

## WILLIAM CHESTER RUTH GALA HONORS PIONEERING INVENTOR AND BUSINESSMAN

By Marke Dickinson, Great Grandson of William Chester Ruth and Gwendolyn Ruth Dickinson, Chairwoman, William Chester Ruth Legacy Project

The past came alive recently for more than 200 local residents as they drew inspiration from Gap inventor and local legend William Chester Ruth and looked to inspire future generations to follow in Ruth's footsteps.

The William Chester Ruth Innovation and Inspiration Gala at the White Chimneys Estate in Gap on September 19 drew a sellout crowd. Business leaders, academics, farmers, history buffs, family members and friends gathered to honor the legacy of William Chester Ruth, an early 20th-century African American inventor and owner of the Ruth's Ironworks Shop in Gap. Ruth is credited with many U.S. patents, including the Ruth Baler Feeder and Ruth Bale Elevator. These inventions helped mechanize farming and provided a safer and more productive process to bale, move, and store straw.



"William Chester Ruth was the son of a slave who never advanced beyond grade school," said Dr. Bruce Bomberger of the Lancaster County Historical Society and a presenter at the Gala. "His inventions changed the way farming was done in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; and Ruth Ironworks was critical to a community that often needed an ingenious solution to keep new machinery running in the early years of the industrial revolution."



The William Chester Ruth Legacy Project hosted the Gala to honor Ruth and fulfill its mission to provide resources and educational programs about Ruth's life and contributions. During the event, the Ruth family awarded a scholarship and a book grant to two promising students at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

Former State Senator Andrew Dinniman and Rahwa Teklai, Senior Vice President of PNC Private Bank, served as honorary co-chairs of the event. Jeremy Jenkins from WGAL TV was the emcee.

In addition to Bomberger's presentation and video premier of "The William Chester Ruth Story," the Gala featured musical selections from Ujima Strings and the members of the Pequea Valley Chamber Singers. Taste and Toast provided the meal.

The William Chester Ruth Legacy Project gives presentations to groups across the Lancaster and Chester County communities. To learn more or inquire about a presentation, contact Gwendolyn Ruth Dickinson at [wcruthlegacy@gmail.com](mailto:wcruthlegacy@gmail.com).

Names of Board Members:

Front - L-R: Kate Kooker, Suzanne Fitzgerald, Gwendolyn Ruth Dickinson, Michelle Dickinson, Sue Groff

Rear - L-R: Dr. Bruce Bomberger, Sheldon Martin, Marke Dickinson, Dr. Leroy Hopkins

