



CELEBRATING INTEGRATION:

Rooted in History, Rising toward Justice







Tonight's Program

Drinks & Hors d'oeuvres

Dinner

Welcome by Board of Trustees Chair Anita Gundanna

Special tribute to Carol Barry-Austin by Mila Jasey

Presentation of Award to Audrey Rowe by Executive Director Nancy Gagnier

Live Auction with Vic DeLuca

Dancing to Music by Essex Funk Collective









October 16, 2025

Welcome to Celebrating Integration: Rooted in History, Rising Toward Justice

This year, we honor retired Program Director Audrey Rowe and remember the work of founding trustee Carol Barry-Austin. Both women dedicated countless hours, talent, and wisdom to the success and longevity of the Community Coalition on Race. Steadfast in their commitment to our mission, they were also open to new ways of achieving our goals. Most importantly, they brought people to the table—and brought people together—to do this hard and essential work.

We face challenging times in our ongoing effort to create a racially integrated, inclusive, and equitable community. Despite the attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion—and the threats to nonprofits doing this work—our board, staff, volunteers, and community partners step up every day to keep our community moving forward on the path toward racial equity.

Here are just some of the ways we've advanced our mission this year through advocacy, relationship-building, and learning:

- Annual Juneteenth Celebration (co-hosted with Durand-Hedden House & Garden)
- Conversations on Race: Confronting the Backlash Against Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- · Schools Committee advocacy for the Intentional Integration Initiative
- Deconstructing Racism Workshops
- Roadmap to Homeownership Workshop
- Education Forum: How All Students Benefit from Integrated Schools
- SOMA Neighbors Connect Event
- Expansion of two Wealth Gap Equalizer Loans to \$15,000
- 24th Annual Dr. King Observance, Volunteer Fair & Luminary Project
- Black History Month with Durand-Hedden: Dr. Hettie Williams on the Critical Roles of Black Women in NJ Civil Rights
- Women's History Month: Highlighting the Life & Legacy of Sen. Wynona Lipman
- · Integrated Art Circles featuring dance, mosaics, murals, and opera

We are deeply grateful for your financial support, volunteer time, participation, and advocacy on behalf of the mission. Together, we continue to build and sustain a community rooted in justice and inclusion.

With appreciation,

Anita Gundanna, Chair of the Board of Trustees Nancy Gagnier, Executive Director

SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE Municipal Offices 76 South Orange Ave

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

scollum@southorange.org P 973.378.7715 ext 2 www.southorange.org P 973.378.7890 F 973.761.4357

Sheena C. Collum Mayor



October 16, 2025

To the Staff, Board, Volunteers, and Supporters of the South Orange and Maplewood Community Coalition on Race,

For nearly three decades, the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race has stood as a national model for intentional integration, racial equity, and courageous community building. Through your programs that foster belonging in our schools, equitable housing, civic engagement, and youth leadership, you continue to prove that progress is possible when we work side by side — across race, class, and difference — to build a community where everybody belongs.

As Mayor, I think every day about our residents — especially our young people — who are struggling to make sense of a world that can feel increasingly divided and cruel. I worry about their hope, their faith in humanity, and their belief that communities can still come together to do good. And then I look at the Coalition's work — your commitment, your courage, your love — and I'm reminded that decency, empathy, and collective action are still very much alive here in SOMA.

Tonight's honorees embody those values. Audrey Rowe, your visionary leadership has made the Coalition's mission a living reality in our towns. And to the family and friends of Carol Barry-Austin — we miss her deeply. Her legacy lives on in the way we advocate, organize, and speak truth to power. Carol showed us what it means to live our values out loud.

There is much work ahead, but for tonight, enjoy this well-deserved celebration and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sheena Collum

Sheena Collum

Mayor

TOWNSHIP OF MAPLEWOOD

ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



Dear Community Coalition on Race:

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to once again thank you and the many dedicated volunteers of the Community Coalition for your tireless work over the years. Your consistent vision and leadership have strengthened our community and advanced the Coalition's important mission.

The Coalition's work has deeply shaped Maplewood and South Orange, creating connections that extend into every neighborhood and school. Because of your efforts, our children grow up in an environment where diversity is not only present but celebrated-where they learn that while we may differ on the outside, we share the same humanity within. This daily experience of empathy, equity, and belonging is both a reflection of our history and a guide toward a more just future. It perfectly embodies this year's gala theme: Celebrating Integration: Rooted in History, Rising Toward Justice.

