

Profiles of Stewardship-Mrs. Ethel Washington

The 2020 Community Steward Award for Music is presented to Mrs. Ethel Washington. A resident of Blackville, SC, Mrs. Washington has served the community as advisor, treasurer, and “mother to the founders” of the Blackville Music & Arts Festival. The Music & Arts Festival has been in existence since 2011. The community festival began as a one-day event and has matured to provide Blackville with three days of Rock, Gospel, Hip Hop, R&B, and Southern Soul. The event provides opportunities for local vendors and allows the town of Blackville to become a tourist attraction during mid-May.

Mrs. Washington serves the community in multiple streams of volunteering and has been an advocate in the area for over thirty-five years. She is the President of the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church Gospel Choir. She serves as the Vice President of the Blackville Planning and Zoning Board and also serves as the Vice Chair for the Axis 1 Center of Barnwell. Her arts advocacy includes Phoenix Rising. Under the umbrella of the SC Arts Commission’s Art of Community: Rural SC initiative, Phoenix Rising sponsored the Blackville Downtown mural and the sidewalk art, “Blackville Is...”

Mrs. Washington is a graduate of Blackville-Hilda High School and furthered her education at Denmark Technical College. A co-founder of the Blackville Community Development Corporation (BCDC), she has been recognized by the Big 7 Association and the Together Sister Club for Outstanding Leadership. An active member of the Blackville Downtown Development Association, she launched Blackville Winter Wonderland which debuted during the winter holiday season in 2019. She received a Certificate of Achievement for Leadership from the University of South Carolina Salkehatchie Leadership Center in Allendale, SC.

Mrs. Washington remains passionate about her work with the Blackville Music & Arts Festival committee. She spends countless hours in search of art and artists that will provide attendees with arts and culture that reflect, educate, and entertain all sectors of the Blackville community. She continues her music and arts training through workshops and conferences sponsored by the SC Arts Commission. She represents the town of Blackville and Barnwell County statewide as an arts advocate to numerous organizations including Rural LISC, SC Arts Alliance, the National Alliance of State Arts Agencies, Artplace America, and Art of the Rural. It is for these and other related efforts to entertain, impact, and involve the entire community, that Mrs. Ethel Washington is awarded the 2020 Community Steward Award for Music.