

# **EXHIBIT 2**

My name is Rodney L. Hurst. I am a native of Jacksonville, and attended the public schools of Jacksonville. I served two four-year terms on the Jacksonville City Council. As the 16 year-old president of the Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP, I led the 1960 sit-in demonstrations at segregated White lunch counters in downtown Jacksonville resulting in the infamous Ax Handle Saturday. I am the author of two books: *It was never about a hot dog and a Coke!* My personal account of those 1960 sit-ins and Ax Handle Saturday; and *Unless WE Tell It...It Never Gets Told!* detailing stories about Jacksonville's Black History of Jacksonville and confronting Racism.

We have a myth in this country, propagated perhaps by an exaggerated faith in the nature of our ineluctable liberties, and our much vaunted "free press." The myth says that the truth is something that has natural buoyancy, and that given the slightest opportunity it will rise of its own accord. But sometimes painful truths are suppressed by the media and our institutions to preserve the comfort level of the status quo, and strenuous efforts by courageous people are required to bring it forward into the light.

Our memories are very selective when it comes to historical circumstances filled with racism and the resulting embarrassment, shame, and hurt. We choose to forget turbulent times rather than learn from them, as if not talking about them will make them go away. Just as closing our eyes does not cause us to go blind, shutting our mouths does nothing to erase memories or make events disappear from history.

Unfortunately, many Whites Jacksonville, Florida have yet to grasp that reality. They rationalized away the days of racism and segregation while insisting they stay buried in the past. On the surface, "Let bygones be bygones" sounds plausible. But U.S. philosopher and poet George Santayana (1863-1952) said those "who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." To paraphrase his words, those who do not learn about their past will assuredly repeat it.

The Civil Rights Movement in the late fifties and early sixties is a history of brave and unselfish Black leaders who fought against racism and segregation, while fighting for the equality of all people in the United States. As a nation, we are acutely familiar with the violent struggles that occurred in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Yet, most do not know that Jacksonville and the state of Florida shared in the cruelties associated with that period.

After centuries of neglect and racism, the Civil Rights Movement became a movement of active demonstrations fighting for the "Life Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness" guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence. Blacks fought against racism and segregation and fought for equal opportunity. Unfortunately Jacksonville's Racial history is historically sordid. On August 27th of 1960, more than two hundred white segregationists armed with ax handles and baseball bats attacked 35 unarmed black teenage members of the Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP as they sat peacefully at a W. T. Grant's lunch counter in downtown Jacksonville, Florida. This horrific and shameful attack, designed to prevent Black people from being seated and served in an restaurant in a store after spending their money in the same store received virtually no coverage from the major media in the Jacksonville area, and only surfaced in the national news by virtue of the strenuous efforts of the local NAACP, Black news papers and the determination of the Black community. The attack triggered serious violence between Whites and Blacks in the Jacksonville area, and came close to triggering serious armed conflict. This was Jacksonville's response to equality, and it resonated throughout the Black Community.

Jacksonville's Black Community had acute reasons not to trust the political establishment. Jacksonville's schools were segregated and underfunded and certainly were not separate but equal. Even after the Supreme Court issued its much hailed *Brown* decision and declared, "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal", *Brown* changed nothing in Jacksonville. No attempts were made to implement the decision in the Duval County School System. Duval County continued its segregated schools and its racist educational policies, and even hired a law firm to fight school integration with taxpayers' money. Duval County Schools would resist the decision, while continuing segregated business as usual until finally in 1960, NAACP Attorney Earl M. Johnson filed the Braxton School Integration Lawsuit on behalf of Sadie Braxton and her two children, Sharon and Daly Braxton. Looking back, you get the impression the Duval County School System wanted segregated Black schools to mark time educationally and not achieve even a reasonable modicum of educational success. Given the resources provided to Black schools and Black schoolteachers, it appeared the Duval County School System purposely went through the motions of educating Black students. Nothing else can explain such meager resources for a public education during those crippling years of segregation.

