

# What's in a Name?

Why would something be named after someone? Are you named after anyone? Who gets to make decisions about what to name public buildings, areas, and streets? Who were the people that have places named for them in our community? Highway 1 is Martin Luther King Blvd., our public library downtown is called the William Alexander Percy Memorial Library, our YMCA is the Hodding Carter Memorial YMCA. What are some others? Can you find those places on a map of Greenville? Who were those people? What qualities did they possess that made people want to name something after them? How can we practice those qualities in our lives today? What happens if not everyone agrees that something should be named for a particular person?

Research important people from the history of our community and choose someone you would like to name something after. What will you name for them and why? How will you go about getting that approved? Write a persuasive letter explaining why you think they deserve that honor.

"As of 2003, at least 730 cities in the United States had attached King's name to streets and of the 50 states, only 11 (or 22 per cent) had no streets named after him."...According to "a 1999 Gallup public opinion poll...34 per cent of surveyed Americans named Martin Luther King Jr as the most admired person of the century, placing him second only to Mother Teresa."

Source: *Critical Toponymies: the contested politics of place naming* By Lawrence D. Berg, Jani Vuolteenaho

## The Schools and Educators

Ever wonder who the Greenville Public School District buildings are named after? Several are named in honor of early day stewards of education for African Americans, including Lizzie W. Coleman, Lucy Webb, Irene Weddington, Malissa Manning, T.L. Weston, Jessie L. McBride and Julia Armstrong. At the turn of the century, there were three schools for blacks...No. 2 on Theobald and Nelson Streets, No. 4 on Hernando and No. 7 at Union and Cleveland.

### Lizzie Coleman

For forty years, Lizzie W. Coleman, principal of No. 2 Elementary School, made an impact on Negro education. She was a woman of vision, far ahead of her time. Before manual training was popular, she saw the need for it. Under a stairway she improvised work space where boys could be taught simple manual skills. By helping to prepare soup and sandwiches for lunch, girls too learned to use their hands.

In Mrs. Coleman's time teachers received license by attending summer normal and taking the state examination. However, Mrs. Coleman wisely saw the need for more training. Before considering the application of young aspiring teachers, she required that they observe experienced teachers and work under supervision for a training period.

Even though not a college graduate, Mrs. Coleman was a student. "Burn the midnight oil!" "Be Prepared!" these were here watchwords. While mathematics was her forte, literature was her love. She was a voracious reader with a passion for poetry. Her ability to memorize and quote long passages was remarkable. In the 20's when Claude McKay, Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes flooded the market with volumes of Negro life, she gave a series of lectures on black authors. When invited to be a guest speaker at the dedication of Alice Tanner Hall (Alcorn College), she was gratified that she was chosen in preference to a male principal. This she considered an honor.

One problem plaguing Negro school, was high absenteeism during the cotton picking season. In the 20's it was customary to enter school after the cotton crop was harvested. Because of this

practice, many boys were over-sized and over-aged. Despite their stature, Mrs. Coleman was able to control them. Her physical strength was great, her will indomitable; hence her discipline problems were few. There were those who disliked her, but certainly all respected her.

Because of her many years of service and contribution to Negro education it is no wonder that in 1923 the school board named a small brick high school on Red Bud Street in her honor.

### **Garrett Hall**

At one time there was a fire station on the southeast corner of No. 2 playground. The firemen were transferred to a station on North Broadway and the station next to the playground was then used as an annex to No. 2 relieving congestion in the primary classes. The annex was called Garrett Hall in memory of Mrs. Garrett, a contemporary of Mrs. Lizzie Coleman.

### **No. 2 and Julia Armstrong Schools.**

Wm. H. Greene from Tougaloo was named to succeed Mrs. Lizzie Coleman at No. 2 School. He was principal also, of Julia Armstrong Elementary located on Red Bud Street. Armstrong was an outgrowth of No. 2 School.

### **No. 4 Schools**

The Principal of No. 4 School, located on Hernando St., was Mrs. Rose McIntyre of Vicksburg. No. 4 was replaced by a more modern building located on South Harvey St. It was named in honor of Mrs. L. L. Webb, principal of No. 7 School. Mrs. McIntyre's successor at No. 4 was T.L. Weston. At Mr. Weston's retirement, George V. Crawford was appointed to replace him. Mr. Crawford was the first black native born to reach the principalship.

