I was fortunate along with four surviving wives and other descendants of the 623 African American men in the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study in Tuskegee to be present at the 1997 Presidential Apology by then President William Clinton in the White House. The National Apology to the 8 surviving men and all of the men descendants as well as the nation was personal and started the journey to healing and forgiveness. The apology pulled out some deep rooted myths many people had about Our Fathers, such as they were lazy, uneducated, and uncaring. Today, their descendants through Voices of Our Fathers Foundation are beginning to tell and share their stories. These were men of courage and dignity, hard workers and deeply spiritual. They wanted the best for their families and the small county of Macon.

It is important that the history of the United States Public Health Service Syphilis Study in Tuskegee and Macon County be told and retold from generation to generation. The procedures of what exactly happened in the study along with the 40 years of being uninformed, denied medical treatment, as well as the profound affects the study had on the men’s families, then and now. All these things should be revealed and must be kept factual.

Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care was established because of the 1997 Presidential Apology. The Center is moving forward creating many exciting education programs, health practices, research and training future health professionals. The Center is a lasting reminder of the injustices of the study but will always serve as a place of hope and prevention.

1997
Presidential Apology
THEN PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

"I would like to announce several steps to help us achieve these goals. First, we will help to build that lasting memorial at Tuskegee. (Applause.) The school founded by Booker T. Washington, distinguished by the renowned scientist George Washington Carver and so many others who advanced the health and well-being of African Americans and all Americans, is a fitting site. The Department of Health and Human Services will award a planning grant so the school can pursue establishing a center for bioethics in research and health care. The center will serve as a museum of the study and support efforts to address its legacy and strengthen bioethics training."
Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation is advancing well toward transforming and uplifting the legacy of the United States Syphilis Study at Tuskegee and Macon County, Alabama from 1932 – 1972. Descendants of the 623 African American men in this study shown in the picture on the front cover attended the 2015 Annual Presidential Apology Commemoration and Public Health Ethics Intensive Course at Tuskegee University March 22 – 27, 2015. Since 2006 descendants have met to heal, seek answers, and unite in order to tell “Our Fathers” stories and honor their legacy. At the family meeting in 2014 we accepted the Foundation’s Mission statement and a 5 year strategic plan. Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation registered as a non-profit Foundation in the state of Alabama. Family day this year was powerful and much was achieved. The day began with a morning of reflection, inspiration, sharing stories and healing, led by Drs. Edward and Anne Wimbrel. Shortly after lunch the descendants, along with Dr. Reuben Warren, visited the gravesites of 10 men in the US Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Shiloh Baptist Church Cemetery. Several immediate family members were able to visit their father’s or grandfather’s graves and place a rose on their tombstones. Annual visits to other cemeteries where these beloved souls are buried will be identified and invited in coming years. Thanks to Mrs. Emma Sinclair for identifying the graves of all of the men buried in this hallowed place. The visit to the Legacy Museum was informative. Seeing, touching and learning about the historical artifacts was interesting. The most beneficial to the descendants was seeing the numerous research files donated to the museum by Susan Reeverby, author of Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy and Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. These files are available for anyone to review especially the descendants. At the family meeting of Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation a $25.00 membership was accepted and all descendants were encouraged to join. Also, non- descendants who will support our mission are eligible and invited to join the Foundation. Based on a membership enrollment goal of 75 the Foundation accepted the 2015 Budget. A beautiful red knock out rose bush was planted in the Memorial and Inspiration Garden. What joy and gladness this lasting tribute will bring to the descendants that will honor “Our Fathers” and tell their stories. This summer the Leadership Team will approve the Foundation’s By-Laws and submit them with the 501(c) 3 Federal Non-profit Tax Exempt Status Application this fall. It is an honor and privilege to work with the Leadership Team and descendants as the chairwoman of the Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation. I sincerely thank each one for their passion, dedication, participation and willingness to honor the 623 men. By remembering and celebrating the lives of “Our Fathers”, they will never be forgotten. Many thanks to Mrs. Beverly Ebo for coordinating all participation in the submission of stories for the newsletter. She also requested assistance with the Bioethics has a new website.

I. Officers were elected as follows:
Chair - Lillie Head
Membership Chair - Florine Edwards
Secretary - Maggie K. Antoine
Treasurer - Joyce Williams
Historian - Emma Willis

II. Bank account-Nick Fuller will be the third signer on the checking account.
III. Annette Washington was asked to submit an article for the newsletter.

