



HENDRY COUNTY
Board of County Commissioners
Contact: Electa Waddell
Public Information Officer
863.675.5304
electa.waddell@hendryfla.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gymnasium Renamed for Community Leader

County to Celebrate Gymnasium Renaming

(March 24, 2017) – LaBelle, Fla. – The Harlem community is coming together to rename the Harlem Gymnasium in honor of Reverend James E. Hart. The Hendry County Board of County Commissioners approved the request and the renaming ceremony will take place on April 1, 2017

Queenie Williams sent a request in February 2016 to the Board of County Commissioners to rename the gymnasium after Reverend James E. Hart. The request received overwhelming support from the community residents including a petition signed with over one thousand names.

Reverend Hart was known as a pillar of the community and felt we have an obligation to help each other. He spent decades of his life managing, restoring and preserving the Gymnasium. The Gymnasium was more than a place for activities under his management, but also a safe haven for Harlem's youth and a place to gather and share memories.

"Under his management, the Gymnasium was more than just a place for activities, but a "safe haven" for many of Harlem's youth, as well as a place to gather and share memories of times long gone," stated Williams. "The residents of Harlem are honored to have a man that was born and raised in the community, have his name on one of its most treasured buildings."

Reverend Hart was known to the community as a public servant, community role model and mentor. He helped establish Mad Dads, which provides activities to the youth of the community during the summer. Reverend Hart also helped to coach Pop Warner Football, was a SAC committee member at Eastside Elementary School, ran a youth ministry at Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and established a prison ministry for inmates at Glades Correctional Institution.

"Hendry County is such a wonderful place due to the individuals who give back tirelessly to their communities," stated Charles Chapman, County Administrator. "We are pleased to have the opportunity to recognize Reverend Hart for his passion for the Harlem Community and honor his legacy through this ceremony and renaming."

Hendry County Board of County Commissioners – Public Information Office
Post Office Box 2340 – LaBelle, FL 33975-2340
863.675.5220/main – 863.674.4194/fax – www.hendryfla.net

Reverend Hart was considered a father figure to many of the youth in the community. His goal was to inspire them to become smart and respectable young men. He encouraged the young adults of the community to work hard to achieve their goals.

The renaming of the Harlem Gymnasium to the Reverend James E. Hart Gymnasium will take place on April 1, 2017 at 11:00am-5:00pm located at 968 Harlem Academy Ave, Clewiston. We encourage everyone in the community to attend and pay tribute to the Reverend who positively impacted so many residents of Hendry County and the Harlem Community.

###

(Please feel free to contact us for an interview, discussion or questions.)