

HOMETOWN HERO AWARD 2016

June 25, 2015 —This hero played a major role in preparing for one of the largest events in history.

In the summer of 1964, hundreds of volunteers from across America convened in Mississippi to put an end to the system of rigid segregation. The civil rights workers and volunteers successfully challenged the denial by the state of Mississippi to keep Blacks from voting, getting a decent education, and holding elected offices.

As a result of the Freedom Summer of 1964, some of the barriers to voting have been eliminated and Mississippi has close to 1,000 Black state and local elected officials. In fact, Mississippi has more Black elected officials than any other state in the union. While the Freedom Summer of '64 made profound changes in the State of Mississippi and the country, much remains to be accomplished.

The Mississippi Freedom Summer 50th Anniversary Conference convened in Jackson, Mississippi to recognize the accomplishments of those who worked for changes to the politically segregated Mississippi and to discuss how to continue the struggle toward Mississippi reaching its full potential for all of its citizens.

Over 3,000 attendees resulted in an economic impact of approximately \$1.6 million dollars for the capitol city. Congratulations on a job well done, Hollis Watkins, and the Mississippi Freedom Summer 50th Anniversary Committee. You are a hometown hero.

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