### **No. 7 School**

No. 7 located on Union and Cleveland, had as its principal Mrs. L.L. Webb. An elementary school at first, it later housed junior high school pupils when No. 2 was demolished. It was sometimes referred to as Yerger School.

### **Irene Weddington Elementary**

Weddington Elementary School built in 1956 was named for Mrs. Irene Weddington who did outstanding work at Garrett Hall where she inspired and supervised many young teachers.

### **Melissa Manning School**

Melissa Manning School was named for a veteran 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who served at No. 7 and at Armstrong Elementary.

### **Jessie G. McBride School**

Jessie G. McBride School on N. Poplar is named for Mrs. Jessie G. McBride, one of the teachers inspired by Mrs. Irene Weddington. Originally the McBride School was the Susie P. Trigg School.

### **T.L. Weston**

T.L. Weston was a great educator. He was born in Learned, MS and attended Utica Institute. After serving in the R.O.T.C during World War I, he came to Greenville on September 13, 1922 to teach in the No. 2 School and served as assistant to Mrs. L. W. Coleman. In 1930, Mr. E.E. Bass, superintendent of schools, appointed him principal of No. 4 School; he continued in this capacity as

principal. He earned his B.S. Degree from Rust College and his M.S. Degree from Tennessee State University at Nashville. Mr. Weston was privileged to serve under four superintendents of Greenville.

Source: Commemoration of National Homecoming of Greenville, Mississippi. July 4-5, 1975

## **Famous/Notable People from Greenville, MS**

### **Holt Collier**

Holt Collier was born in Greenville in 1848, died in Greenville August 1st, 1936, and he was through almost his entire life a remarkable colored citizen of Washington County. He was an ex-slave and a Confederate soldier. He did a great deal for the uplift of his race. He achieved great distinction as a hunter of big game, killing bear all over the country, some on grounds where Greenville homes and public buildings now stand. He gained notice by being in the hunting party of President Theodore Roosevelt, when he came to Washington county in quest of this sport. Holt Collier in relating this colorful incident in his life said: "The President of the United States was anxious to see a live bear the first day of the hunt. I told him he would see that bear if I had to tie it and bring it to him." Collier made good his word. Before the day ended the President had seen the gay old bruin. Upon his return to Washington Mr. Roosevelt sent to Holt a rifle duplicating the one he had used on the hunt, and which Holt had so admired.

### **Steve Azar**

Steve is a songwriter, singer and musician who began writing songs when he was 10. His debut album included the breakout single, "I Don't Have to Be Me ('Til Monday)," which became the country blues rocker's first hit. He has shared the stage with some of music's best including Amy Grant, Brad Paisley, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw and Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band. He released the critically-acclaimed album "Indianola," in 2008. The project's first single, "Moo La Moo" was another Top 40 hit for Steve. For more information, visit [www.steveazarlive.com](http://www.steveazarlive.com)

### **Bill Beckwith**

Beckwith has produced public and private bronzes for more than 30 years. He is represented in public and private collections nationwide. His commissioned work includes "B.B. King," city of Indianola; "Flag Bearer, Mississippi 11th," Gettysburg National Military Park; "William Faulkner," Oxford City Hall, and in 2010 Beckwith sculpted Q. C. Lamar, who was a Supreme Court Justice and secretary of the Interior after representing Mississippi in both U. S. Senate and House of Representatives before he died in 1893. Beckwith's numerous awards and honors include winner of the statewide Governor's Award of Excellence in the Arts in 2001. Originally from Greenville, Beckwith works out of his studio in Taylor. He also is an adjunct assistant professor of art at Ole Miss.

### **Hodding Carter III**

Hodding is an award-winning journalist, having won four national Emmy Awards in the 1980s for his television documentaries for a media criticism series. In the 1980s and early 1990s, he was a panelist on "This Week with David Brinkley" and a frequent correspondent on the PBS series "Frontline." Carter is also the author of two books, "The Reagan Years" and "The South Strikes Back." Hodding's career has also included much work in public service. He served as spokesman of the Department of State and as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs during the Iran hostage crisis. He has served as professor of leadership and public policy at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

### **Robbie Fisher**

Robbie is an independent film producer who has co-produced several documentaries with Mississippi Public Broadcasting including "Boogaloo and Eden: Sustaining the Sound," "The Singing River: Rhythms of Nature," and "The Gulf Islands: Mississippi's Wilderness Shore."

