

# Meridianites Major Events

## Origins

The National Council of Meridianites, Inc. had its beginning in the mid-1960s after several Meridianites reunited at the funeral of a friend in Detroit. Because the friends had not seen each other in over ten years, they decided to plan more fellowship gatherings in the future, which eventually became regular events.

## Chronology

1967: The first picnic of the Meridianites was held in Detroit. At first, the event's location alternated between Detroit and Cleveland. However, as Meridianites residing in other cities began attending the picnic, they started forming chapters in their own cities.

1974: The picnic returned home to Meridian, Mississippi. More than 6,000 people were in attendance, a huge increase compared to the first picnic where only 20 participated. The National Council of Meridianites, Inc. received its official name and selected its first officers.

1976: Due to the growing number of chapters, the organization ratified a constitution and bylaws. The constitution arranged the chapters into regions including the Southern, Western, Midwest, Northern and Eastern, which would host an annual picnic and convention on a rotating basis.

1980's: The Roots Scholarship was instituted; each region awards one scholarship to a graduating senior who plans to attend college in the fall

1996: The National Council of Meridianites created the Jacquelyn Sweetner Caffey Scholarship Foundation, an endowment designed to provide financial support for the foundation's scholarship program.

1998 - 1999: The National Council of Meridianites, Inc. was incorporated by the State of Mississippi and received its U.S. Trademark from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

2000- : The National Council of Meridianites, Inc. has matured into an organization that gives Meridianites the opportunity to reunite with their families, renew old friendships or make new ones, and provide educational support to future generations of Meridianites and their descendants through its Roots Scholarship program. The annual Convention and Picnic consists of a Memorial Service, Hospitality Gathering Friday night; the Annual Picnic, and the Grand Ball on Saturday.

2022: The National Council of Meridianites reorganized. The name is now The National Council of Meridianites, Inc. Convention. The regions have been eliminated and the National is in charge of hosting the Convention.

See [nationalcouncilofmeridianites.org](http://nationalcouncilofmeridianites.org) for detailed history

# National Council of Meridianites, Inc.

National Council of Meridianites, Inc. Convention and Picnic popularly coined “The Meridian Picnic,” attracts thousands of visitors, locals and vendors during the homecoming celebration, which is held in a different city each year and returns to Meridian every fifth year. The Council of Organizations, Inc., the “Home Chapter” is the only chapter in the Southern Region. The other regions are Eastern, Midwest, Northern, and Western.

Attendees, who have ties to Meridian by birth or other connections, participate in several events during the week, including meetings, an awards program, scholarship luncheon, a memorial service, a grand ball, and a Saturday picnic. The purpose of the National Council of Meridianites is to increase the popularity of our common interests. We also want to have fun while when we are together and work on projects.

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As we assembled annually to fraternize with our hometown friends and relatives, there was a yearning to do more, to give back to Meridian, our roots, and hence after much soul searching, we concluded that few deeds would equal or be more satisfying than helping our youth. We then agreed to establish a scholarship program, named it *Roots Scholarship Program*, the Organization has awarded over one-hundred (100) Roots Scholarships to deserving qualified students. Each region is eligible for one scholarship per year. The Organization also expanded its giving by contributing to the NAACP and the United Negro College Fund.

In 1996, *Dr. Larry Walker* consummated “The National Council of Meridianites/Jacquelyn Sweetner Caffey Scholarship Foundation.” Its purpose is to create, through the establishment of an endowment, a permanent source of financial support for the Scholarship Foundation Program and a permanent recognition of The National Council of Meridianites for its support of education and those who excel as educators.

