

# AN African-American Perspective

FREE!

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## Loni Gamble to Play for CAPPA Showcase 2010

If you live in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, you've probably heard of Loni Gamble, the community activist. A long-time resident of the city Loni has contributed greatly to the community's social well being. In July 2002, Loni founded the Kennedy King Youth Intervention and Development Project and Basketball League, a structured program that eventually became the Community Alliance for Positive Progressive Action (CAPPA). As Executive Director of CAPPA, Loni's leadership has provided scholastic mentorship, gang prevention tips and computer technology instruction to at-risk youth. Perhaps his crowning achievement is the annual CAPPA Showcase program. By forming alliances with other organizations in the community - such as the Williamsport Area School District, Giant Food Stores and the Lycoming Housing Authority - CAPPA created a comprehensive youth talent show in 2005. The program fosters high self-esteem in youth that are often marginalized and disrespected. Young dancers, poets, musicians and actors have presented their skills to a live audience in the prestigious Community Arts Center and a Comcast Cable TV viewership.

In years past, a professional band has played groovy "intro-music" between each act of the Showcase. This has caused many members of the community to reminisce about Loni Gamble's previous life. He was a popular musician, recording artist and band leader before becoming a noted youth advocate.

Loni Gamble began his music career as a guitar player touring with The Stylistics. In 1984, in Montreal, Canada, Loni recorded his hit single "Could It Be Love". Upon its release, the single made the top 40 on the dance music charts in eight countries. In Williamsport, Loni formed the group "Loni Gamble and Sound Cheque". The group was best known locally for their contributions to non-profit organizations through benefit concert fundraisers. The band performed with the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra and The Bloomsburg Community

**SHOWCASE 2010**  
EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION  
SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMANCE BY  
**LONI GAMBLE & SOUND CHEQUE • SUGAR & SPICE**  
**Community Arts Center**  
300 West Fourth Street in Downtown Williamsport (Doors open at 5pm)  
**June 10 2010 • 6:00 pm • \$8 admission**  
A portion of the proceeds to benefit Haiti relief efforts.

Orchestra. One of their performance highlights was opening for "The Temptations" at the Community Arts Center.

**In this year's 2010 CAPPA Showcase, Loni has brought the band together for a special guest performance. Admission is \$8.00. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the victims of the Haiti Earthquake disaster. Doors open at 5pm. Call the CAC box office at 570-326-2424 or call CAPPA at 570-326-7700 for tickets.**

Over the years, Loni has received numerous awards. In 1998, The YWCA awarded Loni the "Racial Justice Award" for his commitment to the planning and implementation of The Unity Concert. In September of 2005, CAPPA received the 2005 Pennsylvania Association of Housing and

Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) Best Practice Award. In May 2006, CAPPA received the 2006 MARC/NAHRO (Mid-Atlantic Region Conference/National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) Award of Excellence. In July 2006, CAPPA received the NAHRO National Award of Merit. In August 2006, Loni Gamble was selected from thousands of entrants across the country in the Dr. Pepper "Pepper Your Community" contest. Loni was ranked # 3 in the country and CAPPA was one of five non-profits in the country selected for a professional video shoot from Yahoo Inc. In October 2006, CAPPA received the NAHRO National Award of Excellence.

On April 13, 2010, Governor Edward G. Rendell appointed Loni Gamble to the Governor's Advisory Commission on African American Affairs.

# Juneteenth Celebration honors Julia C. Collins

The Juneteenth Celebration Association of North Central Pa is hosting its 11th annual event on June 19th at Brandon Park in Williamsport. The event will take place from 1:00 until 5:00. For inclement weather, the event will move to Curtin Middle School at 85 Eldred St.

The association will host as speaker, Mitch Kachun, PhD, a Black Studies and history professor from Western Michigan University, who spoke at the 2005 and 2007 events. Dr. Kachun co-edited a book containing essays and, what many believe is, the first novel written by an African-American female in the United States. Kachun will speak about Julia C.

Collins, who had segments of her novel and essays published in 1865 by the African Methodist Episcopal Church's, The Christian Recorder newspaper. The fact that Mrs. Collins lived in Williamsport motivates Dr. Kachun to come here and speak about the importance of her contribution to our area. A state historical marker, honoring Mrs. Collins, will be unveiled prior to the event by the Lycoming County Historical Society at the Heritage Trail on the Susquehanna River Walk which Dr. Kachun and his wife will attend. Following the dedication, guests are invited to come to Brandon Park where Kachun will speak at the Juneteenth Celebration event. A reenactment of the historical marker's unveiling will augment his Juneteenth presentation.

