



**BIG Parklawn Chapter**

*(The Founding Chapter of BIG)*

**Newsletter**

2022 Q4 | Issue 4 | Parklawn Chapter Newsletter

## *Welcome*

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Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> “spring” edition of the Parklawn Chapter Newsletter.

After you read our newsletter let us know what you think! You can reach us as [big.parklawn@gmail.com](mailto:big.parklawn@gmail.com)

Also, check out our website: <https://www.bigparklawn.com/>

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**Message from the B.I.G.  
Parklawn Chapter President**

This month is our annual May Membership Month Drive, May 1-31, 2022. We are stronger together and we all know that there is strength in numbers. To that end, I am challenging all members to be proactive, be enthused, and charge forward in the recruitment of at least two (2) new members to become part of our BIG family. I am sure you know someone either at work or at another agency that you can encourage to join BIG. And remember employees from local, state, or federal government can join BIG so if you know a teacher, police officer, state health or other state employee reach out to them, share our website with them, and our contact information and help shepherd them onboard the BIG train.

**-Anthony W. Lee, J.D., Parklawn Chapter President**

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“There is strength in numbers, yes, but even more so in collective good will. For those endeavors are supported by might forces unseen.” -Richelle E. Goodrich

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**Featured Column**

***Connecting BIG To Congress***

BIG Parklawn met with the BIG National Legislative Committee Chair and National EEO Chair. We discussed BIG having a legislative conference this summer where BIG members will visit with their elected representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to discuss issues that BIG would like members of congress to co-sponsor legislative changes. On the list of top concerns include updating the Civil Rights Act of 1964, As Amended to increase the awards amount that is available to federal employees when discrimination is found during an EEO complaint. The current maximum is \$300K and BIG will request this amount be increased to \$600K. BIG will also request the amount of time that federal employees must file an EEO complaint be increased from 45 days to at least 90 days. Additional topics being discussed are passage of the voting rights act and retroactive student loan forgiveness for federal employees that have already served in the federal government for 10 years or longer that still have outstanding student loan debt.



**BIG National News:** As a reminder, registration for this year's NTI is open! The NTI is scheduled for August 15-18 in Cleveland, Ohio. This year's NTI theme will be "Training in a Transformed Workplace: Providing Innovative Professional Development" and unlike last year will be in-person. The Early Registration Deadline is July 1, 2022.

Pre-Registration (early bird) fee:

- BIG Member \$750.00
- BIG Retired Member\* \$300.00
- Non-Member \$1,100.00
- Cancellation fee \$250.00

On-site Registration (regular) fee:

- BIG Member \$850.00
- BIG Retired Member: \$300.00 (with some exceptions)
- Non-Member \$1,200.00 Single Day \$450.00

Please continue to check the NTI website for updates and details.

**Region XI News:** Next month, Region XI will be hosting its annual Regional Training Conference (RTC), entitled, *READI 2 Serve* at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, VA, on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The Programs and Education Committee is working hard to prepare world-class training, presenters, and speakers that are both insightful and thought-provoking. Registration is open and will be \$25 for members and \$30 for nonmembers. A list of courses and presenters will be provided soon.






## History of the flagship chapter of BIG, Parklawn

Blacks in Government (BIG) was conceived by a group of Department of Health Education and Welfare Black federal employees at the Parklawn Building in Rockville, Maryland, who believed that Blacks should unite to obtain and secure the rights and privileges of full citizenship participation. Organized in 1975, BIG was incorporated as a nonprofit organization within the District of Columbia. Nonetheless, Blacks in Government was organized in 1975 and incorporated as a nonprofit organization under the District of Columbia jurisdiction in 1976.

On December 4, 1975, the first official meeting of Blacks in Government was held at the Parklawn Building in Rockville, Maryland. Of the 400 or more Black government employees of HEW/HSA, only five individuals attended: Ms. Doris Bing, Mr. Garfield Crawford, Mr. James J. "Pat" Daugherty, Ms. Shirlene Gray, and Mr. Calvin McDaniels. Those five individuals are now known affectionately as the "First Five." Subsequent meetings brought others to the organization: Elaine Bailey, John Coffee, Fleetwood Roberts, Rubye S. Fields, Samuel S. Taylor, Lonis C. Ballard, Siegal E. Young, Ramona McCarthy Hawkins and Rhonda Thomas joined with three of the first five to form the organization once known as "Parklawn BIG."

