



# *Forward Lookers Federated Club*

## *“Lifting As We Climb”*



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## *HOW FIRM IS OUR FOUNDATION?*

How can we strengthen communication with our constituents and make our giving less challenging? The need is great, and we must call on our partners and supporters to help.

Forward Lookers Federated Club was founded on the principle that education matters. With public education under attack, this is not the time to relent or forget our purpose.

Our fore-mothers in Federation and education, locally and nationally, showed determination, tenacity, and sacrifice. Without the foundation laid by teachers and education advocates, we would not have the directors, attorneys, judges, deans, legislators, and mayors we celebrate today.

You may not have been a teacher by profession, but your life has been shaped by teachers. Let us be that same force for our children and their children as we continue to “lift” on the climb.

Let’s work together to sustain and promote the Clara Alexander Jackson Scholarship. Let’s fund it, share it with high school students, and remind them that education matters. Let us stand firm in our commitment to lift the next generation of learners.

Our scholarship represents all of us. With the collective brainpower in this club, we can find innovative ways to grow our fund. Together, we can help aspiring students climb the ladder of higher education and empower generations to come.

*~Article Contributed By Club Sister, Malena Dow*

## **SAVE THE DATE**

**Forward Lookers Federated Club  
40<sup>th</sup> Heritage Scholarship Luncheon  
Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



## Outgoing President: *Leading With Heart and Purpose: A Fond Farewell*



*Monocia "Monica" Sue  
Williams Connors*

FLFC Immediate Past President,  
October 2021- September 2025



Monocia "Monica" Sue Williams Connors joined the Forward Lookers Federated Club in 2014 and has served as Vice President, Newsletter Chair, Legislative Committee Chair, and now as the 4th District President and Chaplain of the Mississippi State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc., and Youth Affiliates.

She will celebrate 31 years of marriage to Fredrick Connors on December 31, 2025, and is the mother of George, bonus mom to Amanda, and grandmother to George Austin. A proud graduate of Jackson State University (*Thee I Love*), she holds degrees in Sociology and Guidance and Counseling/Educational Leadership.

Mrs. Connors is a 30-year retired Professional Counselor from Hinds Community College – Utica Campus and has also served as Head Master at C.M. & I College, GED Instructor, and Job Readiness Director at Mid-Town Partners.

She currently serves on the:

- National Church Evangelistic Grant Committee – COCHUSA
- National Publishing Board – COCHUSA



### *Reflections With President Connors*



When I look back on my time as president, I'm reminded that every accomplishment we reached was truly a collective effort. Nothing was achieved alone. The strength of our club, the way we come together, support each other, and work toward a shared purpose is what made this term meaningful.

One of the moments I'm most proud of is the expansion of our scholarship program. What began as an increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for two students later grew into awarding five scholarships—one for each of Mississippi's HBCUs—at our Annual Heritage Luncheon. This felt like a powerful investment in the future.

I also reflect on our resilience as a club. Even as we experienced the loss of three sisters and supported two others through long-term illness, we still welcomed 13 new members. This growth showed our continued relevance and the dedication of our members to share federation with others.

Another highlight was our appearance on WLBT Channel 3 during Black History Month. Being recognized for our community impact and invited to return affirmed the value of our work and strengthened our presence in the community.

Overall, my presidency has been a meaningful journey marked by growth, collaboration, and gratitude for what we accomplished together.



# ***Forward Lookers Showers***

## ***High School Seniors for College Campus Living***

Chairwoman, Carol Cooper, co-chair, Theresa Hence, and team members led Forward Lookers in a collaborative effort, yielding abundant dividends for eleven young men and women enroute to campus living for the 2025-2026 academic year. The annual Trunks For Seniors was hosted at the State Clubhouse, on Northside Drive in Clinton, MS on Sunday afternoon, July 20, 2025.

Abundant lifting is descriptive of this growing project. Recipients were warmly welcomed and showered with over-brimming trunks, plus boxes filled with personal items, towels, bed linen, laundry equipment, literally everything needed to begin residential living on college campus. Each trunk was loaded with the abundance of basic needs for campus living.

The honored recipients and their families were gracious in their acceptance of gifts and hospitality and joined Federation Sisters in a delicious reception.

The scholars were on their way to various institutions of higher learning to pursue majors in accounting, computer science, criminal justice, culinary arts, early childhood education, health science, nursing, pharmacy, and psychology.

