

In our 97th Year of Service to
Youth & the Community

www.birmingham.amoptimists.org
www.facebook.com/BirminghamOptimistClub
BirminghamOptimistClub@gmail.com

Optimist Club of Birmingham

The Flagship Club of the
Alabama-Mississippi District
March-May, 2025

Meets 3rd Thursday
12:00 Noon

MAY 15TH CLUB MEETING

The Optimist Club of Birmingham was honored to have **Tanita Cain, District Court Judge for Jefferson County 10th Judicial District, Place 6**, as our distinguished guest speaker. She was appointed Special District Court Judge and has been a member of the Jefferson County Executive Committee of the Democratic Party. She has more than 25 years of legal experience.

Judge Cain's primary focus was on her work with domestic violence offenders and victims. She also spoke of how domestic violence affects a large number of youth in our community, as well as about the programs she has been implementing, since taking the bench in January of this year, to help stop the cycle of abuse and recidivism.

Judge Cain is extremely involved in the community and is a member of several legal and community organizations. She has received a ton of awards for her social activism in the community. She created a Lawyers and Judges for Literacy Program where the area judges and lawyers pitch in to combat illiteracy.

Before becoming a Judge, she was the founder of The Cain Law Firm, LLC, a general practice firm which specializes in criminal law. As an attorney, she has received many professional acknowledgments. She has also provided numerous hours of pro bono legal services which included, but not limited to, closing her firm for two weeks to work with victims in devastated areas, providing free wills for the elderly, and helping people expunge criminal charges.

The Club was also delighted to have Judge Cain's mother, **Shirley Miller**, as our guest.

CLUB OFFICER ELECTION HELD MAY 15TH

Officers for the 2025-2026 Optimist year, October 1, 2025-September 30, 2026, are as follows:

President – Sharon Wilson

VP Administration/Community Affairs – Anita Lee

VP Youth Work – Dr. Paul Amamoo

Secretary – Jon Ryan

Treasurer – Leon Evans, Jr.

Assistant Treasurer – Erma Hinton

Immediate Past President – Carolyn McCoy

Club Foundation Representative – Nancy Ryan

Directors: Two-year terms expiring 2027 – Angene Coleman, Jackie Holder, and Teresa Jones

Directors Clara Greene, Adrienne Pearson, and Ronald Taylor will continue to serve through Sept. 30, 2026.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 29 (Thursday) - Serve dinner at *First Light Women's and Children's Homeless Shelter*. Volunteers to assist in food preparation are needed to arrive at **4:00 PM**. Food servers need to arrive by **6:00 PM**. **Contact Sharon Wilson at 4Wilson4@bellsouth.net or 205-222-4184** if you are available to volunteer!

June 12 - Board Meeting via Zoom, 1 PM

June 14 – Sickle Cell Walk, Contact Leon Evans for more info re: volunteering at the event levansjr74@aol.com or **205-222-6227**.

June 19 – Club Mtg., 12 N - Alabama Power Company
The meeting will feature a special Induction Ceremony for our newest Optimist Club Members!

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Zoé Champion** on her graduation from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and earning a **Bachelors of Science in Kinesiology**, with a **Minor in Psychology** on May 3rd! Zoé has also announced that she has been accepted to **UAB's Doctorate of Physical Therapy Program** beginning January 2026! Your Optimist Family is so proud of you, Zoé, and wishes you great success as you begin this next chapter in your life!

MARCH Birthdays: 4th – Stuart Benjamin, 4th – Renee Green-Jones, 30th – Monithia Smith

Anniversaries: 11th – Elliott & Kim Carr, 22nd – Robert & Desiree Bates, 26th – Martin & Erma Hinton

APRIL Birthdays: 3rd – Hazel Collins, 11th – Jon Ryan, 15th – Sandra Weems

MAY Birthdays: 13th – Charlie Binion, 20th – Desiree Bates, 26th – Tom Casey

Anniversaries: 27th – Frederick & Jamil Smith

Hope you each enjoy/enjoyed your special day!

Please note: If your birthday and/or anniversary was not included, please email the dates to Nancy Ryan at nryan95@charter.net, so they can be added to the list.



OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

The Optimist Club of Birmingham was honored to have the top 3 winners of its annual Club Essay Contest present their winning essays at the February 20th Club Meeting held at Alabama Power Company. **Samantha Poarch** (1st), **Christian Stubbs** (2nd), and **Maleah L. Cook** (3rd) each received a Medal and Certificate of Participation, a cash prize of \$300, \$200, and \$100 respectively, along with a goody bag and gift card,

Other participants in the contest included: **Shiloh Britt**, **Bethany C. Horn**, **Lillian Johnson**, **Ian Nunez**, **Emma Rice**, **Logan Tarver**, and **Brandon Williams**, who each received a Certificate of Participation, along with a goody bag and gift card.

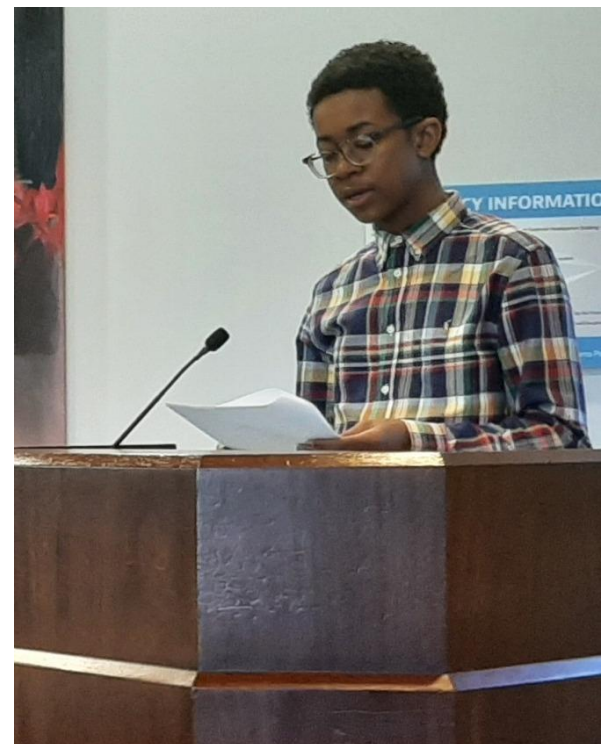
Samantha's 1st place essay has been submitted for further competition in the Alabama-Mississippi District Contest for the opportunity to earn a \$2,500 scholarship to the college of her choice!



Club Essay Chair Desiree Bates & President Sharon Wilson congratulate Essay Contest Winners Samantha Poarch (1st), Christian Stubbs (2nd), and Maleah L. Cook (3rd).



1st Place Essay Winner, Samantha Poarch



2nd Place Essay Winner, Christian Stubbs



3rd Place Winner, Maleah L. Cook

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

CLUB ORATORICAL CONTEST HELD MARCH 1ST

Oratorical Contest Chair, Erma Hinton, conducted the contest at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. The topic of this year's contest was "How Optimism Has Guided Me Through Trying Times."



Contest Chair Erma Hinton & President Sharon Wilson congratulate 1st Place Winner Christian Stubbs



Contest Chair Erma Hinton & President Sharon Wilson congratulate 2nd Place Winner Samantha Poarch



Contest Chair Erma Hinton & President Sharon Wilson congratulate 3rd Place Winner Michael Jones



Contest Chair Erma Hinton presents a Certificate of Participation to Dariya Larry



Contest Timekeeper Margie Argo, along with Contest Judges Hazel Collins & Joyce Stevenson.
Not pictured: Contest Judge Dr. Paul Amamoo



Club Oratorical Contest Chair Erma Hinton & President Sharon Wilson congratulate all of our winners!!



VP Anita Lee with new Member, Dr. Rotasha Madden, Miles College Social Work Program Director

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

ZONE 1 & REGION 1 ORATORICAL CONTESTS

The Optimist Club of Birmingham was proud to sponsor **Christian Stubbs** and **Samantha Poarch** in the Zone 1 Oratorical Contest, held on Saturday, March 22. They both did an outstanding job in delivering their speeches on the topic "How Optimism Has Guided Me Through Trying Times" to all those in attendance!

Congratulations to **Samantha Poarch** for placing **1st in the Zone 1 Contest!** She advanced to the Region 1 Oratorical Contest held on Saturday, April 12. The winner of that contest advanced to the Alabama-Mississippi District Contest for an opportunity to earn a \$2,500 college scholarship and to advance to the next levels of competition to earn additional college scholarships.



Each Contestant received a Certificate of Participation. Each of the four Clubs in Zone 1, including Birmingham, Birmingham West End, Metro-Tuscaloosa, and Talladega, were well-represented by these amazing young people!



