

**ARCHIE EDWARDS BLUES HERITAGE FOUNDATION
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
7/1/2020**

OFFICERS

**President William Leebel
Secretary David Bird
Treasurer Miles Spicer
President Emeritus Michel Baytop**

DIRECTORS

**Phillip Daniels
Eleanor Ellis
Donna Fletcher
Chris Metzler
Uzill "Stormi" Weaver
Phil Wiggins**

***Of Counsel* Jefferson Glassie
Archivist Paul Kennedy**



William Leebel - President

There has always been a special place in Willie's heart for the blues. Prior to starting a family he attended as many blues concerts as he could. Muddy Waters, Sonny Terry and Brownie Magee, John Hammond, B.B. King, Junior Wells, Mississippi John Hurt, Elmore James, John Lee Hooker, Taj Mahal and many, many others.

After a long hiatus, music and the blues found its way back into his life. He picked up the guitar again and started to focus on acoustic blues. Following a conversation with world-renowned harmonica player Phil Wiggins, Willie showed up at Archie's Barbershop on Bunker Hill Road one Saturday afternoon in 2007. Although Archie was no longer around, he found the distinctive atmosphere at the barbershop electrifying.

Willie wanted to absorb all he could about Piedmont and acoustic blues and the history of the barbershop that included all of the "old timers" who knew Archie personally. His love of the shop and the vibe it emitted was enough to keep him attending on a regular basis. He realized that there was something bigger than just the music going on there. In 2009, he found himself on the board of directors of the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation and was elected president in 2016. He performs with the Archie Edwards Blues Ensemble, as a duo with Mike Baytop and with the trio Breaking Blue.



David Bird - Secretary

David got his first guitar at 15, after schoolboy flirtations with saxophone and piano. After years of scared basement playing of various sorts and dubious quality, at the age of 32, he found that John Cephas, whom he had heard play a mind-blowing version of Skip James's "Hard Time Killing Floor" a decade before, was teaching at Augusta Blues Week in West Virginia. After much vacillation, he went, and was drawn into the music and community of the Piedmont blues.

David joined the board in 2005, and around the same time began musical collaborations with Miles Spicer and Jim Lande. With Miles, he has co-written a number of songs that have been performed and recorded by Miles's band MSG: The Acoustic Blues Trio. With Jim, and a rotating cast of collaborators, he performs locally in The Social Ramble. He also performs with the Archie Edwards Blues Ensemble.

With gratitude to John Cephas, and Barbershop figures like Mike Baytop, N.J. Warren, Eleanor Ellis, and Joe Steen, David is committed to carrying on the tradition. In addition to being a jam regular, he teaches guitar for the shop's regular series, as well as produces instructional videos for the program.



Miles Spicer - Treasurer

Miles Spicer's involvement with the Barbershop began when Mike Baytop introduced him to Archie Edwards and the jams at their original location on Bunker Hill Road in 1996. He was part of the original board that formed the foundation in 1998, and served as the organization's first treasurer.

Miles is principal guitarist in M.S.G. Acoustic Blues Trio, with whom he has recorded three full-length CDs, including, most recently, the Wammie-winning *The Flood*, and performed at numerous festivals including Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion and the Chicago Blues Festival. He also performs as a solo artist and with the Riverdale David Bird since 2005, and they have created songs that have been recorded by M.S.G. and other artists. As a staff teaching artist with Arts For The Aging, he performs regularly for seniors in the Washington area.

Miles is proud to have been mentored by Michel Baytop and to have studied with John Cephas and John Jackson. Their instruction included an appreciation of the culture with the directive to carry the legacy forward.



Michel Baytop - President Emeritus

Michel "Mike" Baytop is President Emeritus and a founder of the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation. Archie was his teacher and mentor, and he performed with Archie on harmonica and guitar during Archie's later years.

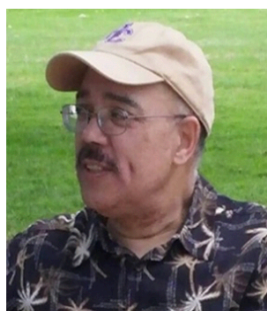
Mike was born in Washington, DC in 1948, where he lived most of his life. His father introduced him to music when he gave him a harmonica. Later in life, he became truly interested in playing the blues he heard as he was growing up. Mike's harmonica sound is influenced by Charlie Sayles, Phil Wiggins and James Cotton. His guitar playing is influenced by Mississippi John Hurt, Larry Johnson, Jerry Ricks – and by Archie Edwards, under whom he studied for many years. He learned to play bones from Richard "Mr. Bones" Thomas.

