

Press



Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cornell To Recognize Sam Waymon For Contributions

Nyack Resident Keeps Issues In Focus For A New Generation Confronting Challenges Of Civil Rights, Social Justice And Discrimination

Presentation Set For Sept. 6

New City, NY (Sept. 2, 2016) – Rockland County Legislator Harriet Cornell will honor Sam Waymon of Nyack for his efforts in furthering civil rights and social justice at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 6.

“Sam has used his talent and creativity to articulate outrage against injustice,” Cornell said. “His devotion to the causes of civil rights and social justice has reverberated through the decades, and his example is helping to educate a new generation about the fight against all forms of discrimination.”

Waymon grew up in Tyron, North Carolina, one of eight siblings and the younger brother of the girl who would grow up to record more than 40 records as the famous Nina Simone. Both started playing piano at the age of 3.

Tyron saw Ku Klux Klan activity and growing up, Waymon witnessed cross burnings and savage beatings, according to a Nyack Sketch Log article by Bill Batson in *Nyack News & Views*.

Nina Simone had her piano debut at age 12, but her parents were forced to move to the back of the hall to make room for white audience members. She refused to perform until her parents were allowed to retake their seats, according to an online article citing an autobiography by Simone and Stephen Cleary.

Waymon joined his sister as her manager and an organist in the mid-1960s, recording and performing around the world, including before the King of Morocco and the President of France.

As an artist, Waymon developed his own style, fusing everything from gospel to jazz, and recording with many elites, including Miles Davis, Roberta Flack and Donnie Hathaway. He recorded for several labels and wrote music and scores for films such as *Weeds*, Jonathan Demme's *Philadelphia*, and Bill Gunn's *Ganja and Hess*, filmed in Nyack and recently remade by director Spike Lee. Gunn and Waymon were creative partners for many years.

Waymon shares his immense talents through his music to preserve and depict the darkest periods of American history, some of which he captured in *Freedom Summer*, a play set to music, intended to make the sacrifice of the southern civil rights movement relevant to a new generation.

Waymon has long defended his late sister's name and legacy. He is creative producer and appears with more than 50 other friends and family members in the new film *The Amazing Nina Simone*. He has also been outspoken about the casting for another movie about his sister in part because it was unsanctioned by the family and because the actress portraying Simone needed to darken her skin for the role, betraying the "truth" Simone was committed to.

In July, Waymon was honored as a participant in the 4th annual March in Washington Film Festival, devoted to telling the stories of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and to motivating today's generation of young people to advocate for positive change.

The program will be held in the Allison-Parris County Office Building, 11 New Hempstead Road in New City. All are welcome.

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