

National Minority Donor Awareness Month

National Minority Donor Awareness Month began as National Minority Donor Awareness Week, founded in 1996 by the National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP), to bring continued awareness to organ donation and transplantation in multicultural communities, such as African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American communities.

Please join us in this nationwide observance dedicated to sharing the power of organ and tissue donation in our communities. Share your stories on social media, encourage donor registration and promote kidney health and wellness by getting checked annually. To register to be an organ donor, go to registerme.org



The History of the Howard University Hospital Transplant Support Group (HUTSG)

Between July of 1971 and June 1973, I trained under John Najarian and Richard Simmons at the University of Minnesota to perform Kidney transplantation. In July 1, 1973 the Howard University Transplant Center was begun. On January 28, 1974 We performed our first 2 Kidney Transplantations at Howard University's Freedmen's Hospital. In 1975 (January 28, 1975) we recognized that the kidney operations alone were not enough for long term patient survival and that its success was enhanced by a rehabilitation focused counselling group made up of a Psychiatrist (Allyce Gullatee), a rehabilitation counsellor (Ardis Silverman) a renal nurse Geneva Green) a social worker (Beryl Rice) and a transplant surgeon (Clive Callender). When we began this group attendance was mandatory in order to get on the transplant waiting list. In 1980 we published our first publication on this subject 'Kidney transplantation and its enhancement by a rehabilitation centered counseling group' in the Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counselling Volume 11, No. 2 PP 85, June 1980.

Between 1980 and 1987, we recognized that involving transplants and their relatives, or significant others improved patient compliance and resulted in better transplant outcomes, especially in our previously adduced patient populations. This was published in 1987, as a retrospective analysis of the success of the transplant support group from 1974-1987 by transplant nurse Josefina Flores and myself in The Journal of Transplant Proc. 1987 April; 19(2 suppl 2): 115-117 and with Dr. Joel Stevens, Renal transplants in Heroin Addicts in Surgery Gynecol. Obstetrics 1983 May; 156(5): 651-655.



In 1995, 20 years later we published our 20-year experience with liver and kidney transplant recipients. This paper chronicled the benefits of a rehabilitation focused support group in a manuscript titled "The Howard University Hospital Transplant and Dialysis Support Group, twenty years and going strong in the International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Vol.45, 1995 Issue 4, PP 471-88.

Now in 2025, 50 years after this group began, the group now includes families and friends, and other invited community participants. The group discussions are about health advances in all health and scientific related areas with ongoing feedback and invited presenters on topics which our group identifies. This group continues to meet on zoom every Thursday from 9-10:30 a.m. The sources for much of our discussions are the Washington Post weekly health section, Medscape and other medical news articles. Our most recent guest was Dr. Wayne Frederick, President Emeritus of Howard University, who discussed the development of strategies necessary to help us survive and thrive in this new administration's efforts to dismantle diversity and inclusion.



Dr. Dineen Simpson – Mitigating Barriers to Transplantation Through Trust and Proximity:

Dr. Dineen Simpson became the First Black female transplant surgeon in Illinois, specializing in liver and kidney transplantation in 2017.

As much data has shown, African Americans make up the largest group of patients in need of organ transplantation, but are less likely to receive an organ, due to the systemic barriers that lead up to getting an organ.

Distrust in healthcare is one of the main issues patients voice when discussing knowledge about healthcare options. So often patients are not provided with the correct information about dialysis options or when transplant can be considered.

In 2019 Dr. Simpson became the founding Director of Northwestern Medicine African American Transplant Access Program, which helps Black patients navigate barriers they may face when trying to access the transplant process, which can lead to optimal health outcomes through kidney and liver transplantation if they can be successfully transplanted.

“Our mission is to mitigate the disparities that limit access to this life-saving treatment” says Dr. Dineen Simpson.

Established in 2019, the program now includes a satellite clinic in Oak Lawn, a suburb on the southwest side of Chicago, a neighborhood of clustered Black communities. By meeting patients where they are, the barrier to transplant evaluation is minimized and it opens the door to provide connections and resources that are needed to get such patients to start the transplant evaluation process, which then continues at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Since its inception, the AATAP has grown to include a dedicated social worker, nurse coordinator, and health literacy coach. These providers help connect patients to resources needed such as transportation assistance, additional transplant education, information about secondary insurance coverage, support groups and more. For many patients, navigating the difficult and complex path from diagnosis to testing to treatment can be discouraging. Having a team that understands the cultural and structural barriers that can stand in the way for this population can make all the difference when completing the necessary testing for listing.

Dr. Simpson saw a need and created a solution to eliminate some of the barriers to transplantation seen by African American patients- by meeting them where they are and providing a trusted safe environment where they are not only seen, but heard.



