



Week of February 19, 2018

From The Desk of Mayor Don Ryan

Next week marks a very special couple of days in the Village of Hempstead and especially for one of our true heroes. For starters, on Tuesday, February 27, as part of the Village of Hempstead's 375th Anniversary celebration, I will be joined by Village Trustees and other distinguished dignitaries and guests during an Honorary Street naming ceremony of Angevine Avenue to General Joseph A. McNeil Avenue (corner of Angevine Avenue and Greenwich Street).

Retired Major General Joseph A. McNeil is a Decorated United States Air Force Veteran, Hempstead Village resident and National Hero. McNeil founded "The Greensboro Four," responsible for a series of nonviolent, sit-in protests in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960, which led to the Woolworth Department Store chain removing its policy of racial segregation and catapulting the Civil Rights Movement in the south into the national spotlight. We will be paying tribute to General McNeil for his role in changing the course of American history and for impacting the lives of African Americans for generations. We are privileged to have a man of his caliber as part of the fiber of our village and I am humbled to be part of recognizing his accomplishments.

Immediately following the honorary street naming ceremony there will be a building dedication at Franklin Street School located at 335 South Franklin Street in honor of General McNeil on behalf of the Hempstead Union Free School District. The festivities will begin at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome but those interested in attending should RSVP by calling 516-478-6414.

Later that day, The Village will be hosting its Black History Month celebration from 6-8 p.m. at Kennedy Memorial Park (335 Greenwich Street). This year's theme is "African Americans In Time of War" and will be centered on that topic. The event will also feature poetry, mime presentation, music and dance. All village residents are invited. This will be among the last events of many that have been held in and around our village throughout February in recognition of Black History Month. I hope to see you there. For more information please visit: www.villageofhempstead.org or call: Juanita Hargwood at 516-478-6286.

The following day, February 28, Gen. McNeil will be the guest of honor during Hempstead High School's presentation of "African Americans in Times of War", a district wide program that's also part of Black History Month. This student led event will take place at 6:30 p.m. in the Hempstead High School auditorium, another special gathering that I am looking forward to attending.

This Week's Best of Hempstead



Best of Hempstead honors this week are extended to the late Dr. Clifton S. Mereday, Sr. who hails from one of the first African American families to reside in Hempstead Village, as far back as 1928. In fact, Clifton's grandfather helped build the Hempstead Railroad Station and his grandmother was one of the founders of the Union Baptist Church. Sadly, Clifton passed away recently but leaves behind a distinguished career and a large contingent of relatives to carry on the Mereday family name.

Born in 1927, Clifton entered Hempstead's public school system in the early 1930's after his family relocated here from South Carolina and graduated from Hempstead High School, where he excelled in academics and sports, especially track and field.

After serving in Korea with the U.S. Army, Clifton earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Ithaca College and followed that with degrees from New York University and City College of NY. as well as a PhD from Union Graduate School.

While Clifton was a student at Ithaca College, he met Kimberly Theresa Randle and after a brief courtship, the two married 1957. The couple enjoyed 59 years of wedded bliss until Kim went home to "Glory" in August of 2016.

Clifton chose the field of Physical Therapy as his career path, and opened a private practice in Hauppauge, while simultaneously holding a position on the faculty staff at Stony Brook University. He ultimately advanced to the level of Chairman of the Department of Physical Therapy at Stony Brook. Upon his retirement, the University endowed a "Chair" in honor of Dr. Clifton Samuel Mereday, Sr.

Clifton held memberships in several professional organizations, including the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, American Physical Therapy Association, and Alpha Eta Society. Additionally, he served as a member of the World Rehabilitation Fund, offering humanitarian aid to earthquake victims in Yerevan Armenia in 1988 and was also on the World Health Team that assisted those injured during the Chernobyl disaster in 1986.

Clifton, we posthumously honor you as one of Hempstead's best and know you and Kim are smiling down on all of us from heaven.

Sincerely,

Don

Don Ryan
Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Hempstead