
Detroit still the most racially segregated region in America

Even as the growing population of the United States becomes more diverse, our communities remain racially segregated and segregation continues to extract a high price in economic and social terms.

Residential segregation studies document that the most segregated areas of the country are in the Midwest and Northeast, with the West being the least segregated. The most segregated area in the United States is the city of Detroit.

The most recent testing, by the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), of the Detroit area found that agents for a Century

21 Town & Country office in Grosse Pointe Farms were consistent in steering African Americans to predominantly black neighborhoods and white people to predominantly white neighborhoods in a series of test conducted from 2003 to 2005.

NFHA's report, *Detroit's Crisis of Housing Segregation*, addresses the nature and extent of racial segregation in this area. It highlights findings that amount to a crisis of racial segregation at a time when funding for, and commitment to, the enforcement of fair housing laws is in a precipitous decline. In the twelve metropolitan areas

investigated to date, including Detroit, NFHA's testing revealed discriminatory behavior, steering practices and other illegal activities that are both striking and pervasive.

To counteract these widespread findings of discrimination in real estate practices, NFHA is filing one of several complaints against real estate firms throughout the nation.

As NFHA files complaints around the country, our goal is to work with local fair housing agencies to inform the public and to obtain affirmative relief for the communities that have been harmed.

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SAVE THE DATE! 19TH ANNUAL EVENT: APRIL 20, 2006

Fall is here and the holidays are quickly approaching. We are preparing for the coming year and already planning our Annual Luncheon and Workshop event.

So, mark your calendars, because on April 20th we will gather together again to talk about fair housing and the challenges we are facing.

We are pleased to announce that our keynote speaker for the event will be Michael Allen.

Mr. Allen is a senior staff attorney and director of housing programs at the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C.



In that position, he provides public policy advocacy in Congress and at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on behalf of the housing needs of people with mental disabilities.

He also supports a nationwide network of disability and legal services lawyers conduct-

ing litigation under the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mr. Allen has written, lectured and consulted widely on civil rights. He is the principal author of the report *Reconstructing Fair Housing* (issued by the National Council on Disability in November 2001), and of the articles "Waking Rip van Winkle: Why Developments in the Last Twenty Years Should Teach the Mental Health System Not to Use Housing as a Tool of Coercion," "Separate and Unequal: The Struggle of Tenants with Mental Illness to Maintain Housing" and "Why Not in Our Back Yard?"

He serves as Co-Director of the Building Better Communities Network and as the writer/editor of The NIMBY Report, a joint publication of the Network and the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Please join us for this very informative afternoon!



The crowd enjoyed every bit of last year's Luncheon keynote's speech.



Our Executive Director talking to the audience at last year's event.



Fair Housing Center's team was happy with the success of the luncheon.



Farewell Martha!

Martha Moorhead leaves behind 15 years of fair housing work and friends

You get to learn early in life that all good things come to an end. However, to say goodbye to an old friend and witness the end of an era is not so simple.

Martha Moorehead started working for the Fair Housing Center in 1990 and through the years she became more involved and knowledgeable not only of what fair housing is but also who is out there to help and how to get them involved. She knows people who know people!

There is a lot to say about Martha, about her work and her 15 years dedicated to fair housing.

That's why we asked the people who worked with her. "What do you think about Martha?"



Martha with Lee Weber and Tim Bracey, in the middle of a work session.

Doretha Ardoin/ Board Member

Martha will certainly be missed by the center, staff and members. Not only because of her physical absence but certainly the valuable amount of history she takes with her. Martha's job description could never be written.

Her knowledge of case after case from the beginning to unsolved and solved cases to the end is

something to be desired. So not only did we lose a good staff person we also lose a bit of history. We will all miss her sense of humor and certainly her style; but most of all the way she recalled details of each situation that she had any part of involvement in. Thank you, Martha and best of luck in your retirement to the Sunny South!

