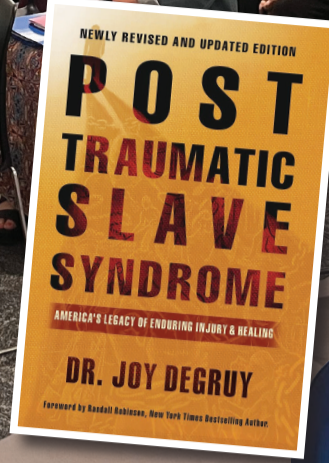


# UNDERSTANDING SLAVERY'S GENERATIONAL IMPACTS

Dr. Joy DeGruy visits Spokane as part of Maternal Health Week to discuss Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome. **PAGE 12**



# THE BLACK LENS

MAY 2024 - VOL. 9 - ISSUE NO. 4

## HONORING MOTHERS AND OUR MILITARY

# OUR LEGACY MATTERS



U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

Major James A. Ellison, left, returns the salute of Mac Ross of Dayton, Ohio, as he inspects the cadets at the Basic and Advanced Flying School for Negro Air Corps Cadets in this Jan. 23, 1942, file photo at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala.

## Black patriotism: Tuskegee airman's daughter speaks on father's legacy

**MORE INSIDE**



### DID YOU KNOW? TUSKEGEE AIRMAN RAISED IN SPOKANE

Jack D. Holsclaw was born in Spokane in 1918, graduated from North Central High School in 1935, attended Whitworth College and Washington State College. He flew 68 missions protecting bombers from German fighter planes. **PAGE 7**

By April Eberhardt  
THE BLACK LENS

Rhonda Leonard-Horwith grew up all over the United States as the daughter of Tuskegee Airman, Lt. Col. Harlan Q. Leonard, Jr. (her grandfather was also Harlan Leonard, Sr., an American jazz musician from Kansas City who formed the band "Harlan Leonard and His Rockets"). She remembers hearing her father talk about being a "dog fighting Tuskegee Airman" when she sat on his lap listening to stories as he looked at old photos. Seeing familiar faces, he would remark "he's gone" each time his young daughter pointed to someone in the pictures.

"I grew up mostly seeing my dad in uniform or in a flight suit, and maybe sometimes the leather jacket with his helmet," she says. By "gone," Lt. Col. Leonard was either referring to the 80% washout rate imposed on Black aviators during training, or simply being shot out of the sky as they practiced in shoddy aircraft during simulated dog fights.

Lt. Col. Leonard was a part of the Strategic Air Command and



Lt. Col. Leonard

had to be ready at a moment's notice to jump into the cockpit under the threat of attack as The Allies raged to defeat Nazi Germany. He flew 9 different aircraft.

The Tuskegee Airmen were pioneers who integrated the Air Force. Rhonda shares that they were more like an experiment because detractors earnestly tried to sabotage them. There was, indeed, another mission besides WWII; the one to prove that Blacks were capable of flying planes. For every 10 pilots, only 2 made it through the training program. Trainers maintained double standards and were much harder on the Black pilots. But Rhonda still remembers the declaration that her father echoed throughout her life: "Don't you ever give up. You always complete the mission."

Rhonda recounts her father's narrative. She details how, as a 19-year-old student at UCLA, "he

See **TUSKEGEE, 6**

## Beauty of Black motherhood



Celebrating the contributions of Black mothers today and throughout history. **PAGE 16**

### NCAA TOURNAMENT: A REFLECTION

## Strengthening work ethic to get to next level



By Michael Bethely  
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



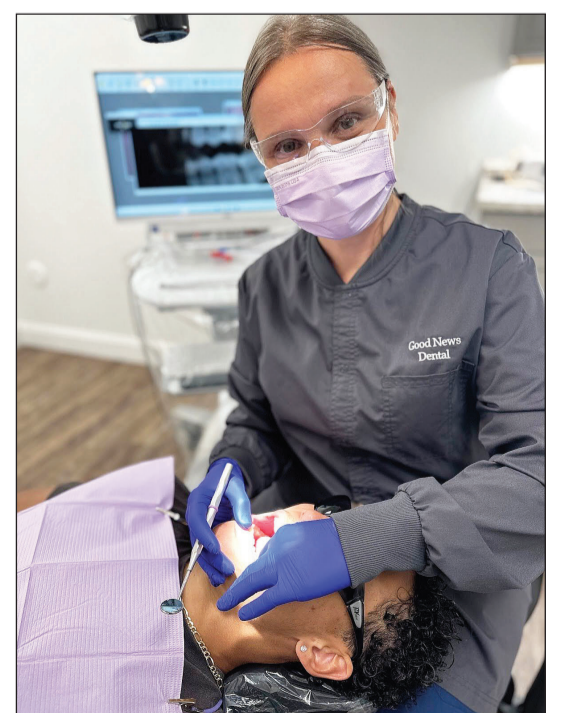
### INSIDE ABOUT OUR BOARD

Michael Bethely is just one many Black Lens board members. Learn about them. **PAGE 12**

In March, the college basketball madness began. Men and women college teams all over the country get a chance to compete for a coveted championship. Culminating the hard work, dedication and sacrifices that these student-athletes made all year into one final tournament.

The atmosphere inside the Spokane arena this year gave the exact vibe that one would expect it to give... Electric. Excitement. Living up to the hype. As seen on TV. It made me want to run to the back, grab an extra jersey of one of the teams, and see if I could get out there

See **NCAA, 7**



## AREA NONPROFIT USES 'VILLAGE' MINDSET TO BREAK CYCLES

One of Operation Healthy Family Spokane's initiatives includes a career bridge for marginalized youth to enter the field of dentistry via a job shadow program. **PAGE 9**

### INSIDE

## NAACP INTERVIEWS SUPERINTENDENT

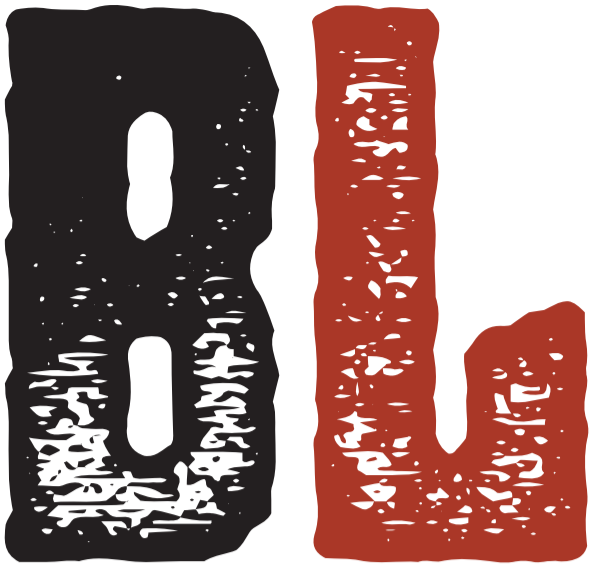
Watch recording of conversation in followup to the Education Townhall held in March in response to the racist Wilson Elementary school event. **PAGE 7**

## CARL MAXEY NAMES WINKLER DIRECTOR

Carl Maxey Center announces Jillisa Winkler as its Acting Executive Director, overseeing existing programs, spearheading development and implementing initiatives. **PAGE 3**



HONORING OUR SERVICEMEMBERS



NEWS

BLACKLENS.NEWS

BSU PILGRIMAGE: A REFLECTION

Black Lens staff

The following is a student reflection from a recent Spring Break pilgrimage to Washington D.C. attended by Black Student Union officers from two local high schools and members of Strong Women Achieving Greatness (SWAG). This trip was sponsored by: The Way to Justice, The Spokane Branch of the NAACP, SWAG, Mentoring Today's Youth, and American Ironworks. Over a week, students toured the National Mall, The U.S. Capitol Building, The National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Howard University.



Weeds Into Flowers  
Written by: Jetaime Thomas  
Ferris High School, 12th Grade

I carry ancient resentment  
I possess a sort of melancholy brain and difficulty  
processing my ancestor's grief along with my own  
My head is like a slideshow  
Replaying horrific stories that are a part of my history  
The history I've spent my entire life trying to understand  
Trying to realize how my people went from mathematicians  
and astronomers  
To servants viewed as uneducated and ignorant  
From talented artists, and agriculturalists.  
To being essentially nothing  
From explorers and artisans  
To the corners of plantations  
I want emancipation  
From negative stereotypes  
That leads to graves  
The waves they hit us  
Like a bus  
It split us  
Contempt to the oppressor  
We were seen as lesser  
It's in my blood to challenge rules  
And simply come out better  
A rose from the concrete  
Survived the bluest eyes  
Constantly torn down and still like dust we rise  
Forced to rebel  
Gone through hell  
Taking down faulty systems one colonizer at a time  
Yeah, imma bet a dime  
On the people we've become  
We came from the slums  
And still we succeed  
Grown weeds into flowers  
I'm 'bout to devour  
The world - it is ours  
Built on our backs  
Sense it lacks  
Yet we can take back our power  
In education and community  
In peace and unity  
In happiness and support

NEWS

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

BUILDING A PAPER IS LIKE BUILDING COMMUNITY

By Michael Bethely  
THE BLACK LENS

In a lot of ways, building and putting together this paper is like building a community. Every story, every picture, every column, every word, and every letter is needed to make the paper what it is. Being able to be a part of this board for The Black Lens is an honor and privilege that I'm grateful for. I know now that I only partially understood the magnitude that Sandy went to and through to start this paper. The idea that she was writing most of the articles. That she was distributing the papers by herself. That she was in charge of the layout. And that she conceptualized The Black Lens from start to finish, is beyond admirable. Sandy put in work to get it done!

I considered Sandy a mentor and a friend. Someone I trusted and that I would call for insight. It's an honor to be a part of continuing the legacy of what she created and to reignite this LENS for Spokane's Black community. As a Black producer, I know deeply the different perspectives that are captured depending on who's holding the camera or who's looking through the lens they have.

To me, this is what gives The Black Lens its value. The ability to highlight a different



COLIN MULVANY/SPECIAL TO THE BLACK LENS

Master of ceremonies for the night and The Black Lens board member Michael Bethely strikes a pose on stage before speaking to the large crowd gathered at the relaunch party for The Black Lens newspaper on Feb. 2 at the Steam Plant rooftop event center.

perspective, a black perspective. Keeping the focus on Spokane, we can give a Black lens to local, regional, national and international stories. A way to cultivate our culture, particularly when culture is amiss. Having The Black Lens to amplify our voices and stories, is something most communities do not have. Well, thanks to Sandy, Spokane does.

So thank you! Thank you to the community for your continued support of The Black Lens. Thank you to all the contributors that helped to relaunch this vessel, so

that it could continue to be what Sandy hoped it to be. I implore the black community to take advantage of this platform and let your black lens shine and be shared. Let us also be encouraged to continue to understand and learn about other diverse communities and their perspectives and lens on Spokane and beyond. We don't know what we don't know. And it can be difficult to respect what we don't understand and value other's worth when it is unknown

So let's be the example for all communities

through The Black Lens to show the worth of our community. Of each member. Of each contributor. Of each lens.

Let's come together like the layout of this paper. Telling stories. Taking pictures. Building pillars. Having conversations. Writing letters. And coming into the fold of our community. We are a people and community of hope. Support. Understanding. Grace. Forgiveness - and most importantly, Love. I think that's what Sandy would've wanted and the best tribute we can give her in return.

MAC SEEKS SUBMISSIONS FROM SPOKANE-AREA BLACK FAMILIES



COURTESY

The Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture will host "Our Stories: Black Families in Spokane," starting June 28.

Black Lens staff

"Our Stories: Black Families in Spokane" will be a celebration of community and history at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture on June 28 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. This event results from a series of meetings beginning in fall 2023 between MAC staff, Julie Williamson Serquinia and Marsha Rooney (former Senior Curator of History at MAC),

regarding ways to make the MAC museum and its programming more relevant and welcoming to all Spokane audiences. It will be the first in a series, according to a MAC release.

In preparation for the event, organizers are asking for loans from the community to augment the historic displays.

"I would love to see anything representing the East Side Youth Center or Hamp's Camp (the

Gospel Mission Youth Camp run by Rev. Mr. C.E. Hamp from 1962 until 2000)," Williamson Serquinia said in a release, "but we welcome any objects, photographs, menus, posters, or flyers that represent Black businesses or organizations from the 1920s through the 1960s."

Anyone interested in learning more or contributing to the project may email: ourstories789@gmail.com.

THE BLACK LENS

Serving Spokane's Black community since 2015

IN MEMORY OF SANDRA WILLIAMS  
FOUNDING EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

THE BLACK LENS INTERIM EDITOR & BOARD MEMBERS

Natasha Hill, Rick Williams, Renika Williams, Luc Jasmin III, Alethea Sharea Dumas, Robert J. Lloyd and Michael Bethely

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About The Black Lens  
The Black Lens is a nonprofit news organization funded through foundations, major donors, subscribers, sponsors and the community it serves. The stories, photos, graphics and columns created by The Black Lens are owned by the community it serves, and can be republished by other organizations for free under a Creative Commons license.



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Statement of Independence

The Black Lens is a not-for-profit, independent newspaper that focuses on all aspects of the Black community in Eastern Washington. The Black Lens editor reports to its own board of directors, which was set up under the guidance of the founders' family.

As journalism calls for increased transparency, The Black Lens believes in being transparent about its work. The Black Lens is funded through foundations, donors, subscribers and the community. That funding pays for the work of the editors, reporters, photographers, designers, correspondents and columnists who produce The Black Lens newspaper, website and other platforms.

The Black Lens retains full authority over its editorial content. This organization maintains a strict firewall between news coverage decisions and funding sources and in-kind help. Acceptance of financial support does not constitute implied or actual endorsement of donors or their products, services or opinions.

All story decisions made by The Black Lens newsroom and its leaders are made independently and not on the basis of donor support. This organization does not give supporters the rights to assign, review or edit content, and if a supporter is covered in a story or other editorial content, The Black Lens will disclose this at the bottom of the story.

The Black Lens is a partner of the "comma" community journalism lab. The Black Lens will be located within the community journalism lab newsroom that is set to be stationed on the main campus of Gonzaga University in Spokane. Though The Black Lens and lab may be housed at Gonzaga, the university has no control or authority over the journalism created by The Black Lens or other newsrooms located within the lab. The comma community journalism lab is a nonprofit news organization with its own board of directors, separate from the university and separate from The Black Lens. The Black Lens' board of directors works closely with the comma community journalism lab and its leaders to

ensure that journalism's protected First Amendment rights continue to be an essential part of our nation's democracy.

Though much of the content created by The Black Lens may appear in regional publications, newspapers or news websites, those organizations have no rights, authority or influence over the content created by this publication. The Black Lens' publications are only responsible to boards of directors for The Black Lens and the comma community journalism lab. Though other publications, including The Spokesman-Review, may assist in distribution, The Black Lens is not a publication of any of its third-party distribution partners.







# THE SANDY WILLIAMS JUSTICE CLINIC'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY

## & THE HISTORY OF LEGAL CLINICS



by **Teresa Brooks**  
THE BLACK LENS  
CONTRIBUTOR

On Saturday, April 20, the Sandy Williams Justice Center's free legal clinic celebrated another year of success, marking a milestone in its ongoing mission to provide vital legal assistance to marginalized communities.

The event was made even more special by the presence of esteemed guest speakers, including Washington state Supreme Court Justice Mary I. Yu, Spokane Superior Court judges Breean Beggs and Dean Chuang and city Public Defender Francis Adewale.

At the Sandy Williams Justice Center, individuals from all walks of life, particularly black and brown people, find a welcoming space to seek guidance and support. The clinic operates on a walk-in basis, offering a lifeline to those navigating complex legal issues without the resources to afford representation. Here, they are greeted by compassionate University of Gonzaga Law students and paired with volunteer lawyers who offer invaluable advice and guidance.

While the clinic cannot provide legal representation, it serves as a hub of empowerment and advocacy, leveraging resources to meet the diverse needs of its clients. From housing disputes to immigration matters, the clinic stands as a bastion of support, empowering individuals to assert their rights and pursue justice.

The legacy of the Black Panther Party's legal clinics lives on through the work of dedicated individuals like Sandy Williams and the countless volunteers who dedicate their time and expertise to serving marginalized communities. Together, they uphold the principles of justice, equity, and solidarity, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their race or background, have access to the legal support they need to thrive.

