Madison County Honors EHS Grad /Alton Resident Anita H. Banks With Living Legend Community Service Award

February 22 2021 10:30 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Madison County is honoring Alton resident Anita H. (Manns) Banks with its Living Legend Community Service Award.

Service to the church and community forms the foundation for Banks' actions. County Board member Michael “Doc” Holliday of Alton, nominated Banks for the award, and said that is the very reason he selected her.

“Mrs. Banks has been a stellar leader in the Alton community for many years,” Holliday said. “With her work and dedication to her church, and her church family, as well as several community organizations she is someone who can be counted on. "She believes in by giving back to the community."

Banks served as the chair on the Foster Grandparents Advisory Board, as a member of the Alton Chapter of NAACP executive committee, past state president of the Illinois Association of Club Women and Youth Affiliation and member of Reba Hill Civic Charity and Educational Club. Beside her service Banks has many hobbies, including her passion for cooking, which she enjoys sharing with others.

Banks says one thing she is most proud of is her service as employment counselor. Through the years she helped place people in a variety of industrial jobs in the county — Olin Corp., Shell Oil Co. (Wood River Refinery,) Laclede Steel Co. and Owen Glass Co. She said the last person she placed in a job recently retired from the Wood River Refinery in Roxana after 40 years of service.

Banks believes in a life of service — to her community and to her church. Her motto, “If I can help someone along the way, then my life will not be in vain.”

“Mrs. Banks life has been filled with purpose,” Holliday said. “She is someone that can be depended on to be supportive and in a place when and where she is supposed to be.”

The annual award is presented during the County Board’s February meeting in honor of Black History Month. Due to COVID-19 and the board continuing to hold meeting via remote, Holliday said he scheduled a time to present Banks with the award at her home.

After graduating from Edwardsville High School in 1954, Banks moved to Alton.Banks worked as a parent coordinator for Madison County Economic Opportunity Commission project Head Start, where she also served as employment counselor for 15 years; Alton School District culinary specialist for 12 years and nutrition specialist for 12 years before retiring.

Through the years she advanced her education by taking classes at Lewis and Clark Community College and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, by enrolling in refresher courses in human resource management. Banks is an active member of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. She serves as a member of the culinary committee, the Dan Gurdon Scholarship Committee, the Lonnie Calmese Banquet

Committee, church announcement clerk, condolence clerk and secretary for the Women’s Sunday School class.

Besides her busy church schedule, Banks advocates for the things in the region.