The Families meeting was called to order at 3:16 p.m. by Lillie Head, Chairwoman. The “Lords’ Prayer” was said in unison.

Greetings from Mrs. Head. She informed us of a need for an evaluation sheet. Stated that the Leadership Team had met three times since the March 2014 meeting. She also stated that she would like to see a face-to-face meeting in the future.

I. Minutes of the 2014 meeting were circulated. It was moved by Joyce Williams and seconded by Jeanetta Nicholson that the 2014 minutes be accepted as circulated. The motion carried.

II. Treasurer Report: Joyce Williams stated that we have collected $350.00 to date.

III. Mrs. Head stated that she was asked to write a letter of support for a grant that Dr. Warren submitted. We were given $10,000. She also stated that we are moving forward with the “Five Year Strategic Plan” and adhering to the “Mission Statement.”

IV. Membership-Florine Edwards circulated a Membership form. Corrections were offered and accepted. Membership dues are $25.00 for one year per person.

V. The proposed budget was circulated. Moved by Mr. Julkes and seconded by Jeanetta Nicholson that the proposed budget be accepted. Motion carried.

It was also recommended that the persons dealing with the finances be bonded.

VI. Public Relations-The Save the Date was placed in the Tuskegee News and the Defender. Rev. Baums stated that he needs flyers.

A facebook page will be developed for our organization and the Bioethics has a new website.

OLD BUSINESS

Scholarship-Criteria will be developed for the awarding of a scholarship. The committee members are Jeanetta Nicholson and Maggie K. Antoine. Scholarship Committee members must be a financial member of VFOFF.

Newsletter- was mailed out. Mr. Talley was thanked for his tribute to his father. Mrs. Head asked for more participation in the submission of stories for the newsletter. She also requested assistance with the newsletter.

Crest- Leo Ware presented a schematic of the crest for the foundation. After much discussion it was moved to accept the crest by Rev. Baums and seconded by Florine Edwards. Motion carried. Mr. Julkes stated that he will check with his son to see what is needed to get the crest patented.

EIN number- We have an EIN number from the state of Alabama.

By-Laws- will be developed by the Leadership team. 501c3 will be applied for.

NEW BUSINESS

I. Officers were elected as follows:
Chair - Lillie Head
Membership Chair - Florine Edwards
Secretary - Maggie K. Antoine
Treasurer - Joyce Williams
Historian - Emma Willis

II. Bank account-Nick Fuller will be the third signer on the checking account.

III. Annette Washington was asked to submit an article for the newsletter.

Lillie Head -Chair Maggie K. Antoine-Recorder

THE BEGINNING Memorial & Inspiration Garden HONORING 623 AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN

A MESSAGE from Lillie Head, chairwoman OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

WE HAVE AN EIN NUMBER FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA.

EXPERTS

NEW BUSINESS

I. Officers were elected as follows:
Chair - Lillie Head
Membership Chair - Florine Edwards
Secretary - Maggie K. Antoine
Treasurer - Joyce Williams
Historian - Emma Willis

II. Bank account-Nick Fuller will be the third signer on the checking account.

III. Annette Washington was asked to submit an article for the newsletter.

Lillie Head -Chair Maggie K. Antoine-Recorder

VOICES FOR OUR FATHERS LEGACY FOUNDATION 2015 BUDGET

Income $1,875.00 Membership enrollment 75
Expenses $1,400.00
2016 Scholarship $500.00
Newsletter $200.00
IRS 501 (c)3 $400.00
Administrative $150.00
Miscellaneous $150.00

MARCH 23, 2015 KELLOGG CONFERENCE CENTER
FAMILY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Rueben C. Warren DDS, MPH, Dr. P.H., M.Div.
Director of the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care

Welcome Reception

MEMBERS OF THE 2013-2014 FAMILY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Lillie Head – Leadership Team Chair - Wirtz, VA
Maggie Antoine – Secretary - Tuskegee, AL
Florien Edwards – Membership Chair - Memphis TN
Carmen J. Head – Social Media – Alexandria, VA
Joyce Williams – Treasurer - Montgomery, AL
Emma Sinclair-Willis – Research - Notasulga, AL
Nick Fuller – Tuskegee, AL

