

OVERCOMING THE IMPOSSIBLE



To begin its 45th year serving the people of Marvell and surrounding communities, the Boys, Girls, Adults Community Development Center held its annual board banquet on Nov. 9, an occasion to recognize the lifetime work of two citizens that produced profound advances for our communities. The labors of Gregory Davis and Michael Jackson and also those of the speaker for the banquet, Dr. Samuel Kelley, should serve as inspirations for the enormous challenges we face in the year ahead and far into the future.

Gregory Davis, a BGACDC volunteer, has served on its board for many years. He campaigned for affordable and decent housing and, as a result, the community has BGACDC Manor as well as other affordable housing that otherwise would have been nonexistent. He campaigned for childcare for many years and operated Asbury Daycare.

Michael Jackson, an attorney, helped start and is president and chief executive officer of Delta Community Development and Law Center, a regional nonprofit community development corporation that has produced affordable housing and promoted community development across the Delta areas of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The resumé of the speaker, Dr. Kelly, is a testament to his voluminous work and, one hopes, an inspiration for the future. He was born in Memphis but grew up on a farm in Marvell with seven of his nine siblings and his uncle and aunt, Wesley and Gertrude Kelly. He graduated from M.M. Tate High School in 1966 and earned an amazing plethora of degrees: a bachelor's degree in speech and drama from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, a master of arts in speech from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, a master of fine arts in play writing from the Yale University School of Drama and a doctorate in radio, television and film from the University of Michigan. He has spent most of his life as a college educator but also writing and performing. He taught such courses as the films of Spike Lee, human communications, African Americans in television and film, and television and radio production.

The banquet was an occasion for BGACDC to thank the men for their inspirations and contributions and thank many others in the communities for their own often unrecognized contributions to the expansion of health and educational opportunities for the young and old. We thank each of you for the support in whatever form you gave and look forward to serving you for 45 more years.