In the heart of the civil rights movement, amidst the tumultuous atmosphere of the late 1960s, Seattle became a beacon of hope and activism with the establishment of legal clinics aimed at serving marginalized communities. Spearheaded by the Black Panther Party, the second such initiative in the nation, these legal clinics emerged as a vital resource for those seeking justice and equality.

Led by Aaron and Elmer Dixon, the legal clinic operated from 1968 until 1978, leaving an indelible mark on Seattle's history. The chapter's programs were groundbreaking, addressing a wide range of issues affecting black and brown communities, from housing discrimination to police brutality. Among these initiatives, the establishment of the Carolyn Downs Medical Clinic stands as a testament to their enduring legacy, providing essential healthcare services to underserved populations to this day.



Spokane Superior Court Judge Breean Beggs

Appointed by Governor Jay Inslee on May 1, 2014, Justice Yu made history as the first Asian American and the first member of the LGBTQ+ community to serve on the Washington State Supreme Court. Her appointment marked a significant milestone in the ongoing pursuit of diversity and inclusion within the judiciary, reflecting a commitment to ensuring that all voices are heard and represented in the halls of justice. Her words of wisdom and insight served as a source of inspiration for all those in attendance, reaffirming the importance of the legal profession in advancing the cause of justice and equality for all.

Judge Beggs assumed office on July 1, 2023, continuing his over 30 year commitment as an attorney to public service and advocacy. In addition to his work on the bench, Judge Beggs is actively involved in community advocacy initiatives aimed at empowering individuals and addressing systemic inequalities. Through programs like Community Advocacy and Street Law, Judge Beggs along with dedicated volunteers has provided essential legal assistance to low-income individuals and families across Spokane.



Supreme Court Justice Mary I. Yu

Sandy Williams recognized the urgent need for legal assistance within the black community in Spokane. Inspired by the successes of the Seattle clinic, Williams founded the Sandy Williams Justice Center, a beacon of hope for those facing legal challenges in Spokane.

In the ongoing struggle for equality, legal clinics like the Sandy Williams Justice Center continue to be indispensable assets, providing a lifeline to those who need it most and championing the cause of justice for all. With the help of the community, allies and experts, legal clinics like the Sandy Williams Justice Center can thrive.

In attendance at the Anniversary celebration were several esteemed members of our Judiciary and Bar in Washington.

State Supreme Court Justice Mary I. Yu's support is a testament to the center's ongoing commitment to excellence and its dedication to serving the needs of underserved communities.



Spokane Superior Court Judge Dean Chuang

Newly appointed Spokane County Superior Court Judge Dean Chuang, helped to underscore the judiciary's commitment to fostering collaboration between legal professionals and community advocates in the pursuit of justice and equality. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Chuang's commitment to public service with legal outreach projects and his tenure as a contract public defender in Kennewick.

Well-known City Public Defender Francis Adewale's support for the clinic is notable and his personal journey to Spokane a testament to his resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to justice. Hailing from Nigeria, Francis earned his law degree in Lagos in 1990. Eight years later, he made the courageous decision to flee Nigeria and seek refuge in the United States, ultimately settling in Washington D.C. after receiving a U.S. Visa through a lottery program. With his legal experience in Nigeria, Francis seized the opportunity to practice law in Washington State, successfully passing the bar exam on his first attempt. Adewale made the life-changing decision to move his family to Spokane, where he quickly made a name for himself as a dedicated and compassionate advocate for his clients.



Public Defender Francis Adewale, at left

As the Sandy Williams Justice Center continues its mission of providing free legal assistance to those in need, we are remind that together is how we build a more just and equitable society, including where everyone has access to the legal resources they need to advocate for their rights and interests.

The Sandy Williams Legal Clinic anniversary provided an opportunity for the community to come together and honor a shared vision of justice and empowerment. Together, we can honor Sandy's memory and work towards a more just and equitable future for all.

### Sandy Williams' Justice Center

If you have any questions about our next legal clinic or would like to get involved, please contact The Carl Maxey Center or the Justice Center by emailing at [selfhelplegal@carlmaxeycenter.org](mailto:selfhelplegal@carlmaxeycenter.org) or visit at 3114 E. Fifth Ave.

**For more information,**  
**please visit [carlmaxeycenter.org](http://carlmaxeycenter.org)**

## NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN AT CARL MAXEY CENTER



The Carl Maxey Center is honored to announce the appointment of Jillisa Winkler as the Acting Executive Director.

Winkler, a dedicated protégé of the late Sandy Williams, steps into this role with a deep commitment to furthering the missions of both Carl Maxey and Sandy Williams, whose legacies continue to inspire the work of the Center.

In her new role, Winkler will oversee the Center's existing programs and spearhead the development, rollout, and implementation of new initiatives designed to enrich the lives of African Americans in Spokane. Her work in program management reflects a holistic approach to addressing the community's needs, identifying opportunities for growth, and fostering sustainable improvements in life outcomes for African Americans.

Winkler's expertise extends to advocacy and external relations, where she will continue to strengthen partnerships with both public and private organizations. These collaborations are essential in assessing the community's needs, supporting the development of community collaborations, and monitoring performance and compliance toward our collective goals.

Under Winkler's leadership, the Carl Maxey Center will continue to champion a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. She is committed to deepening the Center's commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles that stand at the core of our mission.

While Winkler brings a wealth of experience and dedication to her role, she will also coordinate closely with team members to ensure the Center's continued success in areas requiring specialized support. Winkler will maintain HR policies and procedures, ensuring the Center operates with the highest standards of professionalism and care for its employees. Her role in Board relations is equally vital, as she will work closely with the board to ensure the strategic direction and vision of the CMC are realized.

The Carl Maxey Center is excited to welcome Jillisa Winkler as the Acting Executive Director. Her leadership, passion, and vision are invaluable assets as we continue to strengthen our operations and further our mission to improve life outcomes for African Americans in Spokane.





NEWS

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND RACE

*How extreme weather impacts Black and Brown livelihood, well-being and socioeconomic mobility*

By Naghmana Sherazi  
THE BLACK LENS

Extreme weather events such as devastating wildfires, brutal heat and cold, wildfire smoke, and extreme flooding are just a few of the examples of how Climate Change is affecting our region.

The Inland Northwest had a low amount of snowfall across our region this year. Where there would normally be 15 feet of snow on Mt. Spokane by mid-January, only 40 inches was reported. Spokane is a sole source aquifer city, with the river running through it, where most of the City's water comes from. We use it to bathe, water our lawns, play in and use it for daily living. A low snowpack means less water when it melts. With warmer days and whatever snow there was, mostly melted - get ready to conserve water the rest of the year. You may have heard those calls to water your lawn every other day and in the evening, or swap your grass for a drought friendly landscape. This is all because of changing weather patterns - or Climate Change that affects all of us, at every level, but most of the injustice and harm is centered in black and brown communities..

Climate Justice is a concept that recognizes that climate change disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color. It also refers to solutions to the root causes of climate change and other social, racial, and environmental injustices. The disproportionality in communities of color stems from discriminatory practices like "redlining" or "steering" in renting and home buying that restricted communities of color from or to certain neighborhoods with certain characteristics.

It is imperative that we have policies that specifically consider our communities of color. How a policy that is going to be put into place through the legislature, or our City, or County will affect people who are already overburdened and do not have the wherewithal to pivot at the drop of a hat in case there is an extreme weather event, and what resources will specific communities need and how will they access it.

The heat dome that killed 20 people in Spokane County in 2021 was such an event. Too many of us suffered because we did not have shade from trees to cool down our back-



IF YOU GO

### Tree plantings

**WHAT:** The Lands Council is hosting five days of SpoCanopy Tree Plantings from May 7-11 in honor of the 50th anniversary of Expo '74! They have a lofty goal to plant 100 trees per day for five days... that's 500 trees total to plant a SpoCanopy Expo Forest that will be cherished for years to come! Please come with a pair of gloves and your own water bottle.

**MAY 7:** Planting in West Central. Meet at A.M. Cannon Park (1901-1999 W. Spofford Ave, Spokane) 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Food Truck Catering by Mixed Plate

**MAY 8:** Planting in Emerson Garfield. Meet at Corbin Park. (501 W. Park Place, Spokane). 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Food Truck Catering by Jerusalem Middle Eastern Cuisine & Catering

**MAY 9:** Planting at Spokane Conservation District. (4422 E. Eighth Ave., Spokane Valley). 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Food Truck Catering by Crepe Sisters Cafe

**MAY 10:** Planting at Spokane Conservation District (4422 E. Eighth Ave., Spokane Valley). 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Food Truck Catering by Madfire Kitchen & Catering

**MAY 11:** Planting along the Appleway Trail (Appleway Trail, Spokane Valley) starting at University and Appleway. Go to volunteers to the STA Parking lot across the street (10501-10699 E. Fourth Ave., Spokane Valley). Planting from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Food truck Catering by Madfire Kitchen & Catering.

### More Information

The Spokane NAACP Environmental Justice Committee meets every fourth Thursday of the month via Zoom from 6-7:30 p.m. with Committee Chair Naghmana Sherazi. Every other meeting, Dr. Darian Spearman is invited to convene conversations around Environmental Philosophy and Environmental Justice. To get involved with the work they are doing and move the needle on Climate Justice work that is community focused email: [environment@spokanenaacp.com](mailto:environment@spokanenaacp.com).

To learn more about how Environmental Justice IS Racial Justice go to the Environmental and Climate Justice on the NAACP website: [naacp.org/know-issues/environmental-climate-justice](http://naacp.org/know-issues/environmental-climate-justice)

yards and streets. The heat was so intense the air conditioners stopped cooling effectively and good luck finding a replacement in the middle of a heat wave. The City's Parks and Rec Dept and The Lands Council (TLC) partner on a program called SpoCanopy, where trees are planted



in the 'right of way' or the strip between the street and private property, with a focus on areas that have low urban canopy cover. Since 2012, over 127,000 trees have been planted in lower urban canopy cover neighborhoods. Studies have found neighborhoods with lower median income have lower canopy cover - this reflects an equity issue and TLC's focus is to plant in East and West central, North Spokane, and other areas in the City that have low canopy cover. The City's goal is to bring up the average canopy cover to 30% (currently it is 22%), by the year 2030.

*Sherazi is the Climate Justice Program Director at the Lands Council. To get more information on how you can help plant trees in our neighborhoods, go to the Spring SpoCanopy planting drive here: [landscouncil.org/events/spocanopy-tree-plantings](http://landscouncil.org/events/spocanopy-tree-plantings).*

# HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EARN TOP POETRY AWARDS



Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service  
Spokane (WA) Chapter

Black Lens staff

Nikita Habimana (10th grade, Shadle Park High School) was selected as this year's first-place winner, Alima Tambwe (12th grade, Rogers High School) received second place, and Donald Brantley (12th grade, Rogers High School) received third place.

Below are the poems of three high school students on the issues of environmental justice and human trafficking. The Links, Incorporated, Spokane Chapter looks forward to seeing more submissions in the future. The hope is to grow the Young Master Writers Program into a community staple that provides an opportunity for students to use creative expression as a means of advocacy for social justice.

For questions on future community programs related to youth with The Links, please contact Services To Youth Chair April Eberhardt via email at: [aprilliv1976@gmail.com](mailto:aprilliv1976@gmail.com) or [linksspokane@gmail.com](mailto:linksspokane@gmail.com).

*The Links, Incorporated, Spokane (WA) Chapter (chartered in 1978) recently facilitated a city-wide Young Master Writers Contest centered around social justice themes for high school students. This is a new initiative that aims to stimulate creativity, awareness, and activism among our BIPOC youth. The Links' five facets of focus for community programming are as follows: The Arts, Services to Youth, International Services and Trends, National Services and Trends, and Health and Human Services. Spokane Chapter President Shalena Armstrong shares that "providing a safe space to cultivate and encourage creativity in our BIPOC youth is key to sustaining art in our local community."*

### Mother Earth

By: Nikita Habimana  
Mother earth is dying

You would think her children would be crying

Some are While others stand around and feed her to the flames.

More money, more power

What good is money when everything is dead and gone

What good is power when people start dying due to poisoned air

Air poisoned by our own greed.

Mother earth is crying

Crying for her children who are dying

The oceans, lakes, and polluted streams.

Mother earth is weeping

But nobody pays heed to the sounds of her screams

Mother earth is fighting

Fighting for people to listen to her warnings

Pay heed to the calls of nature

Feel her rage boiling like volcanoes in the summer

Her disappointment as cold as snow in the winter.

Mother earth is silent

No longer do we see polar bears in all their might

Nor the fishes swimming with all their might

And no longer do we see the stars shining bright

The earth is dying and it's time we do something about it

No longer shall we stand aside while she burns

Her rage palpable through the at of the summer, her discontent as cold as the winter ice

It's time we came together and fight for our environment

Money, power, and greed all go away

But the beauty of the night sky remains

The atmosphere of a breathtaking sunset stays the same

Unless we do nothing about it and the beauty of nature truly fades

### A Letter From The Earth

By: Alima Tambwe

The earth - crowded, the sky - polluted, the seas - filled with trash and oil murdering the animals that live within

Before the over population of humanity my skies were as clear as day

My land was nontoxic

Numerous animals did not go extinct every other year

Their human bodies were not infested with diseases from chemicals they themselves filled me with...

Everyday, I give signs, signals, anything to get them to realize that they are destroying me

Me!

The place they live in

The place they explore

The place they spend their lives in

For centuries, I never asked for anything of them, not even to quiet down

Not to do anything

But for once, just this once, through this letter I ask of them to stop

To stop filling me with oil

To stop fogging my views with acids

To stop murdering my animals and my trees

It may sound like a lot but for once I no longer want to stay quiet

I cannot sit and watch all that I was flushed out

This time I will fight back

If not for me than for the good of mother nature



### Never At Night, Never Alone

By: Donald Brantley

I enjoy running.

My hair tied back, and my shoes tied too.

I enjoy running because it clears my mind.

Well at least it's supposed to.

I put my AirPod in and listen to some music

But make sure the volume is not too high.

I must be on alert just in case somebody decides to walk by

I've been barked at, catcalled, and drove by a million times

Still I'm thankful I was one of the ones who got to survive

To all the women and men who have not been as fortunate as I

Your footsteps have not been forgotten

They have transformed into awareness and warning screams

For the next headline on TV

Never at night, never alone

Never at night, never alone

And don't ever take the same route home

When I'm running, I always try to get in the zone,

But I can't 'cause I'm too worried

About my location updating on my phone.

I work hard to keep myself healthy

I have to work harder to keep myself safe

I run in public places, so I don't end up the victim of a criminal case

If I ever end up taken, I hope you remember my face

But to ensure I make it back I just need to remember:

Never at night, never alone

Never at night, never alone

God just let me make it back home



2nd annual  
**NAACP**  
summer kick off



music  
games  
art &  
fun!

Saturday,  
May 25th  
2-6pm

MEET & GREET  
WITH NAACP

The Nest at  
Kendal Yards  
1335 W Summit Pkwy



## THE BLACK LENS

### Contributor Meeting

MAY

8

2024

JOIN EDITOR NATASHA HILL AT THE THE SCHOENBERG CENTER TO GET ASSIGNED STORIES FOR UPCOMING ISSUES OF THE BLACK LENS.

**MAY 8, 2024** SCHOENBERG CENTER  
800 N. PEARL ST.  
**4:30 - 6 P.M.** S P O K A N E , W A

RSVP: [BIT.LY/493E9MW](https://bit.ly/493E9MW)





## COMMUNITY

## THE FACES BEHIND THE BLACK LENS

By Black Lens staff report

## Rick Williams

Rick is a former philanthropy CEO and experienced C-level executive and social impact board member. He successfully founded a national consulting company, and led multiple multi-million-dollar enterprises, culminating in serving as the CEO of a philanthropic enterprise with over \$600 million in assets and annually charitable giving of \$40+ million. He has spent 30+ years providing leadership, strategic governance, financial guidance, and professional development to leverage public policy, program development and innovation to meet community needs. He is known for his experience building and scaling programs, developing senior leaders, and community targeted operational planning and innovation. Rick previously served as the Deputy Director of a public Sector Mental Health Department and as an executive in several nonprofit organizations. He is currently the Vice Chair of the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County. Rick graduated from Cheney High School. He holds a master's and bachelor's degree in clinical psychology from Antioch University and Washington State University. He resides on the Central Coast of California with his wife of 38 years, Barb. He has a daughter in Pittsburgh and a son in Silicon Valley.