BIG has been a national response to the need for African Americans in public service to organize around issues of mutual concern and use their collective strength to confront workplace and community issues.



On April 21st we had our very own Helen Robinson speak/present - the DIVA on the Dollar -how you can save and cut back on shopping and spending on food, clothes, gas, etc.

Dr. Contress Braxton was ordained/affirmed as an Apostle on April 10, 2022. She and her Church (God's Divine Ministries Int'l House of Refuge) are also celebrating their 13th year Anniversary.



## Want to become a member of BIG?!?!?! Here are the steps

- First, create an account on the BIG National site which is located here: <https://members.bignet.site/account/login.aspx>
- Second, you will need to pay National Dues by going to the Membership Portal and completing the membership application.
- After you complete the application, please email a copy of your receipt to Klara Jenkins at [Klara.jenkins@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:Klara.jenkins@fda.hhs.gov)
- After paying National Dues through the Membership portal, you will need to pay **Chapter dues in one or two ways:**
  - ✓ By using PayPal (Registered PayPal Users only) and going to: [www.PayPal.me/BIGParklawnChapter](http://www.PayPal.me/BIGParklawnChapter).
  - ✓ Or by sending a check or money order made payable to: BIG Parklawn Chapter C/O Anthony Lee, 5001 Campus Drive, College Park, MD 20743.



To become an official BIG member, you will need to pay National and Chapter Dues each year.

National Dues are **\$35**

Chapter Dues are **\$10**

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**\$45** yearly



## **POTUS Joe Biden's Equality Plan**

In April, the General Services Administration (GSA) along with 90 other federal agencies, unveiled equity plans.

The equity action plans are the result of President Joe Biden's executive order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities. The executive order is a multi-year effort to improve federal service delivery and access for underserved communities.

GSA's Equality Plan highlighted the role it plays in overseeing \$75 billion worth of annual contracts and said it plans to center its equity efforts on three areas: federal procurement, federal buildings, and federal technology.

With the Equality Plan GSA hopes to increase investments in small, disadvantaged businesses.



**For Women's History Month BIG Parklawn partnered with FEW (Federally Employed Women) for another webinar series entitled a Few Blue Table Talk. On March 15, BIG and FEW members were presented with a very informational Blue Table Talk entitled "Securing the Bag: Virtual Interviews" by Alyssa A. Tate.**

**Alyssa focused on areas of perceived barriers in interviewing, myths & fears of the federal hiring process, and pros & cons of virtual interviewing.**





## Return to Workplace News

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is currently initiating the next phase of workplace re-entry plan based on approved or authorized vaccines therapeutics; diagnostics; and other proven, protective measures that have led to significant reductions in the spread of Covid-19. HHS initiated a phased workplace re-entry plan beginning with Phase 2A on December 5, 2021, Phase 2B occurred on March 27, 2022, and Phase C, began on April 10, 2022.

Based on an agreement with the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), bargaining unit employees will start to return to their respective **official duty stations during pay period 13, Sunday, June 5 – Saturday, June 18, 2022.** It has been expressed by HHS leadership that telework availability will be expanded for those who have portable work. The BIG Parklawn chapter welcomes everyone back to the office as we all adjust to (hopefully soon) post-Covid normalcy.



If you have a birthday, anniversary, celebration, someone you would like to spotlight, or an inspirational thought/quote/poem you would like to include in the newsletter, please forward that information to our Hospitality Chair -[Dr. Contress Braxton](#).

### January Birthdays

- Dr. Avery Wilson, 1/27

### March Birthdays

- Lorenzo Edwards, 3/10

### April Birthdays

- Jason Lewis, 4/4
- April Hodges, 4/20

