

April 17, 2025

*Article also appeared in Aberdeen, Fallston, Havre de Grace Patch*

Community Corner

## Harford County Activist Named 2025 Civil Rights Leadership Award Winner

Bertha Copeland, who grew up in the deep South in the middle of the Jim Crow era, has been named a Civil Rights Leadership Award winner.



**Kristin Danley-Greiner, Patch Staff**

Posted Thu, Apr 17, 2025 at 4:35 pm ET



From left to right is Dr. James Karmel, HCRP director and professor of history, Harford Community College; Bertha Copeland, HCRP Civil Rights Leadership Award recipient; and Dr. Theresa B. Felder, president, Harford Community College. (Photo courtesy of Ujen Jonchhe, Harford Community College)

**HARFORD COUNTY, MD** — Bertha Copeland, a dedicated civil rights activist from Harford County, has been named the 2025 Harford Civil Rights Project Civil Rights Leadership Award winner.

Copeland grew up in the deep South in the middle of the Jim Crow era. While working as a licensed practical nurse, she worked to seek racial equality in the 1950s. She was a leader with the Hamilton

Court Association and worked to improve living conditions and fair housing for Black families in Aberdeen.

In 1963, Copeland led an effort to mobilize car transportation barred from crossing the Hatem Bridge between Perryville and Havre de Grace on their way to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. She participated in the march and also coordinated efforts to provide the marchers with food and shelter.

In the 1960s, she organized bus trips to the Harford County Courthouse from Aberdeen to help people register to vote. She continued her involvement in local politics by serving as an election judge beginning in the 1970s to ensure fair representation at the polls. Copeland also participated in the 1997 Million Woman March and the 2000 Million Family March.

In 2011, the Harford County Council and Harford County Public Library recognized Copeland as a Harford Living Treasure. She has been a member of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church since 1956, actively involved in many church activities and in service to her community.