



# **Richard Stockton College Professor Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt Successfully Leads Drive for Fannie Lou Hamer Statue**

**Sculpture to Be Unveiled October 5 in Mississippi**

## ***For Immediate Release***

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**Galloway Township, NJ** – Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt, Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Africana Studies at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, chaired the committee that successfully advocated for the creation and installation of a statue to honor civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer in Ruleville Mississippi.

For nine years, Reid-Merritt has also been a driving force behind the Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium, held each fall at Stockton.

“This has been a very long and arduous journey,” Reid-Merritt said. “All of us were committed to doing whatever was needed to ensure the success of the project. We wanted to uplift the Hamer legacy.”

The eight foot tall bronze statue is to be unveiled on October 5<sup>th</sup> in the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden. It was created by nationally-acclaimed sculptor Brian Hanlon.

Hamer is tied to southern New Jersey for her testimony at Boardwalk Hall (then known as Convention Hall) during the 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic City. Her talk, carried on nationwide television, raised awareness of Hamer’s Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party’s

challenge to her state's all-white and anti-civil rights delegation to the convention. Her efforts resulted in a resolution calling for equality of states' delegations at the 1968 convention.

A national fund-raising drive by the committee, which began in February of 2010, is nearing completion to cover the cost of the monument. The committee was formed in October, 2009.

"A very small group of scholars and community activists from across the nation worked on this project the last two years," Reid-Merritt said. "It is amazing to witness what a small group of dedicated individuals can do. We are overwhelmed and ecstatic to see this monument to Mrs. Hamer is nearing completion and thankful to all who helped make it possible."

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