Publisher and Editor, Lillie Head
540-483-1784 ljewelh@aol.com

Layout & Design, Heather Snyder
heatherhsnyder80@gmail.com

Continued from page 7...
RESILIENT Healing Practices

DRS. EDWARD F. WIMBERLY & ANNE WIMBERLY

Earlier this spring, we had our fifth healing session with the family descendants of the men who were victimized by the United States Public Health Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. Previously, we held four sessions beginning in the spring of 2011, and we met each year since then. We covered the topics which were designed to get the family descendants to engage in the healing process. The first session in 2011 dealt with the stigmatization that the descendants and the families felt. The 2012 session focused on recalling some of the stories from the family descendants and whether there were some positive outcomes and stories that have developed despite the infamous study. In 2013, the emphasis was on resilient practices that the descendants had learned that enabled them to keep on keeping on despite the negative circumstances. In 2014, we looked at models of forgiveness that surfaced from our meetings. Finally, in the 2015 event this year, we explored how the conversations about the 2015 session was an attempt to look at the previous four sessions and to assess to what extent the healing of the family descendants had progressed. The assessment dimensions included awareness of dis-membership which had taken place. For example, dis-membership dealt with how the study disrupted the sense of positive relationships within the family. The second dimension focused on the concept of re-membership, and this related to how positive relationships and respect were restored for family descendants. We discovered first that specific resilient practices promoted the ability of the descendant families to “keep on keeping on.” Second, models related to forgiveness were explored, particularly as the result of President Clinton’s apology and the establishment of the Bioethics Center at Tuskegee University. Indeed, President Clinton’s apology to the participants and their families certainly was one key factor for the victims of the study and their family members and descendants.

One of the main exercises undertaken by the family descendants in the 2015 conference was for the participants to draw literally their own eyes and tell what the eyes see looking back over the years since the study. The key concern was for the family descendants to see themselves now and how different it has become since the time of the study up to the end of the five years of participating in healing sessions.

Some of the drawn eyes identified include:

1. Widened Eyes—eyes that are larger than life seeing anew the stark reality of the atrocity of the study;
2. Squinting eyes—eyes that look as though they are piercing glances into the personal stories that are too difficult to imagine;
3. Double or multiple sets of eyes that reflect the many dimensions of single stories; and
4. Many forms of eyes becoming the means of remembering and retelling the stories that have already been told, but telling newly recalled stories and their impact on what is happening in current life.

There were several forums in the Bioethics Auditorium featuring outstanding guest speakers discussing the innovations and programs developed by Booker T. Washington and the outstanding faculty and staff he recruited.

Tuskegee Institute was founded in 1881 by Lewis Adams (former enslaved person) and George Campbell (former slave owner) with Booker T. Washington serving as first principal and president. Tuskegee Institute was started to train and educate youth and adults. Because February is Black History Month, the lecture series was scheduled that highlighted: Booker T. Washington and the Rosenwald Schools, the Mobile Schools, the Cooperative Extension, and Booker T. Washington’s educational philosophy. There was also a lecture on Margret Murray Washington, one of Booker T. Washington’s wives, and lynching.

March was Women’s History Month, and there was an outstanding panel presentation entitled, “Women of Tuskegee.” Several of the women faculty members discussed the extraordinary contributions that women have and continue to make in the growth and development of Tuskegee University.

April was National Minority Health Month and the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Morehouse School of Medicine, sponsored a national symposium entitled, “Negro Health Week to National Minority Health Month:100 Years of Moving Public Health Forward.” The event was held on the CDC main campus in Atlanta and featured nationally known keynote speakers. There was a student scientific poster session, which included student research from several universities. Four competitive awards were made and a Tuskegee University student won first place. Additional events honoring Booker T. Washington are planned for the rest of the year. On June 19-20, several persons from Tuskegee University will celebrate Juneteenth in Hardy, Virginia on the grounds of the Booker T. Washington National Monument, where Booker T. Washington was born and freed from slavery.

In March the 18th Annual Commemoration Events of the 1997 Presidential Apology for the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee was held on March 23rd-26th, the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (PHEI) was held and it was extremely well attended. The theme of the Commemoration events was, “Assuring Ethics from Generation to Generation.” One of the highlights was the response to the keynote address by Dr. Ralph Katz, who asked the question, “Was the Development of the Mistrust-in-Research Field of Study Yet Another Legacy of the USPHS Syphilis Study at Tuskegee? A Case Study in Passing Ethics Research from Generation to Generation.” Kimberly Whitley, M.P.H, an Integrative Biosciences PhD Fellow at Tuskegee University and a descendant family member provided a riveting response to Dr. Katz’s keynote presentation. The other presentations and