## Luc Jasmin

Luc Jasmin is a business owner, a community organizer, and serves as the Eastern Washington Representative for the Office of Governor Jay Inslee. Luc's career encompasses diverse roles across construction, business consultation, accounting, education, and childcare services, each driven by a shared vision of fostering long-term prosperity and



RENIKKA WILLIAMS

ALETHEA DUMAS

LUC JASMIN III



BOB LLOYD



MICHAEL BETHELY



RICK WILLIAMS

equitable opportunities for all. His advocacy extends beyond business realms, as evidenced by his pivotal roles in Northeast Youth and Family Services and the Washington Child care Centers Association/Foundation, where he endeavors to eliminate barriers to pediatric services, promote community partnerships, and advocate for childcare accessibility and quality.

## Alethea Sharea Dumas

Alethea (she, her, they) is the Director of Community Engagement at a nonprofit law firm, The Way to Justice. She is passionate about Equity, antiracism, restorative justice, and healing work. Alethea was born and raised in Spokane, graduating from Lewis and Clark High School in 2012, and from WSU in 2016

with a double bachelor degree in Women's studies, and Critical culture, gender, race studies, and triple minor degrees in human development, popular culture, and sociology. She is obsessed with sunflowers, loves music, and enjoys singing. She also serves on the board for Spectrum Center Spokane.

## Robert J. Lloyd

Robert Lloyd worked for CORE and SCLC in Chicago from 1962-1967 as an office manager, organizing tenant unions, and doing documentary photography as part of the Chicago Freedom Movement. In 1967 he worked at Menlo-Atherton High School and Stanford University. In 1974 he completed an MFA in Design and Photography at California Institute of the Arts. He founded,

directed, and curated The Grand Photography Gallery at Eastern Washington University and The Lloyd Gallery at 123 Arts. From 1996-2000 he founded and published a community newspaper, the Spokane African American Voice. He retired from Eastern Washington University in 2004 after 30 years of teaching photography and digital imaging. Lloyd has photographed in South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, China and Japan. His work has been recently exhibited at WSU's Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in the Black Lives Matter Artist Grant exhibit, Charles Ball in the letter L in the Black Lives Matter Mural in Spokane and in Our Voices Our Visions, the exhibit he curated for the opening of the Carl Maxey Center featuring 25 BIPOC artists.

## Renika Williams

Renika Williams, daughter of the late Sandy Williams, founder of the Carl Maxey Center, is a creative leader and advocate for the Black community in Spokane and elsewhere. With a diverse career spanning fashion, trend analysis, and marketing, and tech, she has dedicated her efforts to addressing biases and inequities within the influencer/affiliate social space. She has been instrumental in developing policies for pay equity and launching initiatives like CreateHealth Spokane to deliver crucial health information. Renika's commitment to her mother's vision and the Carl Maxey Center's mission is unwavering, as she aims to continue impacting Spokane's Black community positively.

## Michael Bethely

A Spokane native, Michael is passionate about serving and creating opportunities to inspire, encourage, and motivate people to "be.". He is the co-owner of B & B Pro Video, a black-owned video production company, owner of Bethely Entertainment Group and the Lilac City Legends. While he serves on multiple other boards throughout the community and is an active member of Holy Temple Church of God in Christ.

He's an entertainer, public speaker, lyricist, poet, entrepreneur, businessman, youth mentor, catalyst, community builder and community advocate.

Learn more about the board online at [www.blacklensnews.com/about/](http://www.blacklensnews.com/about/)

## SPOKANE TEACHERS ATTEND DREAM DEFERRED CONFERENCE, PRIORITIZING AFRICAN AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT

By April Eberhardt  
THE BLACK LENS

The College Board Dream Deferred/HBCU Conference has been happening for two decades. This year marked the 20th anniversary and there was record attendance, including educators from Spokane.

Jaime Stacy, a School Community Specialist at Rogers High School, attended this year's conference in New York City. Stacy says that being in a space with other educators whose passion is centered around Black and Brown students made her feel validated as a Black educator. This was her second time attending. "It created an awareness of how important representation is in the space where I work, which is predominantly White. I felt empowered, but I also felt the wake of accountability to show up and demonstrate to Black and Brown children here in Spokane that success is obtainable, and their dreams do not have to be deferred."

The College Board Dream Deferred/HBCU Conference started out small in Los Angeles, CA that focused on eliminating disparities within the education system for Black youth. Today, this conference has become a think tank for educational professionals to identify and understand systemic issues, while developing strategies and interventions to mitigate the conditions that cause disparities.

Driven by Black leaders from across the United States, this conference is deliberate in centering Black excellence. Professionals with expertise and insight facilitate workshops that range from



April Eberhardt and Jaime Stacy, SPS Educators

examining modern day redlining practices, to unpacking how mental health support for students is critical to their success within the school system and beyond. Consultants, principals, district directors, deans, higher education administrators, professors, counselors, and equity leaders were among those who, like a magnifying glass, zoomed in on critical needs shaping education for Black students, nationwide.

The opening night featured a screening of the documentary "The Right To Read" which follows how the 2nd Vice President and Education Committee Chair of the Oakland, CA NAACP, Kareem Weaver, is championing literacy as a civil rights issue. One of the executive producers is LeVar Burton from the nostalgic PBS children's program "Reading Rainbow." The film discusses how BIPOC students are substantially behind in reading scores and analyzes the failure of balanced literacy, which focuses on whole language literacy development.

It examines how the absence of phonics in reading instruction is crippling the academic success of students across the U.S., particularly those who have been historically marginalized. This is why advocates such as Weaver and Dr. Kymyona Burk, the Senior Policy Fellow for Early Literacy at the Foundation for Excellence in Education and former K-12 state literacy director for the Mississippi Department of Education push for phonics-based instruction. Dr. Burk was a part of the shift in Mississippi that took the state from 49 to 21 in the National Assessment of Educational Progress Report.

Weaver and Burke were panelists after the screening, and further discussed the urgency of returning to phonics. It was emphasized that students cannot guess or memorize their way through reading, there must be skill employed to decode words by letters and the sounds they make. The fight for literacy as a civil right resonated with Stacy.

"In New York, the city that never sleeps, literacy is an issue that we cannot afford to sleep on. We have already suffered from policies and laws that made it impossible for Black people to obtain the right to read. It has been said that if you want to hide something from Black people, put it in a book. The only reason this has worked as long as it has is because books were unlawful for Black people to possess. After these laws were abolished and Black people were able to acquire books, the content did not reflect their contribution or their excellence. This is simply because the creators of the content control the narrative. Support for literacy is an opportunity for Black people to write their own stories. For this reason, we must wake up."

This year's conference also included the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools, David Banks, and Sharif El-Mekki, the Founding Director and Chief Executive Officer for The Center for Black Educator Development, who received the Dr. Asa G. Hilliard Model of Excellence Award. El-Mekki aims to diversify the teacher pipeline by providing support, coaching, and funding through the center's Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship. His goal is to "retain, recruit, and develop Black male teachers." Additionally, there was a discussion with Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett-Helaire, whose expertise in immunology propelled vaccine development for mRNA-1273, a leading vaccine for SAR-CoV-2 and an interview with historian Dr. Erica Armstrong, who wrote the 2017 novel "Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge."



# FROM THE FRONT PAGE



Below: This 1944 news clipping from *The Spokesman-Review* highlights the award Jack D. Holsclaw received, a Distinguished Flying Cross, in honor of his heroism as a Tuskegee airman.



Jack D. Holsclaw's childhood home in Spokane honors his service with a historic marker placed by the Jonas Babcock Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution reminding pedestrians passing by of Black pilot from Inland Northwest. The house is a private residence.

COURTESY

## TUSKEGEE AIRMAN FROM SPOKANE REMEMBERED

Black Lens staff

Jack D. Holsclaw spent World War II flying as a Tuskegee airman. He also happened to be born and raised in Spokane.

Holsclaw, born in 1918, graduated from North Central High School in 1935, thereafter attending Whitworth College before transferring to Washington State College. In his senior year, he transferred again, this time to Western States College in Portland. Holsclaw graduated from college in 1942 with a chiropractic degree.

Rather than go on to be

a chiropractor in October 1942, Holsclaw enlisted in the U.S. Army. He had received a civilian pilot license while studying in Oregon, and applied to the pilot's program. He was accepted to the Tuskegee Institute, where he was trained to fly combat aircraft. Holsclaw completed his training in July 1943 and was sent to Italy as part of the 100th Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group.

In Europe, Holsclaw flew 68 missions protecting bombers from German fighter planes. On July 18, 1944, the 100th Fighter

Squadron, with Holsclaw as its flight leader, engaged 300 German fighters to protect a group of B-17 bombers. While leading the 16-man squadron during the battle, he shot down two enemy aircraft. For his actions that day, Holsclaw was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, which honors single acts of heroism or extraordinary achievement in aerial flight.

After the war, Holsclaw continued to serve in the military, training pilots before retiring in 1965 with the final rank of lieutenant colonel. Today, his childhood home in Spokane



COURTESY

Jack D. Holsclaw, a Tuskegee airman, was born and raised in Spokane.

honors his service with a historic marker placed by the Jonas Babcock Chapter Daughters of the Ameri-

can Revolution reminding pedestrians passing by of the Inland Northwest's own Tuskegee airman. The

house is a private residence. *Source: Devrick Barnett, "Spokane's Red Tail," Spokane Historical*

## TUSKEGEE

Continued from 1

got on the train and went all the way to Alabama. I can't even imagine that in those times, in the 40s, because there were serious things happening down there." He had heard that there was aviation training at Tuskegee Institute. In 1939, Public Law 18 expanded the Army Air Corps, and called for Black colleges to develop training programs that would prepare Blacks for jobs to support the Air Corps. Thus, the Civilian Pilot Training Program at Tuskegee was established under the direction of Charles Alfred Anderson, the first Black person to earn a pilot's license.

In 1941 Eleanor Roosevelt paid a visit, curious about the work being done there. After being flown in a plane piloted by Anderson, she put her support behind the aeronautical school. Tuskegee became the door through which Black aviators, the Red Tails, would integrate the military. Yet, even with proven skills, many never made it off the ground. Black pilots were given the planes that White pilots could no longer use, were selected for menial flying assignments, or in some cases, were left unprotected during combat.

There was also clear and present danger for the Leonard family in the community that surrounded the military base on which they lived in Maryland. "I grew up in the time period of the 60s; the Klan and racism was hot." She recalls how a classmate witnessed his father's murder. A curfew was enacted for Black members of the military and their families. In the deep woods that she passed daily on her way to school, it was not uncommon to hear about lynchings and torture of Black men caught by the Klan, and it didn't matter if you were a member of the Armed Forces.

Watching her father become crestfallen each time he was skipped for promotion was hard enough because she knew how dedicated he was. She remembers how he would lay on the couch solemnly



COURTESY

Lt. Col. Harlan Q. Leonard poses with his family.



COURTESY

Rhonda Leonard-Horwith poses with her father.

each time the promotion cycle came around. This, compounded with sheer, guttural fear for his life at the hands of the Klan on any given day of the week, created a type of trauma that dug into her soul and even caused her physical sickness. In the safety of her home, she saw her father suit up to fight for his

country. Outside of those walls, she willed that nothing nefarious would happen to him if he stayed out too long. This was the real war in her life.

The Grand Dragon of the KKK would show up every few months to recruit, Rhonda remembers. "We had a 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock curfew (to be back on base).



COURTESY

Lt. Col. Harlan Q. Leonard, Jr.

I was always afraid my dad would not come back." Her high school was off base, and it was not uncommon that crosses were burned at night in the cow pasture next to her school. When her guidance counselor told her that she would embarrass her race by attending UCLA, one of several colleges that she was accepted

into, Rhonda refused to tell her father. "I did not tell my dad that that happened because I was afraid that he would go out there and yell at them, and what if he didn't make it back?"

During these times, she would repeat her father's words in her mind: "Always complete the mission." Rhonda went on to become

a trial attorney and is now retired. Lt. Col Leonard continued to fly planes and also worked in the National Security Agency while on active duty. He served just over two decades in the Air Force as both an aviator and an engineer, retiring in 1968.

In 2007, he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. When he was seated on a Red Tails float during the 2016 Rose Bowl Parade, Rhonda recalls the smile that would not leave her father's face. She describes her dad as a humble man who never bragged about his accomplishments and chuckles as she recalls what he said while signing autographs when the 2012 movie "Red Tails" premiered: "I didn't know being famous was so difficult!" One of his last full circle moments was being invited to the inauguration of President Obama. She recounts that he never thought this would be the America he knew when he started his mission in the 1940s. Lieutenant Colonel Harlan Q. Leonard, Jr., born in 1926, passed away in March of 2023. "Always complete the mission" are the words of his legacy.

Narratives of patriotism are rarely told from a Black lens. Whatever opinions exist about Blacks serving in the military, their pursuit of liberty cannot be unheeded. Black people have fought in every war since the American Revolution. Our battles have always been about the relationship between survival and erasure. Liberty, for us, was so critical that risk takers would forfeit their own lives just to afford their families a mere chance to have it. Allegiance in the face of oppression became the residue of a desperate fight for our humanity under the assault of racism. Yet, generations have endured.

"Growing up with him was like living through history. The legacy is that they taught us respect and to never give up," shares Rhonda. The Tuskegee Airmen, and countless others, are patriots of a different mold. They have shown the world that liberty is our inalienable right. For that, they must be remembered and honored.



# FROM THE FRONT PAGE

## NAACP INTERVIEWS SPS SUPERINTENDENT

Spokane's NAACP restarts its "Challenging the Narrative" series sponsored by Better Health Together, starting with a conversation with Dr. Adam Swinyard, Superintendent for Spokane Public Schools for a follow up conversation to

the Education Town Hall in March.

These events are livestreamed, and participants can submit questions via zoom. You can watch the conversation hosted by President Lisa Gardner and Vice President Jaime Stacy,

Scan the QR code to watch the conversation.

**For more information, visit [naacpspokane.com](http://naacpspokane.com) or [Facebook.com/spokane.naacp](https://Facebook.com/spokane.naacp)**



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE BLACK LENS

Shadle Park's Enoch Gathecha eyes the basket as North Central's Makai Daniels, center, and Trevelle Jones defend during the first half of Tuesday's Groovy Shoes spirit game at the Arena.



Gonzaga Bulldogs forward Anton Watson looks for an opening against San Diego State Aztecs guard Lamont Butler during the second half of a college basketball game on Dec. 29 at McCarthy Athletic Center in Spokane. San Diego State won the game 84-74.

see programs like Emmanuel Fitness, that offers obtainable athletic training to the underserved community. Offering scholarships and giving access to their top of the line equipment. This is why the NCAA tournament being here is such a dope opportunity for young athletes like Makai Daniels, who's been following some of the college players since they were in high school.

Makai, who will be a senior at North Central next year, and his dad Jon Daniels were at the open NCAA practices for that very reason.

"It's just amazing to see. This is the level that I want to be at one day, so it's nice to see how they move and operate, even on the little things," Makai said.

This year his North Central team had a record making season, getting to the state tournament for the first time in 10 years.

Jon Daniels added, "I actually love it for him, because this is where he's trying to end up and being able to see the practices, the intensity, the way they move, the way they think. It's a privilege, especially for a young man here in Spokane."

As Spokane grows, it's important that investments in black centered youth programs that create a direct pipeline to success are nurtured and our youth get to see themselves represented in athletics and beyond. With more access and exposure, our youth get a real feel for what could be next for them with the right work ethic and opportunity.

To view a video clip of the NCAA Tournament, visit our YouTube at [www.youtube.com/@blacklensnews/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@blacklensnews/videos).

can translate into the workforce in whatever profession you may seek. With more access and exposure, our youth get a real feel for what could be next for them, with the right work ethic.

But what does it take to get to this level of competition? What does a young Black athlete who desires to play amongst the best have to do to get there?

I asked a few of the players playing in the tournament, and the most common answer was: hard work.

Lamont Butler, a senior guard for San Diego State, talks about how he wasn't sure if he'd be taller than 5-foot-9, but he put in the hard work to be good at what his coach told him that would get him playing time - defense and taking care of the ball. So he did. Now at 6-foot-2 he's a starter.

Lamont gave me some advice for the younger guys coming up. "My dad always told me that hard work beats everything, so I took that to heart and I kept doing that daily and I was able to get to this position."

He shared that in high school and middle school

he was the smallest player. People would say, yeah he's good, but he probably can't do this at the next level. I just took that as motivation. "Regardless of size, go out there and impact the game. Take that with your life, don't let what other people think affect what you're doing. You have your own thing going on, stay with your circle and trust the people that you have in your life."

