



home > city hall > press releases

## NAACP Honors Councilmember Rogers

Perris City Councilwoman Rogers was hailed by the NAACP as a hero of civil rights and equality for all, a commitment forged by her "DNA that speaks service" to her City, community and country.

The Riverside Chapter of the NAACP presented Rogers and 11 others with awards during its annual Freedom Fund Celebration May 13 at the Riverside Convention Center, a gala attended by hundreds of business, civic, municipal and education leaders and elected representatives.

Joining Rogers at the awards ceremony were Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke, City Councilman David Starr Rabb, City Manager Richard Belmudez, City Attorney Eric Dunn and City Engineer Habib Motlagh, along with her children and grandchildren.

The honorees received a beautiful, limited edition piece of art that depicted a group of protesters, arms locked together—demonstrating on behalf of equal rights in voting, education and employment. They also took home proclamations from state, regional and local elected officials.

Woodie Rucker-Hughes, president of the Riverside NAACP chapter, called all the recipients "unsung heroes" who prefer to operate out of the spotlight, more concerned about results than personal glory.

"Often you do what you do because it's part of your DNA that speaks service," Rucker told the recipients during a private reception before the gala ceremony. "You decided to dedicate your life, your time and your commitment. You are not looking for a pat on the back."



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers with family members after receiving a Freedom Fund Award from the Riverside NAACP in a May 13 ceremony.

Rucker-Hughes pointed out that the theme of this year's 67th Annual Freedom Fund Celebration was "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants."

She noted that 2105 marks the 50th anniversary of the historic march on Selma, Ala., in which police attacked non-violent protesters with clubs and teargas attempting to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge spanning the Alabama River. The Selma episode helped galvanized the civil rights movement and prompted President Lyndon Johnson to submit voting rights legislation to Congress.

"For every person who has helped bring every generation along, we appreciate what you have done and what you do," Rucker-Hughes told Rogers and the other awardees.

Rogers, a native of New York City, said she learned early about the importance of the NAACP from her mother, who actively raised funds for the group. As an adolescent, Rogers said she sometimes babysat at the home of prominent surgeon Arthur Logan and his wife, Marian Logan, New York City Commissioner of Human Rights.

Several times Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visited the home. Rogers would observe the civil rights icon speaking, without notes, to small groups of activists gathered in the home, remarks that left her "mesmerized." She met and talked with King on several occasions.

"It was always about the (civil rights) movement," Rogers said. "My mother and her friends always talked about the work of the NAACP and the need to raise funds to keep the struggle going. I am most grateful to receive this award. The voice of the NAACP is the voice of reason during these troubling times our nation is going through right now."

Rogers continued her commitment to civil rights by taking part in the "Freedom Rides" of the 1960s, traveling to the segregated South to register African-American voters. She was on the Mall in 1963 when King delivered his inspiring "I Have a Dream" speech.

Rogers has served on the Perris City Council since 1999, including four stints as Mayor Pro-Tem.

She said she is pleased the City continues its outreach through civic groups like Cops and Clergy, which she founded as a way to bring together ministers and law enforcement to reduce potential conflicts with police and the public.



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers chats with Woodie Rucker-Hughes, president of the Riverside NAACP chapter, during a private reception at the Riverside Convention Center.

Rogers' City Council colleagues joined other speakers in praising her commitment to Perris and its people.

"This is a great honor for Rita Rogers," Mayor Pro-Tem Burke said. "She is a major force and has gone so much for our City. A lot of young women look up to her for what she has done in our community."

Rabb called the NAACP awards ceremony a "great event," adding, "I appreciate what Rita Rogers' years of service and her efforts to make Perris a better place for all its residents."

In addition to Rogers, other winners and the categories they received recognition in included:

- Judy White; Education Award
- Joan Roberts; Business/Entrepreneur Award
- Rev. David Castro on behalf of Victory Outreach Riverside; Community Service Award
- Dr. Angela Martin; Health Award
- Wallace Allen; Media Award
- Rex. Marris Seymore Sr.; Religion Award
- Sgt. Bruce Wilson; Military Award
- William Kennedy; Law/Justice Award
- William Chamberlain; Roy Wilkins Award
- Tanya Humphrey; Griot Award
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Omar Stratton Award

### Media Contact

Joe Vargo  
Public Information Officer  
951-956-2120  
jvargo@cityofperris.org



Perris City Hall  
101 N. D Street  
Perris, CA 92570

Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 8 am - 6pm  
Offices are closed on Friday.  
Phone: (951) 943-6100  
Map to City Hall  
Get our mobile apps:  
Apple • Android

Contact Perris  
Call: (951) 943-6100 (available 24 hours/day)

Report a Problem/Ask a Question:

Contact Form



### In this website

- ▶ [City Hall](#)
- ▶ [Government](#)
- ▶ [Residents](#)
- ▶ [Business](#)
- ▶ [Visitors](#)