



cayugacenters 

Remembering Fredrick N. "Chuckles" Richardson

REFLECTING ON THE MAN
BEHIND REMEMBER FRED DAY



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“A life well lived is a life done in service. Service to family and service to community. It is a life built on faith.”

Fredrick N. Richardson



Fredrick N. Richardson - May 31, 1941 - August 26, 2016

INTRODUCTION A Personal Encounter

Fredrick N. Richardson, affectionately known as “Chuckles” or Fred to many in the Auburn, NY community, has a story that stretches back many years. However, my personal introduction to the man we at Cayuga Centers celebrate annually began in 2016, precisely on September 7th. - It would be eight years later when I got the chance to sit with his wife, Joy Richardson, and fill in the gaps of what I know about Mr. Richardson.

It was my first day at Cayuga Centers, stepping into the role of its new Social Media Administrator. The marketing department, then comprised of only four individuals, hummed with activity. A blend of emotions — sadness, urgency, and excitement — filled each office. Invitation lists were being drawn up, locations were scouted,

and beautiful plaques in honor of Board Member and Chair Fred Richardson and President and CEO Edward Myers Hayes were designed and ready to be ordered. Simultaneously, a Capital Campaign was underway with the goal of raising enough money to purchase and name a building that housed our staff and clients in Fred Richardson’s honor.

The excitement initially stemmed from the anticipation of a Celebration of Service dinner that the team was planning for the end of the month. However, the urgency and sadness became palpable upon learning about the dinner's original intentions and the sudden changes due to the recent passing of one of its intended honorees, who sadly departed less than two weeks before my arrival.

It was revealed that the Celebration of Service was meant to commemorate a remarkable milestone—50 years of combined service between Board Member and Chair Fred Richardson and President and CEO Edward Myers Hayes. However, it shifted not only to celebrate their accomplishments but also to memorialize Fred's life.

I remember the happiness and smiles that carried the event and the elation that spread across Mrs. Richardson's face. In our recent interview, she reminded me how wonderful the event was and that it brought tears to her eyes. She gushed about the plaque we presented to her on behalf of Fred Richardson, which was placed right behind where I sat in her dining room.

"I knew right where I was going to put it," she laughs. The red and black marble-like plaque had a space all to itself and looked just as it did all those years ago.

As a newly hired employee at the time, thrown into coordinating such a significant event, I was filled with excitement and curiosity, particularly regarding the significance of Fred Richardson's role within the agency and the community members in attendance. Everyone had nothing but kind words whenever his name was brought up. But who was Fred Richardson?

"I know Uncle Chuckles on a personal level, as he is my family member. I don't think I've ever called him Fred. He always involved children. He was always a giver. He was always kind, no matter who you were. He is very missed as a family member. "

Shelly Ali

Intake Specialist - Upstate New York TFFC



Mrs. Richardson accepts plaque in honor of her late husband Frederick Richardson at the 2016 Celebration of Service Dinner

Following the success of the Celebration of Service dinner and recognizing the importance of preserving Fred's legacy within the agency, Edward Myers Hayes made a significant announcement. He declared the beginnings of an annual tradition: **Remember Fred Day**.

ORIGINAL RESOLUTION

Frederick N. Richardson served on the Cayuga Centers Board of Trustees from 1988 to 2016. Fred added to us in so many ways. One of the important things he did every day was validate and lift up those around him.

The quality of our work is directly attributable to the wonderful staff we have. Our staff make the difference in countless lives.

We mark the last business day of November – November 30th in 2016 – as a **REMEMBER FRED DAY**. On this day we thank our staff and encourage them to live the essence of Fred by lifting up each other.

Thank you each and every staff member for your commitment and for your strong, steady and inspired work.

The announcement was heartfelt and necessary. The gesture ensured that Fred's contributions, memory, and values would continue to be honored and lived within the agency. Over the years, this tradition painted a more rounded picture of Fred. Mr. Hayes regularly regaled staff with his memories and stories of Fred, and it was evident that Fred truly had a lasting impact on his life.

"Fred was a realist. He was always positive. He lifted people up and worked with them to bring out the best in them. He brought out the best in me, and he gave me guidance," Edward Myers Hayes shares about his friend and mentor. As he speaks of Fred, there's a hint of sadness and longing in his eyes. It's clear he misses his friend.

Joy Richardson, too misses her husband and best friend, I'm "glad that other people remember and honor him," she shared with me over our cheese and crackers.