Detroit MOTTEP Foundation:

30 Years of Transforming Lives and Communities

As the Detroit Minority Organ and Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP) marks its 30th anniversary, we reflect on a legacy defined by groundbreaking community initiatives, impactful partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to saving lives through education, awareness, and advocacy. From its humble beginnings, Detroit MOTTEP has grown into a nationally trusted voice, exceeding all expectations and driving meaningful change in organ and tissue donation—especially in multicultural communities.

A Legacy of Community Impact, Strong Partnerships, and Lasting Change

Detroit MOTTEP's community outreach efforts have been at the heart of its mission. Over the past three decades, the organization has led thousands of health fairs and community presentations, ensuring vital information reaches the people who need it most. Programs like *Healthy Hair Begins with a Healthy Body*, *Leave a Legacy of Love*, and *Take the Pledge* have engaged hair salons, barbershops, churches, sororities, and fraternities—promoting health education and donor registration in trusted, familiar settings.

Detroit MOTTEP's success is deeply rooted in its strategic partnerships. Over the years, it has collaborated with organizations including the *National Kidney Foundation of Michigan*,

Detroit NAACP, Michigan Medicine, Henry Ford Health, and the Donate Life Coalition of Michigan. Faith-based partnerships with the Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Detroit Baptist Council of Pastors and Vicinity, the Interfaith Leadership Council, and its long-standing alliance with Gift of Life Michigan have enabled Detroit MOTTEP to spread its mission across communities and congregations, fostering a spirit of compassion and advocacy.

With the introduction of *MOTTEP Telehealth in partnership with National MOTTEP and Medicaid Readiness in partnership with the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan*, the organization continues to meet the evolving needs of the community—breaking down barriers to access and providing essential health services and information. *The Angels for Life* and *MOTTEP Men* initiatives have further expanded the foundation's reach, empowering dedicated volunteers to share their personal stories while promoting organ and tissue donation awareness and health education.

The foundation's partnerships with local media personalities—including *Diana and Glenda Lewis, Keenan Smith, and Chuck Stokes of WXYZ Channel 7 Detroit*—have amplified its message, bringing organ and tissue donation awareness into homes across the region.

Detroit MOTTEP's directors have played a vital role in shaping its legacy. *Alfred Bolden Jr. and Remonia Chapman*, both of whom served as AMAT Presidents from 2014 to 2017, provided visionary leadership, guiding the foundation to new heights.



Detroit MOTTEP Foundation: 30 Years of Transforming Lives and Communities

Signature Events That Inspire

Throughout the years, Detroit MOTTEP has hosted an array of impactful events, bringing the community together in support of organ and tissue donation. **The Annual LIFE Walk & Run** has become a signature event, attracting millions of participants from across the country and internationally since its inception. Other signature events—including the **Lifesavers Leadership Breakfast**, **Kountz | Callender | Drew Transplant Symposium**, **Sounds of Saving Lives**, and **Silver Night Under the Stars**—have become pillars of the foundation’s advocacy and fundraising efforts.

Initiatives such as **Greek Blue** and **Green Day** and **National Minority Donor Awareness Day (NMDAD)** proclamations at the city and state levels have further elevated Detroit MOTTEP’s visibility and impact.

Statewide Reach and Recognition

Beyond Detroit, the foundation has expanded its reach across Michigan. Collaborations with the **Flint Ministerial Alliance** and the **Grand Rapids African American Health Initiative** have strengthened its influence, ensuring that more communities receive access to life-saving information and resources.

Detroit MOTTEP’s exceptional service has earned numerous awards and recognitions, including the **Ecumenical Theological Seminary’s Iconic Community Service Award**, the **Michigan Donor Family Council Inspiration Award**, and the **Michigan Medicine Leadership Award**. National honors—such as the **AMAT Clive Callender Award** and **National MOTTEP Awards**—further celebrate the foundation’s enduring impact. Local accolades from the **Detroit Urban League**, **Detroit Community Health Connection**, and the **Michigan Chronicle** underscore its commitment to excellence.

Resilience Through Adversity

When the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the landscape of community engagement, Detroit MOTTEP adapted with resilience and innovation. Shifting in-person events to virtual platforms ensured the continuity of its mission, allowing the foundation to maintain operations and expand its digital presence.



Detroit MOTTEP Foundation: 30 Years of Transforming Lives and Communities

A Remarkable Rise in Multicultural Donations

One of Detroit MOTTEP's most significant achievements is its contribution to increasing multicultural organ and tissue donation rates. Since its inception in 1995, the percentage of multicultural donors in Michigan has grown from **10.8%** to **54%** in 2024—a testament to the foundation's unwavering dedication and influence.

