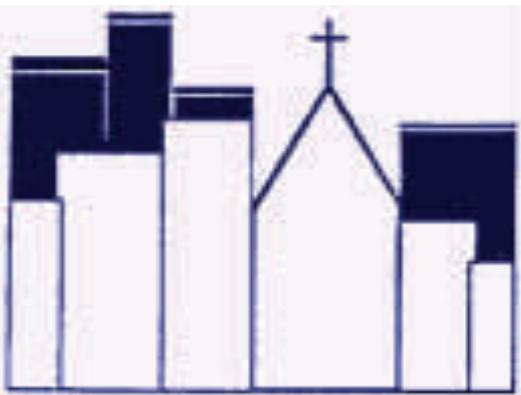




THE URBAN NETWORKER

APRIL 2011

SPRING ISSUE

THE EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS

MINISTRIES OF
RECONCILIATION,
SOCIAL JUSTICE & PEACE
Founded 1980

- **Check our web-site at:**
- episcopalurbancaucus.org

Inside this issue:

Bridges to New Lives—Rosemary Braxton

Molly Rush Speaks at the EPF Luncheon—Ron Miller

A Letter from the President of the House of Depts

2011 EUC Resolutions

John Rabb Steps Down as President of the EUC

2011 EUC SAINTS

In My Father's House—Nell Braxton Gibson

BRIDGES TO NEW LIVES—Rosemary Braxton

Bridges to New Lives: The 2011 EUC Keynote Address

George Werner, former President of the House of Deputies, stood and faced the eager Pittsburgh crowd. He was slated to introduce Bill Strickland, CEO of the Manchester Bidwell Corporation and a newly appointed member of President Obama's Council for Community solutions. Strickland is one of twenty-five members on a new Council the President has called, "impressive" people who have "dedicated their lives and careers to civic engagement and social innovation."

The Assembly room was packed with the usual Caucus members—those who traveled over 2000 miles from the west coast, those who had come hundreds of miles from the mid-west, south and northeast and members of the local diocese

cese who hosted the Caucus. Great ideas have emerged from these gatherings including the concept of a living wage, which even now sweeps the country.

Over the years many prominent speakers have addressed the Caucus, including the late Paul Moore, former Bishop of the Diocese of New York and Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. But nothing about Strickland echoes wealth or privilege. He is a Pittsburgh native who has risen above the ashes of a once proud community through the empowerment of others. In his book, *Make the Impossible Possible*, Strickland describes the Manchester neighborhood of his childhood, a stable working-class community of Greeks, Italians, African-Americans, Eastern Europeans and others. By the time Bill Strickland began high school, factory closings and new freeway corridors isolated the people of Manchester and left be-

hind a disenfranchised community of African-Americans, the all too prevalent remnants of historical racism that even today dot our urban landscape.

Strickland's book states that he barely remembered the Manchester of his childhood as he passed frightening and dangerous residents on the way to high school each day. He had become an invisible student attending classes in response to his mother's determination to make something out of his life. But on a particular school day something unusual happened to change the young boy's life. He encountered the classroom of Frank Ross through the aroma of coffee and the sound of jazz.

Ross, an art teacher, opened the world of ceramics and the beauty a lump of clay could produce. Bill struggled with the clay until he became a fledgling potter and artist. Through the influence (See p.2 Bridges to New Lives)

MOLLY RUSH SPEAKS AT THE EPF LUNCHEON—Ron Miller

Molly Rush speaks at the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Luncheon—24 February 2011.

Molly Rush's name has been familiar to me for 30 years or so. I had always assumed that she was one of those progressive Roman Catholic nuns whose orders go their liberal

way without giving a lot of attention to the Vatican. Actually I learned that she is one of those rarer breeds—progressive great-grandmothers who make the world go around in a better fashion. She is a co-founder of Pittsburgh's Thomas Merton Center, one of the Plowshares Eight, and a winner of many peace and justice awards. Her

address to the EPF luncheon at the Pittsburgh Urban Caucus helped us understand why.

She began by observing, "Most of us still don't realize what is happening in the world, let alone in our own country and our own states; ten percent of the people own ninety percent of the (See p. 3 Molly Rush)

BRIDGES TO NEW LIVES—Rosemary Braxton



Paulo Nzambi, Stand-in Key-note Speaker—Pittsburgh 2011

of Frank Ross, Strickland attended and graduated from the University of Pittsburgh. While still a student he realized how much art and beauty fed his soul and he suspected other members of his Manchester community would also blossom from a similar experience. He shared his dream with Tom Cox, a local Episcopal priest, who encouraged Bill to write a proposal which Cox shared with Robert Appleyard, the then Bishop of the diocese of Pittsburgh. The diocese not only funded the proposal, it

provided a place for Strickland, thereby giving birth to the Manchester Project which introduced the arts to the Manchester community. Immediately students, drop-outs and dislocated workers found their way to the Manchester Project and succeeded through the arts, hard work and eventually through a training program.

