

SOAPSTONE PRESERVATION ENDOWMENT

"Protecting and Promoting the History and Story of the Liberia Community"

www.Soapstonepe.org

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Overview -- The Soapstone Preservation Endowment (SPE) exists for one purpose: to protect and share the history of the Liberia Community—**Soapstone Baptist Church and grounds, the one-room school, and the historic cemetery.**

At the heart of this story is **Mable Owens Clarke**—Soapstone's matriarch and an SPE Board member. Her smile says it ALL ... with YOUR generous support **we have met—and exceeded—our \$1 million endowment goal.**

2025 Highlights

Reaching a \$1 million endowment was a monumental achievement. Yet 2025 also brought meaningful progress on the ground:

- **The one-room schoolhouse (circa 1920s)**—restored in 2024 by *Harper General Contractors* —**has now been fully furnished with period pieces and interpretive banners that tell the community's story.**
- Following **Hurricane Helene**, SPE invested in critical repairs: Restoration of sanctuary ceilings & removal of downed trees from the cemetery.



On **September 13**, SPE helped Soapstone Baptist Church host a public unveiling of a long-awaited **historic marker**, followed by a private luncheon honoring more than two dozen individuals and organizations whose support went far beyond financial gifts.

The Partnership Challenge

Raising a **\$1 million endowment** for a small African American church in rural Pickens County was a steep climb. Two catalytic matching grants made it possible:

- **South Carolina legislature (2023)**
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (2024)**

Meeting those challenges required raising **\$500,000 in matching funds**, accomplished largely through the generosity of **103 businesses, churches, families, and individuals**—each committing at least **\$3,000** in total gifts or pledges.

Yet, **Every gift mattered; Every partner made the difference.**

A complete list of Partners is available at soapstonepe.org (Menu → The Partnership Challenge).

Biblical Generosity

At the recognition luncheon for those who contributed services and in-kind support—often in addition to financial gifts—we highlighted one family whose generosity captures the spirit of this effort.



GIVE NO MORE: *Gally Gallivan called one day to ask if I (Carlton) would be willing to come to their home to share more details about SPE and our plans. My answer: a quick “yes.”*

*Upon arrival I found three generations of the family – **Gally & Fielding** along with one of their sons (**Clark**), and one of Clark & Katie’s children, **Max**. I shared the story and made a pitch for a “Partnership” gift.*

A few weeks later Gally called to say that the story made an impression on the family and that one member – Fielding – was so excited she was sending a check. Gally – jokingly? – suggested that in the future I keep my distance from his wife and her checkbook.

*A few months later, Gally & Fielding attended an event where Mable shared her story at the **Upcountry History Museum** (a video of that presentation is on the SPE website). I took the opportunity to let Fielding know that Gally had set boundaries for us. She laughed as she said, “He can’t do that.”*

A couple of weeks later, Gally texted me to say, “Another check is on the way.”

Still months later, Gally again texted me on a Saturday morning. “She is at it again. Another check is on the way....by the way, I accidentally burned the checkbook.” In giving the Gallivans their award, I shared a story from Exodus 36:6-7. Moses told the people to cease giving gifts for the Temple as “we have enough.” In all my years of fundraising, I had never told anyone they **could not give more** – Fielding & Gally Gallivan are the first!*

***Award created using soapstone gathered from the site**

Any current donor may become a **Partner** by increasing total giving to \$3,000 or more, through:

A one-time gift, OR a multi-year pledge

If you are unsure of your current gift total, simply email carltonowen1@gmail.com, and we will let you know what remains to complete the commitment.

Our Board

We added **4 new members** to the SPE Board at the April 8 meeting.

Peggy Baxter	Carlton N. Owen, Chairperson
Wesley Brashier	Cleopatra Sparks
Mable Owens Clarke	Pastor Chet Trower
Dr. Jeffrey Craddock	Marilyn Wells
Andy Douglas, Secretary/Treasurer	Darryl Williams
Don Lineback	

A Quick 2025 Financial Report

No funds have been drawn from the Endowment since inception. With current cash on hand—and assuming pledges are fulfilled as expected—we anticipate **allowing the Endowment to grow without any draws for approximately three years.**

	Income		Expenses		Fund Balance	
	Gifts	\$491,051	Program	\$24,978	Endowment	\$1,007,110
	Earnings	\$62,721	Mgmt./General	\$1,913	Bank Accts	\$63,941
			Fundraising	\$1,141	Pledges	\$51,602
TOTALS	\$553,772		\$28,032		\$1,122,653	

Looking Ahead to 2026

We have lots of things planned for the year ahead, among them:

- Working with SC DOT to obtain a Historic Site sign on Scenic Highway 11.
- Collaborating with the Clemson Area African American Museum and Clemson University to create a Black History Trail in the Upstate with Soapstone prominently included.
- Seeking “docents” to help open the school to visitors for planned hours 2-3 days each week.
- Taking over the cost of maintenance of the grounds on an ongoing basis.

Chairperson's Corner



On behalf of the **Board of the Soapstone Preservation Endowment**, thank you for your generosity, trust, and belief in this work. ***We truly would not be here without you.***

We wish you a safe, prosperous, and God-blessed year ahead.

Carlton

YES, we still accept and can put gifts to beneficial use...

To Make Online Gifts: www.soapstonepe.org

Checks to:

Soapstone Preservation Endowment

P.O. Box 454

Marietta, SC 29661

To discuss special gifts email: carltonowen1@gmail.com



Rev. Sean Dogan, Pastor, Long Branch Baptist Church, a SPE Partner,
leads prayer at the unveiling of the historic marker.

Photos: Chris Aluka Berry, AlukaStories

Tanner Backman, SPE Award