



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For Immediate Release - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2023

Blair County NAACP Appoints Rogers to Historic Role

For the first time in 65 years, a member-at-large of the NAACP will hold the title of Regional Vice President at the Blair County NAACP Branch #2252. At the regular membership Meeting of the branch on February 15, 2023, the attending executive committee members and officers unanimously approved the appointment of Joan Rogers, of Mount Union, to the position of Regional Vice President for Mount Union/Huntingdon.

With an overwhelming number of racially-motivated incidents in Central Pennsylvania, NAACP PA State Conference officers first permitted participation of Huntingdon county residents with Branch #2252 following the branch election of 2021. However, over the past several months, officers and members of the branch, alike, expressed concerns with the ability to respond to cases outside of Blair County. After failed attempts to re-charter a branch since the passing of Huntingdon County NAACP President John J. Trice, it became apparent that a more permanent position would have to be created. For local leadership, Rogers is a perfect fit for the long-vacant seat. As a Mount Union Borough Council member, with decades of race and gender-focused activism, as well as deep family ties to Huntingdon County, Joan Rogers demonstrates precisely the kind of experience the local NAACP is seeking to re-establish a presence in an area in need.

This position is not without precedent, however. In 1944, Blair County activists Charles Randolph Brown and Dr. George A. Walker attended the 10th Annual Meeting of the State Conference, corresponding with the likes of Thurgood Marshall, Roy Wilkins, and Ella J. Baker. In December of the same year, Brown, in his capacity as Branch Secretary, and Walker, in his capacity as Senior Branch Advisor, oversaw the appointment of one Edward Reynolds of Claysburg to the position of regional vice president, according an *Altoona Mirror* article for Monday, December 4, 1944 (pg. 6) . Another *Altoona Mirror* article, dated Saturday, December 14, 1957, documents Mrs. Coley Hewitt, of Grazierville, being elected Regional Vice President for Tyrone, taking the helm from Mrs. Lucy Prymus, of Tyrone.

And, though the Regional Vice President does not have elected-officer-equivalent voting powers, there are multiple positions available at the branch that do. These positions include: Secretary, Treasurer, and at least two Executive Committee seats, as well as Chairman of the Executive Committee. Applicants with 30 days or more of membership to the organization are encouraged to contact Branch #2252 at admin@blairconaacp.org with intent to run for any of the 2-year office vacancies no later than Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023. Elections will take place between that date and February 28th. Community members may also contact that email with questions or concerns about this announcement, as well as requests for more information on elected positions at the branch, in accordance with the Bylaws and Constitution of the NAACP.