



Chloe Coney

Chloe Coney is known as a leader and a founder – as well as a woman who wears many hats – but she is most assuredly a change agent. Just a few years after a federal court found Hillsborough County was illegally operating a segregated school system, Chloe helped to integrate the system and graduated from Hillsborough High School with honors in 1968. Her determination continued on as she attained her bachelor’s degree in Sociology/Corrections from Florida A & M University in Tallahassee, FL and a Master’s Degree in Biblical Counseling from Florida Beacon Bible College in Largo, FL. She has also completed courses on Community, Housing and Economic Development from Development Training Institute (DTI), Neighborhood Leadership Development Institute (NCCED), NeighborWorks of America and Bank of America Leadership Academy. She received her Honorary Doctorate Degree from Blessed Hope Bible College in Tampa, Florida.

Chloe's passion for justice and building strong communities was evident since she was very young, but took hold when she began her professional career as the first Black female probation and parole officer in Hillsborough County in 1972. She would then become an intake counselor/mediator with the 13th, Judicial Circuit Court of Hillsborough County and marketing representative for Florida Power, Inc. in Clearwater, FL. Later, Chloe was hired as the center manager of the Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center, the largest (36,000 square feet) "One Stop Social and Medical Center" in Hillsborough County. As center manager, Chloe led the effort to restore a sense of pride, ownership, and community in Tampa's Eastside neighborhoods. She helped to start the East Tampa Community School Partnership and the Back to School Kick-off Fair. She has served as the Tampa's coordinator for the Department of Justice Weed and Seed Program. Chloe's passion inspired her to found and become the first President/CEO of the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa (CDC of Tampa). The CDC of Tampa Nehemiah Project Community Building "Brick by Brick" has since enjoyed 22 years of community building through strategic initiatives such as providing job training, promoting entrepreneurship, developing youth leadership programs, revitalizing commercial areas, and building affordable housing. In 2006, Chloe retired as the Founder/President of the CDC of Tampa to become a candidate in a very close race for Hillsborough County Commission District 3. She quickly found a new way to serve community as District Director for Congresswoman Kathy Castor, who represents the 14th District of Florida and includes most of Hillsborough County and South Pinellas County. In this capacity, she assists Congresswoman Castor by addressing an array of constituent concerns, soliciting citizen input, and performing community outreach activities, such as foreclosure prevention workshops during the economic downturn to help families stay in their homes and job fairs during the economic recovery to connect neighbors with local jobs.

Leroy Staley, Legendary Pro Basketball Player

<https://www.aaronshouse.org/pages/leroy-staley-legendary-pro-basketball-player>

In 1977, Leroy Staley promised his parents, Moses and Eula Staley, that he would earn a college education. “Both have passed away, but I am keeping that promise.” At 54, Leroy enrolled at Ashford University to earn his Bachelor’s degree online.

Leroy chose Ashford largely because it offered a program in his area of expertise - Sports & Recreation Management. His love of sports began when he was a young boy. “I got started in sports through the Boys & Girls Club when I was 11 years old, playing basketball for Coach Glenn Purmuy. That’s how I got to where I am today.” In high school, Leroy maintained his relationship with the Ben Moore

at Pierce Jr. High, Dale Klay, at Thomas Jefferson High School, Tom Wilson at Florida College. Then, after Florida College, his experiences and talent landed him a place on the Indiana State basketball team, where he played the same years as Larry Bird in 1978-1979. “My best memory is probably the time we played against Michigan State and Magic Johnson. We returned from the trip on my birthday March 27th - that’s the biggest birthday party I have ever had returning on ISU campus!”

Due to various life events, Leroy was unable to complete his degree at Indiana State. Instead, he found work in the Indiana state corrections department as a Correctional Officer. After a year-and-a-half, he was offered a position as Recreation Leader IV, where he spent 4 and-and-half years for the Indiana State Prison system at Branchville Youth Facility. Thus began Leroy’s 27-year career, which has included positions as Sports Specialist, Recreation Specialist, Assistant Supervisor of Recreation and Supervisor of Recreation in

the Federal Prison Systems.

