

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON EMPOWERMENT NETWORK, INC

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON'S GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER TO LAUNCH NONPROFIT, ATTEND INAUGURATION, ALL IN THE SPIRIT OF HER FAMILY LEGACY

"Tell them that the sacrifice was not in vain. Tell them that by way of the shop, the field, the skilled hand, habits of thrift and economy, by way of industrial school and college, we are coming. We are crawling up, working up, yea, bursting up. Often through oppression, unjust discrimination, and prejudice, but through them we are coming up, and with proper habits, intelligence, and property, there is no power on earth that can permanently stay our progress."

Booker T. Washington

(Excerpt from acceptance speech in 1896 upon receiving honorary master's degree from Harvard University.)

What a legacy! What a call at this time in American History!

As Americans pledge to make good on newly elected President Barack Obama's request to help him restore the country, at home in Northern California, great-granddaughter of Booker T. Washington, prepares to launch Booker T. Washington Empowerment Network, Inc. (BTWEN) as a nonprofit organization. BTWEN has been around for a while, but only recently recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 organization.

Then Sarah Washington O'Neal Rush is off to Washington, D.C., where she was invited to the Inauguration by first cousin, Congresswoman, Diane E. Watson. In addition to famous family members Watson and Washington, she is great niece to her namesake, Sarah Meriwether Nutter, a founder of AKA Sorority. Wow, what a legacy! She intends to follow in each of their footsteps of serving others.

Her Story

Rush only learned the significance of her family history as an adult. Attaining this information helped to dramatically change her life. Today, through speeches, writing, discussions, book readings, and interviews, she is on a crusade to help others change their lives, and discover their own extraordinary legacies. To demonstrate to her audiences that they can achieve anything, she shares her story of growing up in Oakland as an "at-risk" youth. She often parallels her story with her great-grandfather's story of rising above slavery to become a famous educator, the founder of Tuskegee University, and the first African-American invited to dine in the White House. Today, Rush is an author, and she has a master's degree in professional psychology.

Ralph Abernathy Descendant Joins Forces with Booker T. Descendant

Among BTWEN's extremely talented Board of Directors is Ron Abernathy, the nephew of the great civil rights leader, Ralph Abernathy. Abernathy was a champion of human rights in the 20th century, and Washington was a champion of human relations in the late 1800s, and early 1900s. What a great merging of minds evolving through their direct descendants in the 21st century.

BTWEN Mission

Espousing the teachings of Booker T. Washington on education, leadership, excellence, personal responsibility, and character building, BTWEN seeks to help disadvantaged youth and their families rise above difficult circumstances—empowering them to discover their own extraordinary legacies, and return to their communities creating positive change as leaders, mentors, and role models.

Future Plans

Joining hundreds of organizations around the nation named after Booker T. Washington, in the midst of tough economic times, BTWEN hopes to raise enough funds in 2009 to open the doors of the first Booker T. Washington Dream Center. There they will house life coaching, mentoring, workshops, outreach, and a "Drop-In" clinic for youth at-risk of dropping out, or who need help with exit exams, and writing college essays.

Rush says the invitation to the Inauguration is special not only because of the historical significance — but it also signifies how far not just African-Americans, but all Americans have come — from her great-grandfather's invitation as a guest in the White House, which caused tremendous uproar, to Obama's acceptance to become the honored host. Upon her return home she intends to be fully energized — ready to march full speed ahead on BTWEN's mission to help America prosper.

To make a tax-deductible donation in any amount to BTWEN, visit www.btwendreamcenter.com, or write a check to BTWEN, P.O. Box 3311, San Leandro, CA 94578.