



News Release

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Durham Announces Human Relations Advocacy Award Winners

April 4 Ceremony is Free and Residents are Encouraged to Attend

DURHAM, N.C. –The Human Relations Commission will soon recognize four award winners who have distinguished themselves by contributing their time and talents to 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 of Durham 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., features special presentations to celebrate Dr. King's life followed by awards to this year's honorees:

- **Carlie B Sessoms Award:** will be presented to [Serena Sebring](#) with [Southerners on New Ground \(SONG\)](#). This award is for 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:** will be presented to [BullCity150](#). This 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:** will be presented to [Congressman G.K. Butterfield](#). This award recognizes 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:** will be presented to [INSIDEoUT180](#). This award is for 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.

The keynote speaker for this ceremony is Andrea "Muffin" Hudson, a champion for ending mass incarceration through her work with Durham's Participatory Defense, SpiritHouseNC, and All of Us or None. She also serves as the non-profit bail fund director at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice. The ceremony will also feature performances by Bull City Slam Team, the Triangle's regional and national competing poetry slam team.

For more information about this year's ceremony, 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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