Throughout his career, Leroy occasionally returned to the idea of finishing his degree, and when he moved to Mississippi a few years ago 2005, he decided to take

action. When still a student at Ashford, he told us, “I enjoy learning from the other students and hearing their ideas. I have had many great experiences with my classmates. I’ve also been pleased with how well my teachers instruct their online courses, and impressed with how supportive the administration is to online students. My life has changed a lot as a result of being enrolled at Ashford University. I have less time being bored here in Mississippi, and I feel more focused on my current job.” Leroy said he was proud to set an example for his 2 sons and one daughter, DeMichael, Ladarius, and Destiny.

After graduation, Leroy planned to retire and now he works at Opis Fairway Oaks Rehab-Nursing home as Assistant Recreation Supervisor, but he also was a volunteer Assistant basketball Coach at Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida. In 2015 he was hired as Assistant basketball Coach at Trinity College located in Trinity, Florida. “I found sports because of the Boys & Girls Club in basketball, Forrest Heights Little League in baseball, so now I want to give back to my hometown being Tampa, Florida. I want to teach sports and

prevention and not only help kids to stay off the streets and out of prison, but also to achieve success in life.” We look forward to hearing about the impact Leroy is making on the lives of others.

Dr. Walter Smith, Former FAMU President

<https://www.aaronshouse.org/pages/dr-walter-smith-former-famu-president>

Dr. Walter L. Smith, the former second President of Roxbury Community College in Boston, Massachusetts, and the seventh President of Florida A & M University, which was his undergraduate alma mater, was born in Tampa, Florida and grew up in Cairo, GA, Tallahassee, FL, and Harlem, NY. Dr. Smith completed high school as a stellar athlete in track, basketball and baseball. In 1951, Dr. Smith won several competitions while attending the 4-H Short Course at Savannah State College, and was elected Vice President of the 4-H Clubs of the State of Georgia.

Dr. Smith spent his young adult years in Harlem, NY where he found work as a messenger, and racks pusher in the New York Garment center until the age of

twenty-three, after that he served in the U.S. Army for thirty months during the era of the Korean War. After discharge from the army, Dr. Smith enrolled at Gibbs Junior College in St. Petersburg, Florida where he became the first President of the Student Government Association.

Because of his many accomplishments, Dr. Smith was recognized by the National Education Association to assist in breaking racial barriers in teacher organization in the southern and border states. His programs in Human Relations in the State of Florida received the National Rosa Parks Awards at the 1971 and 1972 NEA

Conventions. This effort won him an African American Institute Scholarship and opportunity to study in West Africa. In 1993, Dr. Smith was asked to return to South Africa and later became the founding president of South Africa's first American style two year college. Dr. Smith was a United States monitor for the 1994 election that brought Nelson Mandela to power as President of the RSA.

Today Dr. Smith is retired and lives in Tampa with his wife Barbara W. Smith enjoying their family of five children, U.S. Army Colonel John L. Smith, Attorney Salesia V. Smith-Gordon, Andre Smith, Walter L. Smith II and Tracy

Abrams Butler. They have seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. In 2002, Dr. Smith opened Dr. Walter L. Smith Library located at 905 N. Albany Street in Tampa, it is library/museum dedicated to enhancing the educational development of the people in his boyhood community.

Dr. Smith has received numerous awards and accolades throughout his colorful life, these are a few notable awards received by him:

- Keynoted the "Unveiling of the Magnificent Twelve" by the Association of Florida Colleges;
- IBM Kennedy Space Center Red-X Award;
- Tampa Urban League Scholarly Distinction Award;
- National Conference of Black Mayors President Award;

- Academic Specialty Award to the Country of Malawi;
- Inducted into the FAMU Sports Hall of Fame;
- FAMUN of the Century Award;
- Florida Association of Community Colleges President's Award; • First Chairperson of the Florida Statewide Committee on the Education of Blacks; • Apple Gate Doris Award;
- Anheuser-Bush Association Great Kings Award;
- Inducted into the FAMU Gallery of Distinction in Education;
- National Education Association of the Rosena Willis Human Rights Award.