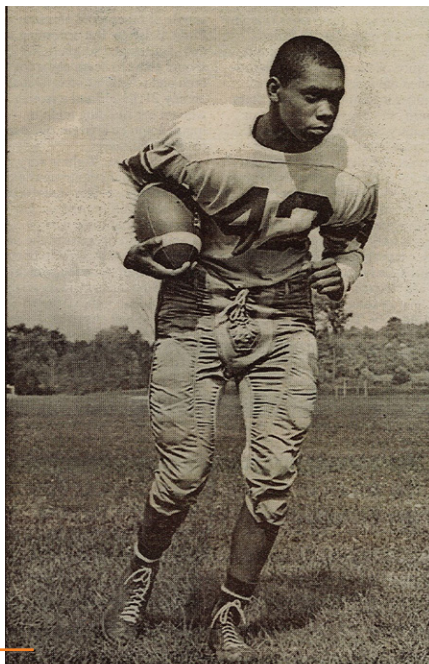
Edward Myers Hayes and Frederick "Chuckles" Richardson

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Edward Myers Hayes
Cayuga Centers CEO



Bob Calimeri hands off the baton to Fred Richardson during a race in 1957



Fred Richardson, was an outstanding athlete at Auburn High School

Photo courtesy of Fred Richardson
FRED RICHARDSON, known as "Chuckles" to his friends, was an outstanding athlete at Auburn High School

THE ESSENCE OF FRED Anecdotes and Memories

My time with Joy unfolded over three hours. Every lingering question about the life of Fred "Chuckles" Richardson found its answer. Fred got his nickname, "Chuckles," from his grandfather, Henry Jones. As a kid, Fred was skinny. Because he had athletic ambitions, his grandfather wanted to bulk him up, so he encouraged him to drink a lot of milk. Fred would sort of chug the milk with a chuckling sound, so to speak. The nickname stuck, and perhaps his grandfather was onto something with the milk.

Fred had quite a famous high school record and is currently a member of the Auburn High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He was a four-sport standout in track and field, football, basketball, and baseball. For the first time in Auburn High track and field history, the team captured the 1958 Section III championship with Fred leading the way. Then, against a rival school, he set (and still

holds) the 220-yard dash record of 22.2 seconds, breaking the old mark of 22.4 seconds set in 1949.

In Auburn, NY, Fred's impact extended beyond his athletic career. In 1963, he shattered barriers by becoming the first Black police officer in his hometown since George Lightfoot in 1881. From there, he became a Corrections Officer and climbed the ranks to become Superintendent ultimately. Throughout his remarkable 28-year career, Fred remained steadfast in his values, epitomizing his belief to "Treat people the way you want to be treated. And treat everybody as individuals."



Fred Richardson during his time with NY State Department of Corrections

Joy shared a story that vividly captures Fred's essence, shedding light on the spirit that we celebrate during Remember Fred Day at Cayuga Centers. "When they had the riot at the [Auburn Correctional Facility] prison, Fred was working," she revealed. I found myself leaning in. During my time commuting in and out of Auburn, I have heard bits and

pieces of the infamous riot at the prison. No one was killed, and only 300 of the prison's 1,700 inmates were active participants.

Fred was one of the corrections officers held in the yard by the inmates. The inmate in charge requested Fred be freed to carry their demands to the Warden thinking that Fred would take the opportunity to stay in safety and not return. "But Fred insisted on going back because his fellow officers were there and the inmates were there, who were someone's family," Joy continues then comments on the fear she felt that day. Even though he dealt with inmates, he always treated them with respect. He treated them the way he would want to be treated had the tables ever turned.

Because of the kindness he showed to everyone he crossed paths with, the rioting inmates were showing their appreciation by allowing him the chance to be out of danger. Fred remained and was made part of the negotiating team that eventually talked the inmates into surrendering.

"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else." - Booker T. Washington. A favorite quote of Fred's. It was all beginning to make sense.



Fred Richardson was a four sport stand-out in track and field, football, basketball and baseball

TO COMPETE AT WEST POINT—Taking part in the Intersectional Field and Track Meet Saturday at West Point will be seven members of the Auburn High Schools squad. The foursome in front is the crack relay team composed of Ben Burniak, John Baldwin, Fred Richardson and Tom Gubbaly. In back are Coach Ed Blatz, Herb Jones, 880 sprinter; Richard Guzalak, high jumper and Punch Taylor, quarter miler. (C.A. Photo)

FRED'S COMMUNITY SERVICE A Multifaceted Legacy

In addition to his work in the Department of Correctional Services and into retirement, Fred Richardson was heavily involved in community service, which played an important role in his life. He once said, "A life well lived is a life done in service—service to family and service to community. It is a life built on faith."

In 1988, Fred Richardson became a member of Cayuga Centers' Board of Trustees, marking the beginning of a 20-year tenure that sadly concluded with his passing in 2016. Throughout his time on the board, Fred consistently advocated for the best interests of the children served by Cayuga Centers. Perhaps his background in the corrections system influenced his dedication to Cayuga Centers' mission. Perhaps Fred was drawn to the work the organization was doing as a way to keep youth out of the jails he guarded for years.

Edward Myers Hayes, President and CEO remembers Fred as "Being the voice of change" that Cayuga Centers needed. Fred's commitment to progress and his ability to bridge the gap between those seeking change and those resistant to it made him the ideal candidate for Chair of the Board.