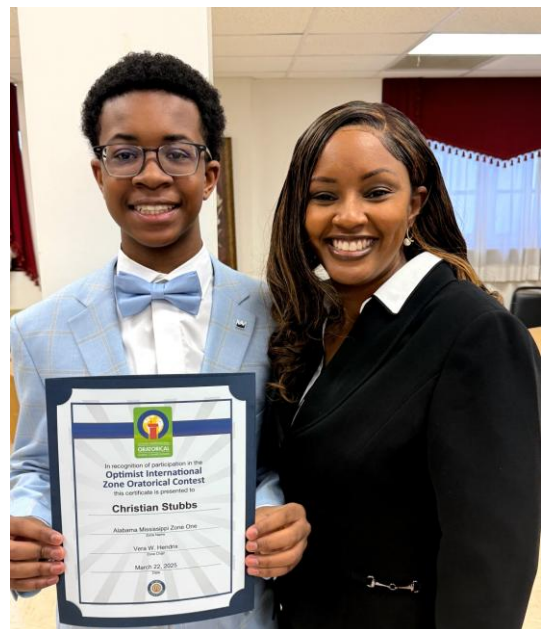
Southeast Region Vice President Tolanda Adams congratulates Zone 1 Oratorical Contest Winner Samantha Poarch!



Samantha Poarch with her proud Mom, Casie Poarch



Club Oratorical Contest Chair Erma Hinton congratulates Christian Stubbs and Samantha Poarch for the outstanding job they did at the Zone 1 Contest!!



Christian Stubbs with his proud Mom, La Quitta Stubbs.

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES



President Sharon Wilson thanks Phyllis Connell for volunteering to serve as a judge for the Zone 1 Contest.



Club Oratorical Contest Chair Erma Hinton with her beautiful daughter, Joie Hinton.



Club Scholarship Chair Jon Ryan, Club Oratorical Contest Chair Erma Hinton, & President Sharon Wilson congratulate Samantha Poarch & Christian Stubbs



Jon & Nancy Ryan, Erma Hinton, Sharon Wilson and Leon Evans congratulate our two contestants, Samantha Poarch and Christian Stubbs,



Zone 1 Lt. Governor Vera Hendrix & Region 1 Contest Chair Norma Stewart congratulate all of the Contestants In the Region 1 Oratorical Contest!



Club Contest Chair Erma Hinton presents the engraved Zone 1 Winner's plaque to Samantha Poarch, accompanied by her parents, Johnathan & Casie Poarch, at the Region 1 Oratorical Contest.

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATION CONTEST FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

The Optimist Club of Birmingham held its Club Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH), conducted by **Oratorical Chair Paula Hines**, on Thursday, April 17, at Alabama Power Company in the Electra Room. Congratulations to our contestants, **Kearrie Brooks** and **Tamiyah Williams**, who each did an excellent job of presenting their speeches on the topic, "How Optimism Has Guided Me Through Trying Times."

Special thanks to **Jamie Glass**, Senior Counselor with the Alabama Dept. of Rehabilitation Services for his assistance in getting information to students, along with their parents and teachers about the contest. Thank you also to **Ben Putnam** who served as the official interpreter for the contest.

1st Place Winner **Kearrie Brooks** and 2nd Place Winner **Tamiyah Williams**, were both eligible to advance to the Alabama-Mississippi District CCDHH Contest, held on Saturday, April 26, in Hoover, AL.



The Club is so proud of our CCDHH Winners, Tamiyah Williams & Kearrie Brooks!



President Sharon Wilson & Contest Paula Hines present the 1st Place Medal, \$300 Cash Scholarship & Certificate of Participation to Kearrie Brooks.



Katelyn Peters, Kearrie Brooks, Pres. Sharon Wilson, & Kearrie's mother, Dalencia Hunter



President Sharon Wilson & Contest Paula Hines present the 2nd Place Medal, \$200 Cash Scholarship & Certificate of Participation to Tamiyah Williams.



Thank you to our Contest Judges: Jerri Lynn Morrow, Maria Katz, Lisa Gray, & Bria Hines!

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

3RD QUARTER ALABAMA-MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT MTG.

The Optimist Club of Birmingham was well-represented at the 3rd Quarter Alabama-Mississippi District Meeting held at the Holiday Inn in Hoover, AL, on April 25-27.

Under the leadership of 2023-2024 **President Carolyn McCoy**, our Club earned the Distinguished Club status and each of our Officers was awarded with a Distinguished Club Citation by 2023-2024 District Governor Jeff Keener, along with a special gift, from Optimist International, on Saturday evening at the Awards Banquet.



