

September 2, 2026

NAACP Albemarle-Charlottesville Branch
P.O. Box 1522
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Greetings,

Mary Church Terrell—educator, civil rights advocate, suffragist, and one of the charter members of the NAACP—spent her life working to expand opportunity for others. As the first president of the National Association of Colored Women, she helped give voice to a simple but enduring principle: **“Lifting as we climb.”**

More than a century later, those words still speak to the responsibility we have to one another. Progress is measured not only by how far we travel ourselves, but by whether we create opportunities for others to travel farther. We see it in the young person who receives a scholarship, the neighbor whose voice is heard, the barrier that is removed, and a community willing to confront injustice rather than look away.

For generations, the Albemarle-Charlottesville Branch of the NAACP has carried that work forward. Through advocacy, education, investment in young people, and a persistent commitment to equality and opportunity, you have strengthened our community.

The Freedom Fund Banquet gives us an opportunity to celebrate that legacy, but it also asks us to consider our own role in carrying it forward. Meaningful progress is rarely achieved all at once. It is built through relationships, courage, honest conversation, and a willingness to keep working together when the work is difficult.

That is what *lifting as we climb* asks of us. Our individual progress and our community's progress are connected, and each generation has a responsibility to open doors a little wider for the generation that follows.

On behalf of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, thank you for your leadership, your partnership, and your continued commitment to building a community where every person has the opportunity to thrive.

As you gather for this year's Freedom Fund Banquet, we celebrate how far we have climbed, honor those who made that progress possible, and recommit ourselves to lifting others as we continue the journey together.

With respect and appreciation,

Ned L. Gallaway
Chair, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors