



NEW STAGE
Theatre

Mississippi **Humanities**

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Maegan Parker Brooks, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Civic Communication and Media Department at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Brooks has published four books about Fannie Lou Hamer, including two biographies, a children's book and the first-ever collection of Mrs. Hamer's speeches. Brooks also served on the board of the Fannie Lou Hamer Statue and Education Fund, which brought the bronze statue of Mrs. Hamer to her hometown of Ruleville, Mississippi. More recently, Brooks has served as the lead researcher for the forthcoming documentary *Fannie Lou Hamer's America* and the director of the multimedia website, *Find Your Voice: The Online Resource for Fannie Lou Hamer Studies*.

Leslie-Burl McLemore is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Jackson State University. Currently, he is a member of the Walls, MS Board of Aldermen where he made history as one of two African Americans elected to the Board. Dr. McLemore also serves as an advisor to the Office of Alumni Development at Rust College, his alma mater. From 2013 to 2017 he was a coach-mentor with The W. K. Kellogg Community Leadership Network. Currently, he is a member of the National Park Service Roundtable of Scholars. During his tenure at Jackson State University, Dr. McLemore served as Interim President of the University in 2010. Dr. McLemore was the founding Director of the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy at Jackson State University. He was Founding Chair of the Department of Political Science, as well as Former Dean of the Graduate School and Founding Director of the Office of Research Administration. Dr. McLemore also served as Acting Director of the University Center in Jackson. He is a past chair of the Mississippi Humanities Council and past vice-chair of the Board of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Dr. McLemore is a veteran of the Southern Civil Rights Movement. As a Rust College student, Dr. McLemore was the founding President of the College Chapter of the NAACP. He organized and led several demonstrations and voter registration drives during his tenure at Rust. Dr. McLemore worked primarily in Benton, Marshall, Tate, and DeSoto Counties. Dr. McLemore became associated with the student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1962. He was the northern regional coordinator for the 1963 Freedom Vote campaign. The Freedom Vote campaign led to the eventual formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Dr. McLemore was a founding member and elected vice-chair of the MFDP in 1964. He also served as a member of the Executive Committee. In August of 1964, Dr. McLemore was elected as one of the 64 Freedom Party delegates to the Democratic National Convention. Dr. McLemore worked very closely with Fannie Lou Hamer, Bob Moses, Victoria Gray Adams, Annie Devine, Aaron Henry and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi and other parts of the American South. In 1997, Dr. McLemore and several colleagues formed the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy. The mission of the Hamer Institute is to engage primary and secondary schools systemically in the exploration of the Civil Rights Movement as it charts, fosters and expands the meanings of citizenship and democracy. The Hamer Institute has sponsored eleven very successful summer institutes for teachers and students on the Southern Civil Rights Movement. In the summer of 2006, Dr. McLemore and colleagues conducted a very successful one-week institute for middle and high school students on the Southern Civil Rights Movement entitled: "The Pivotal Role of Youth in the Southern Civil Rights Movement". Dr. Leslie-Burl McLemore, Co-Editor, *Freedom Summer: A Brief History With Documents*, Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston, 2017.

Sharon Miles is an actor, singer, director, playwright and the Education Director at New Stage Theatre. Her original script, *If Not Us Then Who: Freedom Rides to Freedom Summer* chronicling the Freedom Rides of 1961 and Freedom Summer of 1964- toured though out the state of Mississippi through New Stage's Theatre's award-winning education program. Born and raised in Mississippi, Sharon is an avid lover of Mississippi History and seeks to use theatre arts to teach character development, youth empowerment and empathy. Additional original Scripts include: *Who Are You Calling Ugly: A Modern Duck Tale*, *The Middle Passage* and *8:46* and most recently, *The Debate for Democracy*.