Denard Span, Tampa Bay Rays Center Fielder

<https://www.aaronshouse.org/pages/denard-span-tampa-bay-rays-center-fielder>

The Tampa native was 14 or so and the team was brand new to Major League Baseball. In true 1990s style, the Devil Rays' original home duds featured the team name in a spectrum of teal, green, yellow and purple on the front, underlined by the tail of a manta ray. The backs featured blocky names and numbers in all purple.

Now 34, Span finds himself wearing that same jersey March 31, the anniversary of Tampa Bay's inaugural game. The Rays, having dropped the demonic half of their moniker years ago in favor of sunshine, have grand plans to celebrate two decades of existence this season. That means they will break out the throwbacks a few more times.

Life wasn't always easy for him and his brother, Ray, growing up. Their father, Donald, wasn't in the picture. While he now has a relationship with Span, and though Wilson re-married in 1998, all the parenting was left to her prior to that. In addition to

being an insurance claims adjuster, she had to arrange car rides,

help with homework, wash clothes, cook dinner and more.

“Her impact was monumental to who I am today as a man, as a baseball player, my work ethic,” Span said. “I watched her every morning go to work and just grind. No matter what the circumstances were, she put her head down and kept moving forward. I get a lot of that attribute from her.

Founded in 2014, The Denard Span Foundation, based in Tampa, seeks to “empower single-parent homes.” The inspiration for the organization, Wilson serves as its executive director in addition to operating her own daycare center. She’s “quite involved,” paying bills, handling paperwork, scouting locations for events and more.

Being back in the Tampa area has afforded Span even more time to focus on his foundation. It’s also shined a brighter light on his work. He said that playing in other cities over the years meant he wasn’t visible in his hometown.

Span’s alma mater, which his cousins attend, has also benefited from his return. Ty Griffin never coached Span, but the Tampa Catholic baseball coach is among the many who are excited to see Span on the Rays.

“It’s been like a dream come true. It’s been awesome to play in front of my home city and drive across the bridge, 30 minutes away from my house to work every day,” Span said. “Just awesome, man. Never thought it would be a reality.”

Rufus Lewis, Nat’L Black Golf Hall of Fame Inductee

<https://www.aaronshouse.org/pages/rufus-lewis-nat-l-black-golf-hall-of-fame-inductee>

Rufus Lewis, a retired Tampa Police Sergeant, was inducted into the Black Golfers hall of Fame in Winston Salem, NC in 1995. Mr. Lewis is a devoted husband of fifty-three years to Cynthia Lewis, father of three children, grandfather of four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Lewis is a native of St. Petersburg Florida, and is a life-long Tampa Bay area resident. He is a former graduate from Gibbs High

School, Gibbs Junior College, Hillsborough Community College, and soon after, he continued his education at the University

of South Florida and University of Tampa.

From 1979 to 1981, Mr. Lewis dominated the Sunshine State Amateur Golfers Association, winning forty tournaments, and two SSAGA state championships. Because of his love for golf: he petitioned, and is responsible for the Willie Black Monument being built near the 10th hole at Rogers Park. Some sixty (60) years ago Willie Black had a vision for a place for African Americans to play golf; Willie and hundreds of African American hands joined together, and cleared land that was full of shrubbery, tree stumps, tangled foliage, and weeds and smoothed

the sand with hoes and rakes, five years later in 1948 Rogers Park was born. Mr. Lewis was not going to let anyone forget who paved the way for Blacks to play golf at their own public golf course. Mr. Lewis is also a prominent figure responsible for renaming a section of 30th Street after Willie Black, who founded the 18th hole public course.

In 1974, Mr. Lewis was one of the four courageous black police officers who filed a joint complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commission against the City of Tampa Department for Discrimination. The EOC's investigation was completed in 1976, and the City of Tampa was cited for numerous discrimination violations. This became a historic moment for black officers in Tampa, as well as the City of Tampa employees, opening the doors of progress for many.

In 1985 Rufus was awarded the Willie Black Award for his efforts in promoting golf among children and adults. In 1994 he was appointed the Sunshine State Amateur Golfer's Association Junior Golf Program Chairman

and he held that position for five (5) years.