"Fred and I would have the greatest conversations," reflects Hayes. "We would dig down on my analysis and solutions, and he would poke holes. But we would go and get better."

As Cayuga Centers considered expanding beyond Cayuga County, NY, Fred kept the agency humble and focused. He would often pose questions such as, 'What are we doing for the kids?' and 'Are we where people need us?'



Cayuga Centers Board of Trustees



Cayuga Centers Board of Trustees 1992 - 1993

Most importantly, I've gathered, he knew when to pull back when something wasn't serving the organization's best interest.

From my years at the agency and time spent speaking and listening to Edward Myers Hayes, there's no doubt that the agency continues to be led as though Fred and Hayes are engaging in those deep, impactful conversations that carried Cayuga Centers those many years ago.

Outside of Cayuga Centers, Fred Richardson was the Board President of Booker T. Washington, a social service organization, and its Executive Director. He ran for the local school board and Cayuga County Legislature. He was an active member of the Auburn NAACP, the Auburn Social Club, and the American Correctional Association, and he was a preacher/steward at Thompson Memorial Church, where Harriet Tubman also attended, and a member of Robie's Athletic Association. He served on the assessment review board and the BOCES advisory board and was on the board of directors of the YMCA, Red Cross, Cayuga Savings Bank,

United Way and Boy Scouts. He was supervisor of the Auburn recreational softball programs and was chairperson of the Human Rights Commission. He was very active in Little League and Babe Ruth baseball and was a certified football referee. He was on the Central New York Regional Planning Board, and he was also a beloved husband, father, uncle, and friend to many.

"He was passionate about all his services, especially his time at Cayuga Centers and Booker T. Washington, where he first began working when he was younger. Everything he was on he gave his heart to." Joy comments after we shared a laugh, wondering how Fred ever found the time for it all.

With such an extensive list of roles, I couldn't help but wonder what motivated Fred to become such a prominent figure in his community. A simple "him" slipped from Joy's lips initially. "I don't know. It was just him. As he grew up, he just started helping people if he could."

She went into a brief story of Fred helping a woman who really wanted a specific job in the community but she and her resume was being ignored. Fred knew someone who knew someone and, "Next thing you know, she got the job!"

"He was just a wonderful, wonderful man. It was all in him. That's just the way he was," Joy beams as she reminisces about her late husband. What resonated most from my time at the Richardsons' was the impact of Joy's support on Fred. Her encouragement not only helped him persevere but also inspired him to uplift others. What resonated most from my time at the Richardsons' was the impact of Joy's support on Fred. Her encouragement not only helped him persevere but also inspired him to uplift others.

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Joy Richardson



**"Treat people
the way
you want to
be treated.
And treat
everybody as
individuals."**

Fred Richardson

Fred Richardson during
his high school years



"Fred was a wonderful, wise, fun, kind, hard-working man who loved Cayuga Centers and the staff. Without his years of guidance, we wouldn't be where we are today."

Patsy Hayes Myers
Auburn, NY



Fred Richardson at home with his ceramic figurines collection



LOOKING AHEAD

Living by Fred's Principles

Joy's heartfelt reflections on her husband's life cemented the importance of speaking aloud the names of those who have inspired you and shown you kindness, respect, and love. For those are the people who should never cease to exist.

Each year, during Remember Fred Day, we reflect on Fred's life and legacy - to remember his dedication to serving others and the influence of his kindness and compassion.

In our work at Cayuga Centers and in our everyday lives, let us carry his spirit of generosity, empathy, and perseverance. I hope you were inspired by Fred's story to be the change you wish to see in the world and are encouraged to leave behind a legacy of love, kindness, respect, and service.

Rainer S.A. Nisbett

Digital Advertising & Communications
Specialist at Cayuga Centers

Special thanks to Joy Richardson and Edward Myers Hayes for sitting with me and sharing your stories.



"I still have my very first Remember Fred Day message from 2016."
Kelly Ware, MPA



Scan to hear more about Fred Richardson





Staff reflect on their time with Fred

"He was just so human. It didn't matter your title, he would just stop you in the hallway and want to hear how you were doing. I think about annual meetings and how Fred would start every annual meeting with a moment of silence and he would thank everyone in the room for their service. And it was powerful."

Kelly Ware, MPA

Deputy for Upstate NY Treatment & Support

"Only a few people on the Board wanted to come to NYC and Fred was one of them. Because of Fred and Ed we're in NYC. He always made time for you no matter your position and spoke to you with respect, and I really miss him."

Troy Brathwaite

Deputy for Federal Programs - NYC

"He was always smiling and laughing. He treated you as a person and not an employee. He would come down to the rec center and shoot baskets with whichever kid was there. He wanted to have fun and got the kids involved. Before we talked about work, he would always want to know about your family."

Jenn Hayes

Assistant Director of Diversion Programs
Cayuga County, NY