Meeting the Moment: A New Chapter

In 2023, Detroit MOTTEP launched the **Meet the Moment** initiatives and, in partnership with **Priority Health**, introduced **MOTTEP Men** in 2024—a program addressing chronic kidney disease (CKD) in African American males aged 18 to 35. That same year, Detroit MOTTEP partnered with the **National Kidney Foundation** of Michigan to launch the **Medicaid Readiness Initiative**, designed to address health disparities and increase access to life-saving resources—further solidifying its role as a champion for equitable healthcare.

A Future of Continued Impact

As Detroit MOTTEP celebrates its 30th anniversary, it does so with a sense of pride and determination. The foundation's unwavering commitment to saving lives, advocating for health equity, and empowering communities serves as a beacon of hope. With its rich legacy and forward-thinking initiatives, Detroit MOTTEP is poised to continue being a trusted voice in multicultural communities—making a lasting impact for years to come.

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LOVE Yourself, Take Care of Yourself



Fern Callender: The Steady Heart Behind MOTTEP

Honoring a life of quiet strength,
deep faith, and relentless service

Fern Callender at a MOTTEP Gala, radiant in presence and purpose. “She was everything and everywhere,” said Dr. Callender. “Totally immersed in every aspect of MOTTEP—while never asking for credit.”

It’s often said that the strongest leaders don’t seek the spotlight—they make things happen behind the scenes. For National MOTTEP, Fern Callender was exactly that kind of leader. From its earliest days until her passing in 2025, Fern was the steady presence, the guiding hand, and often, the silent force keeping things moving forward. “She was effectively one of them others of MOTTEP,” recalls MOTTEP founder, Dr. Clive Callender.

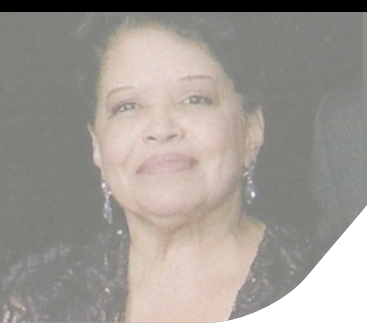
Fern’s commitment ran deep: from serving as secretary and treasurer for the MOTTEP Board to personally contributing significant funds to ensure the organization’s sustainability. “She gave without complaint,” Dr. Callender said. “She gave without needing credit.” Fern’s work with MOTTEP helped raise awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation, as well as promoting self-care to prevent serious illness. Her legacy continues to inspire others to give selflessly and make a positive impact in their own communities.

Even those who worked alongside her may not have fully realized the scope of her impact. She mentored, offered quiet support during personal hardships, and pulled her whole family

together to guarantee that the MOTTEP gala was a can’t-miss event—all while dancing, laughing, and spreading the word about MOTTEP’s mission.

Yet her life was much more than her MOTTEP advocacy. Fern was fiercely devoted to her family and her faith. She drove her husband to work at all hours of the day or night, rain or shine, and nurtured a home rooted in generosity, devotion to family, and love. She enjoyed traveling cross-country with Dr. Callender to visit their daughter and her wife in LA on the “choo choo,” where they would sing along with the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, make friends, and stop in their favorite shops and diners during layovers. The Callenders were both remembered and beloved at train stations from DC to Chicago to LA.

At home, Fern cooked the kinds of meals that kept hearts (and bodies) strong. Having hailed from a family that catered for the Washington elite, Fern knew her way around the kitchen. She was famous for her macaroni and cheese and spaghetti and meatballs. She also had a sweet tooth—Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups and fudge among her favorite treats. Though quiet,



Fern Callender: The Steady Heart Behind MOTTEP

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Fern knew how to show up and show out, and was effortlessly chic. She could carry a pair of giant '70s-inspired sunglasses like nobody's business. And she never met a line dance she didn't make her own.

In the community, Fern had a deeply personal ministry of service. She discreetly donated coats and clothes every month to those in need and contributed to numerous charities without fanfare. A nurse by training, Fern extended her care giving to friends and relatives for years—sometimes decades. One relative simply put it: “She took care of people’s mothers the way their own daughters would.” Her service was more than a commitment—it was the fabric of who she was. She lived by the principle that every act of kindness, no matter how small, could make a significant difference.

Have you ever met someone whose quiet strength and unwavering dedication left an indelible mark on everyone they knew? Fern Callender was that person. Her legacy is a testament to the power of love and service, and her impact continues to inspire others to follow in her foot steps. If there's one lesson Fern leaves behind, it's this: the gift of love is powerful, often invisible, and always enduring.

In remembering Fern Callender, we are reminded of the profound difference one person can make. Her life was a shining example of the virtues of love, kindness, and service. As we reflect on her legacy, we are encouraged to carry forward her spirit of generosity and compassion—so her influence will endure for generations to come.

This tribute is offered with love and gratitude by the Callender family. May Fern's unwavering spirit of service, kindness, and quiet strength continue to inspire all who knew her—and all who carry her work forward.

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