

## Texas African-American Museum honors historical markers in downtown Tyler for Juneteenth



By Zak Wellerman [zwellerman@tylerpaper.com](#) Jun 19, 2020 Updated Jul 28, 2020



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Smith County native Henry Miller Morgan founded the first barber college for African Americans on Erwin Street in Tyler in the early 1930s, which later added several branch locations across the country.

His grandson, Henry Pickett, of Nacogdoches, said Friday his grandfather passed on his work ethic to him.

"He taught people how to be caring and compassionate," Pickett said. "Although I was five when he died, I would sit in the barber chair and watch him run the business."

Because of his grandfather's lessons, Pickett said he will be graduating from Stephen F. Austin State University with a degree in health science.



Morgan's legacy was one of seven African-American markers within the Half Mile of History in downtown Tyler honored by the Texas African-American Museum Friday morning in celebration of Juneteenth, a holiday honoring the end of slavery in the United States.

Juneteenth is celebrated annually on June 19 as the day in 1865 when the news first arrived in Texas that the Civil War ended and that slaves were free.

Other African-American historical markers recognized were Willie Lee Campbell Glass, Texas College, Arthur Dooley Wilson, Willie Neal Johnson, Robert Taylor and Charles Evan Coleman.

TAAM Executive Director Gloria Washington said the museum was instrumental in having some of the seven markers added to the Half Mile of History.

"We are so proud here today to honor Juneteenth in Tyler, Texas," Washington said.

During the walk through downtown, Washington said it was a pleasure to honor the historical markers and encouraged people to visit the museum.

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In addition to discussing each person's marker, Office Pride Commercial Cleaning Co. of Tyler provided cleaning services for the seven markers on the Half Mile of History.

David Stein, owner of Office Pride in Tyler, said he loves being able to help the community with cleaning services.

"It's important to do stuff like this that actually makes a difference," Stein said. "All history is important. If you don't learn from it, you're doomed to repeat it."

Glass served as a teacher at Texas College for decades and was married to the college's president, Dr. D.R. Glass.

In 1950, she became the first African American to be named a consultant for the Texas Education Agency. During the civil rights movement, Glass advised the TEA and school districts as they navigated integration.

She was born into segregation and rose above several barriers to help African Americans.

Texas College was founded in 1894 to educate the children of former slaves and it now has several baccalaureate degree programs, according to the historical marker and the college's website.

TAAM Volunteer Coordinator Denise Pendleton, a Texas College alumni, said the college is continuing to grow and thrive.

Wilson was an actor in 20 films and played the character Sam in the 1942 film, Casablanca. He performed the film's theme song, "As Time Goes By."

Johnson was the founder and lead singer of The Gospel Keynotes, a musical group that won several awards and was inducted into both the Gospel Music and the American Gospel Quartet Hall of Fames.

Taylor, an Olympic medalist and American sprinter, earned a gold medal and silver medal in the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany.

Coleman was the first African-American licensed lawyer in Tyler. He provided free legal aid to his fellow citizens and mentor to his community. He also served in the U.S. Army.

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I came to the Tyler Morning Telegraph in September 2019. I report on crime, courts, breaking news and various events in Tyler and East Texas.

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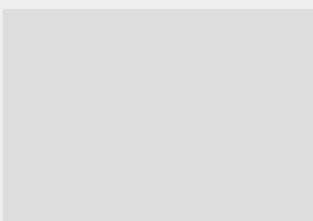
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