Too many times, we see talent put before work ethic, when it's really the dedication and consistency that sharpens the talent. There's a mindset and understanding that needs to be nurtured in our young Black athletes. Especially here in Spokane where national attention isn't as prolific and students and student-athletes looking to move to the next level must be intentional and stay dedicated. Even with natural talent, exposure to the right training, mentorship and resources is necessary to increase opportunity for local talent.

Access is needed for our youth. Exposure to college environments is also key. That's why I'm grateful to

### NCAA

Continued from 1

and play.

After the national anthem and the music starts back up, I hear a fan sitting behind me say, "Oh my gosh, I have chills!" I did too. From the national on air talent that has analyzed, critiqued, and

praised the college players from the beginning of the season, to the crowd management workers directing people to the places that they need to go. This is an opportunity for these young players to showcase their talent, and drive up their stock for whatever position or profession they hope to have after college.

Student-athletes go on to be professionals in many more things other than the sport they're playing, and the benefits of getting to this level has its implications. Positive ones! Résumé keywords like: Discipline. Team player. Works under pressure. Communication skills. Time management. Patience. All these attributes



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# EDUCATION

## STUDENT INSTABILITY: HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

By **Donalda Brantley**  
THE BLACK LENS

Thousands of students struggle with homelessness and many more lack support from their family. To many people this is a surprise, but for many students and minors this is a reality.

In Hillyard, where I live, and the school I go to, many students and families struggle to afford their homes. Waking up and not knowing where your next meal is coming from is one thing, but not knowing where you are going to sleep or live is a whole other issue.

As a senior in high school, I thought my year was going to be full of excitement, new beginnings and opportunities, and although this is true, it also came with some other unexpected challenges. Growing up in Spokane's Hillyard area, there are already economic stability and social inequalities negatively impacting my family and many others. Receiving food stamps and government aid was never a surprise in my household. As I grew up, arguments over money and life became less surprising as well.

Being the only daughter and youngest out of six children, I knew I was going to be treated differently than my brothers. As I became a teen, I realized the conditions in which my siblings and I were being treated were not normal. Bickering between my parents also became regular. I realized while visiting friends that they were treated differently and had a more family-like relationship within their own homes. I always thought "my family is just big, that's why we fight all the time." But as I matured, I found knowledge and courage.

Years of struggling with a toxic family, neglect and hatred had reached a point I could not handle anymore. There would be days I would have to come to school and hold back many tears, anger and frustration that had been passed on to me in the morning. Stress and sadness filled my mind daily, and I knew I needed to get out. Eventually I had enough, and I found the courage to leave my house and live in a different home.

Regardless of moving myself out of a toxic home, the toxicity, resentment and emotions stuck with me. The adjustment was difficult and different to anything I had experienced. Teachers and peers noticed my behavior had changed and I felt more tired. The natural struggle of school became a bigger issue because, just like many students, there is more in life going on than just school.

I was lucky enough to be welcomed into a home where I was not required to pay bills, but I still happily contributed with household chores, cooking and helping



Donalda Brantley was able to find support at school and in a new home.

COURTESY

around the house. Fortunately, I also had the same teachers and peers who understood that what I was going through was difficult and abnormal. As I've been navigating this situation, I have had a lot of support from them. I was highly encouraged to continue with life.

I have many leadership roles, sports and other activities to keep me going. I have struggles and continue to hurt while I am still finishing out my senior year, working, playing sports, and paying for my basic needs moving forward.

Many students have gone through similar experiences and have had less support,

*One girl's journey as an unhoused student a reality for too many youth in Spokane*

## COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS NOW OPEN FOR BIPOC YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS

Black Lens staff

### NAACP Michael P. Anderson Scholarship

Due May 31

Eligible high school seniors (college bound, 3.0 GPA min requirement)

### NAACP Umpqua Bank Business Scholarship

Due May 31

Eligible undergraduate students enrolled in a business/finance field

To learn more about these two NAACP scholarships and to apply: [naacpspokane.com/scholarships](http://naacpspokane.com/scholarships)

### Association on American Indian Affairs

Due May 31

Eligible high school student, must attend an institution seeking a minimum of AA degree, GPA minimum of 2.5)

Visit this website to learn more about this scholarship: [indian-affairs.org/nativescholarship.html](http://indian-affairs.org/nativescholarship.html)

The following scholarships can be downloaded by going to the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/4jzjw7s6>

### 2024 DST Carolynne Clay Scholarship

Due May 17

Eligible high school students (college bound, 3.0 minimum)

### 2024 DST Lee Wade Scholarship

Due May 31

Eligible college students (3.0 GPA minimum)

### The Links, Incorporated, Spokane, (WA) Chapter V. Anne Smith Scholarship

Due May 31

Eligible high school students (3.0 GPA minimum)

### Eileen Thomas Scholarship

Due May 31

Eligible college students (3.0 GPA minimum)

This student story was collected by The ZONE. Contact director Jene Ray at @NECommunityCenter.com or (509) 209-7227 for more information. Donalda Brantley is a senior at Rogers High School.

**SEE IT.**

**REPORT IT.**

Reports from our website are not connected to law enforcement. If you are a victim of a hate crime and need the police to respond, call 911.

Human Rights Spokane

Now accepting nominations for the 2024 Spokane Human Rights' Champions Awards, honoring individuals and groups dedicated to protecting and advancing human rights. The banquet is Nov. 14. Nominations accepted through May 31.



## For Youth 11-16yrs old



## Transformations Camp 2024

Sign up at [ywcaspokane.org/camp](http://ywcaspokane.org/camp)  
Free Empowerment Camp for 11-16 Years Olds

20 spots are available in each camp. Enrollment opens about a month before each camp.

Camp 1: July 22-26  
Camp 2: August 12-16

Questions?  
[transformations@ywcaspokane.org](mailto:transformations@ywcaspokane.org)



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SPOKANE

Brought to you through a partnership between SWAG & YWCA Spokane. This camp would not be possible without sponsorship support from James Sheehan.

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**APPLY NOW!**



CULTURE

**POST TRAUMATIC SLAVE SYNDROME: UNVEILING AMERICA'S LEGACY OF ENDURING INJURY AND HEALING, BY DR. JOY DEGRUY**

**A BOOK REVIEW**

**by Teresa Brooks**  
THE BLACK LENS  
CONTRIBUTOR

In her groundbreaking book, "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome – America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing," Dr. Joy DeGruy offers a profound exploration of the residual impacts of generations of slavery on the African American community. Through her meticulous research and insightful analysis, Dr. DeGruy sheds light on the complex interplay of historical trauma, institutionalized racism, and adaptive survival behaviors that continue to shape the lives of African Americans today.

At the heart of Dr. DeGruy's theory of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)

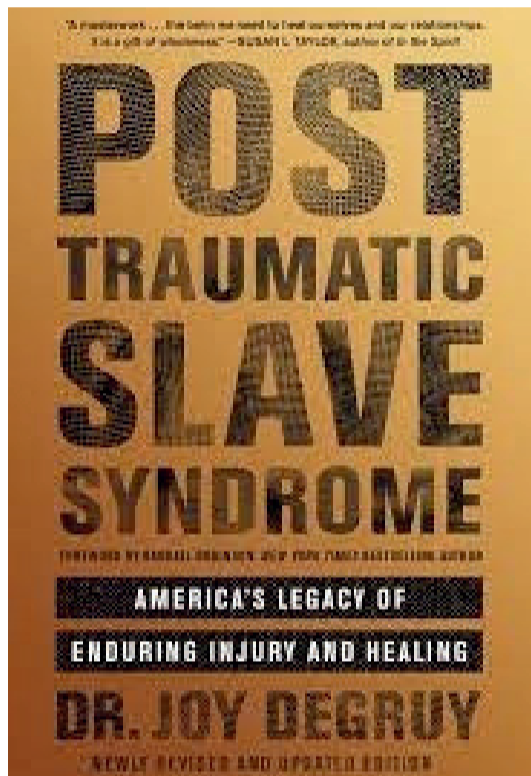
lies a deep understanding of the enduring legacy of chattel slavery and its profound psychological and social ramifications. PTSS is not merely a diagnosis; it is a framework that elucidates the etiology of many of the adaptive survival behaviors observed in African American communities across the United States and the Diaspora. The essence of PTSS can be distilled into the acronym M.A.P.: Multigenerational trauma, Absence of opportunity to heal, and Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome. Dr. DeGruy argues that PTSS is a consequence of centuries of oppression, beginning with the brutal system of chattel slavery, which was founded on the belief in the inherent inferiority of African Americans. This dehumanizing ideology laid the

groundwork for generations of trauma and suffering that continue to reverberate through African American communities to this day. Central to Dr. DeGruy's analysis is the recognition that healing from PTSS requires more than just individual efforts—it necessitates systemic change and collective action. By acknowledging the pervasive impact of historical trauma and confronting the institutionalized racism that perpetuates inequality and injustice, Dr. DeGruy offers a path forward towards healing and empowerment.

One of the most compelling aspects of Dr. DeGruy's work is her emphasis on resilience and strength within the black community. Despite the profound challenges they have faced, African Americans have demonstrated remarkable resilience and resourcefulness, drawing upon their cultural heritage and collective wisdom to navigate adversity and strive for a better future.



^ Dr. Joy DeGruy visits Spokane for Maternal Health Week 2024.



"Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" is not just a scholarly examination of historical trauma—it is a call to action for individuals and communities to confront the painful legacy of slavery and work towards healing and justice. Dr. DeGruy's insights challenge readers to confront uncomfortable truths, but they also offer hope and inspiration for a more equitable and compassionate future.

In conclusion, "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" is a thought-provoking and essential read for anyone seeking to understand the enduring impact of slavery on American society and the transformative power of healing and resilience. Dr. Joy DeGruy's work is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the possibility of healing and redemption, even in the face of profound adversity.

Shades of Motherhood Network Magazine at the event.



**THESE GHOSTS ARE FAMILY BY MAISY CARD**

**A BOOK REVIEW**

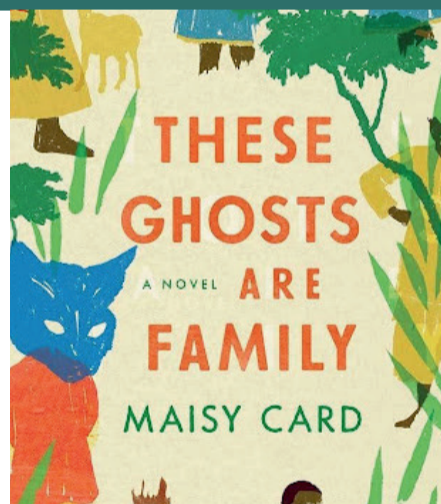
**by Emmarae McLendon**  
THE BLACK LENS  
CONTRIBUTOR

This is truly one of the greatest debut novels I've ever read, and then immediately reread.

In the striking debut novel "These Ghosts Are Family" by Maisy Card (2020) we observe Stanford Solomon, a Jamaican man who makes the decision in his old age to tell his health aide about who he truly is. You see, he is actually Abel Paisley and he faked his own death in the 70s, stole his friend's identity, and left Jamaica leaving his family behind. Now, why is he telling his health aide you ask? Well... because she is actually his first born daughter! \*gasp\* He is about to meet her for the first time! \*gasp!\* And this is about to be her first day as his health aide! \*gasp!!\* (What a first day at work...)

This story is such a rollercoaster of emotions because you get every character's perspective of how Abel's choices affected them - including himself, his children, and grandchildren. Due to Card's incredible writing she shows deeply generational trauma that seeps through the family. We even see characters from Abel's ancestors in colonial Jamaica.

This book had me heavily annotating all throughout! I highlighted, underlined, scribbled, and even added post-it notes, so I could fully express my thoughts and emotions. I felt hopeful, sad, horrified, seen, and hidden. I felt such a range of emotions that when I finished reading it I actually read it again the following month! I was motivated to do such a quick reread because I was truly baffled at how well the characters were written. After reading the last page, I felt like I truly understood the characters and why they made the



decisions they made. I held immense empathy for some and felt very frustrated with others.

There is a quote toward the end of the book that brought me to tears (as a lot of moments did in this book). I'll leave out some spoilery context, but a character is thinking that "maybe if he knew which country his ancestors came from, he'd know which gods to pray to; maybe the spirits of his long-dead family could find him now and save [them]."

No matter what religion you practice it can't be denied how hard hitting this quote is. This is something that has always lurked in my mind accompanied by the feeling of knowing certain traditions or prayers are lost forever. I highlighted this sentence and shed a tear at how powerful of a statement. Moments of my own life where I thought something similar came to mind which made my cry even more. (Notably thinking of all the times I've been asked "But where are you reallyyyy from? Like where are your ancestors actually from?")

These Ghost Are Family by Maisy Card is an incredible read and one that will stick with you months after reading, perhaps you'll even do a reread immediately like me.



< Dr. Joy DeGruy visits Spokane for Maternal Health Week 2024.

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## WELLNESS



## LOCAL NONPROFIT USES A VILLAGE MINDSET TO BREAK CYCLES

By April Eberhardt  
THE BLACK LENS

Tommy Williams Jr. understands the powerful connection between good health, access, exposure, and opportunity. His faith in God led him and his wife Paula to a place of clarity and purpose. Operation Healthy Family Spokane (OHFS), a non-profit, is a seed that was planted nearly 2 decades ago. Today that seed is blooming.

Established in 2011, OHFS's mission "is rooted in faith to provide health equity programs and services for the community regardless of their background and financial circumstances." As a youth in Chicago in the 70s and 80s, Williams recalls countless basketball games on the blacktop in his neighborhood, playing with friends and cousins from daytime until those streetlights came on. He reflects on the imprint his father has left on his own life, and the value of a strong family unit. Williams also remembers the community that helped raise him; the block parties, cookouts, church, and a village mindset that kept him out of risky situations that could have easily set him on a different path. He credits his father's presence and involvement as a model for him and others in his neighborhood, reinforcing the power of influence. These experiences became background music in his life. Now, he is creating that here in Spokane.

Currently a criminal justice instructor at the NEWTech Prep Skills Center, Williams' professional background is social work. He was a successful athlete in the 90s, playing football for Eastern Washington University and went on to pursue a Master of Athletic Administration from Washington State University. While working with Child and Family Youth Services, he saw all too often the lack of skills and social

emotional development that children demonstrated. Positive socialization was another hurdle. Things that were garden variety experiences for Williams as a youth were foreign to many on his caseload. The relationships that helped him keep his focus in life were not a matter of fact for the families he served, and he recognized where the disconnect was.

As the father of 6 sons, Williams offers them the same support that he knew growing up. But when that is not the lived experience of children, deficits are inevitable. To Williams, the absence of fathers in their children's lives has created a nasty wound. There is an African proverb that says: "The ruin of a nation starts in the homes of its people."

Williams recalls the 1974 movie, "Claudine" starring Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones, which highlights the life of a single mother of six in New York. This movie serves as an observation of how social conditions entrenched in inequities have had deleterious effects on the Black community. Williams recalls how in "Claudine", single motherhood was incentivized through government subsidies. He reflects, "That movie opened my eyes to how the government had rules that mothers couldn't have the father in the home if they wanted assistance." This put families in precarious straits that pushed their survival between a rock and a hard place, aggravating an already vulnerable situation. Broken families, compounded by an amalgamation of subpar living conditions, limited economic resources, an influx of drugs in Black neighborhoods, and violence, became the story of urban blight-- all leftover effects of the stain of racism in America. Several generations later, we still feel the impact.

Williams likens this work through OHFS to a military operation. He and Paula work

to support young people and their families through fitness, sports, and dental health education. By creating access to opportunities, the work of cycle breaking becomes tangible. One of the main strategies? Filling the shortfalls by being a family for families.

For instance, under the umbrella of OHFS is Emmanuel Gym, a youth only facility with equipment at the Emmanuel Family Life Center in the East Central community. Williams realized early that physical fitness had reverberating effects on his overall health and it also opened doors for him in college. He wanted to create a space where youth can normalize fitness. At the Emmanuel Gym, he helps teach skill and technique in weight training (among other things) and emphasizes that this gym is specifically for youth. "Kids don't have a space where they can afford to learn how to lift weights and get better in basketball because, nowadays, kids are usually priced out of sports and can't afford to play because they can't pay."

