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CITY OF DURHAM

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News Release

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Durham Hosts Human Relations Advocacy Awards April 4

Nominations Sought by March 5; Nomination Form Now Available Online

DURHAM, N.C. –The City of Durham Human Relations Commission is now [seeking nominations](#) of residents who have distinguished themselves by honoring the spirit of servant leadership in Durham.

In honor of National Fair Housing Month, the Human Relations Commission and the Human Relations Division of the City's Neighborhood Improvement Department are hosting the 2018 Human Relations Advocacy Awards on Wednesday, April 4 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Hayti Heritage Center, 804 Old Fayetteville St., Durham. This ceremony is free and open to the public.

This year's ceremony, which will be held on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will feature special presentations to celebrate his life followed by the issuance of awards to this year's honorees. A catered reception will conclude the event.

The four award categories are as follows and [nominations](#) are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, March 5:

- **Carlie B Sessoms Award:** presented to an individual or organization that has made a major impact on improving human relations. This award commemorates the contributions of the late Carlie B. Sessoms, a Durham native who served as chair of the Human Relations Commission and played a major role in improving human relations locally and nationally.
- **Fair Housing Advocacy Award:** recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding efforts in promoting fair housing with emphasis on the economic, social and/or political impact in the community which has encouraged diversity and housing opportunities for all.
- **Human Rights and Advocacy Awards:** presented to a local, state or federal lawmaker who has successfully supported or promoted human rights causes and issues.
- **Norris Wicker Youth Human Rights and Advocacy Award:** presented to an individual or group of individuals under the age of 18 for demonstrating an understanding of and commitment to the improvement and human relations. This award commemorates the contributions of the late Norris Wicker, a human relations commissioner, who lived a life dedicated to service, and empowering and supporting youth.

In addition to this ceremony in April, the Human Relations Commission will also sponsor the Uneven Ground display at City Hall in honor of National Fair Housing Month. Uneven Ground is a traveling public exhibition by [Bull City 150](#) that tells the story of the historical roots of current-day land and housing inequality in Durham, and hopes to spark dialogue to prevent a repeat of these mistakes and injustices of the past.

For more information about this annual ceremony or the Uneven Ground display, contact Human Relations Manager James E. Davis, Jr. with the City's Neighborhood Improvement Services Department Human Relations Division by [email](#) or at 919-560-4107, ext. 34277.

About the City of Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services Department Human Relations Division

The [Neighborhood Improvement Services Department](#) works to preserve and improve quality of life conditions for Durham residents, and to encourage active participation in neighborhood redevelopment and public policy and decision-making dialogue. The department's [Human Relations Division](#) strives to improve race and human relations in the City by working to eliminate housing discrimination and by prioritizing community outreach and educational activities to meet the needs of Durham's residents. The division is responsible for enforcement of the City's Fair Housing Ordinance and the federal Fair Housing Act. HUD provides funding annually for the division to investigate housing complaints that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (gender), religion, national origin, physical or mental handicap or familial status (families with children). The division also provides oversight to the City's [Human Relations Commission](#), which is comprised of residents who meet monthly to work on activities designed to improve human relations and promote harmony throughout Durham.

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