

**The city of Mound Bayou  
to honor Dr. T.R.M. Howard, MD  
by renaming portion of Old Hwy 61, in his honor**

***August 6, 2010, Mound Bayou, MS***--After six decades, the state of Mississippi will honor T.R.M. Howard, MD, who is credited with giving Medgar Evers and Fannie Lou Hamer their start in the Civil Rights movement of the '60s. The city of Mound Bayou, MS will rename a portion of Old Highway 61, (161) in Dr. Howard's honor. The dedication ceremony and street renaming will be held on **Monday September 6, 2010, in downtown Mound Bayou at 1:00 p.m.**

The festivities will begin with a parade. Citizens and special invited guests will assemble at 11:45 a.m. on Old Hwy 61, (161). A ribbon cutting ceremony will be followed by a luncheon, in the Mound Bayou Facilities Building, located at 301 Martin Luther King, Jr Drive.

At press-time confirmed guest include, Ed Dwight America's first Black astronaut and renowned sculptor; as well as, Nichelle Nichols the first actress to portray a black astronaut on TV; Charles Evers the brother of Medgar Evers former Field Secretary for the Mississippi State NAACP. Evers, whom Howard gave his first job out of college in 1951 (selling Life Insurance) was murdered after returning home from the Delta June 12, 1963; and, Bill Luckett, Democratic candidate for Governor and business partner of actor Morgan Freeman.

Three years before Rosa Parks came to prominence in 1955, Dr. Howard organized a successful boycott against service stations, which denied the use of restrooms to Blacks. In fact, it was four days after Parks attended one of Howard's Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL) conferences in Montgomery, AL that Parks took her defiant seat on the bus in Montgomery sparking the boycott and signaling the launch of the American Civil Rights era.

Howard was one of the wealthiest Blacks in the state of Mississippi in the early 1950s. He owned a plantation of over one thousand acres, a home construction firm, an insurance company, a small zoo, and a restaurant with a beer garden. He built the first swimming pool for Black people. He was chief of surgery at the Taborian Hospital and Friendship Clinic, which gave low-cost care to thousands of poor people in the 1940s and 1950s. His annual Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL) rallies in Mound Bayou and is attended by thousands, who convene from around the country (helping to build the local economy). The Council of Negro Leadership introduced thousands of Mississippians to outstanding figures in the new emerging Civil Rights movement and

provided an incubator for local community activists, like the legendary gospel singer, baker, and field hand from Ruleville, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer.

Howard's contemporaries were attorney Thurgood Marshall, former NAACP national president A. Phillip Randolph; United Nations Undersecretary for Special Political Affairs and Undersecretary-General Ralph Bunche; and legendary singer Marian Anderson. Even Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gained early prominence after speaking at one of Dr. Howard's RCNL rallies in Montgomery, AL. Howard consistently used his wealth and status to empower the people of Mound Bayou, his adopted city.

The purpose of this celebration and street naming is to celebrate Howard's work as a doctor and "maverick" in the fight for justice, civil rights and economic empowerment for African Americans, other economically disadvantaged people in the state of Mississippi, and across the nation.

In 1955, Howard played a pivotal role in the investigation of the murder of Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old child from Chicago, IL murdered because of an incident in Money, MS involving the White wife local plantation "Straw Boss" and general store operator, Roy Bryant. Howard was instrumental in finding witnesses, by allowing his insurance agent Medgar Evers to gather information about the murder, which was later turned over to the U.S. Justice department and prompted then Federal Bureau of Investigation Director, J. Edgar Hoover to launch an investigation into the Till murder. During the subsequent trial Howard gave refuge, in his home, to Mrs. Mamie Till, and other Black journalist covering the trial for the Black press. It was Howard who famously warned "hell to pay in Mississippi" after Till's mangled and a beaten body was found floating in the Tallahatchie River.

According to Linda Royster Beito, the co-author of the recently published book on Howard's life "Black Maverick: T.R.M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power," who stated "This event will not only honor a man of intelligence, determination and perseverance but also the town of Mound Bayou and its tradition of self-help, health-care entrepreneurship and civil rights."

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