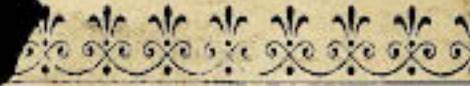


MAITTERS

Welcome to
Our New Home!

Ribbon Cutting on
**The Opportunity
Center**

[See page 3 for the full story]



WHAT IS HEIRS' PROPERTY?

Most heirs' property in the Lowcountry is land that was either purchased by or deeded to African Americans after emancipation. Much of this land has been passed down through the

generations without the benefit of a will so that the land is owned in common by all of the heirs - whether they live on the land; help pay the taxes or have never set foot on the land.

This unstable form of ownership puts heirs' property at high risk for loss because any heir can sell his/her percentage of ownership to another who can force a sale of the entire property.



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Welcome to Our New Home

It great to see a plan come together. We have been in our new home - The Opportunity Center - for a little more than six months. The halls are bustling with individuals attending the meetings of our fellow tenants. The Opportunity Center is a unique collaborative place impacting low-wealth communities. Individuals can come to this innovative space to receive job training, have their start-up housed in the business incubator, share entrepreneurial space, and partake of the services from the Women's Business Center.

The Opportunity Center is a place for the Center's valued employees to provide landowners with the access to education, expertise, partners, programs, and choices, which will allow them to honor their family legacy and help build wealth for future generations. In addition, it houses the offices of several non-profits actively working in the community economic development sector.

It may be a bit of a cliché to say that home is where the heart is, but our welcome mat is out, and it is indeed heartwarming to know The Opportunity Center will be a one-stop-shop with the goal of making sure all landowners have access to the tools they need, so they will no longer be labeled as "historically underserved."

Leadership Team

- Jennie L. Stephens, *Chief Executive Officer*
- Josh R. Walden, *Chief Operating Officer*
- Cheryl Reid, *Chief Financial Officer*
- Ether K. Adams, *Manager of Strategic Initiatives*
- Brianna Bogart, *Director of Legal Services*
- David Bourgeois, *Field Operations Manager*
- Menia D. Lee, *Executive Administrator*
- Steve Patterson, *Director of Forestry*
- Sharon Piggs, *Executive Assistant*
- Alexa Stephens, *Director of Outreach*
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- Jacqueline W. Wilson, *Associate Director of Administration*
- Jeffrey Winget, *Director of Communications*

Staff

- Dorisa Adams, *Outreach Liaison*
- Trey Bailey, *Forester*
- *Kenneth Dunn, *Forester*
- Ariel Ellerson, *Legal Adm. Assistant*
- Antonia Francis, *Staff Attorney*
- Monica Frasier, *Outreach Liaison*
- *Anna Garrick-Camara, *Legal Secretary*
- Sharmaine George, *Forestry Associate*
- Angel Gonzalez, *Finance and Database Specialist*
- *Marcus Gurley, *Outreach Liaison*
- LaVerda Kearse James, *Paralegal*
- ReZsaun Lewis, *WCA Outreach Liaison*
- Henry Poole, *Forester*
- Asija Rice, *Forester*
- Brianna Roberts, *Paralegal/Legal Adm.*
- Aashini Shrivastav, *Staff Attorney*
- Demetra Stevenson, *Outreach Liaison*
- Janessa Taylor, *Resource Development Associate*
- Gino Truncellito, *Staff Attorney*
- Y. Elizabeth Wellman, *Staff Attorney*
- Walter Whetstone, *Forester*
- *Orangeburg Office

Our New Home: The Opportunity Center



Thursday, March 31st, was the ribbon-cutting ceremony for our new home, The Opportunity Center! What an eventful morning, with an inspiring program, an overflow crowd, and the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon! Thank you to our donors, our supporters, and those whose dreams finally became a reality with this dedication.

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation™, Increasing H.O.P.E., and the South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development [SCACED], in partnership with Homes of Hope, will be using The Opportunity Center not only as their headquarters but as a training center and a business incubator all under one roof. This facility is more than a building; the goal of this non-profit hub will be to create this shared space as an "entrepreneurial ecosystem" to serve the needs of the community.





USDA Roundtable Discussion



Even before the official ribbon-cutting on our new home, The Opportunity Center, March 14th was a rewarding and historic day! The Center hosted a special gathering of national importance, a USDA Roundtable Discussion featuring Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh and The Honorable James E. Clyburn, 6th District and U.S. House Majority Whip. The purpose of this meeting was an opportunity for cooperators and historically underserved agricultural producers to share their thoughts regarding USDA programs while highlighting USDA's work to advance equity.

The Roundtable Discussion included local Black landowners and farmers who shared their experiences with Deputy

Agriculture Secretary Jewel Bronaugh and U.S. House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn. The goal of the discussion was for the USDA to share its ongoing efforts to root out generations of systemic racism, deeply integrate equity in decision-making and policy-making, and build equitable systems and programming inclusive of those served by the agency. We were proud to host this important gathering here at our new home.

Following the roundtable, Dr. Jennie L. Stephens, CEO of the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation™, sat down and talked one-on-one with Deputy Secretary Bronaugh. You can watch this in-depth conversation on the Center's YouTube page!



