

African American Families Who Once Fought to Save Their Collierville Land Sell It to Hardware Giant

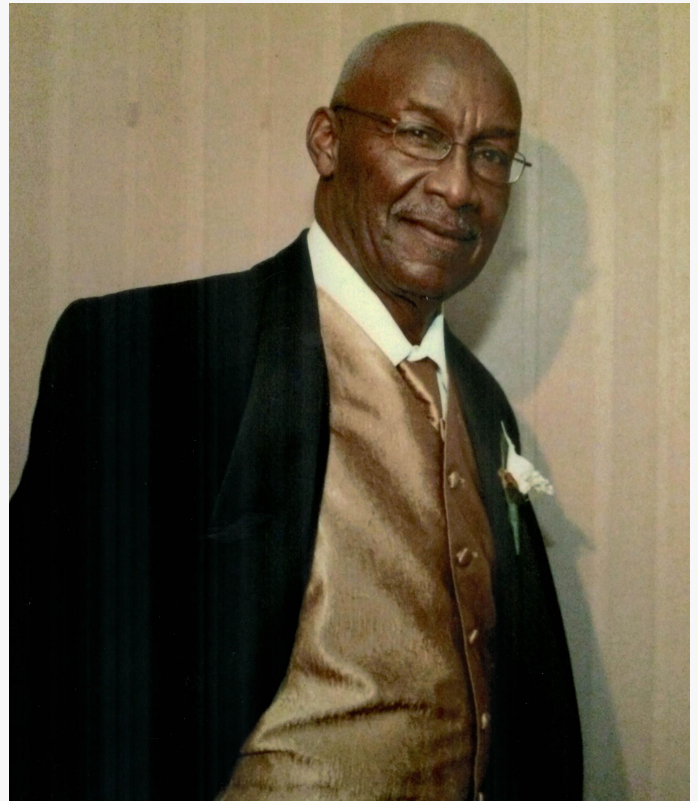
African Americans who boldly fought off eminent domain celebrate receiving fair market value for land that has been in their families for over 100 years.

COLLIERVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, April 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sunday, April 30, 2023, a group of more than 30 African American families, who owned land on Bailey Station Road in Collierville, TN, will celebrate the sale of the site to independent hardware distributor Orgill, Inc. These small farmers banded together for 23 years to stave off a ruling of eminent domain and acquire a fair market value sale. The land was in their families for over 100 years, and this multi-million-dollar sale of 48 acres will impact them for generations to come. The celebration to bid this historic site farewell begins at 3:30 p.m. at 4005 Bailey Station Road.

During the celebration, a press conference and short program with a balloon release will be held in honor of their ancestors. Many of the

elders who began this journey have passed away, including John "Bubba" Brown, a tenacious leader who was determined to fight to keep their land until it was bought for its true value. His brother, Thomas Brown, also a landowner and the current President of the Bailey Station Association II, LLC; Collierville Mayor, Stan Joyner; and the attorney who has represented the group and their families pro bono for the past 23 years, Vanecia Belser Kimbrow, Esq., are expected to make remarks, helping to commemorate this monumental win for the Town of Collierville and the families.

Theirs is a tale of tenacity and fortitude. The group was initially led by John "Bubba" Brown, a



John Brown initially led the group in the fight to keep their land. He passed in 2016 before his dream of seeing them receive a fair price was realized.

retired MLGW lineman. After his death, his brother, Thomas Brown, became head of the group. The Browns knew the value of their property and fought with the assistance of a young and empathetic real estate attorney, Vanecia Belser Kimbrow, Esq., who learned of the group's plight while watching a Saturday morning episode of WKNO's "Small Business Review," hosted by Earnest Lacey. Attorney Kimbrow reached out to Mr. Lacey to locate Mr. Brown, and with the blessing of her then-boss, Attorney Kevin Bruce, she diligently took the matter on and has represented the group for the past 23 years pro-bono. As their legal counsel, Attorney Kimbrow guided the group through the rough waters of a threatened public taking by the Town of Collierville during a time when public takings are all too common, and Cordova farmers had recently lost their land to make way for the Wolfchase Mall. She was able to halt the public takeover in 2000 by having the individual farmers invest their land into a cooperative association. Throughout the years, various entities tried to purchase the land with offers that didn't reflect its value, but the group and Attorney Kimbrow stood firm in their refusal to accept them. In April of 2023, Attorney Kimbrow finalized negotiations for a multi-million-dollar sale of the group's 48 acres to Orgill, Inc.



Thomas Brown led the group in the fight to receive a fair price for their land after his brother, John Brown, passed.

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Our ancestors worked hard to acquire this land, farm this land, and raise their families on this land. There was no way we could let anybody take it from us or sell it for less than what was fair.”

Thomas Brown, Landowner & President of the Bailey Station Association II

“We are grateful to Attorney Kimbrow for fighting with us all these years. Our ancestors worked hard to acquire this land, farm this land, and raise their families on this land. There was no way we could let anybody just take it from us or sell it for less than what was fair. I encourage other landowners who find themselves in this situation to do the same. Twenty-three years is a long time, and we're going to celebrate this accomplishment and celebrate our ancestors. I know they're proud of us,” said Thomas Brown.

Attorney Kimbrow has been practicing law for 23 years and opened her private practice, Belser Kimbrow Law, in 2000. “I became an attorney because I wanted to help people. When I saw the WKNO special with John Brown, I knew I had to do

something. I couldn't sit idly by and watch these wonderful families lose their land without proper compensation, especially to organizations that have access to millions of dollars. It's wrong and unjust. I was a spirited young attorney back then, and I thank the landowners for trusting me. I had no idea it would take this long, but the journey is finally over. These families deserve this happy conclusion, and I count this as one of the greatest accomplishments of my career," said Attorney Kimbrow.

The public is invited to come and share this historic moment with the families of Bailey Station Association II, LLC.

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Attorney Vanecia Belser Kimbrow worked with the group for 23 years pro bono.

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