2023-2024 Governor Jeff Keener presents Distinguished Club Citations, along with special gifts, from Optimist International to 2023-2024 Distinguished Club Secretary Teresa Jones, Distinguished Club President Carolyn McCoy, & Distinguished Club Treasurer Leon Evans!



Gov-Elect Mike Holt, Immediate Past Gov. Jeff Keener, and A&A Chair Annette Williams present award to Secretary Teresa Jones & President Carolyn McCoy, along with Past Secretary Jon Ryan, for the Club's outstanding participation in the Awards & Achievements Program throughout the past year.

Tamiyah Williams did an outstanding job of representing the Club at the District Contest! (Due to a prior commitment, Kearrie Brooks was unavailable to attend the competition.)



Congratulations to 2023-2024 Distinguished Club President Carolyn McCoy, Treasurer Leon Evans & Secretary Teresa Jones!!



Board Member Jon Ryan, Social Media Chair Nancy Ryan, Secretary Teresa Jones, President Sharon Wilson, Immediate Past President Carolyn McCoy, Past Optimist International Foundation President & Club Foundation Representative Roger Vaughan, & Treasurer Leon Evans. Also in attendance at the District Meeting were Vice President of Youth Work, Dr. Paul Amamoo, & CCDHH Contest Chair Paula Hines.



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING LEADERS IN ATTENDANCE FOR THEIR DEDICATION & SERVICE TO OUR DISTRICT OVER THE YEARS!!! Past Alabama-Mississippi District Governors (front row) Vera Hendrix, Jeff Keener, Ester Stubbs, (back row) Slade Watson, James Adams, Tolanda Beal-Adams, Jacqueline Sullivan, Pamela Black, Helen Howard, Tom Casteel, Janet Smith, and Debbie Merritt. Not pictured: Optimist Club of Birmingham Member, Roger Vaughan.

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Optimist Club Members **Jonni Clark**, **Angene Coleman**, **Ra'Jeeni Marshall**, **Adrienne Pearson**, **Sharon Wilson**, under the leadership of **Reading Chair Saundra Taylor**, volunteered to read to students at Robinson Elementary Schools in both Eastlake & Fairfield during **Black History Month** in February.



President Sharon Wilson & Jonni Clark



Jonni Clark with students at Robinson Elementary



President Sharon Wilson reading to students



Saundra Taylor, Adrienne Pearson, Jonni Clark & Angene Coleman at Robinson Elementary School.



Teacher with Adrienne Pearson, Jonni Clark, & volunteer Lolita Sims (a fellow member of Continental Societies, Inc. along with Jonni Clark)

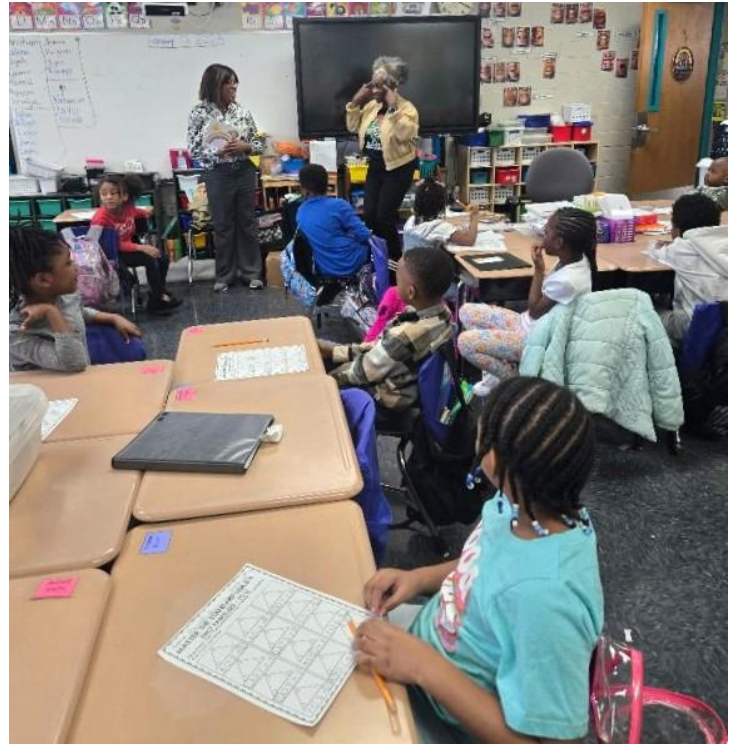


Ra'Jeeni Marshall received a special gift from students after reading to them!

