

'They Inspired Martin Luther King' 'Boynton Weekend' Honors Heroes of Selma

Civil Rights heroes Amelia Boynton Robinson and her late husband, Sam W. Boynton, were honored for their leadership in the American Civil Rights movement in a beautiful celebration Aug. 17-18, sponsored by the City of Selma, Ala. and the National Voting Rights Museum & Institute. Sam Boynton and Amelia—she is the vice chairman of the Schiller Institute and a world-renowned leader of the LaRouche political movement—pioneered the fight for voting rights for black Americans in Alabama, beginning in the 1930's.

Together, the Boyntons spent decades laying the groundwork for the movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; they invited Dr. King to launch the famous fight in Selma which resulted in passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and they supported him, when virtually everyone else shrank back in fear. The great danger and personal cost involved led to Sam Boynton's premature death, and left Amelia Boynton gassed and beaten on the "Bloody Sunday" march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, on March 7, 1965.

Ironically, the two had never been honored in the city where they gave so much.

'Don't Know Our History'

Noted Civil Rights attorney J.L. Chestnut, author of *Black in Selma*, who worked with the Boyntons, addressed this in his tribute at the event, saying that Mrs. Boynton Robinson "has been honored all over the world, and all over the United States. But the question was, when will Selma get around to honoring Mr. and Mrs. Boynton?"



EIFNS/Marianna Wertz

Amelia Boynton Robinson holds plaque from Alabama Governor Don Siegelman.

Weekend," planned to coincide with Mrs. Boynton Robinson's 91st birthday. The LaRouche movement was there to give the hundreds gathered there a sense of the work which this brave woman has accomplished in the last two decades, as she has travelled the world to teach the universal lessons of the Civil Rights movement, and to campaign for the man who, as she said, has picked up the broken pieces of that movement and leads it today: Lyndon LaRouche.

The reason for the delay, he said, is "because we don't know our history. There would have been no Selma Civil Rights movement except for S.W. and Amelia Boynton. . . . There is no way to measure the influence of the Boyntons on this town and nation. The Voting Rights Bill," which was the fruit of the Boyntons' work, "changed the world. . . . They inspired Martin Luther King. They inspired me."

The honoring of the Boyntons was at last done right at the "Boynton

Youth Festival

The weekend began Saturday with an all-day festival at Selma University, attended by about 300 youth, with sporting events, music, speeches, and food. The highlight was the unveiling of an exhibit by the festival organizers, Selma Councilwoman Bennie Ruth Crenshaw and Felecia Pettway of the National Voting Rights Museum. When complete, the exhibit will be housed in a waterfall monument being constructed on the campus.

Mrs. Boynton Robinson addressed the Saturday gather-



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At Selma University (left to right): Selma Mayor James Perkins, Jr., Boynton Robinson, Mrs. Anderson (wife of Rev. Anderson, who, with the Boyntons, was one of the "Courageous 8" that led the Selma Civil Rights movement), Selma Councilwoman Bennie Ruth Crenshaw.

ing briefly, urging the youth to exercise their rights and duties as citizens, by registering to vote and running for office—a message she has brought to youth across the U.S. over the past decade.

The event was covered by local television and the Selma Times-Journal, which ran front-page headlines for two days on the celebration.

On the Saturday program, at Mrs. Boynton Robinson's request, this author—Schiller Institute vice president Marianna Wertz—brought greetings from Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, and then introduced Louis Donath, a Bundestag candidate with the LaRouche movement in Germany, who had travelled to Selma especially for the occasion, and who beautifully sang a German *Lied* for the assembled youth.

Political Leaders Pay Homage

The Sunday event was a four-hour celebration, with speeches honoring Mrs. Boynton Robinson by virtually every Selma politician, as well as the presentation of resolutions passed in her honor by both houses of the Alabama State Legislature. U.S. Congressman Earl Hilliard, whose district includes Selma—and who recently lost his primary reelection bid owing to an intense campaign against him by the Zionist lobby for his stand for an even-handed policy toward Israel and the Palestinians—also sent a message of congratulations, as did Democratic Governor Don Siegelman.

The recently elected Mayor of Selma, James Perkins, Jr., called the Selma Civil Rights fight “our ground zero.” “It takes a long time for ground zero to heal,” he said. “We ought to consider ourselves blessed because God decided to use Selma as ground zero. I thank God that in every instance and generation, he raised up such leaders. Thank God for the Boyntons.” Three members



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Festival organizers Bennie Ruth Crenshaw and Felecia Pettway unveil painting honoring the Boyntons.

ed her for her “work with Lyndon LaRouche around the world.”

A Beautiful Soul

This author presented Mrs. Boynton Robinson to the audience: “As vice chair- man of the Schiller Institute since the late 1980’s, Amelia has travelled the world, joining with Lyn-

don and Helga LaRouche, her “adopted son and daughter,” in fighting to bring the lessons of the American Civil Rights movement to a sorely troubled world. . . . Amelia is the embodiment of what Friedrich Schiller called a ‘beautiful soul’ and a ‘world citizen.’

“Wherever she goes—be it the war-torn Balkans, East Berlin just after the fall of the Wall, or to hundreds of classrooms across this nation, Amelia has inspired audiences worldwide with the fierce, yet loving determination which she brings to the fight for dignity and fundamental rights for all human beings. Thank you, Amelia, for all that you’ve given to the world.”

At 91, Amelia Boynton Robinson is inspiring youth today with her courage and determination, just as much as she

and her husband did 50 years ago. The honor bestowed on them by Selma, was a fitting testament to their enormous contribution to humanity.

—Marianna Wertz

of the Selma City Council then presented the Key to the City to Mrs. Boynton Robinson.

State Senator Hank Sanders read the State Senate resolution and the birthday message from Gov. Siegelman. Sanders, himself a noted Civil Rights leader, added that “Don Siegelman would not be Governor today except for Amelia Boynton Robinson, and he knows this.”

The former Mayor of Tuskegee, Johnny Ford, who is now a State Representative, read the Alabama House resolution paying tribute to Mrs. Boynton Robinson. He promised to honor her similarly in Tuskegee, where she lives today, saying, “I would not be where I am today, were it not for Sam and Amelia Boynton.” Ford also commend-



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Amelia Boynton Robinson with granddaughter Carver Boynton, in front of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where she was gassed, beaten, and left for dead on “Bloody Sunday.”