When he was a social worker, Williams realized that many kids did not know how to do sports because they had never really been taught. There were also barriers in the way of many foster kids to participate in afterschool sports. As a response to this, Ballers Youth Sports Club (BYSC) was created under the OHFS umbrella to offer healthy physical activity for girls and boys in grades 3-12. BYSC has a basketball camp that teaches kids to understand the sport better. It is also here that the family, especially fathers, are encouraged to be involved. Youth who are at risk for behavioral issues are a focus, as the club provides them with an outlet and a place to belong. Participants in BYSC also learn the following core values: faith, honesty, respect, integrity, sportsmanship, and leadership. "OHFS's goal is to help decrease childhood obesity

and juvenile diabetes with kids of color in Spokane. Statistics also show that if Black boys are disciplined in schools early on with suspension and expulsion, they are more likely to graduate to the school to prison pipeline."

One of the newest initiatives of OHFS is a career bridge for marginalized youth to enter the field of dentistry via a job shadow program. Paula is an Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary who specializes in placing fillings after the dentist diagnoses and prepares the tooth. Good News Dental (GND) is a part of OHFS and serves as a launching pad for future dentists, hygienists, and assistants. It also seeks to employ BIPOC professionals to foster representation and stimulate interest in the profession. By providing this opportunity, youth can gain hands-on exposure and become curious about STEM careers by way of the health sciences. Understanding that dental care is vital to all other aspects of one's health is also an important facet. As such, "Brush for The Future" was a program offered prior to the COVID pandemic. Under GND, dental staff went into schools and helped students learn proper dental care, with the notion that they could share this information with their families. Approaches such as this empower everyone to take ownership of their health and cycle breaking can take root to build stronger families and stronger communities.

Williams is hoping to reach those areas that are historically underserved. He invites our local churches and schools to share more about OHFS, particularly the job shadow program. This collective action is how OHFS hopes to heal homes, families and communities.

To find out more about OHF, visit the website here:

<https://www.ohfspokane.org>.

## FROM THE WATER'S EDGE

eagles and ospreys circle above it in search of their next meal of fish. However, just out of view from the rim are camps tucked along the river's edge home to different folks with a different lifestyle. They live there just out of sight unless they travel up to the rim on deer trails and dare become visible.

Like Kendall Yards, South Hill is another example of neighborhoods of affluence. As one leaves the valley floor and begins the climb, homes grow in size and the biggest ones have the best view of the valley. It's worth a drive along Cliff Drive and High Drive just for their views. Manito Park, Manito Gardens, Comstock Park and the Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden are beautiful green spaces located on South Hill. The neighborhoods are crowded by age old deciduous trees and green islands separating lanes of traffic. The trees produce much needed shade and cooler temperatures during the hottest months and beautiful fall colors.

Flatland neighborhoods in Spokane are less attractive. They lack the views, have fewer creature comforts or amenities, fewer tree lined streets, and are hotter in the summer. Instead of a view of a flowing river and circling birds of prey they have the freeway and the constant drone of traffic 24-7. Liberty Park provides much-

needed-green space in East Central.

Starting in 1929 government maps were created in Spokane to actually identify neighborhoods based largely on race. Redlining was used by banks to determine where it was "safe" to lend money to residents. Neighborhoods where black and brown people lived outlined in red signifying "hazardous risk" for lending money. The impact of Redlining is still evident in some of our neighborhoods just as the advantages of generational wealth are obvious in affluent ones. Some wealthier neighborhoods have racially restrictive covenants stating that, "No race or nationality other than the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot." Black geographer Dr. Carolyn Finney in her 2014 book titled Black Faces, White Spaces, calls the outcome of these covenants and wealthy enclaves as creating "landscapes of exclusion". The location of toxic waste dumps is another indicator of environmental racism. The Spokane Reservation, located forty miles away from their ancestral lands, is not spared from the impact of uranium mining.

East Central was known for its black and immigrant blue collar residents. By 1956 it was considered Spokane's "poorest and most diverse

neighborhood". Some folks decided it was the "perfect" location for I-90. With the future expansion of I-90 more concrete, steel, interstate traffic and noise are coming to the residents of East Central.

Environmental justice means that everyone—regardless of race, color, national origin, or income—has the right to the same environmental protections and benefits. Residents have the right to have access to safe green spaces as well as meaningful involvement in the policies that shape their communities.

Today, there are efforts to address the impacts of environmental racism in Spokane and on the rez. The [Spokane Eastside Reunion Association \(SERA\)](#) and the [Carl Maxey Center](#) are working, to bring positive changes to East Central. We can't all afford to live in affluent neighborhoods but we all deserve equitable considerations.

*Dr. Bartlett is a retired educator. He retired from Gonzaga University in 2007 and Eastern Washington University in 2020*



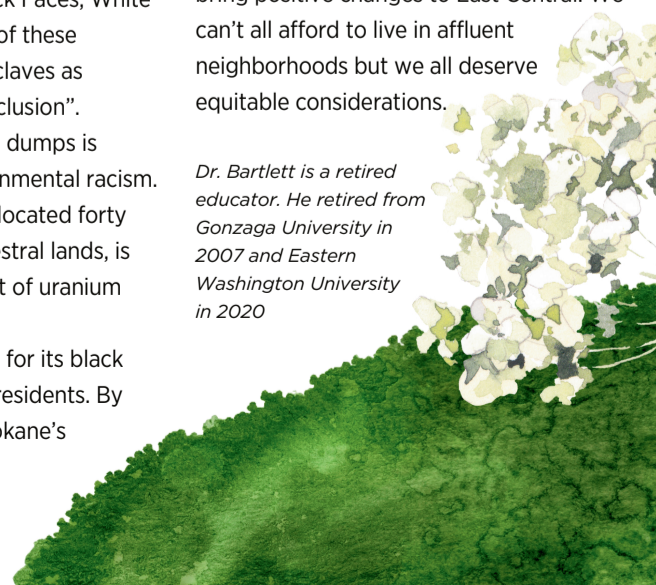
Dr. Robert  
"Bob" Bartlett  
THE BLACK LENS

Environmental racism is real! Identifying the existence of racism depends too frequently on the eye of the beholder: "I know it when I see it." The most blatant local example of environmental racism is what our Native American brothers and sisters experienced here. Another example is East Central where black and immigrant families once congregated in Spokane.

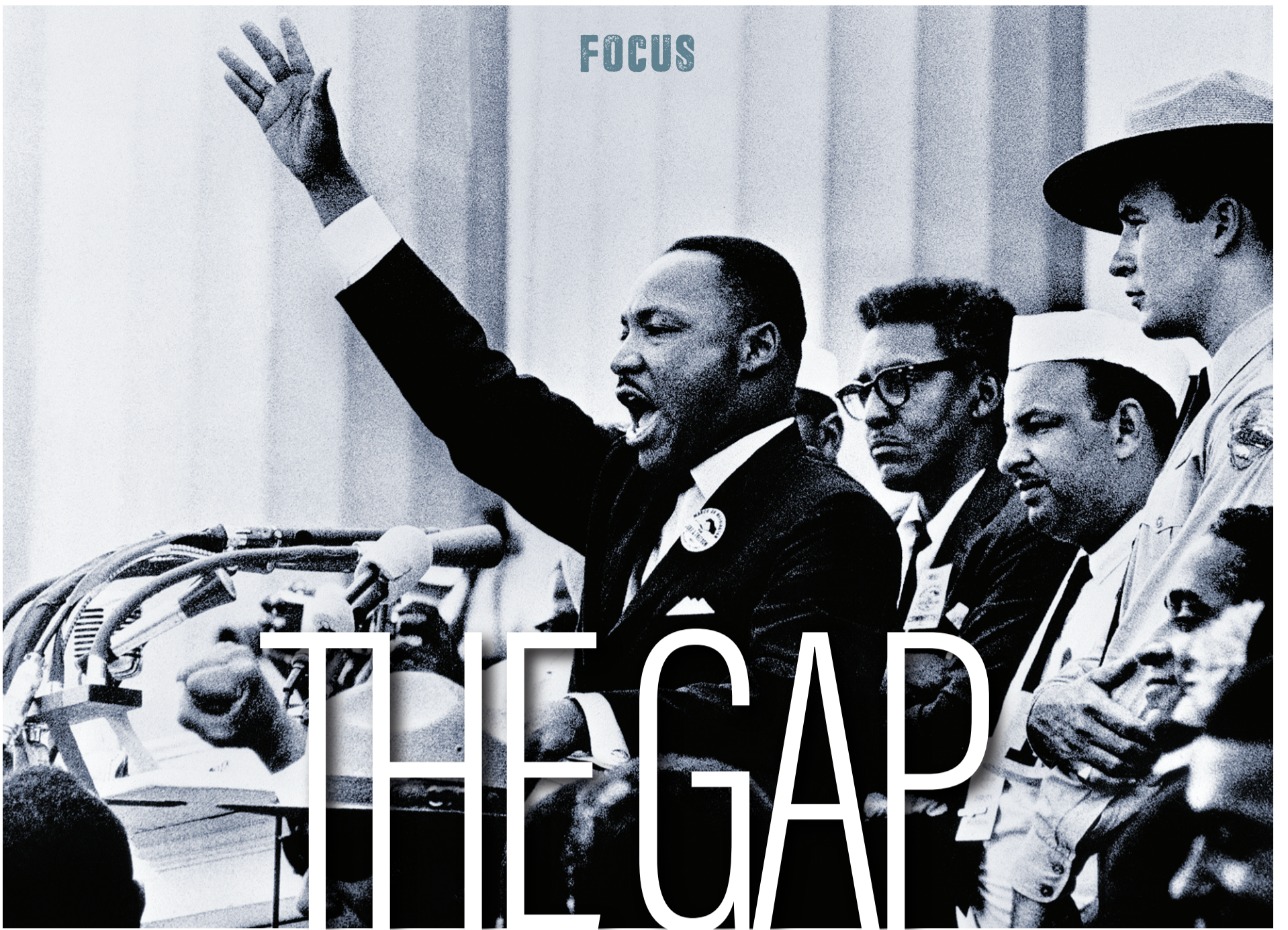
The least desirable parts of any city tend to be the most affordable, less likely to have safe green spaces or share a beautiful view of it. When black and brown people do live near nature it's often toxic with harmful chemicals and noise pollution.

Let's take a tour through Spokane and see if, "We know it when we see it". First stop: Kendall Yards. Notice the trendy markets, shops, access to health care, clean and relatively safe park, quiet streets, beautiful landscaped yards, and a bordering paved trail with a stunning urban river view.

From the Kendall Yards rim, the river below looks and sounds pristine. Bald







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By Black Lens Staff

Despite the progress that's been made over the past century in improving civil rights for African-Americans ... despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the integration of the military, public schools and other public accommodations ... despite civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., above, becoming a national icon and his words becoming well known by most Americans ... despite all this, there is still a huge gap in the way Black and White Americans view the current state of race relations in our country.

In July 2020 — after mass protests had broken out nationwide in the wake of the George Floyd killing in Minnesota — analytics, polling and consulting company Gallup launched a major effort to study the lives, experiences and opinions of the more than 40 million adult Black Americans.

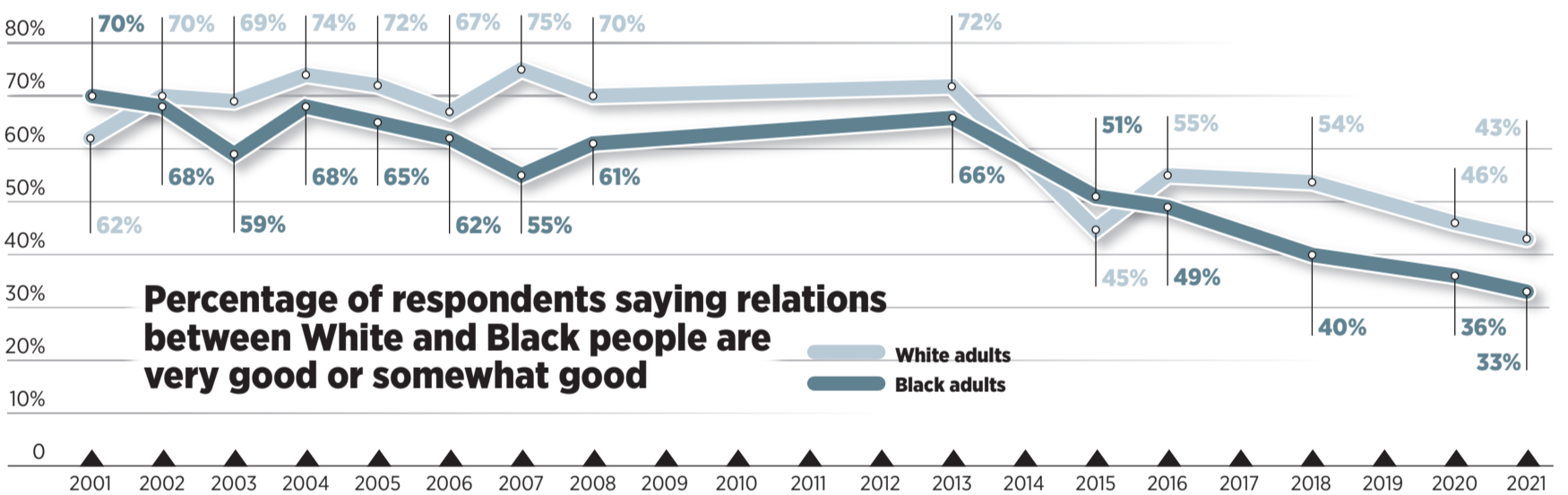
Among Gallup's findings:

■ Americans are less certain today than in the past that equality of economic opportunity exists for Black Americans.

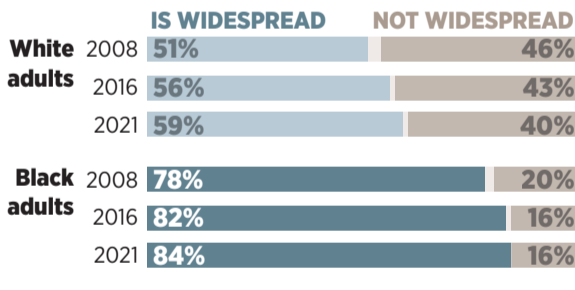
■ Americans are more skeptical in general about the state of relations between Black and White Americans than they were during the Barack Obama Administration.

■ Black Americans aren't confident they receive fair treatment from police officers, health care professionals or from their own employers. In some cases, White Americans seem oblivious to those concerns. Or perhaps don't agree with them.

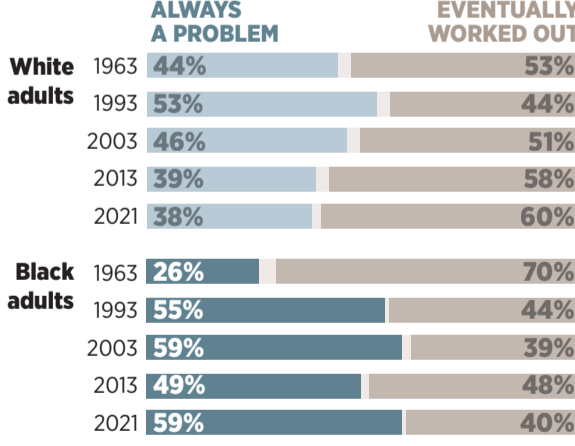
Some of the backsliding in race relations and the increase in the gap between perceptions of White and Black Americans can be explained by the same polarization that's affected U.S. politics over the past few years. Still, it's clear the nation has a ways to go before it lives up to "We, the people" by actually including all Americans.