Lyonel LaGrone, Jr., MBA/ FHC's Former Investigations Coordinator

I am writing to express gratitude to Martha Moorehead for her 15 years of service to the Fair Housing Center of Greater Grand Rapids. I met Martha in 1997. From 1997 to 1999 I enjoyed a friendship as well as a professional relationship with her.

All of Martha's professional endeavors possess one consistent theme: affirmatively furthering Civil Rights.

As a White American, Martha has victoriously forged through all pre-existing social barriers by working to fight for Civil Rights even during a time when it was grossly unpopular for Whites to do so. Martha has been consistent, dedicated, passionate, enthusiastic and a pleasure to work with. I wish her well!

Erik Skinner/ FHC's Former Investigations Coordinator

What was it like working with Martha? She was excellent in dissecting a telephone call, and showing that she cared by steering callers in the right direction. I recall her coming to work

EVERY morning with a unique vegetarian dish, a big Zip-loc bag of sunflower seeds, and a water bottle. I looked forward to the daily discussions and her opinions on current events.

I remember Martha's love and concern for her children. She was well informed about what was going on in the Middle East. But most of all I remember a sweet person with a sense of humor that most individuals need to develop.

Congratulations on your retirement Martha. May God continue to bless you, take plenty of sun tan lotion, and enjoy the Florida sun!

Nancy Haynes/ Executive Director

Saying goodbye to Martha was probably the hardest thing that I have had to do in my almost six years as a Director of the FHC. Martha's commitment to the FHC and to social justice helped nurture and shape me as well as all of the other employees who have worked at the Center.

As we have grown and changed, Martha has helped us remain true to our mission. She has been our source for historical context.

Her continued, steady presence, served as a foundation upon which the FHC has been built. Pam Laschi, the Director of the Fair Housing in Southeast Michigan asked me if we planned to replace Martha. I laughed out loud as the question struck me as absurd. I could not fathom ever finding anyone with the combination of skills, knowledge, personality, humor, compassion, appetite and or expertise that Martha possesses. "No," I replied to Pam, "We will not be replacing Martha".

Fair Housing Updates

Capital Campaign

Thanks to the generous donation of Bank One, the FHC will have a new home in summer of 2006. The ink has dried on the legal documents and ownership of the former Bank One branch located at 20 Hall Street SE has transferred to the FHC.

Now the real work of collaborating with architects and contractors to design the new space and raising the funds necessary to complete the renovations begins.

Once complete, the new facility will offer increased capacity to deliver fair housing education and enforcement as well as increased visibility.

This prime location is easily accessible from anywhere in West Michigan and will include signage on the outside of the building. The new office will be more than three times larger than the current space and will include onsite parking. It will also include a "state of the art" meeting facility with capacity for over 45 people, making it possible for the FHC to offer fair housing training on site.

The FHC plans to approach area foundations, industry partners and individuals for support to make these plans a reality. Please contact the FHC for more details and/or to find out how you can help!



Our new building needs your support.
Help us grow!

FHC Case #05-101

An African/American woman called FHC with a complaint against a property owner. The claimant stated that she called the owner to inquire about an apartment. The owner told her that the rental rate would depend on the number of people living in the apartment. The claimant viewed the apartment and agreed to pay the rental rate requested by the owner. The owner later left her a message for her stating that he would not be able to rent the apartment to her, because of her two children. Testing conducted by FHC gathered evidence to support the claimant's allegation and in August 2005 the case was filed with HUD.

At the time of this publication, the claimant and respondent in this case were still working to conciliate with assistance from HUD.

2005 Membership Drive

Thank you and congratulations to everyone who has contributed to the FHC Membership Drive this year. You have helped us reach 90% of our goal.

The 2005 membership year is drawing to a close, however, and the FHC is still \$1,000 short of our 8,500 goal.

For those who have not yet joined, there is still time. Help us reach our goal by including us in your holiday giving. Tax season is quickly approaching, so keep in mind that your donation is tax deductible!



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