

Dr. Michael C. Threatt settles Federal Fair Housing Act Retaliation Lawsuit with Sylacauga Housing Authority in Alabama

Christ-led Fair Housing Hero created equal housing opportunities and implemented Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing mandates at Housing Authority in Alabama

DOTHAN, AL, UNITED STATES, February 8, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Michael C. Threatt made history by serving as the first African American Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Sylacauga Housing Authority (SHA), a public housing authority (PHA) in central Alabama, from 2017 until 2019.

Dr. Threatt and SHA have settled the federal Fair Housing Act retaliation lawsuit. They both go on record to recant any defamation of character said about each other.



2019 AAHRA Executive Director of the Year & Website of the Year Awards_Dr. Michael C. Threatt

Although it has been 55 years since Congress passed the Fair Housing Act public policy, seven days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., on April 11, 1968, there were three federal Fair Housing Act lawsuit settlements with three different PHAs in Alabama from 2020-2023.

Dr. Threatt is excited to see the recent announcement of HUD's [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing \(AFFH\) proposed rule](#) and the name changing from the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) to the Equity Plan. He is also excited to see how the White House's Memorandum on Redressing Our Nation's and the Federal Government's History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies will align with HUD's FY2022-2026 Strategic Plan language of advancing inclusive, equity-focused policies.

It is a perfect time to bridge the gap between evidence-based research and practice through John Kingdon's Multiple Streams theory. America has a "window of opportunity" to fix the broken promises of the Fair Housing Act by combining the streams of public policy (AFFH), politics (Congress), and problems (discriminatory housing practices) into one stream.

"It is a blessing to be vindicated as we recently celebrated the birthday and life of Dr. King a couple of weeks ago. I am reminded of one of my favorite quotes by the Courageous Civil Rights Leader, the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. My Christian values, beliefs, and spirit of love and forgiveness led to this positive conflict-resolution process. I am humbled and grateful to have my faith and strength, which have provided me wisdom as I attempted to make real the promises of the Fair Housing Act public policy," said Dr. Threatt.

"I want to thank my wife, Dr. Jennifer M. Threatt, who stood by my side during this daunting and challenging time. I would also like to thank my family, friends, and supporters who stood in the gap and prayed with and for me during the past four years. I would be remised if I did not thank the countless hours and support of my incredible and dynamic legal team, which consisted of Attorney Richard A. Rice, Attorney Roderick T. Cooks, and Attorney Lee Winston," Dr. Threatt added.

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It is time to Change the Narrative in Alabama and America to Fair Housing Today, Fair Housing Tomorrow, Fair Housing Forever”

Dr. Michael C. Threatt

Merit-based Awards
While at SHA, Dr. Threatt launched a rebranding campaign by creating a new logo, website, and social media platform. He also led the SHA's investment in technology by moving from paper to the cloud, implementing the C-Suite business model and evidence-based and best practices listed in his 2018-2019 "Our Evolution" Annual Scorecard. Additionally, he started preparing SHA to convert its entire portfolio to the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program.

Based on these accomplishments and the successful implementation of his "Housing Authority of Tomorrow" model, Dr. Threatt was awarded the 2019 Executive Director of the Year, and SHA

CEO Reflection 2018-2019

"If you can't figure out your purpose, figure out your passion. For your passion will lead you right into your purpose." - T.D. Jakes

As I reflect on our Evolution into becoming a "Leader in Rural Affordable Housing", over the past fiscal year, I cannot help but think about all the hard work that our devoted staff has done to re-establish the Sylacauga Housing Authority (SHA). During our Evolution, we realized that we were still operating under the centralized public housing model. After hiring a great team of talented individuals who are passionate about what they do, we implemented the mandated Asset Management Property (AMP) model correctly.

Our forensic audit created a "clean slate" for the new management team and our subsequent fiscal audit required the SHA to create a comprehensive corrective action plan. The "clean-up" felt like we went to our state capital to become chartered as a housing authority all over again. We also implemented checks and balances and added fiduciary controls so we could ensure we were wise stewards of federal funding.