For this year's gala, I am delighted to extend heartfelt congratulations and deep gratitude—on behalf of my colleagues on the Maplewood Township Committee, Deputy Mayor Malia Herman, and Committee Members Victor De Luca, Deborah Engel, and Dean Dafis-to this year's honoree, Audrey Rowe, with a special tribute to Carol Barry Austin.

As Program Director, Audrey dedicated her career to creating programs that advanced the Coalition's mission and empowered volunteers to carry them forward. She worked with residents, leaders, and organizations across Maplewood & South Orange to make racial integration, equity, and inclusion a reality. From Integration through the Arts to Conversations on Race and the annual Dr. King Observance, Audrey's vision and commitment have touched countless lives and left a lasting impact on our community.

We join you in your tribute to Carol Barry-Austin, a founding trustee of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, who devoted nearly three decades to shaping the organization through her vision, leadership, and mentorship. She guided trustees, Executive Directors, and volunteers with wisdom and passion, always urging others to bring their best to the cause of racial equity—especially within our schools. Her dedication, advocacy, and friendship left a lasting mark on the Coalition and on the lives of countless people in our community. She is deeply missed.

Thank you to the Community Coalition for all you do to strengthen our community, and for honoring these two remarkable residents whose contributions have enriched our towns in so many ways.

Warmly,

any J. adams Mayor Nancy J Adams Township of Maplewood

Audrey Rowe

Audrey Rowe recently retired as Program Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, where for more than twenty years she worked with neighbors, civic leaders, youth, the local school district, faith leaders, activists, and government officials to make racial integration, equity, and inclusion a reality in Maplewood, South Orange, and beyond.



Raised in Missouri, Audrey earned a Bachelor of Medical Science degree in Pre-Med from the University of Missouri, a Master of Arts in Speech Pathology and Audiology from Kent State University, and pursued MBA studies at Duke University, the University of Houston, and NYU. Her varied academic background led to a seventeen-year career with AT&T Communications before she launched her own cosmetics business.

As Program Director, Audrey developed signature initiatives like Integration through the Arts, organized and supported Conversations on Race and Coffee House Discussions, led anti-racism/anti-bias workshops and trainings, and trained facilitators for dialogues about race, and was instrumental in the design and success of the Coalition's long-running Dr. King Observance & Volunteer Fair. Plus, she represented the Coalition on public platforms including ABC's Here and Now, the Brian Lehrer Show, and The Face of America podcast series.

Her deep commitment to community extends beyond her professional work. Audrey has served on the boards of local organizations such as the South Orange—Maplewood Adult School, as an elder and deacon at Prospect Presbyterian Church, and on numerous community planning committees.

Audrey finds joy in dancing to soul and R&B music and in lifelong learning through books, audio programs, and meaningful conversation. She lives in Maplewood with her husband, Abdul Alim Mubarak (Ronald) Rowe. They are the proud parents of two daughters, Solana Rowe (SZA) of Los Angeles and Panya Rowe of Richardson, Texas, and grandparents to Savannah Rowe, also of Los Angeles.



Remembering Carol Barry-Austin

Carol Barry-Austin was a founding trustee whose unwavering leadership, drive, and commitment over the past 28 years shaped and built the organization we are today. Her mentorship of trustees, executive directors, and volunteers profoundly influenced the Coalition's trajectory, ensuring its positive growth and impact. She touched countless lives, and her unwavering commitment to racial equity and inclusion remains her enduring legacy.



Carol served as Chair of the Community Coalition on Race from 2006 to 2008, on the Executive Committee for multiple years, and she chaired the Nominating and co-chaired the Schools Committees. On the Schools Committee, Carol spearheaded critical discussions on the Academic Achievement Gap, including the Aim High! Focus on the Minority Achievement Gap Program, which earned the 2007 "Exemplary Program Award for School Partnerships" from the New Jersey Association of Partners in Education and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators.

Carol was a staunch advocate for equity in the school district, championing reduced academic tracking, school and classroom integration, support for students of color, and advocacy for building a successful, diverse teaching staff. She introduced programs like Talking to Children About Race, helping parents and teachers understand racial development stages and navigate conversations about race with young learners. Her efforts contributed to the Coalition receiving awards from organizations like the South Orange Civic Organization, American Psychological Association, and Leadership NJ, and the townships of South Orange and Maplewood, as well as recognition in publications such as The New York Times and The Star-Ledger.

Carol's commitment extended to other local organizations, including the Columbia High School Scholarship Fund, South Orange Civic Organization, Tuxedo Park Neighborhood Association, and the South Orange Maplewood Awareness Committee. She also served as PTA/HSA President for several schools and led the PTA/HSA Presidents' Council. Her contributions earned her numerous accolades, such as the Beloved Community Award, the Citizenship Award from the Rotary Club of Maplewood, and the South Orange Villager of the Month Award.

