



# From The Desk of Mayor Don Ryan

Week of February 18, 2019

As part of its extensive coverage of Long Island’s African-American past in recognition of Black History Month, a recent article in Newsday highlighted two noteworthy citizens of Hempstead Village that I wanted to share with you.

### Alverta Banks Gray Schultz

As reported by Newsday, Alverta Banks Gray Schultz, the woman behind the middle school that many call A.B.G.S., made her living as the owner of an employment agency, a beauty shop and school in Hempstead Village and Glen Cove, but her influence extended through a half-century of civil rights progress.

Schultz, who lived in Hempstead from 1933 to 1984, was among the founders of the Nassau NAACP. A lifelong Republican who believed in working within the system for positive change, she became one of Nassau’s first black officials when she was appointed to the Hempstead Housing Authority.

When Alverta Gray Schultz was named Nassau County Citizen of the year in 1980, Newsday wrote, “Along with Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley, NAACP lawyers and David Adams, another Nassau branch founder, she laid the strategy for a battle against de facto segregation at Hempstead’s Prospect School 30 years ago.”

In the same article, Schultz said she didn’t want to be known as a fighter, but “just somebody who stood up to be counted on the issues . . . You don’t win much with bricks and curses.” In 1984, the Hempstead school district’s middle school was named for Schultz, who had served as the district’s adult education director. That’s an honor also accorded to President Barack Obama, for whom the district named an elementary school a decade ago.

### Vivian Schuyler Key

As also reported by Newsday, Vivian Schuyler Key’s artistic journey began in her hometown of Hempstead, flourished in Brooklyn and led to recognition as a visual artist of the Harlem Renaissance.

Schuyler Key graduated from Hempstead High School in 1924. She was one of only two African-Americans, both women, in a class of 46 graduating seniors, according to records at the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University.

Schuyler Key established her artistic credentials early on, winning high school awards and serving as art editor of Colonial, the school’s yearbook. An inscription under her 1924 yearbook photo calls her “one of the world’s future artists.”

She went on to become one of the earliest African-American fine arts graduates of Pratt Institute, a leading art, design and architecture school in Brooklyn. Her representational artwork centering on positive portrayals of black women appeared as cover illustrations for issues of The Crisis, the official magazine of the NAACP.

According to Debra Willett, educational coordinator for the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra. Hempstead Village and Hempstead High School should be very proud of what Vivian Schuyler Key accomplished. Indeed. And the same goes for Alverta Banks Gray Schulz, two incredible woman whose contributions should be remembered and celebrated.

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I also wanted to remind residents about our Black History Month celebration that will be taking place on Tuesday, February 26. This special program will embrace the migration of African- Americans. The festivities will include mime presentations, poetry readings, music and dance, refreshments and more. The program will be held at Kennedy Memorial Park (335 Greenwich Street) starting at 6:00 p.m. I hope you can join us. For more information please call 516-478-6286.

## This Week’s Best of Hempstead



Best of Hempstead honors this week are extended to Alan Heuson. Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, Alan settled in Hempstead in 1979 and has lived her ever since. A long-term member of the Ingraham Estates Civic Association, Alan has served as president of the organization for the past 10 years and has also served for 10 years as a member of the Hempstead Coordinating Council of Civic Associations. His efforts over the years working closely with Village departments as well as our police have had a positive impact on improving the community and helping residents get the services they need.

For more than 35 years, Alan was as a manager for the U.S. Postal Service where he provided training for supervisors and also helped coordinate customer service programs for the rank and file. A talented vocalist, Alan loves to entertain and over the past decades has displayed his singing prowess on countless occasions, including time spent with the musical group The Gents and even performing with The Drifters.

Since his retirement, Alan has also gotten involved in a number of senior groups and programs throughout the Village. His contributions over the years have been recognized with numerous awards spanning his postal service work, as an entertainer and for his many civic activities.

Alan, we’ve been fortunate having you as a valued member of our community for more than 40 years. It gives me great pleasure to recognize you as one of Hempstead’s best. Congratulations.

Sincerely,

*Don*

Don Ryan  
Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Hempstead