

Senator Lincoln, Cong. Berry to speak at 'Hoxie 21' reunion

The "Hoxie 21" Reunion steering committee has met to finalize plans for the Labor Day weekend event in Hoxie and Walnut Ridge. "Hoxie 21" refers to the 21 African-American students who successfully integrated into the Hoxie School system in 1955.

It was the first challenged desegregation following the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, and the reunion will commemorate the event and the courage of those individuals involved.

Fayth Hill Washington of Memphis, one of the "Hoxie 21" and chairperson for the reunion, announced the following events:

The first activity will be held on the lawn of the Lawrence County Courthouse on Saturday beginning with a program at 11 a.m. The keynote speaker will be U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln.

A free picnic lunch will be served following the program at 12:30 p.m. The program and lunch are open to the public.

An official ceremony honoring the "Hoxie 21" will be held on Saturday evening at the Hoxie School cafeteria with Congressman Marion Berry giving the keynote address.

The closing event of the weekend will be on Sunday at Crider Field on the Hoxie School campus. The event, also open to the public, will begin at 2 p.m. and will feature State Sen. Tracy Steele, director of the Martin Luther King Commission. The culmination of the weekend activities will be a balloon release led by Linda S. White of the "Hoxie 21" Reunion steering committee.

Many other state leaders in government and education are planning to attend.



Hoxie School alumni Ethel Tompkins (left) and Fayth Hill Washington of Memphis reminisce while looking at a Hoxie School yearbook. The two women are part of the "Hoxie 21" African-Americans who integrated into the school in 1955. A reunion set for this weekend will reunite and honor members of the "Hoxie 21."

Digital image by Sherry Moore