In 2018, I attended my first Housing Assistance Council (HAC) conference where the theme was Capacity Building for Rural America. We decided to adopt a similar theme for our 2018 Board of Commissioners and Executive Staff retreat "Building Capacity" which reflected our goals and actions. Finally, as we continue to establish a high-performance organizational culture and become a premier provider of rural affordable housing, we will be prepared to LEAD by Example, MOTIVATE Others, INSPIRE Greatness as a "Leader in Rural Affordable Housing".

I am excited to share our Evolution Report of our results-oriented and performance-based accomplishments for FY18-19.

Michael C. Threatt
Chief Executive Officer

Executive Operations

LEAD by Example, **MOTIVATE** Others, **INSPIRE** Greatness

2020-2022 Strategic Plan / SHA Housing, Neighborhood and Demographic Study

Board of Commissioners

- Board Assessment & Enactment of Board Performance Enhancement Plan
- Recruit Board Commissioners with correct skill set
- Continue training for Board of Commissioners to understand SHA role

Establishing Nonprofit Affiliates

- Marble City Development Corporation
- Sylacauga Housing Authority Scholarship Foundation

CEO Leadership Recognition

- 2019 Leadership Sylacauga Graduate
- 2019 Rural Leader Magazine 40 under 40 (Top 4 of the 40 under 40)
- 2018 Inaugural Class of the 40 under 40 Central Alabama

Fiscal Operations

Financial Feasibility Assessment & Preparing for RAD PBRA Conversion

16 New Fiscal Policies, including policy for Procurement

Forensic & Fiscal Audits

- Implemented Comprehensive Corrective Action Plan
- Created and implemented Checks & Balances for effective fiduciary controls

Technology Upgrades:

- Cloud-based with remote desktop & Microsoft® 365 Pro
- Gov. Spending for Procurement/ E-Procurement
- MRI Next Generation Housing Software/Online Payments
- New Responsive Website/Staff Portal/Board Portal
- Verizon Business Digital Phone Service
- Spectrum Business Services for Internet/Wi-Fi

Section 3 Mandates and MWBE Compliance

- SHA New Hires as a Section 3 business
- Minority and Women Business (MWBE) Contracts
- Resident Engagement Workforce Training

Capital Fund Program Awards

2016	2017	2018	2019
\$739,374	\$752,580	\$1,162,885	\$1,127,916

Evolution Scorecard CEO Statement

was awarded the 2019 Website of the Year for the Alabama Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities (AAHRA).

On September 5, 2019, in Albany, Georgia, Dr. Threatt was awarded the Top 4 Winner for the Rural Leader Magazine 40 under 40 Edition for the states of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. As the CEO of SHA, he was honored for his work [to increase housing opportunities in rural Alabama](#). He was also a part of the Inaugural Class of Central Alabama's 40 under 40 Awardees in 2018.

Fair Housing Hero

While working at SHA, Dr. Threatt met with the Alabama Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) Office and the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama to learn best practices regarding creating equal housing opportunities under the Fair Housing Act and implementing AFFH mandates.

In April 2019, under his leadership, SHA hosted a Fair Housing Symposium, inviting all stakeholders to learn more about the Fair Housing Act. Attendees were given copies of "The Color of Law" book to better educate themselves on why PHAs are charged with analyzing the impediments to Fair Housing. He ensured that SHA complied with the Fair Housing Act by taking meaningful actions to foster inclusive communities and comply with the AFFH public policy.

Dr. Threatt also said, "Ironically, another favorite quote that comes to mind is from one of my Heroes and another Courageous Civil Rights Leader, fellow Alabamian, and United States Congressman, the late John Lewis. Congressman Lewis inspired the spirit of "Good Trouble" in me to have the moral courage to call out what is wrong and stand for what is right. His famous quote, "never ever be afraid to make some noise and get into Trouble, Good Trouble, Necessary Trouble, weighed heavy on my heart during the past four years."

Dr. Threatt hopes all PHAs in America start to implement Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, read the "Color of Law" book, and celebrate the Juneteenth holiday. "It is time to change the narrative in Alabama and America to Fair Housing Today, Fair Housing Tomorrow, Fair Housing Forever," he concludes.

Dr. Threatt obtained his Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) from West Chester University (WCU). He is a member of the following organizations and committees:

- National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB)
- National Fair Housing Alliance (NHFA)



Rural Leader Magazine Top 4 Winner 40 under 40

- Diversity Equity Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC) for the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO)
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated
- National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)
- National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, and disability.

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