



MONTGOMERY COMMUNITY MEDIA

**Testimony of Vernon Ricks  
County Council Budget Hearings  
April 9 2024, 1:30 PM Hearing Block**

Council President Friedson and County Council members, thank you for this opportunity.

I'm Vernon Ricks.

I feel honored to have been selected as Montgomery County 2023 African American Living Legend. I sit on the Executive Committee of the Montgomery County NAACP, the Josiah Henson Museum Advisory Board and I am also a former Takoma Park Councilmember and mayor pro-tem.

Today I am here to advocate for Montgomery Community Media. I am proud to say I celebrated my tenth year on the Board of Directors! I know a few things about longevity- I have just celebrated my 85<sup>th</sup> birthday .... and MCM is celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

The year was 1984- Stevie Wonder was just calling to say I love you, Ghostbusters was the big summer blockbuster and Montgomery Community Television opened it's doors. Since it's inception, Montgomery Community Television has been a champion of free speech for the residents of Montgomery County. It exists to ensure that all members of our diverse community have the tools and platforms they need to amplify their unique voices. Community access to free-flowing information is as essential to a healthy and thriving democracy today as it was back then--- I would say, even more so!



MCT evolved to Montgomery Community Media, a premier nonprofit public access organization which has won the nation's highest honors. MCM has won Telly awards, Hometown Media Awards and let's not forget-- 19 Emmys-- in the last 5 years. All of this from a small but mighty team of media professionals who cover and curate county news and information, while training the next generation for the future of media. MCM has a thriving intern program where tomorrow's journalists and media professionals are learning their trade at the hyper local level.

Plus, MCM provides free or low-cost media training classes to everyone- businesses--- nonprofits--- youth----senior citizens--- and everyone in between. MCM is a one stop shop for county news and information while providing the hub for all community members to create or consume the media that matters to them.

MCM is important because THIS community is important...

So, I ask each of you to please continue to support Montgomery Community Media.

Thank you.