



**FANNIE LOU HAMER
STATUE COMMITTEE**

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Mr. Tracy Sugarman
Ms. Susan Taylor
Ms. Eleanor Walden
Ms. Iyanla Vazant

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"I am sick and tired of
being sick and tired."
- FANNIE LOU HAMER
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NEWS RELEASE

FANNIE LOU HAMER TO BE HONORED WITH STATUE
Campaign to Memorialize the Legacy of the Civil Rights
Leader and American Heroine

RULEVILLE, MS., June 1, 2011 -- A national committee of distinguished scholars, educators, community, civil rights and political activists have organized a national campaign to honor the legacy of civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer with a statue in the **Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden** in her hometown of Ruleville, Mississippi.

A woman of strength, courage and vision, Hamer was a warrior for truth and justice – a true American heroine. Her work as a grassroots civil rights activist and political organizer brought national attention to the stark reality of the political disenfranchisement of Black people in America. Her work with the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and her testimony at the **1964 National Democratic Party's Convention** on behalf of the **Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP)** helped change the nation's perspective on the true meaning of democracy in America. She was a pioneer among Black women in politics and was one of the few women in the **Civil Rights Movement** who held a leadership role on the front lines of the struggle.

In 2009, the **Fannie Lou Hamer Statue Committee (FLHSC)**, a not-for-profit, was established primarily for the purpose of commissioning the construction of a full-length statue in her honor to be placed in the memorial garden. The Board of Alderpersons of the City of Ruleville, lent its support to the project by designating property owned and maintained by the city, where Hamer and her husband are buried, as the permanent location for the monument.

"Fannie Lou Hamer took on a leadership role during a tumultuous time in our nations' history," explained Patricia Reid-Merritt, Stockton College professor who serves as committee chairperson.

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“The average person is unaware of her role and importance in American history. People need to be reminded of the significance of her contributions to the Civil Rights and Black Political Independence Movements. This campaign will further educate the public about the tremendous sacrifices and achievements made by Mrs. Hamer during her lifetime in an effort to gain freedom and social justice for African Americans and all disenfranchised people.”

“We are appealing to the public to support this worthy cause to commemorate her as a true American heroine. The committee has set a goal of \$125,000 for the completion of the first phase of the fundraising project and hope to achieve this goal by October 6, 2011 the 94th anniversary of Mrs. Hamer’s birth.”

Merritt said the committee is planning a series of activities to bring attention to the campaign and the Hamer Legacy. Activities will include a **Fannie Lou Hamer Statue Design Competition**, a **Fannie Lou Hamer Teach-in** and a **Fannie Lou Hamer Sunday** among other activities.

Charles McLaurin and Lawrence Guyot, fellow SNCC members who worked closely with Hamer, have joined the effort. McLaurin was Hamer’s campaign manager and Guyot was chair of the MFDP. Other notables on the FLHSC include Hamer’s daughter, Vergie Hamer Faulkner; Dr. Stacy White, chair of the Sunflower County Civil Rights Organization; Dr. Julianne Malveaux, president of Bennett College; Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, Temple University professor; Hakim Johnson, son of Hamer SNCC comrade June E. Johnson; Yolanda Jones, professor at MVSU, Hattie Jordan, former Ruleville Alderwoman; Margaret Kibbee, Sunflower County Civil Rights Organization; Dr. Francine C. Childs, professor emeritus, Ohio University; Minister Vester Lobbins, Hamer’s cousin; committee coordinator Patricia Thompson, founder of Repaying Our Ancestors Respectfully (ROAR); committee treasurer Rev. Regena Thomas, former New Jersey Secretary of State; Susan Reep, California Hamer Flamekeeper and Dr. Maegan Parker Brooks, co-editor of *“The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is”*.

The FLHSC Honorary Members include MS State Senator Willie Simmons, Congressperson Eleanor Holmes Norton, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., William Buckley, former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin, Harry Gene Moss, Gloria Steinem, Susan Taylor, Dr. Davis Houck, Tracy Sugarman and Iyanla Vanzant.

How can you help? The committee is calling on community organizations, civil rights organizations, women’s organizations, schools, fraternal organizations, business/professional organizations, faith-based organizations, activist groups, labor unions and corporations to support the campaign by becoming sponsors, holding fundraisers, writing letters to the media in support of the campaign, purchasing *“The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is”* (a percentage of book sales is contributed to Hamer Statue Fund) and producing educational events in honor of the Hamer Legacy.

Tax-deductible donations can be made via check, credit card or electronic transfer including PayPal through the **National Black United Fund (NBUF)**, the committee’s fiscal sponsor, at www.nbuf.org. For more information on the campaign go to www.fanni louhamer.info, [facebook @ Fannie Lou Hamer Statue Fund](https://www.facebook.com/FannieLouHamerStatueFund), email at info@fanni louhamer.info or call **(612) 812-1278** or **(336) 517-1393**.