



UNION COLLEGE

Office of Public Relations

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Union College Senior to Perform Historical Reenactment of a Military Pioneer

BARBOURVILLE--Many people in and around Union College know Haley Bowling as a talented senior who has a great face for print and a professional voice for radio.

It should come as no surprise, then, that she is also a convincing actress—especially when the role she is playing is one she is passionate about.

On Saturday, Sept. 9, Bowling will appear at Union College's Conway Boatman Chapel not as herself, but as Anna Mac Clarke, the first black Women's Army Corps officer to command an all-white unit. The reenactment will begin at 6 p.m., when Bowling will breathe life into an historic figure who died more than 60 years ago.

Clarke had a short but powerful life, the compelling details of which should be more widely known, according to Bowling. This performance serves as the vehicle through which Bowling can share the story of Clarke, the Lawrenceburg, Ky., native who died in 1944 at the age of 24.

Lt. Clarke struck a powerful blow for racial equality in the military by insisting on fair treatment and becoming commander to an all white unit. Prior to her military accomplishments, she graduated from Kentucky State College (now University) in Frankfort in 1941 with a degree in sociology and economics. Back home in Lawrenceburg, her degree was useless—only domestic jobs were available. She left for New York, and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, enlisted in the Women's Army Corps.

Clarke then reported to Ft. Des Moines, Iowa for officer training. She was the only black graduate in her class. Arriving for duty at Douglas Army Airfield in Arizona, Clark made history by assuming command of an all-white unit. She then made national news by protesting segregated seating in the base theater. After the base commander heard her arguments, he issued an order banning segregation on the base. A month later, Anna Mac Clarke died of a ruptured appendix.

This production is sponsored by the Red Hat Society of Barbourville as part of the Kentucky Chautauqua series, which is an exclusive presentation of the Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc. with statewide support from the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels and regional funding from Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America, Inc., People's Bank & Trust Company of Hazard, National City banks in Lexington and Long, the Brown-Forman Corporation, and Union College in Barbourville.