



For Immediate Release

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Black farmers to gather at Carver High School in Haywood County to discuss heir property issues; pursuing economic development partnerships for generational wealth with BlueOval City project

Memphis, TN - Thomas Burrell, president of the Black Farmers & Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), will hosts a second meeting with Black farmers at 11 a.m. on Thursday, August 3, 2023, in Carver High School's gymnasium in Brownsville, Tenn., located at 705 E. Jefferson Street. The first meeting at Greater Fredonia Baptist Church attracted nearly 60 Black farmers in Mason, Tenn., on June 26.

"The purpose of the meeting in Brownsville is to encourage the Black farmers to come together and unify to discuss how we can solve the ongoing problems of heir property," commented Thomas Burrell, president of BFAA. "We must solve the problem of heir property first before benefitting in the economic development partnerships for hotels, restaurants, gas stations, warehouses, and office buildings near the \$5.6 billion-dollar BlueOval City project in Haywood County. The Black farmers who own thousands of acres of land need to incorporate. We will have attorneys present to answer your questions."

Burrell added he envisions creating wealth that will be passed down through generations of Black farmers. He is seeking to incorporate and establish a more powerful position of economic development. Rather than individual landowners selling land by the acre, Burrell is advocating for a partnership with BlueOval City.



Historical Grassroots

Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Inc. (BFAA) is a Memphis, Tennessee based non-profit organization established in 1997 by Thomas Burrell, an avid and passionate farmer from Covington, Tennessee. He was elected president of the association in 2001.

In 1981, Burrell ignited a movement with protests and sit-ins in his native home to address issues and concerns of Black farmers in the United States and abroad who were deliberately discriminated against by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). BFAA has an active membership of more than 20,000 African-American farmers, landowners and their heirs nationwide.

BFAA gained nationwide prominence after successfully launching a worldwide public and media awareness campaign in the historic (Pigford v. Glickman) 1999 class-action lawsuit against the USDA, alleging racial discrimination against Black farmers in its allocation of farm loans and assistance between 1981 and 1996. The lawsuit was settled on April 14, 1999 for almost \$1 billion. BFAA'S continuous goal is to ensure that every Black farmer receives appropriate compensation, including advocating that the USDA discontinues its practices of blatant racial discrimination against Black farmers.



PRESIDENT THOMAS BURRELL



Thomas Burrell was born on a farm in Covington, Tennessee in May of 1949. He fought for his country and served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War from 1969 to 1970. After being granted an honorable discharge in 1972, he earned a Business of Administration degree from the School of Business at the University of Michigan in 1975.

Burrell was one of the first Black farmers to publicly engage in a civil war against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1981. He gained overwhelming support from other Black farmers and staged weeks of protests, sit-ins and public rallies at a local USDA county office in his native home and other counties. The demonstrations sparked worldwide media attention and later evolved as the Black farmer's class-action racial discrimination lawsuit in 1997; the lawsuits provided over \$5 billion dollars in compensation to thousands of Black farmers and other minority farmers, including Native Americans, Hispanics, female farmers, and ranchers all over the country.

In 2001, Mr. Burrell was elected became the president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Inc. (BFAA) headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee. For the last four decades, he has been fighting for the rights of Black farmers, their heirs, administrators who are still being discriminated against by the USDA. He convinced his legal team in 2015 that the USDA's contractor (Epiq Systems) was violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — by not allowing African- American male claimants participation in a lawsuit filed on behalf of Hispanic men and women and African- American women. After several years of opposition by the USDA's attorneys, U. S. Department of Justice, and a panel of federal judges, the U. S. Court of Appeals in D. C., denied the government's motion to have the \$1.8 billion dollar case dismissed.

BISHOP DAVID A. HALL, SR. FARMER • PASTOR • AUTHOR



Bishop David Allen Hall, Sr. is surrounded by acres of soybean farmland with his two grandchildren, David Hall, III and Aiden Hall.

Bishop David A. Hall, Sr. is the chairman of the Ecumenical Action Committee, a local Memphis group of clergy supporting the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Inc. (BFAA) while the farmers wage a civil war for a billion dollar settlement of an historic discrimination lawsuit with the United States Department of Agriculture. He is also the president and board chairman of the International Trustee Group (ITG), LLC., which focuses on assisting Black farmers into a more substantial agricultural position with growing crops, training, financing, sales and marketing, and equipment purchases.

Bishop Hall has served as pastor of the historic Temple Church Of God In Christ in Memphis, Tennessee since 1991. The church was founded by COGIC Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, founder of the 6-million member Pentecostal denomination headquartered in Memphis. He is also a General Board member in the COGIC, and the Jurisdictional Prelate for the COGIC Tennessee Headquarters Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

Bishop Hall is an author of a critically acclaimed book, *Essays to the Next Generation*. A skilled musician, critical thinker and lecturer, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Butler University; a Master of Divinity from C.H. Mason Theological Seminary of the Interdenominational Theological Center; and a Doctorate in Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary. Married to Mary Portis Hall, MD, he has two sons in the ministry and three grandchildren.