The training piece took form shortly after Strickland graduated from college when he learned that the Bidwell Training Center, sponsored by

Bidwell Presbyterian Church, was looking for a new director. Strickland was hired by Bidwell and two dreams merged giving birth to the Manchester Bidwell Corporation.

As members of the EUC Assembly sat awaiting Bill Strickland's introduction many already knew his story. Others knew only what we had heard or read from news accounts but everyone was eager for more. I can't remember George Werner's exact (See insert p. 1—BRIDGES)

2011 ASSEMBLY THEME:

***“Building
Bridges—
Healing
Connections in
a Broken
World”***

BONNIE ANDERSON, D.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE
OF DEPUTIES February 23, 2011

Peace to you, Holy People of God.

Congratulations and greetings as the annual assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus gathers. I give thanks for your ministry and faithfulness.

The theme of the assembly is timely, as we face a growing age of anxiety in our culture. It is, indeed, a time to turn our hearts and minds more fervently toward the building of bridges and to the de-

veloping proactive mechanisms for healing connections in a broken world. We joyfully accept the responsibilities bestowed upon us at our baptism, knowing that we are given all the gifts we need to bring about a reconciled world.

I hope that you will join me in encouraging the ministry of all the baptized, of all the people of God, to work together in peace and harmony and to keep the vision of a just world always before us. Our relationship with God, each other, and creation, is part of our spiritual discipline. Through constant care of

these relationships we are able with God's help, to build bridges and strengthen relationships.

I join you in prayer as you celebrate the lives of those who are the saints of the EUC. Many dear friends have contributed selflessly to the work that brings you together today. I offer blessings for the saints among us still and thanksgiving for those who have gone before us.

I continue to commit my support to you and your ministry. I am abundantly grateful for all that you do.

JOHN RABB STEPS DOWN AS PRESIDENT

Having filled the unexpired Presidential term of Bishop Wilfredo Ramos in 2006, Bishop John Rabb was then elected to two terms on his own in that capacity. This year Bishop Rabb concluded his tenure as head of the Caucus at the end of the 2011 Pittsburgh Assembly. Bishop Rabb has guided the Caucus through some unsteady times—including a national recession—with a very steady hand. Together with Treasurer, Diane

Pollard, he has made it possible for the EUC to begin 2011 on solid financial footing with contributions exceeding those of the previous several years.

With his commitment to urban ministry, Bishop Rabb has seen to it that the ministry of the Urban Caucus was spread to new dioceses—including the Diocese of California in 2008 and the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast in 2009. And so it is with grati-

tude that we say farewell to Bishop Rabb as President. but with thanks to God that he will continue as a Board member.

Likewise we thank Barbara Larsen for her service as Vice President and as host of the 2010 Assembly. We look forward to her return to the Board in the future.

Congratulations to Sheila Sims, newly elected President. - Nell Braxton Gibson



Bishop John Rabb, Immediate Past President of the Episcopal Urban Caucus

MOLLY RUSH—Ron Miller

wealth. This inequality in wealth only masks other problems related to inequality. The inequality here is like that of Egypt."

She quoted from Thomas Merton, who observed, "Don't simply depend on hoped-for results, work for them." This led her to a discussion of Gene Sharp, a little-known American writer who is having an amazing impact around the world. His publications include: a major book, *The Politics of Nonviolent Actions*, (1973), as well as

"198 forms of non-violence" and "Bringing Down a Dictator" (a video). Many of these have been widely translated and read throughout Central Europe, Africa and the Middle East. He also founded the Albert Einstein Institute (<http://www.aeinstein.org>) which is located near Harvard, to promote non-violent social change. He is not religious not spiritual, but he is a serious researcher who has put together a history of non-violence during the twentieth century.

Are the public reactions in Wisconsin and other states a reflection of the movements we are seeing in the Middle-East? How much of what is really happening do the media hide from us?

The challenge is to bring young people into the struggle. It is their future which is at risk after all.

2011 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2011-1 Solidarity with Hyatt Workers

RESOLVED, that the Episcopal Urban Caucus declares its support for the current campaign conducted by employees of the Hyatt Hotel chain, through their union UNITEHERE, in which they are seeking justice for laid off employees, and recognition of UNITEHERE as the collective bargaining representative of the employees, and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon the people of the Episcopal Church to respect the boycott of Hyatt Hotel properties called UNITEHERE, which may be found on the union's website at <http://www.hotelworkersrising.org/HotelGuide/>

We call upon the people of our Church to honor the boycott with special care during the 2012 General Convention by not eating, sleeping or meeting

at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis Hotel during the 2012 General Convention.

Resolution 2011-2 Solidarity with Public Employees

RESOLVED, that the Episcopal Urban Caucus declares its support for the right of public employees to organize themselves into unions, and to bargain collectively over their wages, hours, benefits and other terms and (see insert)

RESOLVED

That the 31st Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus ...gives thanks to the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh for their gracious hospitality...