A South Orange resident of 46 years, Carol, who cherished her family, lived with her husband Clarence, raised three children, and took great joy in her role as a grandmother. Carol often concluded reflections about herself with these words: "I am proud to be a part of a community that values integration and diversity."



Our Mission, Vision, Beliefs, and Goals Mission

To build and sustain a community that is racially, culturally and socially integrated and truly inclusive, where there is equity and equality for all.

Vision

We aspire to be a community that is a model for the nation in which people of different races, ethnic groups and backgrounds can interact, form friendships and participate fully in the community's economic, political, civic, educational and cultural life.

We believe that:

- Honest dialogue between racial groups without the constraints of fear is essential to building meaningful relationships within our organization and in our community and in our world.
- Racial integration, true inclusion, and racially sensitive communities of faith will ultimately benefit the entire community in all areas that contribute to quality of life, including schools, housing values, civic life, business, and government.
- Our efforts to achieve a racially integrated and truly inclusive community need to be both intentional and clear in language and actions.
- The benefits of a racially integrated and truly inclusive community cannot be attained without taking risks and positions that may challenge existing ideas.

Our goals are:

- Our schools are racially integrated and have closed the achievement gap.
- Students of all races are achieving academic excellence in an equitable and representative fashion throughout our public school system.
- All neighborhoods are racially integrated and truly inclusive in Maplewood and South Orange.
- Government, civic, and business organizations in both towns are racially representative and have embraced racial integration and inclusion as a civic value.
- It is common throughout the community to see people of all races socializing together in public and in private.
- All of this is accomplished while property values in all neighborhoods continue at optimal levels for the current market conditions.
- The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race model is instrumental in building racially integrated and truly inclusive communities throughout the nation, and other communities ask the Coalition for consultation and guidance.

Become one of the many volunteers who make the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race work!

Work with a diverse group of your neighbors, be active in community life, and use your talent in support of racial integration and inclusion.

Schools This group works to ensure that students of all races are expected and encouraged to excel in a community that is proud and supportive of our schools. It focuses on eliminating the minority academic achievement gap, promoting parental involvement, providing resources, information, and training to teachers and parents, and advocating for diversity hiring and integrated schools and classrooms.

Community Engagement Bringing the community together to learn, to build relationships across racial and cultural barriers, and to celebrate differences is the focus of this mission area. Volunteers are active in one or more events and projects like the annual Dr. King Observance, the Luminary Project, Conversations on Race, Deconstructing Racism Workshop Series, Black History programs, the Juneteenth Celebration in collaboration with Durand-Hedden House & Garden, Integration through the Arts programs, Coffee House Discussions, and more.

Marketing Communications Promoting the welcoming and inclusive nature of our towns to potential home buyers, and raising local, regional, and national awareness for the Community Coalition on Race's mission and programs are the goals of this group. Volunteers identify target audiences and publications for placing promotional ads, develop stories, oversee our website and social media marketing, and support Coalition events with outbound communications.

Residential Using pro-integrative strategies to support stable racial integration in our towns' neighborhoods, this group works with realtors, does targeted outreach to prospective home-buyers, hosts a Neighborhood Summit, and oversees the Wealth Gap Equalizer Loan in support of integrated neighborhoods.

Demographics Research This committee identifies baseline data and methods for assessing the state of stable integration in various areas of the community, including residential and school integration. It also assesses racial representation on boards, committees, and staff of public entities and it monitors home sales activity, rental activity, and housing prices.

Visit our Volunteer page at CommunityCoalitionOnRace.org

Get social with us!









SETON HALL UNIVERSITY IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE SOUTH ORANGE/ MAPLEWOOD COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE.

Congratulations to tonight's honorees and best wishes for a wonderful evening!



The Board of Trustees & Staff of the South Orange-Maplewood Adult School honor

Audrey Rowe &
Carol Barry-Austin, in memoriam,
who exemplify the
Power of Inclusive Community



Thank you to the Community Coalition on Race for your continued work in our community.





We celebrate Audrey Rowe, whose dedication, leadership, and vision have strengthened our community and advanced the mission of the Community Coalition on Race. Her tireless work has inspired so many to continue building a truly inclusive and equitable community.

We honor the memory of Carol Barry-Austin, whose wisdom, grace, and commitment helped lay the foundation for all that the Coalition has achieved.

Our community is better today because of both Audrey's leadership and Carol's enduring legacy. May their example continue to guide and inspire the Coalition's work for years to come.