Mike performed with Archie at the Smithsonian Institute's 150th birthday celebration. In 1997 they played the 90th anniversary of the Niagara Group at Harper's Ferry, WV, and at the Rocky Gap Festival in Cumberland, MD, this time joined by Mr. Bones.

Mike has recorded on Michael Roach's CDs *Ain't Got No Home* (1994) and *Blinds of Life* (1996). They performed at the first Bluebird Festival at Prince George's College in 1994 and at the 11th annual DC Mayor's Arts Awards in 1995. Mike joined Michael Roach on a tour in England in 1966.

In demand as a performer, Mike has played at the Bull Durham Blues Festival, Blues in the Burg Festival, DC Blues Society Festival, the Smithsonian National Folklife Festival, and the Folk Festival at Ferrum College. He participated in the opening of the John Hurt Museum in Avalon, Mississippi. In 1998, Mike played the role of the Bluesman in the play *I Am A Man*. He also accompanied poet Theresa Davis on the harmonica during her poetry readings.

Mike has conducted workshops at Common Ground and has lectured and performed at the University of Maryland. He participated in the annual Percussion Discussion, a program for elementary schools. Other community service activities include performances at schools and civic events.



Phillip Daniels

Born and raised in Washington, DC., Phill Daniels grew up listening to R&B, soul, and classical music. After discovering the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Cream and other classic rock groups, he signed up to take guitar lessons from Bill Harris, a founding member of the DC Blues Society. However, he soon discovered that he wasn't ready to experience the joy of playing the guitar. During college his interests expanded into jazz and fusion. He played the French horn in the marching/symphonic band and alto saxophone in the jazz/pep band. But his real love was the bass guitar/upright bass which he also played in college and continues to play.

In 2013, Phill bought a Kala U-Bass after hearing how much it sounded like an upright bass. This led to his purchase of his first ukulele. After a group of ukulele players told him about the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation, he began attending the Saturday jams. Since 2015, he has hosted a monthly ukulele jam where attendees play a variety of musical genres including blues.

As he became more interested in the history and performance of Piedmont-style blues, Phill wanted to help the Foundation grow. In 2019, he was asked to join the Foundation's Board and work to expand its fundraising efforts. Phill continues to explore how he can promote playing blues on the uke. One might think that the ukulele is a strange instrument on which to play the blues. Phill notes that the ukulele was used in string bands and early Jazz bands, and that a number of Blues musicians — including "Rabbit" Muse and Del Rey — have played this tiny beautiful instrument.



Eleanor Ellis

A native of Louisiana, Eleanor has devoted her life to the preservation of traditional blues, as a musician, teacher, and mentor, but also as a writer, archivist, and filmmaker. She was part of the founding of both AEBHF and the DC Blues Society. Her performing career started in bluegrass, but she evolved into a master of acoustic blues finger-style guitar. From 1985-90, she collaborated with legendary D.C. street-singer Flora Molton. In 1987, she toured Europe with Molton and Archie Edwards, who had become a regular partner.

In 1989, she produced the acclaimed documentary *Blues House Party*, featuring John and Cora Jackson, Archie Edwards, Flora Molton, John Dee Holeman and Fris Holloway, and Cephas & Wiggins. She has also written for *Sing Out*, *Living Blues*, and *Blues Review*, among other publications.

Her recordings include the 1993 album *Preachin' In That Wilderness*, recorded with guitarist Bill Ellis and pianist/guitarist Andy Cohen, and her 2007 release, *Comin' A Time*. She performs regularly as a solo artist, as The Gator Pears duo with Pearl Bailes, and as Front Porch Blues with Jay Summerour and Eric Selby. Her teaching credits include Augusta Blues Week and Centrum, as well as AEBHF's guitar series.



Donna Fletcher

Donna Fletcher has been engaged in promoting traditional music in the board, she helps program the Folklore Society of Greater Washington's annual Washington Folk Festival and is entertainment coordinator for events such as the DC Downtown Holiday Market, presenting a wide variety American and international musical genres.

