

Roscoe Reporting

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The Journey to the Anne Moody Memorial Highway

My Talk at the Highway Dedication

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#AnneMoody

#AnneMoodyHighway



Highway 24, Centreville, Miss.

NOTE: This talk was presented at the dedication of the Anne Moody Memorial Highway. The event, which was held by the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), took place at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019, at the Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church, Highway 24,

Centreville, Miss. More than 200 people attended the historic event, including 70-plus students from the Wilkinson County High School. I was one of three speakers. We were given three minutes each.

Good morning,

I greet you today on behalf of Warden Scott Middlebrooks and the Wilkinson County Correctional Facility.

I want to speak for a couple of minutes about the journey involved with today's honor. In doing this, I want to look at some of the things that brought us to where we are.

Some of you may be surprised to know that the idea for the Anne Moody Memorial Highway originated in a prison. Specifically, the dream of naming a portion of Highway 24 in Anne Moody's honor was birthed inside the Wilkinson County Correctional Facility. The facility is privately managed by the Management & Training Corporation or MTC of Utah.

It all started in the spring of 2017 when I walked in on a conversation between my colleagues, Ms. Emma Taplin and Ms. Lavern Taylor. They were talking about Anne Moody's contributions to the civil rights movement and her sacrifices in the fight for freedom and justice for all people. They also noted, with serious concern -- and apparent sadness -- that she had not received the recognition she deserved.

Then, almost in unison, they said, "We need to do something. We need to do our part in honoring her legacy. We need to tell people about her story."

We later spoke to our colleague, Ms. Ruby Dixon, and she agreed that we must act. After some brainstorming, we created the Anne Moody History Project as a community service endeavor to promote and help preserve the legacy of this civil rights pioneer. We agreed that our mission would be to keep her legacy alive.

AT THIS TIME, I WOULD ASK THE MEMBERS OF THE ANNE MOODY HISTORY PROJECT TO STAND.

While we were certainly committed and quite ambitious in our efforts, we did not work in isolation. In fact, I can say without hesitation that some of our plans would have fallen short without the support of our elected officials and government agencies. For this reason, I want to acknowledge the support we received.

We are grateful to the Centreville Board of Aldermen for approving, unanimously, our request for a Proclamation for Anne Moody Day on September 15, and for the resolution to rename Fort Street, "Anne Moody Street."

We are grateful to the Wilkinson County Board of Supervisors for approving our request for a resolution authorizing the state to name a portion of Highway 24 in Moody's honor.

We offer thanks to Rep. Angela Cockerham, Gov. Phil Bryant, Commissioner Tom King and the Mississippi Department of Transportation for making this dream a reality.

And last, but not least, we express our sincere appreciation to the family of Anne Moody for their support and encouragement.

As I close, I want to make two requests:

First, if you haven't already, I want to ask you to read *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. Reading this book can be a life-changing experience.

Second, if you have a phone, I want to ask you to take a few photos of today's event. Don't be shy. Take a few selfies, and then share them on social media. Please include photos of this beautiful art work created by the men incarcerated at our facility.

This, I believe, will help tell Moody's story and keep her legacy alive.

Thank you.

For more information:

See the **Anne Moody page** here: <https://roscoereporting.blogspot.com/p/anne-moody.html>
Questions about the Anne Moody History Project may be directed to **Roscoe Barnes III Ph.D.** (<https://www.roscoebarnes.net/>) via email at doctorbarnes3@gmail.com or roscoebarnes3@yahoo.com For updates on Anne Moody history and the on-going work of this community service project, simply follow this blog or **follow AMHP on Twitter (@AnneMoodyHP)**. #ComingOfAgeinMississippi