

'Natchez Together: A Festival of Ideas' Celebrates Civil Rights, Community, and Visionary Leadership on April 5th

City sponsors free symposium dedicated to exploring the rich civil rights history and bright future of vibrant, diverse community.

NATCHEZ, MS, UNITED STATES, February 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Historic [City of Natchez](#) is proud to sponsor "[Natchez Together: A Festival of Ideas](#)", a free symposium dedicated to exploring the rich civil rights history and bright future of this vibrant and diverse community at the [Natchez Convention Center](#) from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday, April 5, 2025, with panels throughout the day. The symposium is set to be a transformative day of discussions, storytelling, and celebration bringing together historians, artists, civic leaders, and change makers to examine the legacy of race relations, the influence of faith, the power of storytelling, and the contributions of future leaders that are shaping Natchez today.

This year's event celebrates the life and legacy of Natchez native Marjorie "Marge" Rushing Baroni, (1924-1986) a trailblazer in the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1960s, Marge's fearless advocacy for equality and justice is an enduring source of inspiration for the community. The event will feature the unveiling of a trail marker at her family home, honoring her courage and dedication to human dignity. Her children and grandchildren, many of whom are actively participating in the event, continue to carry her legacy forward.



Natchez Together: *A Festival of Ideas*

*Symposium Celebrating
Civil Rights and
Visionary Leadership*

Free Admission • Limited Capacity

The symposium is to be held at the Natchez Convention Center and will be free to the public.



Civil Rights Trail Marker
Dedication

Marjorie Baroni (1924-1986)

A 1960's trailblazer
who worked tirelessly
to bridge divides and inspire
change in Natchez & beyond.

After the symposium, a ceremony will be held to honor Natchez native Marjorie Baroni (1924-1986) a trailblazer in the Civil Rights Movement.

“This dedication recognizes our mother’s unwavering commitment to human dignity and her courageous efforts to challenge injustice,” son, Philip Baroni remarks. “Our entire family is so grateful for this tribute.”

Natchez Mayor Dan M. Gibson reinforces that commenting, “Honoring Marjorie Baroni’s work is a reminder of the power of individuals to create lasting change.”



Alderwoman Hall is asking for RVSPs as seating will be limited for this event at the Natchez Convention Center.

“We are excited to welcome a diverse group of speakers and attendees to engage in meaningful conversations about equality, unity, and progress,” stated Natchez Alderwoman Valencia Hall, who is co-chairing the symposium with the Baroni family.

To help organizers get a headcount, the city is asking those interested in attending to please register at <https://natcheztogether.onenatchez.com>. While registration is encouraged, walk-ins are welcome and all are invited to come together to reflect, connect, and envision the future of Natchez.

Links to other attractions, events of interest, and overnight accommodations in Natchez are available on the Visit Natchez website at <https://visitnatchez.org>.

For questions or additional information, contact Alderwoman Hall by email at vhall@natchez.ms.us.

The festival will feature four engaging panels:

- Race Relations in the Past in Natchez – Moderated by Reverend John Scott, Jr., this panel includes community leaders who experienced and shaped the Civil Rights era in the city.
- Spiritual Influences on Race Then and Now – Moderated by Philip Baroni, this discussion highlights faith leaders from diverse traditions as they reflect on the moral imperative of justice.
- Storytelling through the Arts – Led by Luis Mirón, this session explores the intersection of art, history, and social change, featuring prominent artists, musicians, and writers.
- Voices of the Future – Moderated by Elise Baroni, this panel showcases the emerging leaders

committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The impressive lineup of panelists is set to include:

- Philip Baroni: As the third of Louis and Marjorie Baroni's six children, he is documenting his experiences from this pivotal era.
- Rose Ann Baroni Mirón: A child of Marge Baroni, Rose Ann is an arts advocate and former university administrator continuing her mother's legacy of activism.
- Elise Baroni: A granddaughter of Marge Baroni, Elise works as a public defender inspired by her grandmother's commitment to justice for the most vulnerable.
- Devi Mirón Murphy: A granddaughter of Marge Baroni, Devi is a Tulane faculty member and child psychologist actively engaged in antiracism efforts.
- Damian Baroni: A grandson of Marge Baroni, Damian is a former U.S. Marine pursuing a creative career as an artist and student.
- Annalisa Mirón: A granddaughter of Marge Baroni, Annalisa is a public defender with decades of experience advocating for marginalized communities.
- Dr. Lamar Braxton, Sr. (May 30, 1934 - Jan. 22, 2025) : A trailblazer in education and Civil Rights, instrumental in creating lasting community improvements.
- Tony Byrne: Former Mayor of Natchez who worked alongside Civil Rights leaders to promote justice and equality.
- Valencia Hall: The current Alderwoman for Ward 1 in Natchez, Valencia is an advocate for justice and rights for all people and is dedicated to advancing community well-being.
- Most Reverend Joseph R. Kopacz, D.D.: Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, a champion for social justice.
- Reverend Joan Gandy: Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Natchez, providing a spiritual lens on reconciliation.
- Beau Bumgardner: President of Temple B'Nai Israel, Mississippi's oldest Jewish congregation, and advocate for cultural unity.
- Reverend Clifton Marvel: Spiritual leader of two local Baptist churches, focused on faith and empowerment.

- Luis Mirón: Educator and activist inspired by Marge Baroni's legacy of social justice.
- YZ Ealey: Celebrated Blues musician and cultural icon of the Mississippi Delta.
- Stanley Nelson: Pulitzer Prize finalist and journalist investigating Civil Rights-era cold cases.
- Josie Camper: Co-founder of NAPAC and longtime advocate for preserving African American culture in Natchez.
- Chelsea Hall: Advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion with a focus on education and community improvement.
- Robbie Cade-Furdge: Entrepreneur and pastor leading multiple local businesses and community initiatives.
- Lamar Braxton, Jr.: Engineer and community facilitator fostering interracial dialogue.

ABOUT THE HISTORIC CITY OF NATCHEZ

Founded in 1716, The City of Natchez, Mississippi, an international tourist destination, prides itself on being the oldest city on the Mississippi River. Natchez is known for its creative cultural lifestyle. It is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all residents and celebrating the diversity of its rich and storied cultural heritage. The official city website is <https://natchez.ms.us>.

Valencia Hall, Alderwoman

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