

Warner Robins Hybrid American Government Class Welcomes Warner Robins Warriors by Dr. Grace Adams-Square



In compliance with USG list of "Foundational Documents" that should be taught in American Government survey courses specifically, define civil rights outlined in both the U.S. and Georgia constitutions and their amendments. Students enrolled in Dr. Grace Adams-Square, Assistant Professor of Political Science Hybrid American Government class in Warner Robins, began the first weeks of the Fall 2025, semester engaged in research and developed reports on civil rights from the federal and state level. The activity culminated with inviting members of the local Warner Robins community to share their perspectives on civil rights in the local community. The concept of launching this activity began in February 2025, when Dr. Adams-Square was asked by Commissioner Dan Perdue, Chair of the Houston County Board of Commissioners to speak before the Commissioners for 15 minutes during Black History month. After conducting extensive research Dr. Adams-Square discovered such a rich history of Black culture in Warner Robins, Georgia and realized that 15 minutes was not adequate time of exploring the Black

experience in Warner Robins. Decisively, several prominent members of the Warner Robins Black community were invited to speak with the students and tell their story. Identified below are brief excerpts of each speaker:

MGA Lecturer Ebonie Fraser spoke to the students in a dual capacity as a sociologist describing the intricacies of race and as a citizen who grew up in Warner Robins.

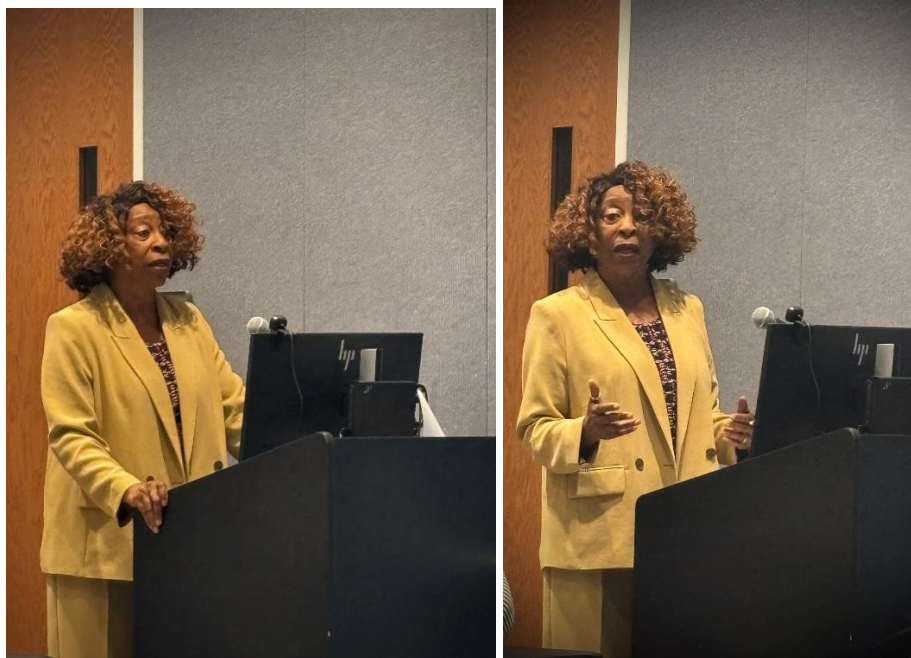


Mrs. Barbara Harris shared her experiences interacting with Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. The dangers she encountered while protesting include tear gas, water hosed and going to jail. Mrs. Harris shared a book and circulated it among the students



entitled, *“Houston County’s Critical Race Truth: A Tale of Two Citizens; Silenced History of the Freedom Movement-Black Women on the Front Lines-Untold Stories of the Civil Rights Movement”* by Lavoris Gail Alexander. Mrs. Harris was adamant that she wanted students to understand the discriminatory practices that youth living in Warner Robins in the 1960’s endured. Including that on April 9, 1965, parents of 53 Black students filed a desegregation suit against the Houston County Board of Education in Federal Court and on April 30, 1965, the Houston County Board of Education filed its answer denying most of the charges (Alexander, 1976)

Jeanette Allen McElhaney was one of the speakers and a contributor to the Alexander book, a compilation of interviews spanning over 500 pages. McElhaney protested and subsequently went to prison, not jail she emphasized. Yet her passionate message to the students was to vote. The importance of not only registering to vote but engaging in voting.



Houston Porter echoed the same message to students to vote. Porter also discussed the need for collaboration and coalition building. He shared having been elected as the first Black to be elected to the Houston County Commission in 1980.



Oscar Thomie shared that his upbringing was centered around his parents who were members of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.). The dangers his parents endured to ensure the family's safety as NAACP membership placed a target on your back. Understanding the importance of speaking out and advocating for others appealing to local government to pave dirt roads, all of which has compelled Thomie to be a lifetime member of the NAACP.





Fenika Miller, a graduate of Fort Valley State University with a degree in Political Science and an MBA from Wesleyan College as well as a Leadership Robins alumna and the innovator of Succeed CoWork Houston County's first coworking community and entrepreneurial incubator for women. Miller challenged the students to speak out and not take a passive voice. That change only happens when you take action.

Rutha Jackson

Rev. Dr. Rutha M. Jackson is an activist on the frontline. Jackson started her activism at age 16 at the height of the Civil Rights Movement in Houston County. This local trailblazer is actively engaged in protests and plans to combat injustice for families victimized by overzealous police officers. Onward with civil rights, she collaborated and led Marches in Houston County against police brutality in honor of George Floyd's abusive death. As President of NAACP, advocated for more change in policing and training of officers in Houston County. She was instrumental in helping to pass the Parental Parent Paid Leave Policy for the City of Warner Robins. --Compiled by Zora McKissic. Her message to the students was education. Stay in school as long as you can, that will enable you to make positive decisions.





The students and faculty wish to say thank you to each presenter for bringing such in-depth knowledge and lived experiences into the classroom. A rich history of local Warner Robins Warriors who were willing to take risks for a better society and boldness to share their story with the next generation.

As for the American Government students there is much appreciation to those students who volunteered to assist with the program on Thurs, September 5, 2025.

Beginning with Alexia McNeal who provided us with these outstanding pictures. Students checked in the guest speakers, passed out programs, served as timekeepers and assisted people to the stage: Laura Herra, Mehya Kassom, and Rayna Liz Bowling, Josiah Langston, Hannah Dickerson and Diademina Hostetler.

Last here is a quote from Paul Robeson, used in the book mentioned above,

“The lesson of life is the journey itself which includes the people you meet along the way; the things you have learned; things you have heard; things you have touched and been touched by. No matter what you leave, no matter the legacy, or who proceeds you, in the final analysis, every generation will have to be responsible for itself” (Alexander, 1976, p. 547).