

The Texas State Historical Association

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December 16, 1996

Mr. Clay Johnson
Director of Appointments
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This letter is to recommend that Mrs. Willie Lee Gay be re-appointed to the Texas Historical Commission. As you no doubt know, Mrs. Gay is the first African American to serve on the Commission. She is also probably the first secondary teacher of history to be a member of that board. Under her tenure at the Commission, the THC has established valuable links to those two segments of the Texas population.

I met Willie Lee Gay almost twenty years ago when I became the Director of Educational Services at the Texas State Historical Association. At that time Mrs. Gay was the very active sponsor of the Junior Historian chapter at Carter G. Woodson Middle School, which is located in the inner city of Houston. Under Willie Lee's guidance the chapter at Woodson excelled in all aspects of our program. A number of her students researched and wrote essays on prominent African American Texans—including John W. Biggers and Christia V. Adair. A number of those student essays were published in the *Texas Historian*, the publication of the Junior Historians of Texas. Other chapter members researched and produced slide/tape shows on African American contributions to our Texas heritage. When Mrs. Gay retired from teaching in 1986, a number of her present and former students raised money to endow the Willie Lee Gay Endowment Fund through the TSHA to recognize and award students who researched and produced essays, media presentations, and dramatic performances on African Americans in Texas. Since that time scores of junior and senior high school students from all over Texas have received cash prizes for researching a neglected area of our state's past.

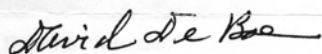
Since retirement Mrs. Gay has continued to serve as a resource person for the educational programs of the Texas State Historical Association. In 1993 she made a presentation at our History Awareness Workshop for secondary teachers on the teaching resources available from the Texas Historical Commission. Recently she talked to me about launching a campaign whereby Junior Historians and other students could collect money to help preserve La Salle's ship, much as students did several generations ago to help raise "Old Ironsides."

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In toto, Mrs. Gay is an educator and a historian who has established vital links between the Texas Historical Commission and two important segments the THC needs to reach--the African American community and the Texas history teacher. Her re-appointment will assure that those links are strengthened in the years to come.

Sincerely yours,



David De Boe
Director of Educational Services

I am pleased to recommend that Mrs. Willie Lee Gay be re-appointed to the Texas Historical Commission. Mrs. Gay is the first African American to serve on the Commission. She is also probably the first secondary teacher of history to be a member of that board. Under her tenure at the Commission, the THC has established relationships to diverse segments of the Texas population.

I met Willie Lee Gay almost twenty years ago when I became the Director of Educational Services at the Texas State Historical Association. At that time Mrs. Gay was the very active spouse of the Junior Historian chapter at Carter O. Woodson Middle School, which is located in the inner city of Houston. Under Willie Lee's guidance the chapter's members excelled in all aspects of our program. A number of her students researched and wrote essays on prominent African American Texans--including John W. Biggers and Christa V. Adair. A number of those student essays were published in the Texas Historical Commission's publication of the Junior Historians of Texas. Other chapter members researched and produced slide tape shows on African American contributions to the Texas heritage. Willie Lee Gay retired from teaching in 1986, a number of her present and former students raised money to under the Willie Lee Gay Endowment Fund through an effort in which they researched, wrote, and produced essays, audio recordings, and dramatic performances on African Americans in Texas. Over the years essays of junior and senior high school students from all over Texas have received cash prizes for researching a neglected area of our state's past.

Since retirement Mrs. Gay has continued to serve as a resource person for the educational programs of the Texas State Historical Association. In 1991 she made a presentation at our History Awareness Workshop for secondary teachers on the teaching resources available from the Texas Historical Commission. During that time she talked to me about launching a workshop whereby Junior Historians and other students could collect money to help preserve a site of historic importance, such as students did several generations ago to help raise "Old Ironsides."