Mr. Lewis's community involvement and accomplishments are extensive. Some of them include him being involved with the NAACP, United Negro College Fund, Zeta Phi Beta 2009 Humanitarian, 2011 Gibbs Junior College Hall of Fame Inductee, Jefferson High School Boys Golf Coach, North Tampa Chamber of

Commerce Officer, Orchid Social Club, FAMU West Coast Rattler Quarterback Club,

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers, Loretta Ingraham Community Center Mentoring Program for Youth Director, 1st Flight and the 2003-Jefferson High School Ida S. Baker Distinguished Minority Educator of the Year Award.

Senator Arthenia L. Joyner, Florida Senator

Senator Arthenia Joyner has spent her life standing up for what she believes and paving the way for others. Born in Lakeland FL and reared in Tampa, she grew up in a time of segregation and has always been determined to end it. That commitment began in high school, where she began her protests against racial discrimination, and continued at college, when she was arrested twice during protest marches. Later, as President of the National Bar Association, it was a protest against apartheid in South Africa outside of that country's embassy that led to her incarceration once again in Washington, D.C. As a state lawmaker, Senator Joyner continued her struggle for equality, passing legislation requiring the state to compensate wrongfully incarcerated persons, the unshackling of pregnant female inmates when giving birth, and prohibiting the mutilation of female genitals. She was also at the forefront of the drive to restore civil rights for ex-felons, and held ongoing workshops for those who needed assistance navigating the often-difficult process.

A graduate of Florida A&M University's College of Law, she was Florida's fifth black woman lawyer, the first black female lawyer in Hillsborough County, the first black lawyer in Polk County and the first black female lawyer in the Florida Senate. Upon her graduation, she could not find anyone willing to hire a black woman lawyer so she hired herself, opening her own successful practice. Joyner has practiced law for forty-eight (48) years – longer than any black woman in the history of Florida.

Joyner entered politics in the early '70s when she chaired the Shirley Chisholm's presidential campaign, and subsequently chaired Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns and Bill Clinton's presidential campaign in 1992 in Tampa, Florida.

Joyner was elected to the Legislature in 2000, first serving in the House of Representatives, followed by the Florida Senate. In 2014, her colleagues elected her to serve as the first black woman to lead the Senate Democratic Caucus. As a senator, Joyner worked to preserve the legacy of Tampa's historic Central Avenue district, though she is most proud of the millions of dollars procured for her district including the black infant mortality study, the Prodigy program, and the Computer Mentors Program. She has been a champion for women's rights, affordable health care, education, civil rights, and reforming Florida's criminal justice system.

Tyrone Keys, Former NFL Player

<https://www.aaronshouse.org/pages/tyrone-keys-former-nfl-player>

To some, Tyrone Keys may be noteworthy because of his personal accomplishments on the football field as a defensive Most Valuable

Player (MVP) in high school and college, or former Super Bowl XX Chicago Bears defensive end. Tyrone, however, remembered to give honor to whom honor is due, and graciously acknowledged his mentor's words at Callaway High School, Coach Odell Jenkins: "Sow a thought...reap a word. Sow a word...reap an action. Sow an action...reap a destiny. Sow into a destiny...reap character".

Tyrone is from Jackson, Mississippi, where he was named a High School All-American and voted defensive MVP of the year in the state of Mississippi in 1977. His high school team also won the state championship in 1976.

After graduating from Mississippi State in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education, Tyrone began his nine-year professional football career. Tyrone was the 5th Round (113th player) draft pick, defensive end, for the 1981 New York Jets. However, he decided to start his career for two seasons in

the Canadian Football League with the British Columbia (BC) Lions.

In 1983, Keys returned to the National Football League (NFL) to launch a successful seven-year career. He signed with the Chicago Bears as a defensive end where he

remained through the 1985 Super Bowl XX Championship year (46-10 over the New England Patriots). The Bears were 18-1 and their only loss was to the Miami Dolphins eight weeks prior to the Super Bowl, December 2, 1985. The Bears-vs.-Dolphins game had the highest number of viewers in the history of football. Keys and his team mates produced the Super Bowl Shuffle on the next day, December 3, 1985. Tyrone was the keyboardist in the Super Bowl Shuffle video which was nominated for a GRAMMY Award and sold over a million copies.