### **Walt Grayson**

Walt is a television personality with WLBT in Jackson. His programs include WLBT's "Look Around Mississippi" and Mississippi ETV's "Mississippi Roads." He is the author of three books, "Jackson the Good Life," "Looking Around Mississippi with Walt Grayson" and "Looking Around Mississippi Some More With Walt Grayson." Walt was inducted into the Associated Press Mississippi Broadcasters Hall of Fame. For more information, visit [www.wlbt.com](http://www.wlbt.com).

### **Angela Jackson**

Angela is a poet, playwright and author. Some of the award-winning author's published poetry works include: "The Greenville Club," "Solo in the Boxcar Third Floor E," and "All These Roads Be Luminous: Poems New and Selected," which was nominated for the National Book Award. Her plays include "Witness," "Shango Diaspora: An African American Myth of Womanhood and Love," and "When the Wind Blows." Her latest work, her first novel, is titled "Where I Must Go," and was published in September.

### **Leon Z. Koury**

Leon Z. Koury was born in Greenville, MS, in 1909, Son of Syrian immigrants who owned grocery in Greenville. Koury wrote to Greenville writer Walker Percy Alexander and asked advice on writing. Percy invited Koury to his house and was impressed by the art on Koury's poetry notebook. Koury became a sculptor of busts of William Faulkner, William Alexander Percy (in 1964 Percy bust was covered by Time and Life magazines) and busts of Negro heads. In 1939 Koury was named director of then new Delta Art Center in Greenville. He was the mentor of many Mississippi artists and writers including William Beckwith.

### **Marie Lillo**

Marie was born and raised in Leland, MS, to the late Jimmy and Conchetta Lillo of Lillo's Restaurant in Leland. She graduated college from Loyola University and began singing Opera at the MET in New York right after college! Her work crossed all media including theatres from Mark Taper, Globe Theatre to the Guthrie. You may have seen her on Broadway '42nd Street', and 'Over the River and Through the Woods.' She also guest starred on TV in 'Passions,' 'Law and Order,' 'General Hospital,' 'ABC (MOW)', plus 'toured with Milton Berle Show' and 'Death Trap' w/ Leslie Nielson, etc. to name just a few. Singing and acting brought her to many stages in Las Vegas, too. She taught voice and acting in Los Angeles, California until her death February 1, 2011.

### **Hank Nelken**

Hank is a screenwriter and director. Since graduating from the USC School of Cinema/Television, Hank Nelken has sold a dozen feature screenplays, a television pilot, and had four feature films produced including Saving Silverman starring Jack Black, Are We Done Yet? starring Ice Cube, and Mama's Boy starring Diane Keaton, Jeff Daniels, Jon Heder, and Anna Faris. In addition, Nelken has rewritten multiple scripts for various studios including Warner Brothers where he also adapted a book and was given a blind deal. As a director, Nelken recently completed Hostage: A Love Story, a comedy short starring Zachary Quinto (Star Trek's Spock) that premiered on Will

Ferrell's Funny or Die website. Currently, his feature screenplay Something Borrowed is in pre-production at Lakeshore Entertainment with Jennifer Garner in negotiations to star.

### **Alex O'Neal**

Alex O'Neal is a painter, a Mississippi native, born in Starkville, raised in Jackson and Greenville, now lives in Brooklyn, NY., had an installation at Mississippi Museum of Art in 2005. In 1999 received a Guggenheim Fellowship in Painting. Has received other awards from National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, and Tennessee arts Commission. His drawings and paintings address American community, especially the American South. Drawn images are combined with collage materials from the 1930s to the 1970s and depict typically American themes, such as the homestead and family, Hollywood, or dramatic landscapes.