# CONVENTIONS

	Year	City	Region		Year	City	Region
				41.	2007	Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN	Northern
1.	1967	Detroit, MI	NA	42.	2008	Atlanta, GA	Eastern
2.	1968	Cleveland, OH	NA	43.	2009	Meridian, MS	Southern
3.	1969	Detroit, MI	NA	44.	2010	Los Angeles, CA	Western
4.	1970	Cleveland, OH	NA	45.	2011	Cincinnati, OH	Midwest
5.	1971	Chicago, IL	NA	46.	2012	Memphis, TN	Northern
6.	1972	Cincinnati, OH	NA	47.	2013	Birmingham, AL	Eastern
7.	1973	Los Angeles, CA	NA	48.	2014	Meridian, MS	Southern
8.	1974	Meridian, MS	NA	49.	2015	Oakland, CA	Western
9.	1975	Detroit, MI	NA	50.	2016	Detroit, MI	Midwest
10.	1976	Cleveland, OH	NA	51.	2017	Chicago	Northern
11.	1977	Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN	NA	52.	2018	Atlanta	Eastern
12.	1978	Washington D. C.	NA	53.	2019	Meridian, MS	Southern
13.	1979	Meridian, MS	Southern	54.	2020	Seattle, WA*	Western
14.	1980	San Francisco, CA	Western	55.	2021	*Cancelled	Midwest
15.	1981	Cincinnati, OH	Midwest	56.	2022	Houston TX	Eastern
16.	1982	Chicago, IL	Northern	57.	2023	*Cancelled	
17.	1983	New York, NY	Eastern	58.	2024	Meridian, MS	
18.	1984	Meridian, MS	Southern				
19.	1985	Los Angeles, CA	Western				
20.	1986	St. Louis, MO	Midwest				
21.	1987	Milwaukee, WI	Northern				
22.	1988	Cleveland, OH	Eastern				
23.	1989	Meridian, MS	Southern				
24.	1990	Los Angeles, CA	Western				
25.	1991	Detroit, MI	Midwest				
26.	1992	Chicago, IL	Northern				
27.	1993	Atlanta, GA	Eastern				
28.	1994	Meridian, MS	Southern				
29.	1995	Oakland, CA	Western				
30.	1996	Cincinnati, OH	Midwest				
31.	1997	Chicago, IL	Northern				
32.	1998	Cleveland, OH	Eastern				
33.	1999	Meridian, MS	Southern				
34.	2000	Houston, TX	Western				
35.	2001	St. Louis, MO	Midwest				
36.	2002	Milwaukee, WI	Northern				
37.	2003	New York, NY	Eastern				
38.	2004	Meridian, MS	Southern				
39.	2005	Los Vegas, NV	Western				
40.	2006	Detroit, MI	Midwest				

## Regions Chapters & Colors

**Eastern Region** : Atlanta Area; .Peach & Royal Blue;  
Greater Texas –Teal and light grey

**Northern Region:** Chicago Social Pals--Red & White;  
Twin Cities (Minneapolis, St. Paul) –White;  
Milwaukee--Pink, Navy & White

**Midwest Region:** Cincinnati--yellow & White;  
Detroit--Green & White; St. Louis--.Gold & Brown

**Western Region:** Los Angeles Area--Blue & White;  
Northern CA (San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland)--Black  
& Gray; Viva La (Los Ángeles--.Blue & White

**Southern Region:** Council of Org,, Inc. (Meridian-  
Home Chapter )...Maroon & Gold

## National Presidents

- Leroy C. Caffey & \*Lucile Jackson, Co-Chairs 1968 – 1974
  - Leroy C. Caffey, Chairman 1974 – 1977
  - \*Walter Block, President 1977 – 1979
  - Leroy C. Caffey, President 1979 – 1981
  - \*C. E. Oatis, Jr., President 1981 – 1985
  - Peter Lott, Jr., President.....1985 - 1989
  - \*William Harvey, President 1989 – 1993
  - Juanita Simon, President 1993 – 1997
  - Artis Hampton, President.....1997 – 2001
  - \*Johnnie Stennis, President.....2001 – 2005
  - Gloria Dianne Nickerson, President..... 2005 – 2009
  - \*Irene Wade, President.....2009 – 2013
  - Valeria Burwell, President ...../.....2013- 2017
  - Louise Gaddy, President.....2017-2022
  - Denita Dean, President.....2022-Present
- \*deceased