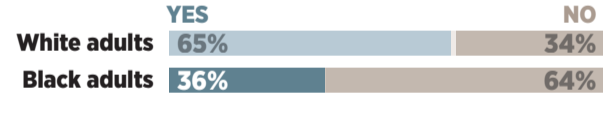
**Q Do you think racism against Black people is or is not widespread in the U.S.?**



**Q Do you think that relations between Black and White people will always be a problem for the U.S., or that a solution will eventually be worked out?**



**Q Do you think that Black people have as good a chance as White people in your community to get any housing they can afford?**



**Q Are Black people in your community treated less fairly than White people ... on the job or at work?**



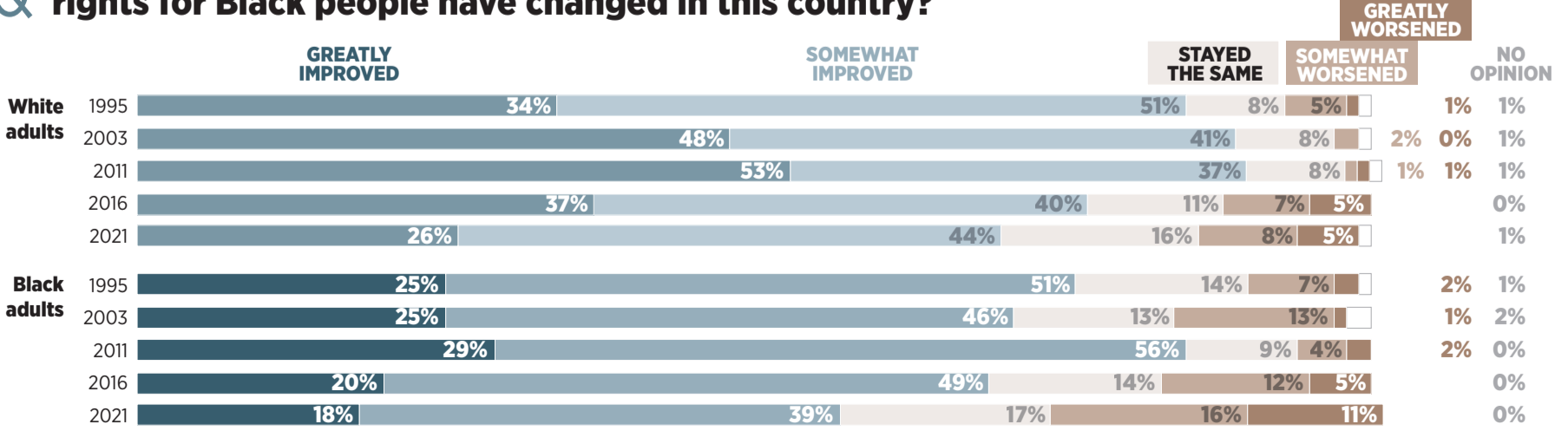
**Q ... in dealing with the police, such as traffic incidents?**



**Q ... in getting health care from doctors and hospitals?**



**Q Thinking back over your lifetime, how do you feel civil rights for Black people have changed in this country?**



Sources: Gallup, U.S. Census Bureau, Newsweek, ABC News, Vox, the New Yorker



CULTURE

# Don't call me Colored

A Reflection



by Shirlyn Hillson  
THE BLACK LENS  
CONTRIBUTOR

It was the beginning of a new school year and for the first time in 20 years, I was nervous about what that day would look like. Today, as I prepared my classroom to welcome a new group of students, I wondered what they would think of me. How much of who I am should I share with them, I wondered. Would they simply hate me at first glance? I had no idea what to expect. Spokane was all new territory for me. Having moved across the country, reaching far south from Florida to Washington state, was a shift from my southern roots and an adventure in itself. I was used to living in a place where the people I saw regularly reflected me in both culture and appearance. Being in this new place somewhat amused me, but I must admit, it also felt a little intimidating. Thank goodness for my husband, the reason I found myself in what I would call Dr. King's Dream. My relocation to Spokane actually brought back some of the feelings I felt many, many years ago when I was one of the few Black students in my school back home in Florida, during the era of integration. Coming from the South, I didn't realize there were places like the Pacific Northwest; it had never even crossed my mind. Florida, though southern, is also quite a melting pot of culture. You can always see yourself mirrored in the population; from the darkest of night to the brightest of bright and everything in between. That's the America I had grown to know. The bell was about to ring, announcing the beginning of the school day. I took a big breath, opened the door and stood quietly next to it.

Placing a smile on my face, I awaited the first of my students to enter. Not surprisingly, my first student arrived with her mother. Looking from the student to her mother, I could see the surprise on their faces when they looked at me. Glances were exchanged. Here I was, a Black woman standing at the entrance of the classroom. Placing a smile on her face, she gathered herself and asked, "Is this room 6?" "Yes," I replied. "Are you the teacher?" "Yes, I am Mrs. Hillson. Welcome. And who is this young lady?" She mumbled something I didn't hear clearly, as I turned to show the student to a seat, with a smile. The mother looks back questionably. Then leaves without a word. The rest of that period is basically the same. Parents escorting their children into my classroom on the first day. Students arriving without their parents seemed more curious than surprised. Seemingly, they wanted reassurance that I was, indeed, "the teacher." "Yes, I am the teacher." I found myself repeating this continuously. Once the bell rang to signify that class had officially started, I made it to the front of the classroom. I began, "Good Morning, I am Mrs. Hillson. Welcome to your first day in middle school. I know if we work together, we can make this experience enjoyable and exciting. For now, please check your schedules for the following information, homeroom 06, teacher Hillson and Math 7- Advanced." I quickly began to walk around the room, assisting students who may have needed additional instructions in locating the indicated information. When everyone knew they were in the correct room, I began saying "I know we will have a great year together as we learn and explore so many interesting math concepts. But first, let's introduce ourselves. I will go first. As you can see, I am a Black woman from the South. I was

born and raised in Miami, Florida and I am excited to be here today with you and to learn so much about you and my new home." As I described myself as Black a few students looked shocked. I thought it was all in my head. Little did I know it would become an issue. I called the names of the students listed on the roster I was provided and had each one introduce themselves and share a fun fact. The day went well as class after class proceeded the same way. Lunch was interesting. I was used to the cafeteria providing home cooked meals versus fast-food alternatives. I brought my own, thank goodness. The other teachers were welcoming and seemed nice; however, I noticed I was the only Black person there. Never-the-less, things seemed to be going great. Or were they? Feeling pretty good about my first day and having set up my room for the following day, I headed to the office. As I was signing out, the principal noticed me and asked me to join her in her office for a moment. I was taken aback, since I felt things had gone great. I assured myself she was just checking in with me since I was not only new to the school, but the city as well. Once the door to her office was closed, she did not immediately acknowledge my presence. Time seemed to slow down and I could imagine how a kid would have felt if they were summoned to the office and had no idea why they were there. I took a deep breath and waited. She began by asking me how my day had gone and I told her I felt that things had gone well. That the students were delightful, inquisitive, and seemed ready to get started on this new journey. There was a pause before she spoke again. Looking down, at what seemed to be notes, she began, "I had a few phone calls concerning something you said in class." "Really? Me? Couldn't be. I didn't say anything inappropriate." I was alarmed

and confused. "Well," she began, "some parents have called concerning you referring to yourself as, and I quote 'a Black woman from the South.'" I replied, in confusion, almost like a question instead of a statement, "Well that's what I am." Looking intensely into my eyes she said, "We don't use that term. We say 'person of color.'" Calmly, counting to ten, giving myself time to think and not explode, I replied, "No one can tell me how to identify myself. I know who I am. I refuse to accept the designation of being a person of color. I find it offensive." Thinking back to my own childhood, that term symbolized something derogatory in the era of segregation. "Colored" was plastered on water fountains, restrooms and stores that banned us because of prejudice, preceded by the word "NO." I hated it then and even more now, at that moment. Thinking quickly, I said, "They need not worry about how I identify. They can simply call me Mrs. Hillson." I refused to let anyone put me in their little boxes. I am who I am. With that, I stood up and left her office, bidding her a nice day. After this awkward moment, I never heard anything else about it. But the experience reaffirmed that I say who and what I am. Others cannot define me. This is America. The words we recite daily in school, that have been drilled into every child's head in these United States, "the home of the brave, the land of the free" beckons me to take my power. I am who and what I say I am! It is not negotiable. I am Black and my Black is Beautiful.

**POET'S CORNER**

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**PAGE 16**



## COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

### Acquiescence to comfort over accountability

The privilege of naïveté is a luxury for those on the upside of a power imbalance. It affords escape from uncomfortable truths, sweeping injury under the rug. Superficial conversations happen, but avoidance occurs when the dialogue gets too hard. The privilege of naïveté turns into outright cognitive dissonance, enabling evasion. You cannot expect those pushed to the margins to endure discomfort while everyone else takes their time to find comfort with race talk. There is no sanitizing that type of disregard; the dirt that gets swept under the rug becomes an inescapable obstacle. Identity politics built this country, and the lie of inclusion says that we will all move ahead when we pretend like that is not true. So, we dance around critical conversations about how rampant historical exclusion has created a trajectory that still impacts us today. Equity policies and benchmarks paint a picture that makes system leaders proud, but who really moves ahead? Growing frustrations become an afterthought to everyone else's convenience, so long as the boxes get checked. Cognitive dissonance is the force behind performative equity, and it

acquiesces to comfort over accountability. When it comes to race and class in America, many know there is a problem but deny it at the same time. They look the other way or entertain symbolic gestures to keep things quiet. It is a survival response that hooks into our consciousness and informs how we move through the world. Survival feels different for all of us; those with power can make decisions so entrenched in denial that problems get dumbed down. Normalizing the culminating effects of racism (the microaggressions, the gaslighting, the stereotyping, the dog whistling, the gatekeeping, etc.) is a dangerous game that has caused and continues to cause immeasurable harm that devastates our personhood. For those who have grappled with intergenerational, cultural, and racial trauma, cognitive dissonance is the ultimate Jedi mind trick. Without an honest reckoning with the truth, equity and anti-racism work falls flat. Acknowledgement is not enough. It is paramount to move from courageous and brave dialogue into a place of intentionality. This is the dirty work that takes collectivism and power sharing, amplifying and valuing the voices that don't come from the status quo. Stakeholder relationships need trust and transparency; they cannot be thwarted when contention arises. Belonging in community, if authentic, requires honest discourse, accountability, collective problem solving, and follow through. It is the undoing of fortified practices that have become standard operating procedure for centuries, in systems that were built to exclude. Part of the deep clean we need is to ask the questions: what are we trying to preserve, at whose expense, and why? Until we confront that, we cannot even begin to uproot, destroy, or rebuild. We simply repeat what has not worked, watch the pendulum swing back and forth, and follow people who are not willing to deviate from the standard operating procedures while power is being safeguarded. Looking at macro-level and micro-level social patterns throughout history is a good barometer for directional transformation. The effects of cognitive dissonance can be felt in every facet of society. It lives in the label of "angry" or "dramat-

ic" when acts of bias and bigotry are called out. It hides in the statement "assume positive intent" when repeated exposure to microaggressions produce so much angst and distrust that those words feel like an assault. "Good intentions" start to feel like a crutch or disguise for offense. It tries to finesse a false narrative of reconciliation when there has never been real healing. It feigns progress and alienates the voices of those who won't settle for being placated. It's the condescension in the question of whether you think there is really a race problem when you have expressed exactly that. It's so ingrained in America's psyche that it gets handed down to children and shows up at 1st grade recess when a Black child is told that he is the bad guy because his skin is dark, in a game of chase. It's in the song that proclaims, "I wish I were in Dixie" without ever asking what Dixieland was like for the enslaved and their families. It's in the reclaiming of a word that was never meant for our uplift or survival, a word that was the last thing many heard before being hung from a tree. Cognitive dissonance whitewashes history and never questions how the same person who wrote: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal" also wrote the words: "the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind." We cannot soft-kitten-glove our way through racism because racism is certainly not gentle with us. It is destructive, it is insidious, and it erodes humanity. And the game has not changed, only the players have. Unmet needs still prevail. Anti-racism and DEI initiatives cannot work until, as Dr. Cornell West states, we get beneath the deodorized language and do a reset with truth and justice. These are the forerunners to any work done in the name of equity and is the real catalyst for systemic change. Otherwise, nothing changes if nothing changes, and we continue to circle the wagon. Playing charades is shallow and benefits no one. You cannot play in the faces of people who recognize all the tricks. That approach is like putting lipstick on a pig. Folks are tired of waiting.

**14 JUN 2024 @ the FOX**

# PILLAR AWARDS

NOMINATION FORM

**Nominate a deserving Non-Profit, Business, Individual, Church/Religious Organization, and Heartwood who have impacted, helped, and influenced the black community in Spokane.**

**SCAN ME**



SPORTS

# FIRST KING CARL NIGHT A SUCCESS

**Black Lens staff reports**

The Spokane Indians, in partnership with The Black Lens and the Innovia Foundation, hosted the first King Carl Night on April 19 in honor of Jackie Robinson.

“It was a great evening of community and celebration with a walk-off win and fireworks to end the night,” senior vice president Otto Klein wrote in an email.

The North Central High School step team welcomed

guests to the night, and special King Carl jerseys were worn by players and guests alike.

The next King Carl Night is June 19, in celebration of Juneteenth.

From each ticket sold, \$1 is donated to the Sandy Williams Fund for the Carl Maxey Center. Tickets are at [milb.com/spokane/community/king-carl](http://milb.com/spokane/community/king-carl).

Thank you to North Central High School’s step team and Coach Shamerica Nakamura for an exciting pre-game performance.



Spokane Indians player No. 20, Jean Perez, throws the ball during King Carl Night at Avista Stadium.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAMES SNOOK/SPOKANE INDIANS



Board members, contributors and supporters of The Black Lens pose before King Carl Night at Avista Stadium.



Spokane Indians manager Robinson Cancel stands on the field donning a King Carl uniform.



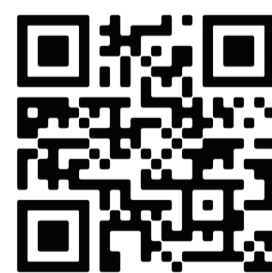
North Central High School step team members rehearse before performing outside Avista Stadium.



Spokane City Council president Betsy Wilkerson dons a King Carl jersey with her granddaughters at King Carl Night at Avista Stadium.



Members of the North Central High School step team prepares for a King Carl Night performance outside Avista Stadium.



**Watch it online**

To watch a video of the North Central High School step team, visit The Black Lens’ YouTube at [www.youtube.com/blacklensnews/videos](http://www.youtube.com/blacklensnews/videos)

The North Central step team performs outside Avista Stadium before King Carl Night.



# BLACK BUSINESS DIRECTORY

**4AM Vintage** – Vintage clothing store owned by Christian Jones. Contact (832) 652-4580 or coojones4am@gmail.com. 1009 N. Washington St., Suite A, Spokane, 99201. Instagram: 4am.spokane.

**A Do Good Cleaning Service LLC** – Janitorial service by Daryl Givens Jr. Contact (509) 714-8113 or dgizzle21@gmail.com.

**A Man & A Truck** – Junk removal by Demetrius Bell. Contact (509) 319-8860, (509) 319-7126 or amanandatruckspokane@gmail.com.

**A Truly Reliable Cleaning Services LLC** – Janitorial service by Tatiana Ross. Contact (678) 974-6907 or trulyreliablecleaning@gmail.com.

**A Woman's Worth** – Woman Empowerment Group by Gaye Hallman. Contact (509) 290-7687, (509) 385-7074 or ghallman@aww.community. 59 E. Queen Ave., Suite 210, Spokane, 99206.

**Allie & Austin Accounting Services** – Bookkeeping by Dorothy Hood. Contact (509) 242-3324 or dhood@allieaustin.com. P.O. Box 142207 Spokane Valley, 99214.

**Allowing Change, LLC.** – Pre-Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Certified Life & Relationship Coach Britney Richards (she/her). Contact (509) 795-0376 or allowingchangelc@gmail.com. 9 S. Washington St., Suite 420, Spokane, 99201.

**Andrews Care** – Assisted Living Facility for Adults with Disabilities owned by Ashley Andrews. Contact (509) 939-7218 or ashandrews@comcast.net. P.O. Box 1629, Veradale, Wash., 99037.

**Spokane Beard Papa's** – Cream puff bakery owned by Marc Bryant. Contact (509) 290-5128 or spokanebeardpapas@gmail.com. 4808 E. Sprague Ave., Suite 204, Spokane Valley, 99212.

**Beauchamp and Chase** – Luxury Soaps and Comfort Wear by Genesis Veronon. Contact (509) 608-1511 or beauchampandchase@gmail.com.

**Bethely Entertainment Group** – Owned by Michael Bethely. Contact (509) 710-1338 or mbethely@be2become.com. P.O. Box 28931, Spokane, 99228.

**Betty Jean's BBQ** – Restaurant owned by Omar Jones. Contact (509) 828-5931 or bettyjeansbbq@yahoo.com. 2926 E. 29th Ave., Spokane, 99223. Online at www.bettyjeansbbq.com, Instagram: Betty\_jeans\_bbq and Facebook: Bettyjeansbbq.

**Brendan Blocker Realty Services** – Real Estate Agent Brendan Blocker. Contact (509) 290-9645 or brendan.blocker@gmail.com. 4407 N. Division St., Suite 200, Spokane, 99207. Online at brendan.spokanearealestate.com or Facebook: Blocker Real Estate.

