

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Atlantic States

Delaware · District of Columbia · Maryland · North Carolina · Virginia

April 21, 2018

To Contributors to the Regional Bahá'í Fund since May 1, 2017

Dearest Bahá'í Friends:

With profound gratitude and great joy we thank you for the contributions that you made to the Regional Bahá'í Fund during the fiscal year, May 1, 2017-April 30, 2018. As you know, the Regional Fund is a branch of the National Bahá'í Fund, and every contribution to the Regional Fund counts toward the National Fund goal. During this past year, a record 25% of the Atlantic's expenditures were covered by contributions to the Regional Fund.

At this Ridván season, let us "Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favour unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened."

Eighty years ago, a Bahá'í prominent in Washington, DC African-American society ascended to the Abhá Kingdom, alone, with no family to care for her final needs. She was buried in an unmarked grave in an African-American cemetery. Her body and those of her fellow people of color were later unceremoniously relocated to the National Harmony Memorial Park in Hyattsville, MD where it remained unnoticed and unmarked until a few believers learned of her and were inspired to find her story.

Pocahontas Pope (c1864-1938) was the first African-American Bahá'í in Washington, DC. Pauline and Joseph Hannen had taken to heart 'Abdu'l-Bahá's emphasis on the oneness of humanity and freedom from prejudice. They shared with her and she declared her faith to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1906. He sent her a Tablet in which He wrote:

Render thanks to the Lord that among that race thou art the first believer, that thou hast engaged in spreading sweet-scented breezes, and hast arisen to guide others. It is my hope that through the bounties and favors of the Abhá Beauty thy countenance may be illumined, thy disposition pleasing, and thy fragrance diffused, that thine eyes may be seeing, thine ears attentive, thy tongue eloquent, thy heart filled with supreme glad-tidings, and thy soul refreshed by divine fragrances, so that thou mayest arise among that race and occupy thyself with the edification of the people, and become filled with light. Although the pupil of the eye is black, it is the source of light. Thou shalt likewise be. The disposition should be bright, not the appearance. Therefore, with supreme confidence and certitude, say: "O God! Make me a radiant light, a shining lamp, and a brilliant star, so that I may illumine the hearts with an effulgent ray from Thy Kingdom of Abhá...."

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Her soul, among the Supreme Concourse, has been aiding us without name for eight decades. Now, a befitting grave marker will be installed on May 19, 2018, ensuring that her name will be recorded visibly and on our lips as we share the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with people of all backgrounds and hues in the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia.

Whatever your particular station in life, whether your sacrifices and offerings at the altar of service are seen or unseen, know that in hidden realms of God's knowledge and compassion you are treasured always.



William P. Collins
Treasurer