

The writing of Canton's African-American History by a committee comprised of diverse, committed individuals was no easy task. We relied on historical information from various sources, including E.T. Heald's *The Stark County Story* and David Gerber's *Black Ohio and the Color Line* to supply documented historical information prior to 1950, with little mention of local African Americans.

There have been many first's, outstanding achievements and significant contributions were made by local African Americans to this community.

Our book includes histories of neighborhoods, personal stories, landmarks, legends and legacies, collections of folklore and essays. Information spanning a 65-year period from 1950 to 2015 was gathered from programs, booklets, website research, personal interviews and eyewitness accounts.

Our contributors wrote about their lives or someone from Canton who inspired them.... from the present or the past and about who they were, what they did and why.

Many citizens of Canton and Stark County may not recognize the contributions of local African Americans i.e.,

- **Esther Archer, the first black woman elected to Canton City Council and for the State of Ohio in 1947.**
- **Few have heard Dr. Norma Marcere's story. After gaining her teaching degree, she was informed by Canton superintendent, Jesse Mason, "I will never hire a colored teacher as long as I am superintendent of Canton City Schools. Go South!" Betty White, was treated with respect when she became Canton's first Black school teacher in 1952.**
- **Alan Page, Football Hall of Fame inductee and Minnesota Supreme Court Justice.**
- **Stephen Perry was the 17th Administrator for the US General Services Administration under President George W. Bush from 2001-2005. President & Executive Director of the Pro Football Hall of Fame 2006-2013**
- **Canton has Streets, parks, buildings and schools named after local African Americans.**
- **Canton Education Administration Building is named after Nadine for her work with the school system. She was also president of the school Board for 12 years.**

Much of local Black history is not mentioned in textbooks or mainstream media. Canton's history show legacies of treasures of African American contributions to our community. It was important to us to document, preserve and share these histories.

We had learned of the invention of the traffic light, the gas masks, medical discoveries,

And more. Black history, local & nationally is an integral part of American history. Has the knowledge of black history made a difference? Yes!

Nadine McIlwain Massey, principle author, complied, edited and coordinated this project, along with Gerry Radcliffe, and 48 other contributors. We gathered researched and authenticated stories of Canton's local African American history.