Confronting the irregularities of voting and not having the opportunity to vote for a candidate who looked like you was a further instance of racism and the segregated southern way of life in the fifties and the sixties with Blacks continually facing an unrelenting barrage of increased violence, lack of respect, and racist hatred.

The mid to late sixties saw the quest for consolidation in Jacksonville Florida. Jacksonville like many cities in this country existed under "at large" elections---where everyone voted, no matter the office and no matter its impact. Correspondingly there was NO possibility for Blacks in Jacksonville to elect a Black elected official. At the time, Jacksonville had a Mayor-City Commission-City Council form of government, and a separate County Commission. You could easily identify it as a politically expedient, yet rather cumbersome, "good old boy" system. You voted citywide for Jacksonville's elected officials, or countywide for Duval County's elected officials. There were district races, but you still ran at-large. Blacks could not run countywide or citywide at that time and win. Blacks represented 25% of registered voters in Jacksonville, but at-large elections diluted the Black vote and prevented the election of Blacks to public office.

Blacks throughout Jacksonville had but one option—to vote for the White candidate who represented the "lesser of political evils." Many White elected officials would not try to understand the cultural differences and political differences between his or her White and Black constituents. "Negro" was the racial vernacular at the time used to reference Blacks. Blacks would see many of those same officials use the word "Nigra" in a dishonest effort to not correctly pronounce "Negro." Blacks did not trust the political establishment to do the right thing because it was the right thing to do and it was appropriately clear having Black elected officials in Jacksonville historically and traditionally was not the right thing to do. Yet a defined tenet of consolidation and the major instrument which saw the Black community support Consolidation was the "legal promise" that this new form of government would include Black access City Council districts which ensured the election of Black representation. Jacksonville's "constructors" of consolidation recognized the political necessity to have a Black candidate "run" to represent Black City Council district if they were going to "sell" Jacksonville's Black community on Consolidation.

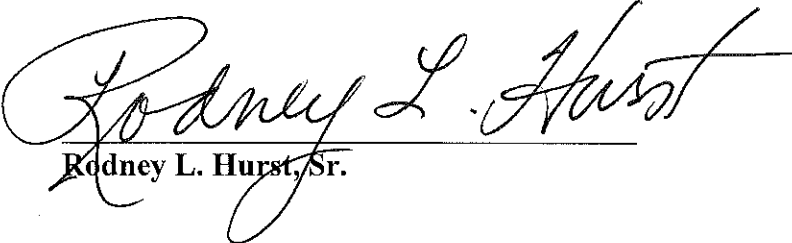
Doctor Arnett Girardeau is the first Black senator elected to the Florida Senate from Jacksonville since Reconstruction. A native of Jacksonville, Dr. Girardeau

chaired the Florida Senate Subcommittee on Congressional Redistricting and drew the lines for the Third Congressional district, now the Fifth Congressional district, with the support of his White colleagues in the Florida Senate. He understood those issues as a community activist in Jacksonville prior to his election to Florida House and then the Florida Senate. Dr. Girardeau and the Florida Senate “sewed” together identifiable Black enclaves to comprise Congress’s Third Congressional District as an inclusive congressional district and not an exclusive congressional district...an inclusive congressional district which allows Congresswoman Corrine Brown to work on the numerous problems which impact Blacks on a daily basis throughout the congressional district. The hue of skin of her Black constituents represents a physiological and even a societal sameness that Congresswoman Brown understands.



Racism is not simply personal prejudice and bigotry that only manifests in the form of being unkind to someone on the basis of their skin color or calling them a derogatory name. Racism is a system of oppression, one that creates a society of first- and second-class citizens by denying rights and access to resources to non-white people. Racism is a system of power created by and maintained through public policy.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

STATE OF FLORIDA        }  
                                      } ss.  
COUNTY OF DUVAL        }

  
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Rodney L. Hurst, Sr.

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 4th day of April, 2016 by  
**Rodney L. Hurst, Sr.**, who is personally known to me and who did take an oath.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person taking oath  
Notary Public, State of Florida  
  
**Linda D. Hughes**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name typed, printed, or stamped