Membership benefits include new member packet containing forms and references to begin family history research, quarterly AAGS newsletter, yearly updated AAGS membership Surname Index.

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

African–American Genealogical Society of Cleveland, Ohio held their annual Heritage Dinner at the Manor Party Center.

The Society used “Smooth Criminals” as their theme. President Cathy Neal gave the welcome before everyone sung “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing.”

Tamara Stokes led everyone in games while Dovie Baumgardner touched on Dumb Crimes and Criminals. Leontae Jenkins provided personal insight about not doing the crime. Carmine Stewart shared pictures and research about Crimes Committed.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Deborah Abbott who researched Rev. Marvin McMickle's family. Dr. Abbott's four-year genealogical research project about an African American Family from Kentucky entitled "From Slavery to Freedom to Antioch" was highlighted in an Ohio Newspaper (February 2008) under the title "
Six-Volumes to Amplify a Family History
."

Recently (February 2010) the City Council of Detroit, Michigan presented Dr. Abbott with a "*Tes timonial Resolution"*
for her outstanding commitment to African-American genealogy research.

Abbott, past president of the African-American Genealogical Society, Cleveland, Ohio (AAGS), is a retired professor of counseling from Cuyahoga Community College. She holds Bachelor of Science and Masters of Education degrees from Tuskegee University (Alabama) and the Ph.D. from Kent State University.

She is an adjunct faculty member at the Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research at Samford University (Alabama). She has presented lectures at a variety of local genealogical societies, libraries, schools, and churches throughout northeast Ohio and the surrounding states.

Even though Abbott specializes in African-American genealogy, she enjoys teaching genealogy methodology. Her love for genealogy shows through her talks as she lectures on a wide variety of topics suited for all levels of genealogists.

AAGS Society began in 1990 . The mission of the twelve founding members was to assist novice historians in beginning their family research, to facilitate networking among African-American researchers, and to promote genealogical studies by offering the talents of its

members as speakers, teachers and exhibitors.

The mission remains unchanged.

They are in the midst of getting ready for their 2012 AAGS Spring Conference “Unlocking the Mystery of Family History” to be held Saturday, May 5, at the Cleveland Public Library in the Louis Stokes Auditorium located at 325 Superior Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio.

The conference will feature Shamele Jordon, a genealogical researcher, lecturer, writer and podcaster (Genealogy On Demand). Her biographical highlights include researcher for the PBS series *Oprah’s Roots: An African American Lives Special and African American Lives II* and Kimberly Powell who is a professional genealogist, web developer, genealogy blogger and proud mother of three children. She has been writing about genealogy for www.about.com since 2000, and her work also appeared in several genealogy magazines.

AAGS Membership is open to anyone interested in genealogy and family history. Members share their experiences and knowledge within the society and the general public at large. Annual dues are $30.00 for an individual and $40.00 for an organization.

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To find out more about AAGS visit their website at www.aagsclev.org.