### **JerMichael Riley**

JerMichael currently teaches music at Greenville High School. Prior to his return to Greenville, he was Music Director at the Jerusalem Temple Church of God in Christ where his father and pastor is Supt. Roy L. Riley, Sr.. JerMichael is a lead vocalist of the Grammy/Stellar Award-winning and world-renowned Mississippi Mass Choir which he joined in 1996. Since then, JerMichael has been blessed to tour with the choir throughout the United States of America as well as many countries abroad. JerMichael wants God to get the glory out of everything he does. "God gave me this talent for one reason, and that's to give Him the glory and honor that He deserves." JerMichael received his bachelor's degree from Jackson State University in Communications and a minor in Music Education (with emphasis on the voice). He also received his Master's degree from Freed Hardeman University in Curriculum and Instruction. [www.jermichaelriley.com](http://www.jermichaelriley.com)

### **Curtis Wilkie**

Curtis' journalism career began in 1963 at the Clarksdale Press Register and after working on Capitol Hill and for newspapers in Delaware, he joined the Boston Globe staff, where he served as national and foreign correspondent until he retired in 2000. During his tenure at the Globe, he covered seven presidential campaigns, served as White House Correspondent from 1977 to 1982 and served as the chief of the newspaper's Washington bureau. In addition to writing for national magazines and publishing several books, Wilkie has served as a visiting professor of journalism at the University of Mississippi since 2002. For more information, visit <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/overby/curtiswilkieprofile.htm>.

### **Hattie Mae Winston**

Hattie Mae Winston was born in Lexington, Mississippi on March 3, and grew up in nearby Greenville, Mississippi. Winston attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. after receiving a full voice scholarship. Winston moved back to New York City after one year at Howard in 1964 and enrolled in an actor's group study workshop, and success came quickly. In 1968, she became a replacement performer in Hair in 1969 obtained a part in Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie? and in 1970 was cast in The Me Nobody Knows, all significant Broadway roles. In 1971, she had another replacement role in Two Gentlemen of Verona. In 1983, she scored a starring role in the critically acclaimed Broadway play The Tap Dance Kid. Her roles in To Take Up Arms and Up the Mountain earned her two Los Angeles Critics Drama-Logue awards, and she has been the recipient of a variety of other theatrical honors, including two Obie Awards (for Mother Courage and The Michigan), CEBA Awards and an Audelco Award for her contributions to the world of theater. She has also worked as an independent producer and director, and was responsible for reviving Langston Hughes' Black Nativity off-Broadway. Winston has extensive credits in the worlds of television and film. She had a

regular role on the Emmy-award winning PBS-TV series *The Electric Company*, where she played Sylvia. She played Gloria Davis in the critically acclaimed series *Homefront* and has been cast in numerous television programs since, including *Nurse E.R.*, *Port Charles*, *The Parent Hood*, *Malcolm & Eddie*, *The Smart Guy* and *Scrubs*. She most recently played Margaret, a headstrong nurse on the CBS sitcom *Becker*. Her film credits include *Jackie Brown*, *Meet the Deedles*, *Beverly Hills Cop III* and Clint Eastwood's *True Crime*. In 1993 and 1997, the National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina honored her with "Hattie Winston Day."

### **Benjamin Wright**

Benjamin Wright was a very happy individual as he watched the 46th Annual Grammy Awards. Benjamin provided string orchestration for the two biggest albums of the year: OutKast's *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* and Justin Timberlake's *Justified*. Benjamin Wright has had a long career with a string of hit recordings under his belt, working as a producer, engineer, arranger, and songwriter with such acts as Brandy, Destiny's Child, Dru Hill, Aretha Franklin, Quincy Jones, James Ingram, Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson, and many others.

## **SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**2. Acquire the characteristics to be a responsible citizen in the United States. (C, H, G, E)**

e. *Explain the most important responsibilities of local government to the community. (DOK 1)*

f. *Explain why certain civic responsibilities (e.g., civil protocol, and studying historical figures, etc.) are important to individuals and to the community. (DOK 2)*

### **Additional Resources:**

<http://mlkblvd.wordpress.com/category/greenville-ms/>

Images and dispatches from streets, boulevards, drives, etc. named for Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://www.jgwchpc.com/markers.htm>

Historical Highway Markers in Washington County, Mississippi

<http://www.jgwchpc.com/sites1.htm>

State Landmarks in Washington County, MS