2011 SAINTS OF THE EUC

The Rev. Emmett Jarrett, Episcopal priest and editor of *To Heal the Sin Sick Soul*, died on October 9, 2010. Jarrett also served along with his wife, Anne Scheibner, as Coordinator of the EUC from 2000 to 2005.

RPM Bowden, a layman from Atlanta, GA was a former President of the EUC and was serving as a member of the EUC Board at the time of his death on October 5, 2010.

The Rev. John Harmon, a priest in the Diocese of Massachusetts died on August 18, 2010. Harmon was a well known civil rights activist and writer on urban ministry.

The Rev. Lucius Walker served as Executive Director of pastors for Peace, Associate General Secretary of the National Council of Churches and Human Rights activist. He led, taught and inspired others to do the work of justice for a

better and more compassionate world.

Jeanne N. Washington was a laywoman at All Souls Episcopal Church in Harlem where she served on the Altar Guild, as a Girl Scout Leader, Credit Union member and on the All Soul's Inter-parish Council.

They have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, leaving us to follow their example.

THE EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS

MINISTRIES OF
RECONCILIATION, SOCIAL
JUSTICE AND PEACE

P.O. Box 21182
Park West Station
New York, NY
10025

Phone: (212) 699-2998

Fax: (212) 699-2998

E-mail:

coordinator@episcopalurbancau

cus.org

WEBSITE:

www.episcopalurbancaucus.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

Sheila Sims, President

Canon Robert Brooks, Vice President

Velva Wright, Secretary

The Rev. Ron Miller, Asst. Secretary

Diane Pollard, Treasurer

The Rt. Rev. A.C. "Chip" Marble

The Rt. Rev. Brian Prior

The Rt. Rev. John Rabb

The Rev. Michael Hopkins

The Rev. Philip Jacobs

The Rev. Charles Lane

The Rev. Glenna Reed

The Rev. Carol Borne Spencer

The Rev. Matthew Stewart

Rosemary Braxton

Wanda Guthrie

Bruce Ingram

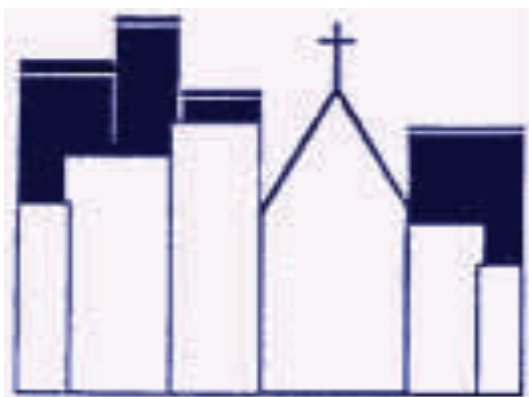
Pamela Moffat

The Hon. Byron Rushing

Nell Braxton Gibson (Ex Officio)

**The 2012 Assembly, February
29—March 3 Atlanta, GA**

THE EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS—Founded 1980



IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE - Nell Braxton Gibson

For those of us fortunate enough to stay in Pittsburgh an extra day a visit to the August Wilson Museum was the perfect way to end the 2011 Assembly. The museum was a little more than two blocks from the Doubletree Hotel where the EUC Assembly took place and offered a compelling exhibit. Called, "In My Father's House."

The exterior of the museum is shaped like a slave ship but once inside one comes upon a first floor exhibit from the private collections of photographs donated by Pittsburgh's African American families. They link black Pittsburgh to the rest of the African Diaspora with images that document everyday life; including celebratory occasions and candid moments. Mary Martin, Art Instructor at the Winchester Thurston

School, notes that when coming into the entranceway, one takes in a collage of visual experiences that interpret the complexities of African American life.

Each exhibition room begins with a collector's story. The one most captivating to me was a kitchen with a six foot tall black fist on a narrow wall at one end of the room and photographs of blacks wearing dashikis and afros against a long side wall. Dishes in a cabinet, a Formica table and vinyl covered chairs faced the long wall on the opposite side.

The collector's story reads, "He was his parents' bright shining prince. The one who would reap the full benefit of the opportunities they traveled to Pittsburgh to find. Migrant workers in Palatka, Florida they left there and settled in the Hill

District, where their son was born in 1935. They were part of the great migration of blacks from the South to northern industrialized cities full of promise. His father was a steel worker, his mother a nurse. They wanted nothing more for their son than for him to become a doctor or a lawyer. At his parents' insistence, he attended Howard, went to dental school and became a dentist.

Then the revolution came—the Black Power Movement—and he abandoned his practice and became part of it. Choosing to live as an expatriot led him to Jamaica for a while. There he met a fierce Jamaican woman as passionate about the struggle as he. Eventually, he returned to Pittsburgh with her. Their kitchen becomes the 'situation room' The place where he and his comrades talk revolution, plan rallies and craft speeches. It is also (his wife's) domain, as she earns a living catering (continued—top of insert, page 2)