

News Release

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program (SPOHP), University of Florida, March 4, 2014

“Florida Civil Rights Struggle: Past & Present” to Highlight Local Organizing History

Gainesville, FL—On March 12, 2014, the UF Samuel Proctor Oral History Program will host a public panel entitled, “The Florida Civil Rights Struggle: Past & Present,” at 6:00 p.m. in Pugh Hall. The panel will honor the history of civil and human rights organizing in the state of Florida, and pose the question: “Where do we go from here?” The event will highlight movement activity throughout the state in towns such as Ocala, St. Augustine, Tallahassee, Miami, and Gainesville. Audience members will receive a CD anthology of African American oral histories of segregation and civil rights with an accompanying educator’s guide.

The panel will feature key Florida movement organizers including Vivian Filer, Dan Harmeling, Rosemary Florence, and John Due. Mrs. Filer was a member of Gainesville Women for Equal Rights and is currently vice chair of the Rosa Parks Quiet Courage Committee as well as chair of the Board of Directors for the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center. As a UF student, Harmeling was a member of the Student Group for Equal Rights and he was arrested for protesting segregation in St. Augustine. Rosemary Florence brings years of experience in the civil rights movement in Ocala and Marion County. Civil rights attorney John Due was a participant in the CORE Freedom Rides, the Mississippi struggle, and he was active in the movement with his wife Patricia Stephens Due throughout Florida for five decades.

To highlight the organizing traditions of African Americans in Florida, students will read stories drawn from oral history interviews with black elders for the audience. A special announcement will be made at the event about the unveiling of the Alachua County African American Project which is funded by the UF Office of the Provost.

Reverend Milford Griner will give the invocation. Rev. Griner is president and founder of the Rosa Parks Quiet Courage Committee.

A reception will follow the event. Parking is free, adjacent to Pugh Hall.

This public program is made possible by a grant from the Center for the Humanities in the Public Sphere Rothman Endowment, and is co-sponsored by the UF Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research, the UF African American Studies Program, the UF Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Affairs, Alachua County NAACP and the UF Institute for Hispanic-Latino Cultures.

For more information about this event, including directions and parking information, please visit the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program’s website, <http://oral.history.ufl.edu> or call the office at (352) 392-7168.