Club President and MSFCWC Chaplin, Monica Connors invoked blessings on the event. MSFCWC President, Immediate Past-President of Forward Lookers and organizer of the event, Mary Collier, shared the history of the event and assisted project chairwoman, Carol Cooper, in the award presentation.

The Trunk Shower has proven to be a prime illustration of the Federation motto, "Lifting as We Climb."

## ***Trunks For Seniors***

### ***RECIPIENTS INCLUDED:***

- *Morgan Bradley*
- *Kenneth Ray Bunton, Jr.*
- *Crystal Dozier*
- *Amaya Esco, Jr.*
- *Emeryl Esco*
- *Ken'lya James*
- *Eric Lollis, Jr.*
- *Timothy Dwayne Steward,*
- *Johanna Wilson &*
- *Michael Tyler Williams.*





## Incoming President: *Guided by Vision: Welcoming Our New Leader*

Irene S. Booker is a Mississippi State University graduate with a BS in Agriculture/ Home Economics with emphasis in Nutrition. Irene is a retired Food Service Administrator and Nutritionist having worked with all age groups during her career including pregnant females, infants and toddlers, preschoolers, Head Start and Early Head Start, K - 12 and older adults.

Irene became a proud Federated woman in 2013 as a member of Forward Lookers Federated Club (FLFC) in Jackson, MS. She has chaired the club's signature project -The Annual Heritage Luncheon which is a fundraiser that provides scholarships to elementary education majors at the five HBCUs in Mississippi as well as recognize outstanding members of the community and our club.

Irene also serves as the Mississippi State Federation of Colored Women's Club, Inc., and Youth Affiliates (MSFCWC) Recording Secretary, 4th district Treasurer, and past Historian and current Assistant Recording Secretary of Southeastern Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc (SACWC).

Irene and her husband of 49 years have two adult children and two precious grandchildren. In her spare time, she enjoys crafting of all types such as sewing, quilting, jewelry-making, painting and floral arranging. She also loves to volunteer in the community and enjoys bowling.



*Irene Simmons Booker*  
FLFC President, October 2025-



### *A New Leader's Light*

*A new light rises, steady and bright,  
Guiding our steps with purpose and insight.  
We lift as we climb, together aligned,  
Strength in our hands, our hearts intertwined.  
We stand united, ready to grow,  
Trusting the path new leadership will show.  
With open hearts and spirits high,  
We move ahead beneath a hopeful sky.*

*~ Anonymous Author ~*



## Q & A with President Irene S. Booker

**What is your vision for the organization during your presidency?** *My vision for the organization during my presidency is to provide meaningful service to our community while expanding our reach and impact. I aim to develop programming that educates our members and creates strong leadership opportunities that will strengthen the organization from within. Additionally, I am committed to increasing our presence and recognition in the community and growing our membership by recruiting new members, reclaiming former members, and retaining the dedicated members we currently have.*

**How would you describe your leadership style?** *It varies with the situation, but primarily servant, democratic and a bit bureaucratic.*

**What do you see as the most pressing needs in the community right now? How can the organization strengthen its impact in addressing those needs?** *Education, poverty, lack of necessary resources, lack of affordable housing, lack of jobs that provide a living wage, especially for those without college degrees. We can strengthen our impact in addressing those needs by collaborating with other organizations in the area with similar goals. Also, by narrowing our focus to fewer areas so that we can have a greater impact.*

**Are there new partnerships or collaborations you'd like to explore?** *Yes, collaboration with our sister clubs to pursue projects of joint interest – i.e., establishing a young adult club.*

**Are there areas where you see opportunities for change or innovation?** *Developing ways to better recruit and retain members through more orientation for prospective and new members to the goals, ideas, vision, and purpose of this great organization. Make it easier for new members to become actively involved so that they will see the benefits of staying.*

**What inspired you to accept this leadership role?** *This was not my initial goal. With encouragement from my club sisters and prayer, I decided that after serving as vice president, it could be the next logical step. My passion for service and love for federation played a significant role in my decision.*

**Would you like to add any additional information?** *There are goals that I would like to see accomplished for our club.*

- Obtain legal status as a 501c3 organization
- Develop a policy and procedures handbook
- Improve communication among all club members
- Develop a system to better document the service we provide, and the contribution made so the information is readily available if needed for reports, grant writing, etc.
- Create additional funding avenues that allow us to carry out projects without increasing members' financial obligations
- Every member is actively involved in a project or work of the club

## *Growing Together: Meet Our New Members*



Welcoming new members strengthens our club by bringing fresh ideas, new energy, and diverse perspectives to our shared mission. Each new voice expands our capacity to serve, lead, and make a meaningful impact in our community.

