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***Westmoreland Diversity Coalition Concludes Chapter, Leaving a Legacy of Impact and Awareness***

After ten years of advancing equity, understanding, and unity throughout Westmoreland County, the **Westmoreland Diversity Coalition** will officially close its doors on **June 30, 2025**. This milestone aligns with the retirement of **Carlotta Paige**, the Coalition's founder, co-chair, and Chief Operating Officer, whose visionary leadership has shaped the organization since its inception.

The decision comes amid a national and state-level shift that has created an increasingly hostile environment for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The dismantling of such programs has made it more difficult to secure support at every level, ultimately contributing to the Coalition's closure.

Founded with a bold mission to create a community where all residents feel welcomed and valued, the Westmoreland Diversity Coalition launched numerous impactful initiatives. These included:

- The **Billboard Project**, celebrating the diversity of Westmoreland County
- **Turn the Tables** dinners, fostering honest dialogue across lines of difference
- The **Hidden Treasures** series, honoring unsung community heroes
- Youth-centered programs like the **Reaching for Knowledge Book Club**
- A **film festival**, **unconscious bias workshops**, and multiple **conferences**

These initiatives offered space for education, collaboration, and conversation, serving as powerful platforms for inclusive community engagement.

Carlotta Paige—a tireless advocate and connector—was instrumental in launching and sustaining these efforts. Her unwavering belief in the power of dialogue and connection brought together nonprofits, government agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and foundations in a united effort to create positive change.

“I want to thank all the individuals and organizations we've partnered with over the years,” said Paige. “It's been deeply meaningful to be part of this journey. I'm proud of what we've accomplished, and I hope others will continue pushing for the kind of community we all deserve.”

As the Coalition sunsets, its legacy lives on in the programs it pioneered and the partnerships it nurtured. Many local organizations have already adopted its values and continue to carry forward the work of inclusion and connection.

“Carlotta is not just a founder—she’s the heart and soul of this organization,” said Sara Perman, co-founder and co-chair of the Coalition. “Thanks to her leadership, we are more courageous in confronting our differences and more empowered to turn them into strengths.”

Although the Coalition’s formal structure will conclude, conversations are already underway among local nonprofits about how to collaborate further and continue advancing the values that have taken root in the community.

“Thanks to the groundwork laid by the Coalition, many organizations in Westmoreland County are already committed to making this work a priority,” said James Galik, Vice Chair of the Board and LGBTQ+ community advocate. “We’re excited to continue building on that foundation in a collaborative, sustainable way.”

In today’s increasingly polarized environment—where misunderstanding, mistrust, and intolerance can dominate public discourse—the work of building bridges and cultivating mutual respect is more important than ever. While the Westmoreland Diversity Coalition is concluding its formal chapter, its legacy endures in the progress it inspired and the collective will it helped spark throughout the region.