**Brittany Trambitas Hair Design** – Natural hair stylist Brittany Trambitas. Contact (509) 768-3925 or btrambitas1228@gmail.com. 802 E. 29th Ave., Suite 14, Spokane, 99203.

**B & B Pro Video** – Video Production by DeShawn Bedford and Michael Bethely. Contact (509) 818-0864 or admin@bbpvideo.com. 1011 W. Railroad Alley, Suite 100, Spokane, 99201. Online at bbpvideo.com.

**Cascadia Public House** – Restaurant owned by Jordan Smith. Contact (509) 321-7051 or info@cascadiapublichouse.com. 6314 N. Ash St., Spokane, 99208.

**Chicken-N-More** – Restaurant owned by Bob and Teresa Hemphill. Contact (509) 838-5071 or manysmiles@comcast.net. 414½ W. Sprague Ave., Spokane, 99201.

**Clear View** – Window cleaning by Limmie Smith. Contact (509) 319-7526 or fresh00274@icloud.com. 3011 E. Columbia Ave., Apt 3, Spokane, 99208.

**Dennis Mitchell Empowerment Seminars** – Education services by Dennis Mitchell. Contact (509) 981-0646 or dennispeaks@gmail.com. 9116 E. Sprague Ave., Suite 66, Spokane Valley, 99206.

**DM & Owl** – Vending service by Deandre Meighan. Contact (702) 954-2562 or dm.owl247@gmail.com.

**Discovery Counseling Group LLC** – Mental/Behavioral Health Counseling by Melissa Mace. Contact (509) 413-1193 or

info@discovery-counseling.org. 1008 N. Washington St., Spokane, 99201.

**Ebony Hair Salon** – Salon owned by Pam Thornton. Contact (509) 325-4089 or ebhair3@yahoo.com. 3125 N. Division St., Spokane, 99207.

**Ethan Mendoza-Pena Insurance Agency, LLC** – Insurance Agency owned by Ethan Mendoza-Pena, M.A. Contact (509) 590-4726 or emendoza@farmersagent.com. 2010 N. Ruby St., Spokane, 99207.

**Exclusive Barber Shop** – Barber shop owned by Keno Branch. Contact (509) 862-4723 or branchingoutbiz@gmail.com. 1423 N. Argonne Road, Spokane Valley, 99212.

**Fantasy Kleaning LLC** – Commercial Janitorial Service by Nathaniel Harris. Contact (509) 890-0819 or fantasy.kleaning@gmail.com.

**Fresh Soul** – Restaurant owned by Michael Brown. Contact (509) 242-3377 or spokanereunion@gmail.com. 3029 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202. Online at freshsoulrestaurant.com.

**Gorilla Park Music** – Music production by Brandon Batts. Contact (256) 642-6463 or gorillapark2@gmail.com.

**I Hear You Sis LLC** – Nutrition/health coaching by Prosparetti Coleman. Contact (509) 995-7044 or ihearyousis@gmail.com. Online at www.ihearyousis.com, TikTok: tiktok.com/@i.hear.you.sis.

**Inter-Tribal Beauty** – Master esthetician, Reiki practitioner and TV/film makeup artist Octavia Lewis. Contact (509) 201-8664 or octavia@intertribalbeauty.co. 59 E. Queen Ave., Spokane, 99207. Online at www.intertribalbeauty.com, Instagram: instagram.com/inter\_tribal\_beauty/.

**JSandoval Real Estate** – Real Estate Broker Jacquelyne Sandoval. Contact (509) 460-8197 or JSandoval@windermere.com. 1620 E. Indiana Ave., Suite 1250, Spokane Valley, 99216. Instagram: instagram.com/therealestateantie/.

**Koala Koi Massage** – Massage therapy by Joy Robinson. Contact (509) 900-8968 or koalakoimassage@gmail.com. 1008 N. Washington St., Spokane, 99201.

**Lacquered and Luxe** – Nail salon owned by Lisa-Mae Brown. Contact (509) 993-7938 or brownlisamae@yahoo.com. 33 E. Lincoln Road, Suite 205, Spokane.

**Larry's Barber & Styling** – Barbershop owned by Larry Roseman Sr. and operated with Master Barber QC. Contact (509) 869-3773 or ljrbarberman@aol.com. 3017 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202.

**League of Women for Community Action, Nonprofit, dba Southeast Day Care Center** – Nonprofit Child Care Center owned by Day Care Director Sug Vilella and the League of Women for Community Action. Contact (509) 535-4794 or lwca@gmail@hotmail.com. 2227 E. Hartson Ave., Spokane, 99202. Online at www.southeastdaycare.org.

**Legacy Barbershop** – Barbershop owned by Dougie Fades. Contact (509) 315-8312. 28 E. Sharp Ave., Spokane, 99202.

**Lilac City Legends Inc.** – Professional sports team owned by Michael Bethely. Contact (509) 774-4704, info@lilacitylegends.com or michael@lilacitylegends.com. 631 S. Richard Allen Court, Suite 205, Spokane, 99202. Also at P.O. Box 28931, Spokane, 99228.

**Maranatha Evangelical Church** – Church owned by Luc Fils Jasmin. Contact (509) 389-4539 or eem.maranatha@gmail.com. 631 S. Richard Allen Court, Suite 211, Spokane, 99202.

**Mary Kay** – Beauty Consultant Nicole Mills. Contact (509) 666-4929, (252) 365-4971 or MKwithNicole@gmail.com. Online at mkwithnicole.wordpress.com, Facebook: facebook.com/MKwithNicoleM.

**Maxey Law Office** – Lawyer Bevan Maxey. Contact (509) 326-0338 or info@maxeylaw.com. 1835 W. Broadway Ave., Spokane, 99201.

**Mo-Nu Hair City** – Wig retailer Jackie Douglas. Contact (509) 443-3193 or jazzyjackie9@yahoo.com. 4750 N. Division St., Spokane, 99207.

**Moore's Boarding Home** – Residential care by Betsy Wilkerson. Contact (509) 747-1745 or betsy@mooresassistedliving.com. 1803 W. Pacific Ave.,

Spokane, 99201.

**MoVin Properties** – Property management by Latrice Williams. Contact (509) 565-0325 or movinproperties@gmail.com. 5723 N. Division St., Spokane.

**Natasha L. Hill, P.S.** – Lawyer Natasha Hill. Contact (509) 350-2817, (509) 357-1757 or natasha@nhlawoffices.com. Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. Second Ave., Spokane 99201.

**New Beginnings Hair & Beauty Salon** – Hair styling and braiding salon owned by Stephanie Tullos-Brady. Contact (509) 475-3556 or tullos\_stephanie@yahoo.com. 3019 E., Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202.

**New Developed Nations** – Level 1 & 2 Substance Use and Mental Health Outpatient Facility owned by Rickey "Deekon" Jones. Contact (509) 964-1747 or info@newdevelopednations.com. 3026 E. Fifth Ave. Spokane, 99202.

**Nina Cherie Couture** – Bridal boutique owned by Nina Nichols. Contact (509) 240-1782 or info@ninacherie.com. 827 W. First Ave., Suite 109, Spokane, 99201.

**Operation Healthy Family** – Dental and youth programs by Tommy Williams. Contact (509) 720-4645 or tommy@ohfspokane.org. Good News Dental is located at 3009 S. Mount Vernon St. at (509) 443-4409. Emmanuel Fitness is located at 631 S. Richard Allen Court at (509) 822-7058.

**Parkview Early Learning Center** – Early Learning Center owned by Luc Jasmin. Contact (509) 326-5610 or parkviewelc@gmail.com. 5122 N. Division St. Spokane, 99207.

**Pro Mobile Auto Detail LLC** – Auto detailer Antonio Holder. Contact (509) 995-9950 or antonio@spokanepromobile.com.

**Providential Solutions** – Counseling and coaching by Charina Carothers, LICSW. Contact (509) 795-0150 or info@psurnotalone.com. Richard Allen Court, Spokane, 99202.

**Quality Blacktop & Striping** – Residential and commercial blacktop by Barrington Young Jr. Contact (509) 251-6019 or young.barrington@gmail.com. 5759 E. Broadway Ave., Spokane, 99212.

**Queen of Sheba** – Restaurant owned by Almaz Ainuu. Contact (509) 328-3958 or info@queenofsheeba.com. 2621 W. Mallon Ave., Suite 426, Spokane, 99201.

**Quick and Classy Auto Customs** – Mechanic Jamar Dickerson. Contact (509) 315-5090, (509) 795-6065 or 2gn2tythoon@gmail.com. 3627 E. Broadway Ave., Spokane.

**Share Farm Inc.** – Online farmers market and supply chain logistics company owned by Vincent Peak. Contact (509) 995-8451 or vince@share.farm.

**SmooV Cutz Barber Shop** – Barber shop owned by Jason "SmooV" Watson. Contact (509) 703-7949 or jsmooV923@gmail.com. Two locations at 13817 E. Sprague Ave., Spokane Valley, 99216, and 14700 E. Indiana Ave., Spokane Valley, 99216.

**Spacehub Production** – Photography Studio owned by event photographer Eugene Muzinga. Contact (509) 216-1072 or spacehub@gmail.com. 1023 W. Sixth Ave., Building 1, Spokane, 99204.

**Vision Properties** – Real estate firm owned by Latrice Williams. Contact (509) 431-0773 or transactions.thevision@gmail.com. 5723 N. Division St., Spokane.

**3 Performance Institute** – Sports performance and physical therapy by Louis Hurd III. Contact (509) 869-2344 or Louis@spokane3pi.com. 211 W. Second Ave., Spokane, WA 99205. Online at spokane3pi.com.

*Are you a Black business owner and you don't see your name or business in this directory? Contact info@blacklensnews.com with your name, business, contact information, address or website, if available. Put "Black Business Directory entry" in the subject line. This listing was made with the help of the Black Business and Professional Alliance and the Carl Maxey Center. If you are part of the Maxey online directory but not seen here, The Black Lens needs your updated contact information in order to publish.*



COURTESY

Morning Star Baptist, ran by the Rev. Walter Kendricks, is located at 3909 W. Rowan Ave. Sunday School is at 9:30 a.m. and Sunday Service is at 10:45 a.m.

## AREA BLACK CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES

**Holy Temple Church of God in Christ** – Auxiliary Bishop Ezra Kinlow. 806 W. Indiana Ave, Spokane, 99205. Sunday School is 9:45 a.m. Worship Service is 11 a.m.

**Bethel African Methodist Episcopal** – The Rev. Benjamin D. Watson, Sr. 645 S. Richard Allen Court, Spokane, 99202. Sunday School is 9:30 a.m. Sunday Service is 11 a.m.

**Calvary Baptist** – The Rev. Dr. C. W. Andrews. 203 E. Third Ave., Spokane, WA, 99202. Sunday School is 9 a.m. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

**Morning Star Baptist** – The Rev. Walter Kendricks. 3909 W. Rowan Ave., Spokane, 99205. Sunday School is 9:30 a.m. Sunday Service is 10:45 a.m.

**New Hope Baptist** – The Rev. James Watkins. 9021 E. Boone Ave., Spokane Valley, 99212. Sunday Service

is 10:45 a.m.

**Saving Grace Ministries** – The Rev. Earon Davis Jr. 3151 E. 27th Ave., Spokane, 99223. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

**Word of Faith** – The Rev. Otis Manning. 9212 E. Montgomery Ave., Spokane Valley, 99206. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

**Jesus is the Answer** – The Rev. Shon L. Davis. 1803 E. Desmet St. Spokane, 99202. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

**Restoration Church** – The Rev. Andre A. Dove. 2815 W. Sunset Blvd., Spokane, 99224. Sunday Service is 10:45 a.m.

**Mt. Olive Baptist Church** – The Rev. Patrick Hamm. 2026 E. Fourth Ave., Spokane, 99202. Sunday Service is 11 a.m. Wednesday Bible Study is 6 p.m.

## EVENTS TO WATCH FOR

**MAY 6 AND MAY 22: GENEALOGY FOR BEGINNERS** – Eastern Washington Genealogical Society shares tools and tips to help get started on genealogical discoveries. 5-6:30 p.m. May 6 at Indian Trail Library. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. May 22 at Central Library.

**MAY 13 AND MAY 20:** Working Families Tax Credit Help – Get 20 minutes of help with your application for the Washington state Working Families Tax Credit. Details in the long description. Registration required. 11 a.m. May 13 at Hillyard Library. 11 a.m. May 20 at Shadle Park Library.

**MAY 12: LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER** – This 12th-annual event offers a night of storytelling on all aspects of motherhood. Hilarious, heart-breaking, and everything in between, each show strives to encapsulate the everyday joys and heartaches along with the complexities and nuances that make mothers and motherhood what it is. Proceeds from ticket sales will go to Embrace Washington, a nonprofit that supports foster care and education for children in foster care. 7-8:30 p.m. Sunday, May 12, at the Bing Crosby Theater. 901 W. Sprague Ave., Spokane 99201.

**MAY 16: RESISTING ERASURE THROUGH STORYTELLING** – Celebrated author Putsata Reang describes how writing and storytelling are

an antidote to shame, discrimination, and erasure. 5:30 p.m. May 16 at Liberty Park Library.

**MAY 25: NAACP SUMMER KICKOFF** – Meet and greet event with the Spokane NAACP, featuring music, games, art and fun. 2-6 p.m. Saturday, May 25. The Nest. Kendall Yards, 1335 W. Summit Pkwy.

**MAY 31: NOMINATIONS DUE FOR SPOKANE HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPIONS AWARDS** – Human Rights Spokane is now accepting nominations for the 2024 Spokane Human Rights Champions Awards. This is an opportunity to formally recognize and honor individuals and groups in our community who are dedicated to protecting and advancing human rights. The Spokane Human Rights Champions will be honored by Human Rights Spokane and the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission at their annual banquet on Nov. 14, along with Gonzaga Center for Hate Studies' Eva Lassman: Take Action Against Hate awards recipients. Nominations will be accepted through May 31.

**NOW-JUNE 28: MAC SEEKING SUBMISSIONS** – The Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture is currently accepting submissions for "Our Stories: Black Families in Spokane." Anyone interested in contributing to the project may email ourstories789@gmail.com. The event will take place 11 a.m.-4 p.m. June 28.

## NAACP MEETINGS

To join, visit naacpspokane.com/contact.

**GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** Third Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

**HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE:** Second Monday of each month at 5:15 p.m.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE:** Second Wednesday via zoom at 7 p.m.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Fourth Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** First Tuesday at 5 p.m.

## Black Lens pickup and distribution: Get on our list!

For newspaper pickup and distribution, please contact info@blacklensnews.org. Pickup is at Carl Maxey or Schoenberg at Gonzaga on Fridays before Sunday publication. The Black Lens is published the first Sunday each month.

Have you lost a dear loved one, who was part of Spokane's Black community?

THE BLACK LENS  
*In remembrance*

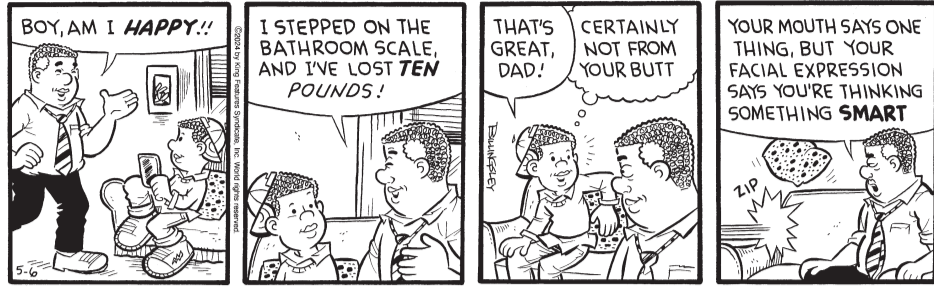
We are offering free obituary services. Email info@blacklensnews.com with "Obituary" and your loved one's name in the subject line. Please limit obituaries to 400 words or less. A photo of the loved one is encouraged, but not required. We may lightly edit the obituary for brevity and clarity, but will otherwise leave it in its entirety.