As we grow, we build a stronger foundation for future projects and opportunities. We are excited to embrace our newest members and look forward to all that we will accomplish together.



Dr. Brenda C. Jenkins  
Hometown: Canton, MS  
Family Dynamics: Married w/ two daughters and two granddaughters.



### **How did you first hear about Forward Lookers Federated Club?**

*I was invited to join Forward Lookers by my high school teacher, Mrs. Carol Cooper. I was inspired to do this because, at my age, I have never been a part of an organization like this one. I have been a member of professional organizations such as the American Public Health Association, the Obesity Society, and the American Heart Association*



Tiffany Gaskin  
Hometown: Jackson, MS  
Family Dynamics: Married to husband, Jeremiah Gaskin of 19 years, and 2 daughters, Taia (22 yrs old) and Lailah (16 years old).



### **What do you hope to gain from being a member of Forward Lookers Federated Club?**

*I hope to gain sisterhood and growth in all aspects of my life. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to network and meet lifelong friends. I want to be able to extend this opportunity to other young women like me who are change-seekers. I want my legacy to be rooted with those of like-minded individuals who are eager to blossom at their fullest potential.*



## *Growing Together: Meet Our New Members*



Tiffany Allen Barner  
Hometown: Jackson, MS  
Family Dynamics:

Husband – Donovan L. Barner and  
3 Sons – Donovan Jamal Barner,  
Jeremy Rashad Barner, Raphael  
Antoine Barner



Shundra Johnson  
HOMETOWN: Jackson, MS  
Family Dynamics: Two college age  
children and a 5 year old who is full  
of personality.



Skyla Mitchell, LMSW, SAP  
Hometown: Jackson, MS  
Family Dynamics: Single, but  
looking forward to marriage and  
starting a family in the near future.  
I am very family oriented.

### **In what ways do you hope to get involved?**

*I hope to get involved in several ways, including volunteering my time directly with youth programs, supporting advocacy efforts that promote educational opportunities, and assisting with event planning to bring resources and awareness to the community. I'm also open to serving in leadership roles where I can help organize initiatives, mentor others, and strengthen the mission of forward Lookers. My goal is to be hands-on wherever I'm most needed and to contribute in ways that make the greatest impact.*

### **What does "community service" mean to you personally?**

*As a social worker, community service is at the heart of what I do. It means standing alongside those in need, meeting them where they are, and advocating for meaningful change. It's more than just volunteering; it's a commitment to equity, empowerment, and compassion. For me, community service is about using my knowledge and experience to uplift underserved populations, connect individuals with vital resources, and help communities to thrive. It's both a personal and professional calling to be part of something greater than myself.*

### **Are there specific projects or initiatives you'd like to contribute to?**

*Health screenings and education days, resource drives for dialysis patients and caregivers, and mentorship for students interested in social work.*

### **What issues or causes are you most passionate about?**

*Health equity, kidney health awareness, mental health access, women's empowerment, and patient advocacy.*



## Forward Looker Club Members Walk For Diabetes 2025



The Diabetes Foundation of Mississippi hosted the 2025 MS Walk For Diabetes at LeFleur's Bluff Playground in Jackson, MS on September 22, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. The club members raised and contributed a \$500 donation.

Many of the Club Sisters participated in the walk: Donna Williams, Debra Rayborn, Wilma Lightfoot-Green, Demetra Lewis, Theresa Hence, and Carol Cooper along with her husband James Cooper.



*Congratulations*

### Forward Lookers Federated Club

*Installation of New Officers:*

Mary J. Collier, MSFCWC President installed new officers for 2025-2027 FY

- President- Irene Booker
- Vice-President- Xavier Johnson-Jenkins
- Secretary- Mattie James McQuarter
- Assistant Secretary- Evelyn A. Bishop  
*\*(Brenda Jenkins in her absence)*
- Correspondence Secretary- Danyel Castilla
- Parliamentary- O'ka Duren
- Financial Secretary- Debra Rayborn
- Treasurer- Carolyn Coleman  
*\*(Rhonda Richmond in her absence)*
- Chaplain- Ruth Huddleston