Donna began her musical career as a folk guitarist/vocalist during the 1960s, but discovered a passion for acoustic finger-style blues and the repertoire of classic women's blues artists 30 years ago when she attended her first Blues Week at the Augusta Heritage Center. Learning guitar from John Cephas and finding her voice as a blues singer through Gaye Adegbalola led her to joining the Archie's Barbershop community. She performs with her vintage blues and swing band Blue Panamuse as well as solo and in other ensembles.



Chris Metzler

Chris Metzler has lived in the DC area since 2001 and on Capitol Hill since 2006, but his involvement in the Barbershop is much more recent.

Ever since taking beginning guitar lessons at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, Chris has been trying to figure out what to do with an acoustic guitar, and treasures the Barbershop for helping him with this.

In an earlier life, Chris was a volunteer EMT and a busy search and rescue incident commander, and he helped to run a volunteer backcountry rescue organization. Before coming to DC, Chris did research in cosmology and astrophysics. When not playing music, listening to music, or reading about music, Chris can usually be found at work as a theoretical physicist, in the kitchen/at a restaurant with his wife Mary geeking out about food, or at RFK Stadium supporting DC United.



Uzill "Stormi" Weaver

Stormi Weaver has always had a passion for music. As a child she sang in the gospel youth choir at church. Her passion was reignited in a major way in 2017 when she took her first guitar class with a guitar given to her by her brother. Her playing skills increased and she added singing to her new hobby. Stormi became the main vocalist for the guitar class showcases. Since then, her thirst for "all things guitar" has sent her in search of teachings and opportunities to grow in her musical endeavors. In April of 2018, with the support of her sister and brother, she made her first professional appearance as a guest vocalist/guitarist with her brother's band, One Hot Mess, in Virginia.

Early in 2018 Stormi began volunteering for the DC Blues Society. In January 2018, she attended a Saturday afternoon jam at the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation and was immediately hooked on the significance of the tradition, the Piedmont and acoustic blues musical style, and the warmth of the Barbershop jam family. She jumped right in as a volunteer and has never looked back. Stormi has performed with the AEBHF ensemble and recently with a group of musicians from the AEBHF led by her mentor and Foundation president, Willie Leebel, known as Stormi Thunder & Lightning.

Not only is Stormi dedicated to keeping Piedmont blues alive she is also dedicated to women in blues. Her living ladies of blues influencers are Eleanor Ellis, Donna Fletcher, Valerie Turner, Jackie Merritt, Resa Gibbs, Pearl Bailes, Gina DeSimone, and Gaye Adegbalola.



Phil Wiggins

Although Phil Wiggins is a Washington, DC native, he cites summers he spent in Titusville, AL (from where his parents had moved) as one of the main reasons for his strong connection with blues.. "I would walk my grandmother around the corner to the...for prayer meeting. I would wait outside and hear the elder women of the church singing prayers and praises. The context was religious, but the sound was deep blues."

During the early years of his development as a musician, Phil was constantly playing with and learning from some of the most notable acoustic blues musicians that made their homes in the Washington area: Flora Molten, Mother Ester Mae Scott, Wilber "Chief" Ellis, John Jackson, Archie Edwards, John Cephas, and others. He was mentored as well by many other musicians who frequented the DC area: Johnny Shines, Sam Chapman, Sunnyland Slim, Henry Townsend, Robert Lockwood, John Dee Holeman, Algia Mae Hinton, Howard Armstrong, Ted Bogan, Etta Baker, and others.

In the early 1970s, Phil performed with Flora Molton, and 1976, he met Chief Ellis, John Cephas, and James Bellamy, forming the group Chief Ellis and the Barrelhouse Rockers. After Chief's passing, Phil and John Cephas formed the duo Cephas and Wiggins. This duo performed together for over 30 years, becoming America's premier blues duo. As ambassadors of the Piedmont blues, Cephas and Wiggins took their music all over America as well as all over the world. Some venues of note include Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, Royal Albert Hall, and the White House.

Cephas and Wiggins released numerous albums through the course of their career, including the Handy Award-winning *Dog Days of August*. Phil has also contributed music, narration, and performance to numerous film projects, including *Blues House Party* and *Matewan*. He has been active as a teacher with Everyday Theater, Art and Drama Therapy Institute, among others, and served as both director and teacher for Centrum and Augusta Blues Week.

Phil's musical journey has extended in variety of directions since the death of John Cephas in 2009. He has performed and toured with his band Phil Wiggins & The Chesapeake Sheiks, and emphasized re-connecting blues to its roots as dance music.