Musical guests for the event include Heaven Sent, recording artist's Johnny J. Blair – "Singer-At-Large" and Kevin D. Watson, licentiate at Mt. Zion AME Church, Norristown. Evangelist Dawn Filchner-White and WRLC 91.7 FM radio personality, Marcelene Brown will also perform. There will be dance performances by Katie Benson's School of Dance and Valorie Taylor's Expressions.

Other speakers include, State Representative Rick Mirabito, reading General Order No. 3, Rev. Kenneth A. Burnett, reading the Emancipation Proclamation, and a representative from Congressman Christopher Carney's office. In appreciation for her contribution of local black history to our community, Dr. Mamie Sweeting-Diggs will be honored with a plaque presented by Wegman's Food

and Pharmacy –Store 078 and the Juneteenth Celebration Association. Kevin D. Watson and Marcelene H. Brown will emcee.

There will also be a children's carnival, CC (lady) Clowns, pony rides and petting zoo courtesy of Russ and Marie Reitz' Gracious Meadows Farms, Dr. Diggs' Underground Railroad exhibit, genealogical advice, vendors and more.

The second Gifted Youth Art Exhibit will be presented as a result of 5 art workshops preceding the event. The workshops involved a mentoring program and art instruction provided by area professionals, Jackie Thomas, fibers artist; Seth Goodman, Associate Art Professor at Lycoming College; Eve Archer, retired art instructor and Way's Garden Art Show Founder; and Rev. Marwin Reeves, Treatment Specialist for USP Lewisburg. Six art students from Lycoming College also volunteered their time. "Without the mentoring aspect in the art workshops, teaching skills to the children could very well be a waste of time if they get sidetracked by illicit temptations and don't commit to what they've learned", says association administrator, Conni Robinson. There are plans to provide several fine arts' oriented field trips this year, as well.

The term "Juneteenth" was first introduced to Williamsport by Dr. Mamie Sweeting-Diggs at the Wegman's Food and Pharmacy's black history program in 1997. Dr. Sweeting-Diggs also presented her newly created local, Underground Railroad Exhibit at that event. "Juneteenth Celebration" was introduced to the area as a public event in 2000 by Bethel AME Church in Williamsport. The coordinators were church officials, Kevin D. Watson and Constance Robinson. The celebration has been an annual event since then. Having expanded its education and mentoring program throughout the year, the church committee evolved into an independent charitable 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization in 2008. The programs sponsored by the Juneteenth Celebration Association promote education, diversity and public service. "We have new board members that still include Robinson, but the local AME Church will always be the "Bethel rock" foundation of the

association", say organization members.

"Juneteenth" began on June 19, 1865 when General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, with 1200 troops at the ready, to read General Order No. 3. The order stated that slaves were free. This was 2 \_ years after the Emancipation Proclamation was written by President Abraham Lincoln. Some states had sent their slaves to Texas to wait for the outcome of the Civil war and Texas considered seceding from the Union prior to 1865. June 19th became a day for celebrating freedom, and represents the actual ending of slavery in the United States. The troops that accompanied Granger were not needed and jubilation by slaves all over Texas followed this reading. .

There is a push from other Juneteenth organizations to make Juneteenth a national holiday. National Juneteenth Holiday Campaign Chair, Ronald V. Myers, Sr. M.D., is encouraging others to convince Pennsylvania's senate to submit legislation that would make "Juneteenth, Emancipation Day" a state holiday as it is in Texas and 35 other states.

For more information about Juneteenth Celebration, please call 570 419-2502 or visit the website: [www.JuneteenthCelebration.org](http://www.JuneteenthCelebration.org).

**What: 11th annual Juneteenth Celebration**  
**Where: Brandon Park, (Rural Ave. & Hepburn) Williamsport, PA**  
**When: June 19th, 1:00 until 5:00**  
**Rain: Curtin Middle School, 85 Eldred St.**  
**Contact: 570 419-2502 or**  
**[www.JuneteenthCelebration.org](http://www.JuneteenthCelebration.org)**



**Julia C. Collins' historical marker will be on the Susquehanna Riverwalk.**

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# Kiwanis and Overhead Doors to help The Center.