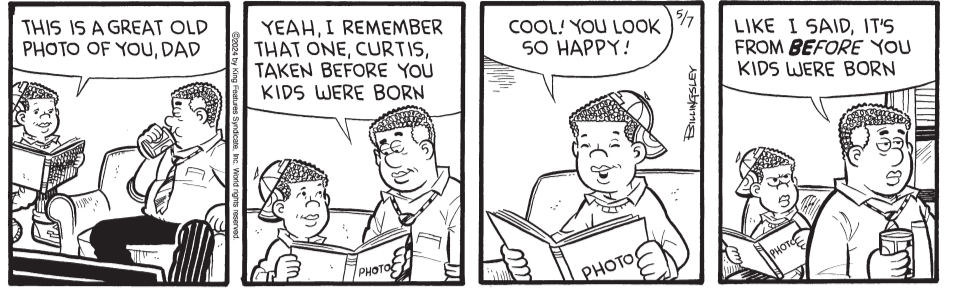
# COMICS

CURTIS • BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

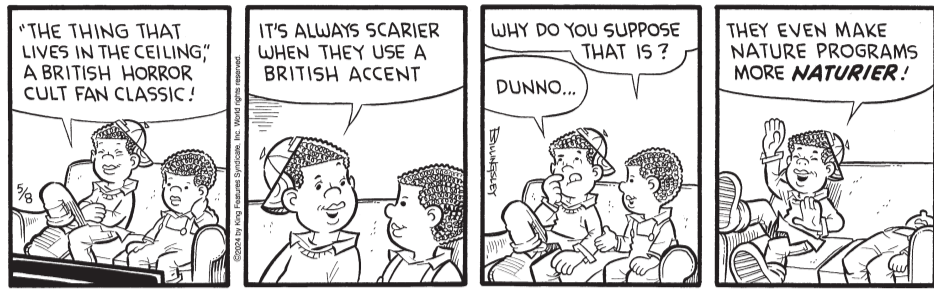
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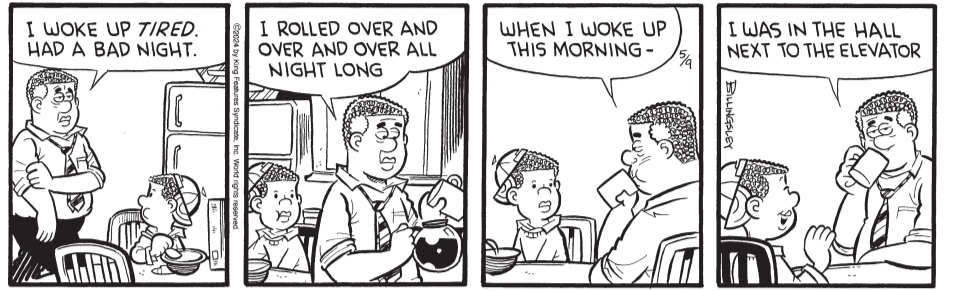
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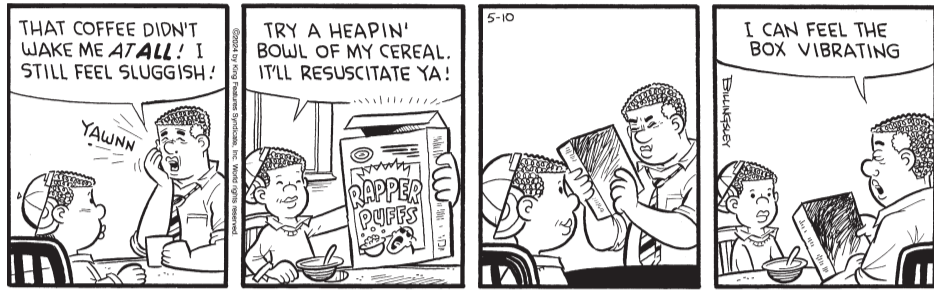
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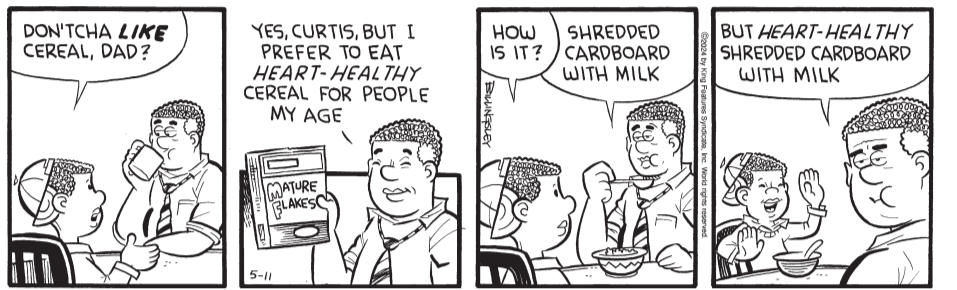
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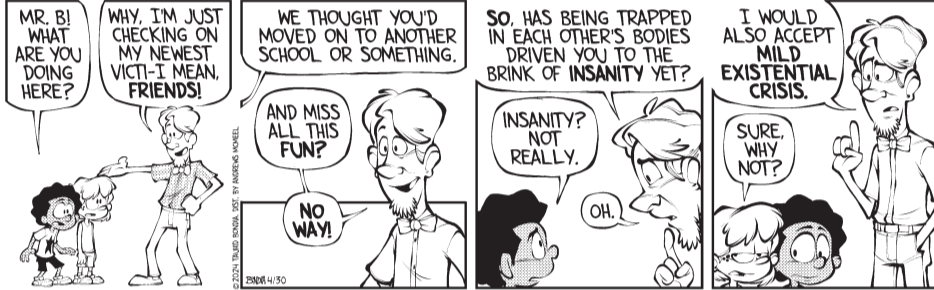


MAY 11



CRABGRASS • BY TAUHID BONDIA

APRIL 30



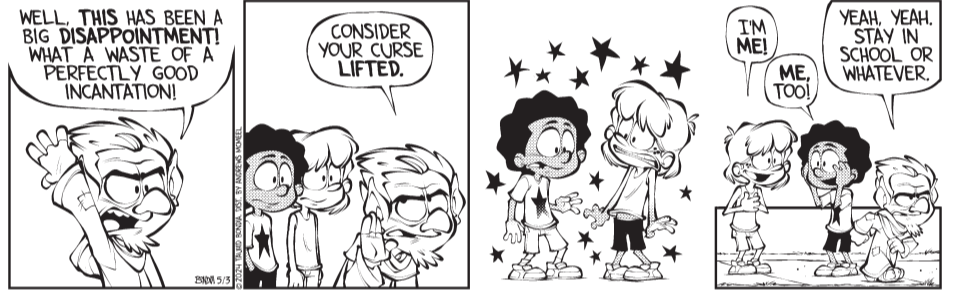
MAY 1



MAY 2



MAY 3



MAY 4



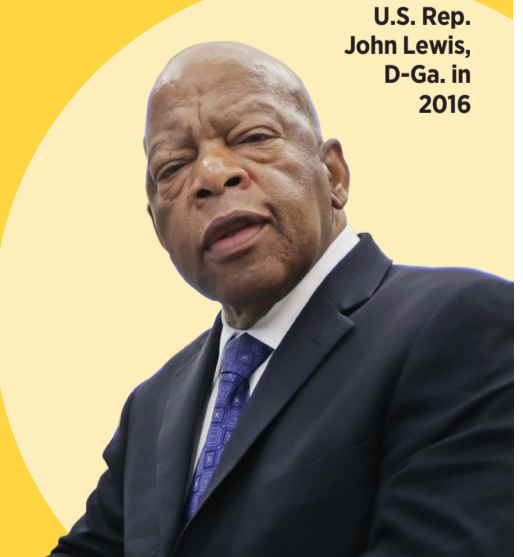
MAY 6



## CIVIL RIGHTS WORD SEARCH

- Black Panther Party
- Shirley Chisholm
- Civil Rights Movement
- Strike
- Boycott
- Loving vs Virginia
- Freedom Riders
- W.E.B. Dubois
- John Lewis
- Protest
- Racism
- Sexism
- Voter Rights Act
- Brown vs. Board
- Apartheid
- Ida Wells
- Bigotry
- NAACP

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 WJOHNLEWISWUTAPARTHEIDCURYAROL  
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 BKLUMQUVMVFIILFAROLGWQVEQSFQAK  
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CULTURE

# REMEMBERING GREAT GRANDMA'S APPLE DUMPLINGS

By April Eberhardt  
THE BLACK LENS

I used to watch my great grandmother make these individually wrapped baked apples nestled in a pocket of dough when I was a child. She would get requests to make these on holidays and special occasions. I never saw her write a single thing down, but she always knew the exact ingredient measurements. In 2012, I made a promise to learn how to make this family favorite. It required calls to Pennsylvania and Georgia. I realized simply watching her was an inheritance of the recipe, copying her techniques as I jogged my memory. This Mother's Day, I will pay homage to my great-grandmother, Morine "Pecola" Holmes, by making her signature apple dumplings. This recipe submission is a shout out to our mothers, past and present, whose footprints we follow.



APRIL EBERHARDT/THE BLACK LENS  
These apple dumplings were a popular request during holidays and special occasions for April Eberhardt's family.

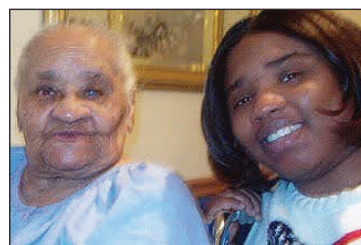
- Ingredients**
- Vegetable shortening
  - Cold water
  - Vanilla Extract
  - Cinnamon powder
  - Cinnamon Sticks
  - Butter
  - Brown sugar
  - Apple cider (optional)

- Baking apples (Granny Smith, Macintosh, Fuji)
- All-purpose flour
- Salt

**Directions**

1. Dough: Make the dough by

mixing these things together in a large bowl. Add water last, after mixing the other ingredients:  
 1/2 cup vegetable shortening  
 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 cup cold water  
 2. Knead the dough into smooth, medium sized balls, place in Ziplock bags and refrigerate for an hour  
 3. Wash, peel and core apples



April Eberhardt, right, and her great grandmother

4. Mix cinnamon powder, brown and white sugar in a small bowl  
 5. Glaze: Put the peels, cinnamon sticks, 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract, 2 tablespoons of brown sugar, 6-8 ounces of water (or apple cider) and a 1 tablespoon of butter into a small pot or saucepan and put on low heat, watch and stir (this part is flexible for other spices such as nutmeg and you can add more of any of these ingredients according to your preference)  
 6. Take out balls of dough, on a baking mat, use a rolling pin to flatten each ball to make a circle large enough to wrap the apple  
 7. Place the cored apple in the center of the rolled dough  
 8. Take a teaspoon and put 1-2

scoops of the cinnamon, white and brown sugar mix, with a small slice of butter into the core of the apple (step #4) into the core of the apple. Be careful to watch the bottom of the apple so that the dough does not thin. If it thins, add a little dough to thicken that layer  
 9. Wrap the apple on each side (making it like a pocket) and pinch the top to close the pocket  
 10. Spray a baking pan with nonstick spray and place wrapped apples into the baking pan  
 11. Drizzle glaze from step #5 into the baking dish to create sauce at the bottom and some on top. Save a little for the end of the baking cycle  
 12. Place the dumplings in a preheated oven (375 degrees) and cook for 50-55 minutes, until brown and tender  
 13. Drizzle a little more glaze on top at the end of the baking cycle, let the dumplings rest and cool for 10 minutes

*Do you have a recipe you'd like to share? Please send recipes to editor@blacklens.com with "RECIPE" in the subject line. Photos of the food is recommended.*

# CELEBRATING CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK MOTHERS TODAY, TOMORROW

By Natasha Hill  
THE BLACK LENS



As Mother's Day approaches, it is essential to honor and celebrate the contributions of Black mothers today and throughout history. Black motherhood has long been a cornerstone of strength, sacrifice, and love.

dren, but a staunch advocate for civil rights and social justice, despite the risk and ultimate loss to her family. To Mamie Till-Mobley who made the decision to reveal her son Emmett Till's mutilated body through an open-casket funeral in a defiant act that shook the nation's conscience. By allowing the world to witness the brutality inflicted upon her son, Mamie catalyzed the civil rights movement, forcing people to confront the horrors of racism. Through their unwavering courage, these women transformed personal grief into a powerful force for social change, leaving an indelible mark on history and inspiring future generations to confront injustice with unwavering resolve.

in raising others children, particularly white children during slavery, had profound and enduring impacts on Black families and communities. Enslaved Black women were often forced to care for the children of their white enslavers, serving as wet nurses, nannies, and caregivers. This practice not only separated Black mothers from their own children but also subjected them to physical, emotional, and psychological exploitation. Forced to prioritize the needs of white children over their own families, Black mothers experienced profound trauma and loss, which has had generational implications.

Throughout history, Black mothers demonstrated remarkable strength and love in the face of unimaginable

adversity. The manipulation of Black mothers as caregivers perpetuated a narrative of Black inferiority and servitude, reinforcing dehumanizing ideologies, which contributed to the erasure of Black motherhood from dominant narratives of caregiving and maternal love. Despite their sacrificial labor and unwavering dedication, Black mothers were often marginalized and devalued, their contributions overshadowed by pervasive racism.

Despite systemic injustices, Black mothers have found ways to nurture and protect their own families, instilling values of resilience, resourcefulness and dignity in future generations. Let us remember and celebrate the remarkable contributions of Black mothers, today and

every day.

Here are some ways to commemorate this day:

**1. Acknowledge Black Mothers:** Whether it's a family member, friend, or community leader, let them know how much they are loved and valued and that you appreciate their dedication, sacrifice and unique experiences.

**2. Get Educated About Experiences:** Take the time to educate yourself about the experiences and contributions of Black mothers throughout history. Read books, watch documentaries, or attend events that highlight their stories, sacrifices and achievements.

**3. Give Back to Community:** Honor the spirit of activism and advocacy embodied by Black moth-

## Listen to Your Mother event

This 12th-annual event offers a night of storytelling on all aspects of motherhood, featuring Black Lens contributor April Eberhardt. Proceeds will go to Embrace Washington, a nonprofit that supports foster care. 7-8:30 p.m. May 12 at the Bing Theater.

ers by volunteering or supporting organizations that work towards social justice and equality, particularly around the Black maternal health crisis, our youth and the poor.

Above all, take the time to celebrate the love and devotion that Black mothers provide to their families and communities.

THIS MONTH ON...

## BLACK SOCIAL

01

### ANGEL REESE TO THE CHICAGO SKY

Angel Reese's move to the Chicago Sky marks a significant addition, enhancing the team's competitiveness with her remarkable talent and energy. Her arrival is celebrated as a major boost for the Sky, promising to elevate their performance and excite fans for the upcoming season.

02

### SONEQUA MARTIN-GREEN TALKS DISCOVERY

therealsonequa • Tonight was the night! The season premiere of Star Trek Discovery's fifth and final season on @paramountplus. If you tuned in, I hope you enjoyed it. Much more to come...! ❤️🔥

03

### SUMMER LUCILLE CELEBRATES PLUS SIZED BODIES

**TheJuicyBodyGoddess**  
@juicybodygoddess2.0

- Plus Size Fashion & Confidence
- In Store or Online (ships internationally)
- Charlotte, NC
- in bio
- www.juicybodygoddess.com
- linktr.ee/Summerlucille + 3

04

### DAWN STALEY WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

**BLACK GIRLS ROCK!**  
@BLACKGIRLSROCK

Beginning our week with this message: "This is Uncommon Favor" - Coach Dawn Staley.

This National Championship win is proof that delay does not equal denial! Keep striving, keep believing, and victory will prevail! 🙌🏾 Again, #blackwomen are unstoppable!

## POETRY CORNER

# Black Light

By Jaime Stacy

Oh Chicago!  
 Why must thou be gloomy today?  
 Your beauty covered  
 by a blanket of clouds  
 heavy with the tears of the heavens,  
 to all appearances,  
 forsaken by the sun.

Your rich black history  
 was forged in this darkness,  
 and is not bothered  
 by the lack of light.  
 A light assumed necessary to make visible the  
 next steps of the staircase leading to  
 new opportunities,  
 success,  
 hope.

Black perseverance moves forward through the gloominess,  
 boldly putting one foot in front of the other.  
 And with each step,  
 illuminating the path  
 for those who will come after.

Now

Here I sit in a room  
 filled with Black Excellence,  
 lost in admiration  
 for the resilience of the journey  
 that lit the way  
 so that I may bask in this experience.

I am light.



*Written by: Jaime Stacy  
 March 9, 2023  
 Inspired by: Author, Dr. Jarvis Givens  
 Fugitive Pedagogy; Carter G. Woodson  
 and the Art of Black Teaching*