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