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES



Jonni Clark, Angene Coleman, Teacher, Lolita Sims



Jonni Clark & Lolita Sims reading to children



Sandra Taylor reading to students



Lolita Sims & teacher enjoyed reading to and interacting with students.



Adrienne Pearson reading to students

OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

READ ACROSS AMERICA

Saundra Taylor, Sharon Wilson, Erma Hinton & Adrienne Pearson spent the morning on March 11th with 3rd graders at **Martha Gaskins Elementary School** teaching **Reader's Theater** as the Optimist Club's participation in **Read Across America**.

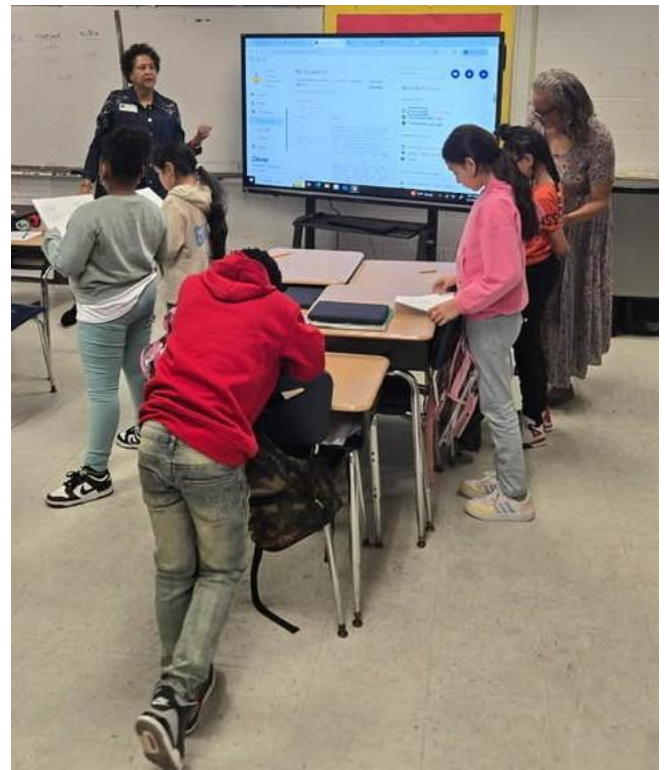
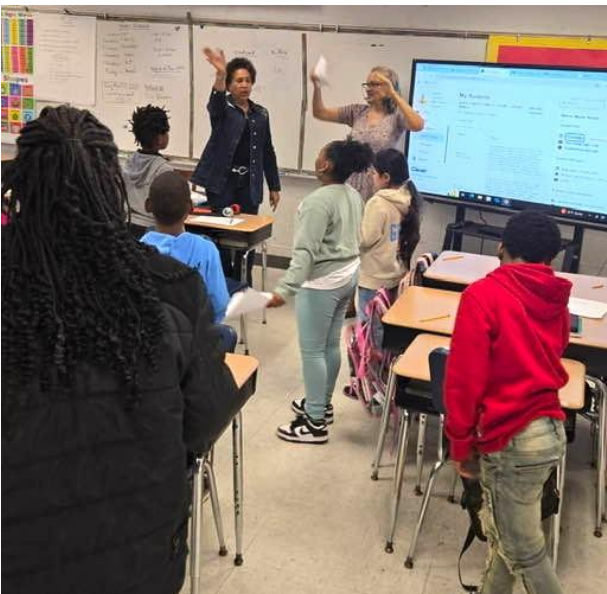
Interesting note: Erma shared that Adrienne was one of her best friends in high school and they studied theater together at West End High! "Reading was fun today!" 📖 📚 📖 📚 📖 📚



Saundra Taylor, Sharon Wilson, Erma Hinton & Adrienne Pearson enjoyed their day of reading with students!



Saundra Taylor, Erma Hinton, Adrienne Pearson & President Sharon Wilson are welcomed by the Principal of Martha Gaskins Elementary School, **Dr. Herbert Blackmon, Jr.**



OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

**MAY 15 CLUB MEETING
JUDGE TANITA CAIN GUEST SPEAKER**



Shirley Miller, Judge Tanita Cain & President Sharon Wilson



Judge Tanita Cain shared about her experience of working with both domestic violence offenders and victims.



Teresa Jones, Clara Greene, Jackie Holder, Leon Evans



Carolyn McCoy, Ron Taylor, Shirley Miller



Dr. Paul Amamoo & Carolyn McCoy



Jackie Holder, Carol Harris, Adrienne Pearson