[www.5krun4kids.com](http://www.5krun4kids.com)



**June 4, 2010 - 6:30pm**  
Downtown Williamsport  
Entry Fee \$20.00 on  
race day



**\$10 Children  
under 13**

**June 3rd from 5pm to 7pm** the 5K Family Fun Festival. The evening will include a cookout, presentations from our after-School program, face painting, and more. 5K run participants will also be able to pre-register for the event. (Packet pick up and barbecue at Center, 600 Campbell street.)

**June 4th 6:30pm** The Annual Kiwanis 5K Run for Kids. this year event will benefit the (Bethune-Douglass) Center.

**Registration:** 4-6pm Community Arts Center, west 4th Street.

**Course:** Race will begin and end in front of CAC. see map posted on website - [www.5krun4kids.com](http://www.5krun4kids.com)

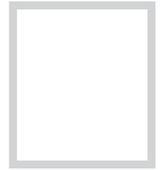
**FREE kids Fun Run:** 2 races - age 6 and under and 7-11. Every child will receive an award.

**Award:** Runners top 3 men and women in each group  
Walkers top 3 men and women.

**Cash Prize:** \$100 Break course record. Male - 15:28  
Female - 18:40

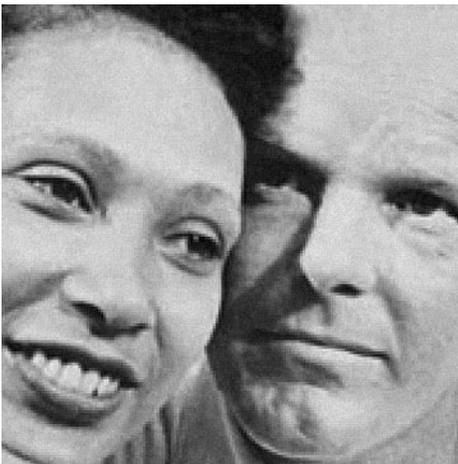
**Post Race:** Free food music and vendors for all participants. this is a first Friday event, so enjoy all the fun downtown Williamsport.

Call Ken Danielson for more information at 570-327-1680.



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## Another Day to Remember in June



*Mr and Mrs. Loving.*

The Loving case started in rural Caroline County, Va., about 100 miles south of the District (of Columbia). Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter were young people in love. She was just 18. She was black and he was white. They traveled in 1958 to the District, where interracial marriages were legal, took their vows, came home and, at 2 a.m., were arrested in bed by deputies. They were prosecuted and sentenced to a year in jail. Caroline County Circuit Court Judge Leon Bazile suspended the sentence -- so long as the couple left the state and did not return together for a quarter-century.

"Almighty God created the races, white, black, yellow, Malay, and red and placed them on separate continents, and but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for

such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend the races to mix," Bazile ruled.

The Lovings moved in exile to the District. And then they sued. It was not until 1967, 13 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* ended segregated schools, that the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the law.

Richard Loving was killed in a car accident in 1975; Mildred Loving, now in her late sixties, still lives in Virginia but rarely gives interviews.

"Since the older generation is dying," she told *The Post* in a 1992 interview, "the younger ones . . . realize that if someone loves someone they have a right to marry."

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### June 12th is Loving Day

According to [LovingDay.org](http://LovingDay.org), a website dedicated to the celebration of the legalization of interracial couples, there are 3 million mixed marriages in the United States. Every year Loving Day is celebrated around June 12 to mark the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that all anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional.

Ken Tanabe, a "Belgian-Japanese" American, who wanted to educate people about race, the law and politics in America, started Loving Day seven years ago. 2007 was the 40th anniversary of the landmark decision and large celebrations were held across the country.



"Loving Day is about fighting prejudice through education, connecting cultures, and creating a sense of community among people that engage in meaningful intercultural relationships. The annual Loving Day celebrations commemorate *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), the Supreme Court case that legalized interracial relationships in America. The project uses digital media to provide educational resources and to encourage people nationwide to host their own celebrations on the Sunday closest to June 12th. Loving Day teaches people about the history of interracial couples in America. Lov-

ing Day Celebrations are an annual tradition that will one day make the Loving case a universally recognized civil rights landmark." states the [Loving Day](http://LovingDay.org) website.

Mr. Tanabe, who is now 33, said in an interview for the magazine *Village Voice*, that he gets hate mail from white supremacists. He said that prejudice still exists today and that he hopes that his grassroots efforts will grow into a national movement. Mr. Tanabe expects people to accept Loving as a civil rights issue and that they will celebrate it like Juneteenth is celebrated.

For more information about Loving Day, go to:

<http://www.lovingday.org>