With appreciation and admiration, Kelly Quirk & Martin Ceperley





[words]

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are proud to help honor our friend and supporter,

AUDREY ROWE

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Thank you Carol

for your decades of service through your volunteer work with The Columbia High School Scholarship Fund. As chair of the Selection Committee your dedication, fairness and compassion enabled hundreds of students with financial need to continue to pursue their education. You worked tirelessly to ensure our organization governed with fairness and integrity. CHSSF will honor you by continuing to follow your example. Thank you for making our community a better place for our children.

We miss you.

Welcome. Everyone.



theablebaker.com 973-313-1133 Maplewood NJ

For Audrey Rowe My colleague and dear friend of many years—



I can't thank you enough for all that you have done to make the Community Coalition on Race such a vital part of SOMA. Your creativity, compassion, and commitment have touched every aspect of our work and every person who has been part of it. My deep gratitude for your wisdom and friendship through the years.

With love and admiration, Nancy

For Carol Barry-Austin In memory of my mentor and friend—







Carol, your vision, courage, and steady leadership helped shape the Community Coalition on Race from its earliest days. You taught me, and so many others, what it means to lead with both strength and grace. Your legacy continues to guide this work and inspire all who believe in the power of an inclusive, equitable community.

With heartfelt gratitude, Nancy



Behavioral Health **Mitigation Services** Training 76 South Orange Ave. Suite 101, South Orange, NJ 07079

Grateful for the work of the South Orange/Maplewood
Community Coalition on Race

Congratulations Audrey Rowe! Thank you for your work and dedication to the SOMA Community

Congratulations to
Audrey Rowe
2025 Honoree of the
South Orange/Maplewood
Community Coalition on Race
And in Memory of
Carol Barry-Austin
Meredith Sue Willis & Andrew B. Weinberger

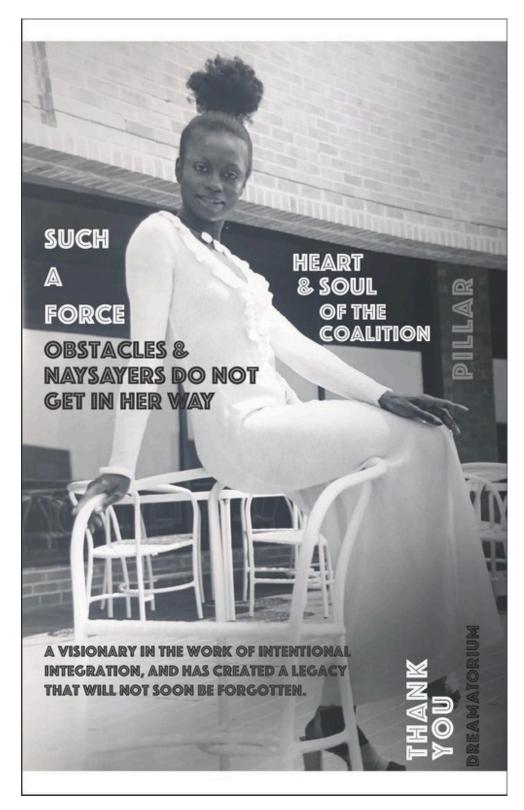




In appreciation for SOM COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE

and In Memory of CAROL BARRY-AUSTIN

THE ROWE FAMILY



We honor the work and memory of Carol Barry-Austin. She gave her voice and talents to community and youth empowerment. Our role is to continue and "bloom where we are planted," as she did.



Congratulations to Audrey Rowe whose commitment to community is exemplary. Her life's work has benefited many and will continue forward!

Phylis and Carl Peterman

The South Orange Civic Organization (SOCO), as part of its legacy,

honors the memory of Carol Barry-Austin, a valuable and impactful member of SOCO for many years.

Rest in Power and may we continue to follow your example.



South Orange Civic Organization 1970-2020

Sponsors

We are deeply grateful for these sponsors who helped to make this celebration a fundraising success for the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race and who are on-going supporters of the mission!

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We thank you, Audrey, for all of your years of dedicated and effective service. We both agree that you are the person who, over the years, most perfectly embodies the culture and the principles of the Coalition.



We will always fondly remember Carol for her leadership and endless commitment to the Coalition. Fred, in particular, is forever indebted to her for her wise counsel and good will, without which he never would have been able to navigate the early fractious years of our organization.

Fred & Susan Profeta



Audrey, congratulations on this well-deserved award.

In honor of Carol, we miss you.

Terry & Lori Martin



Celebrating the vision and growth of the Community Coalition on Race



Dawn Williams & James VanOosting



CAROL BARRY-AUSTIN

The Schools Committee of the South
Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race
wouldn't exist without Carol Barry-Austin. She was its
founder and guiding light for over 25 years. She
showed us what it means to care deeply about all
children and truly live your values.