Landowner Engagement

Center Forester David Bourgeois met landowner Ronald Richards on his property earlier this year. Mr. Richards is seen here standing proudly next to his trees after just two growing seasons. Many of the two-year-old trees are now taller than Mr. Richards!

Mr. Richards will install a pollinator plot next spring with funds from the South Carolina Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] Conservation Stewardship Project. He wanted to take soil samples and send them to Clemson Extension to see if his site is deficient in any particular nutrients.

The process involves collecting about ten small cores and mixing them in a bucket. You then dry the soil and fill a specially labeled box provided by Clemson Extension for this purpose. They will then perform a very cost-effective soil analysis. Simply tell them what you wish to grow, and they will recommend any nutrients to add for that particular crop.

The Center appreciates our hard-working landowners. All of our talented foresters enjoy working closely with them.



A Thank You Note 20 Years in the Making!

This past February, on a Saturday morning at the Second Mt. Beulah Baptist Church in St. Matthews, South Carolina, community members were invited to a FREE Heirs' Property Seminar. They intently listened and asked questions to Outreach Liaison

Dorlisa Adams, Forester David Bourgeois, and Attorney Aashini Shrivastav, learning about both legal and forestry resources the Center could provide and how that could help create generational wealth. In particular, one person, a young lady

in the audience, learned something valuable that helped her and her family unlock and resolve an issue over two decades old. We wanted to share her thank you note to the Center below.

Good Morning!

I hope you are well.

You came to St. Matthews a few weeks ago to Second Mt. Beulah Baptist Church and did a seminar. I was the young lady that asked about why the property would be in heirs property if the will stated who it was to go to.

Well, I found out it was an error on the Probate Court. They did not file the paperwork correctly. They had it as all 3 children instead of the one child it was willed to, and the will clearly stated it. The will was also attached. Therefore, a revised Devise/Descent was done to correct the matter. It took 20 years and more than 5 attempts of inquiry to get it corrected, finally.

Thank you for your help. Have a great day!

Cassandra

The mission of the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation™ is to protect heirs' property and promote the sustainable use of land to provide increased economic benefit to historically underserved landowners. That is our mission. We were so pleased to be able to help Cassandra and her family. We were thrilled to receive her thank you note here at the Center and know that we played a role in helping her solve a 20-year-old problem. Now is the time to resolve your heirs' property issues. The longer you wait, the more complicated it can become. Call the Center to make an appointment with one of our attorneys for one hour of free legal advice about your particular heirs' property situation and what you need to do to resolve it.



Congratulations Jennie

Congratulations to our CEO, Dr. Jennie L. Stephens, who was named earlier this year by the USDA to the newly formed national Subcommittee on Agriculture of the Equity Commission! Launching this independent Commission delivers on President Biden's commitment to create an independent Equity Commission and provide it with the necessary resources to support its mission to address historical discrimination at the USDA. Congrats again, Jennie!



The 2022 'Commitment to Justice' Award



The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation™ is proud to recognize Reverend Nelson B. Rivers, III as the Recipient of this year's Commitment to Justice Award. Reverend Rivers was born in the South Carolina coastal community of Bennett's point and is a Lifelong servant in the fight for justice.

As a minister, Reverend Rivers has preached at churches in twenty-three states and is the pastor of Charity Mission Church in North Charleston. He received his bachelor's degree from Wilberforce University in Ohio, the first private Black-owned and operated university in America. He was ordained at the Olivet Baptist Church of Christ in Fayetteville, GA, by the late Dr. Howard W. Creecy, Sr. He is pursuing his Master of Divinity at Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC.

Reverend Rivers has received numerous accolades highlighting his commitment to justice. Including the Order of the Palmetto, the state of South Carolina's highest award, induction into the South Carolina Black Hall of Fame, H. E. DeCosta Trailblazer Award by South Carolina African American Heritage Commission, and the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Vision Award by the YWCA of Greater Charleston.

Reverend Rivers's civil rights work led to the election of more than 300 new black officials in South Carolina between 1986 and 1994. His involvement with civil rights organizations includes the National Association for the Advancement for Colored People [NAACP] and the National Action Network [NAN]. He also is a founding member of the Charleston Area Justice Ministry [CAJM], an organization that promotes justice through congregational work.

The Center is indeed privileged to have this lifelong warrior and activist for civil rights, Reverend Nelson B. Rivers, III, as the 2022 Commitment to Justice Award Honoree! We hope you can join us in person at the Francis Marion Hotel for this incredible event on September 8th at 5:30 p.m. to honor Reverend Rivers.



SAVE THE DATE

Commitment to
Justice Award
Reception:
Sept. 8th

7th Annual South
Carolina Rural &
Limited Resource
Landowner
Symposium:
Coming in October

Unique
Lowcountry
Outing and Feast:
Nov. 12th

Commitment to Justice will be an in-person event. For ticket or sponsorship information contact Brett Wadford at 843-745-7055 or bwadford@heirsproperty.org

CENTER FOR HEIRS' PROPERTY PRESERVATION™

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Forester



Asija Rice,
Forester



Brianna Roberts,
Parlegal/Legal
Administration



Y. Elizabeth Wellman,
Staff Attorney



New Home, New Address

Our New Home,
The Opportunity Center!

Center for Heirs' Property Preservation™
8570 Rivers Avenue, Suite 170
North Charleston, SC 29406