Keys founded "All Sports Community Service, Inc." in 1993 as a non-profit mentoring and scholarship organization dedicated to helping challenged youth in Tampa, Florida, achieve their dream of attending college. Keys taught his students the idea that the skills from the playing field could be parlayed onto the field of life. Since 1993, All Sports has assisted hundreds of students obtain over \$20 million in support towards their college education from all over this country and in England as well. All Sports students are mentored through a combination of academics, community service and sports. Great emphasis is placed on returning to the community to assist the next generation. All Sports is now seeing the Full Circle Participation in action with its students returning to invest time, energy and scholarship funds into the program and the community.

Tyrone Keys' relationship with the Hillsborough County School District dates back to 1986. While still playing in the National Football League, he started serving the district as a substitute teacher at Leto High School. After retiring from the NFL due to career-ending back injury, he extended his work with the district, becoming

a substitute and coach at Chamberlain High School and Gaither High School in the early 1990s. Keys began to focus his efforts on helping student athletes navigate the system and move on to college. His efforts intensified after the death of Albert Perry, a former Leto High running back whose life may have taken a different course if he had escaped his impoverished neighborhood. Perry instead was shot and killed in a senseless dispute. Inspired, Keys formed All-Sports Community Service, the nonprofit organization that would eventually help thousands of student-athletes and students go to college. That work strengthened his connection with Leto High, and for the last 12 years, he's returned to Leto to watch two of his former students present scholarships to current seniors.

Warren Hope Dawson, Esq, Tampa Attorney

<https://www.aaronshouse.org/pages/warren-hope-dawson-esq-tampa-attorney>

A native of Mulberry, Florida, a graduate of Union Academy High School in Bartow, the third black graduate of a public high school in Polk County, Florida to become a lawyer, and of Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. Mr. Dawson served as an active duty officer in the U.S. Army from 1961 to 1963 and received his law degree from Howard University, Washington DC in 1966.

Not only was his entry into the legal profession a piece of Florida history, he went on to become a nationally recognized leader in the legal profession in the United States. He is a veteran of innumerable civil and criminal trials, both jury and non-jury. He has worked as lead counsel in trials before hearing officers, mediators, arbitrators, trial judges sitting with and without jurors, and before appellate courts. He has been general counsel and labor counsel to clients in appearances before judicial and administrative law judges, as well as before regulatory agencies, both federal and state.

In 1974, Attorney Dawson became the lead counsel for the Plaintiffs in the now famous lawsuit known as Manning vs. the School Board of Hillsborough County. The Plaintiff class consisted of “all minor Negro children and their parents residing in Hillsborough County.” In that role, he vigorously represented the Plaintiff class and was responsible for monitoring and enforcing the desegregation Orders handed down by the Federal Courts.

This civil rights lawyer worked for 24 of the next 27 years (1974-1998) without compensation as he continued the legal effort to eliminate the dual (one white and one black) school systems in the public schools of Hillsborough County, Florida. In 2001, a Federal Appeals Court finally ruled that the School District had achieved “unitary status” and no longer required federal judicial supervision.

Dawson also participated in the voting rights case of Warren vs. City of Tampa. That case successfully challenged the at-large election systems of the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County. That legal effort led to the creation of a combination of at-large and single-member districts in the city and county. Dawson and another civil rights lawyer successfully lobbied the Florida Legislature to adopt single-member districts for the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate.

In 1967, Dawson became the city's first black Assistant City Attorney for the City of Tampa – and may be the first black attorney to hold such position in the South. In 1983, his leadership among lawyers was recognized by his election as President of The National Bar Association. In that same year, Ebony Magazine recognized Dawson as one of the “100 Most Influential Black Americans”. And before the 1990 Super Bowl in Tampa, Dawson pushed for the integration of the Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla. Some of Mr. Dawson's Recognitions & Awards include, but are not exhaustive, of the extent of his actual experience, activities, affiliations, recognitions, or awards:

- Inductee, National Bar Association Hall of Fame, August, 2007.
- Awarded Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, FAMU, 2011.
- The Warren Hope Dawson Elementary School, a \$20 Million Dollar state-of-the-art public school for children in grades Pre-K through 5th, was established by the Hillsborough County School Board in the Riverview community. The School received its first students in August of 2017.