We are richer for having known and worked alongside her, and so much poorer for her loss. We will continue to honor her in our work and in our commitment to the children of South Orange and Maplewood.

WITH LOVE FROM THE SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

Jocelyn, Erin, Sue, Ed, Diane, Nancy, Jane, Patricia, Susan, Lisa, Christina, Michelle, Reesa, Hannah, Elizabeth, Bibi, Alice, Lauren, Abby, Norman and Alison



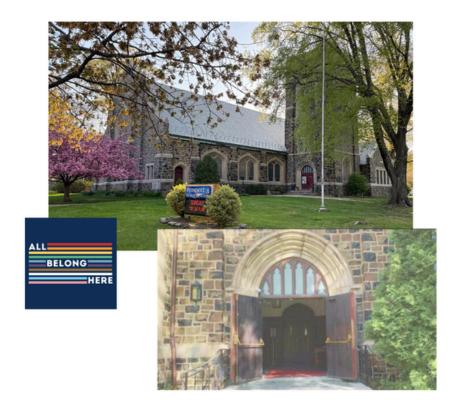
"Do not fear work that has no end."

-Avot d'Rabbi Natan



Thank you Audrey and Carol for inspiring us to find purpose in the process.

Prospect Presbyterian Church



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Congratulations Audrey,

We are proud to be a part of your life and the good work you have done and continue to do in the SOMA community.

Your Prospect Church family

Congratulations Audrey



We appreciate so much the life of service that you turned into a second career.

Our organization and community benefited so much from your work.

Congratulations on this well deserved honor. We are thrilled to be celebrating you tonight.

Mith love and gratitude from the Schools Committee

Jocelyn, Erin, Sue, Ed, Diane, Nancy, Jane, Patricia, Susan, Lisa, Christina, Michelle, Reesa, Hannah, Elizabeth, Bibi, Alice, Lauren, Abby, Norman and Alison

Congratulations to Audrey Rowe on this well-deserved honor



Mikki and Derek Murphy and Family

With admiration and gratitude

Audrey, congratulations on this well-deserved honor. Your dedication and leadership have made a lasting impact on the Coalition and our community.



In memory of Carol, we miss your wisdom and friendship. Your legacy continues to inspire our work every day.

With appreciation,
Anita Gundanna
Chair, Board of Trustees



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In Memory of My Friend Carol Barry-Austin

8

Congratulations to Audrey Rowe

From
Anthony K. Greene
Past Chair
South Orange / Maplewood
Community Coalition on Race



To Audrey Rowe -

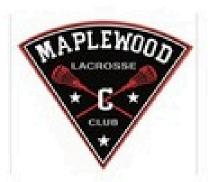
With gratitude for your extensive and exuberant contributions to our community, and with best wishes for the next exciting chapters of your life with your beautiful family

Mark and Laura Mucci





Proud to Grow Strong Players – and an Even Stronger Community



Maplewood Lacrosse Club is honored to support the Community Coalition on Race and its mission to build unity and inclusion.



Many thanks to our generous auction donors!

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Special thanks to

Orange Lawn Tennis Club:

- Stefanie Peters Event Manager
- Kerry Zinckgraf Event Sales Manager

Essex Funk Collective Tracy Sham Photography Vic DeLuca, Auctioneer

The Celebrating Integration planning team

Nancy Gagnier Melanie Girton Anita Gundanna Terry Martin Susan Pendleton Kristien Webber

Celebrating Integration Volunteers

Megan Clement Karen Freeman-Pettis Maria Henningburg Gail Safian Diane Thomson



In Celebration of Audrey Rowe and in Memory of Carol Barry-Austin

Working with Audrey and Carol has been one of the great honors of my time on the Board. Their wisdom, passion, and dedication shaped the Coalition's mission and strengthened our community in lasting ways.

Ed Stuart



Honoring Audrey Rowe

Audrey's generosity, insight, and unwavering belief in our mission have encouraged me to stay engaged and grow in this work. Audrey's impact reaches far beyond the programs she led —it lives on in all of us who continue the effort to build an inclusive community.

William Vaughan



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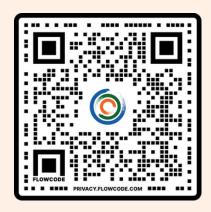
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STAFF

Nancy Gagnier, Executive Director Lark Lo, Program Coordinator Susan Pendleton, Office Administrator



Thanks for joining us tonight! We are grateful for your support.



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