

THE BLACK LENS

NOVEMBER 2024 - VOL. 9 - ISSUE NO. 10

POINT OF INFLECTION

COMMUNITY FONDLY REMEMBERS THE REV. PERCY ‘HAPPY’ WATKINS

The Black Lens

The Rev. Percy “Happy” Watkins, an influential civil rights advocate and orator, died in late October at the age of 82. “Beloved Community,” Spokane City Council President Betsy Wilkerson wrote Oct. 25 on Facebook. “It is with a heavy heart that we learn about the passing of Reverend Happy Watkins. Born in the Bronx, but



Rev. Watkins

a Spokaneite in heart and soul since 1961, he has served our community with a heart of gold and helped us remember the words of Dr. King as he recited the ‘I Have a Dream’ speech every year like clockwork and at events

throughout the year.” Watkins delivered Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech hundreds of times spanning three decades to thousands of youth at elementary schools across the city. “As pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, he touched many lives and was part of the founding board of The Fig Tree among many other things,” Wilkerson wrote. “My heartfelt condolences and prayers to his family and

to his church on such a tragic loss for our community.” Watkins retired from New Hope in 2018. He held the title of pastor emeritus. “He will be greatly missed,” Mary Stamp, the co-founder and publisher of The Fig Tree, wrote on Facebook. “He gave us so much!” A Rogers High School student was the first recipient of a scholarship in Watkins’ name

earlier this year. “Sending love, hugs and prayers (heart emoji) to the family and church family of New Hope Baptist Church,” wrote motivational speaker and Black Lens contributor Stephey Nobles-Beans on Facebook. Watkins is survived by wife, Etta, and four sons, one of whom – James Uriah Watkins – leads the New Hope Baptist Church.



COURTESY

Wilhelmenia Williams celebrates her 90th birthday.

Celebrating Momma Williams' 90th birthday

By Teresa Brooks
THE BLACK LENS

Born on Oct. 16, 1934, Mrs. Wilhelmenia Williams recently turned 90 years old. Teresa Brooks, Black Lens contributor, shares a special tribute. Happy 90th birthday, Momma Williams! You are truly a blessing to all of us. Over the past year, I’ve learned so much from you, and your wisdom has been a guiding light in my journey. Coming back home wasn’t easy; the transition felt rough at times, and I found myself struggling to adjust. I’ll never forget the day I went for a run, tears streaming down my face, feeling a bit lost. I decided to pop my head into the Carl Maxey Center, and there you were, welcoming me with open arms. You had me sit down and play

bingo, and it turned out to be exactly what my heart and mind needed. Your kindness in that moment was profound – it helped me find the strength to move forward. I remember Sandy always saying, “I’m getting you ready,” and reassuring me that if I ever needed anything, you and she had my back. She would say, “Start feeding the bees honey, you’ll get further in life.” I never fully understood the meaning behind her words until I returned home and found comfort in your warmth and guidance. You’ve shown me the importance of trusting God’s plan while reminding me to keep pushing forward, no matter the obstacles. Thank you, Momma Williams, for being there

See **WILLIAMS, 10**



COURTESY

Chauncey Jones, fifth from the right holding a baby, is a community and wealth builder.

A vision without a plan is a hallucination

East Central community developer Chauncey Jones talks about building ‘wealth esteem’

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

Chauncey Jones believes in cultivating an asset mindset and closing the racial wealth divide. He has a close relationship with the city of Spokane, particularly the East Central community. He is a beloved community developer, a wealth esteem builder, a business owner, and he started a nonprofit to address homelessness in Spokane. In September, he helped lead and facilitate the Black Home Ownership Summit and in October, under his leadership, the first Black Homeownership Spokane Cohort graduated. In this cohort, homebuyer activities were stimulated under the guidance of community leaders with the goal to increase access and advance Black homeownership in Spokane County. Jones takes us through his journey to becoming the change he wants to see in the world in the interview below.



Chauncey Jones

What is Take Up the Cause?

A BIPOC by-and-for nonprofit organization that focuses on housing and services.

How Take Up the Cause come to be?

The long story of this is, Sandy Williams invited me to lunch one day and said, “Chauncey, we need someone who looks like us in the affordable housing realm.” And I said, “I’m already in the affordable housing realm.” And she said, “No, we need it in the non-

profit sector because there are a lot of resources, and the stewarding of those resources don’t usually go to our people.” And so, after three or four lunch meetings she finally convinced me to look into it a little more seriously. And then I also had a brother-in-law of mine who wanted to give back to the community. He said, “Hey, I have some things that I want to put some resources towards to help in this same area.” And so, between the two of them, we started talking and formulated Take Up the Cause.

Tell us more about your affordable housing venture.

I have a for-profit organization called A Better Way, and that’s with myself and my cousin. We have affordable housing rentals. In that space, we’ve partnered with Habitat for Humanity, where we’re rehabbing homes and then selling them to

See **CHAUNCEY, 10**

Carl Maxey Center sends legal tech, GU student, others to national conference

Members of the Sandy Williams Justice Center’s Justice Team readies to leave for the National Self Represented Litigants Conference in Salt Lake City, which took place in late September.



COURTESY OF THE CARL MAXEY CENTER

By Teresa Brooks
THE BLACK LENS

The Carl Maxey Center recently supported Shayla Maxey (a limited license legal technician) and Julia Zaglin, a Gonzaga law student, in attending a legal clinic conference, where they gained valuable insights into the current state of access to justice, among other Spokane youth. I had the pleasure of speaking with Maxey and

See **LEGAL, 10**

HAPPENING AROUND TOWN



UBUNTU FLY ANGLERS GATHERED TO SHOW COMMUNITY ‘WE ARE HERE’

Black Lens staff reports

On Oct. 10, the Ubuntu Fly Anglers Community Appreciation gathering took place at the Empire Health Philanthropy Center as a way to strengthen community engagement. Founders Bob Bartlett and Carl Crawford celebrated a milestone first year of operations as a nonprofit organization. “We Are Here” was the theme for the night and this was an op-

portunity for the community to learn more about how connecting to the environment through fishing is a narrative that belongs in the Black community as much as it does in any other. Bartlett grew up hunting and fishing; he adopted a deep admiration for nature, actively participates in outdoor activities and raised his family to do the same. He shared that

See **UBUNTU, 10**

ARTS AND LEISURE

POETRY CORNER
Spoken City
By AJ the Wordsmith

Let's a have a conversation

We are more than just a political observation

What are we really doing?

The agenda is our spiritual vibration

Sometimes has blinders and needs a reminder that we can be more kinder,

Here's a rewinder

Fake promises never see through the loop

DEAR SPOKANE why do so many youth become so uncouth

before you flee the coop

Don't tell no lies on me, and I won't tell spiritual truths about you.

Let us plant some humble humans seeds and let them grow to provide fruit of knowledge for the next,

May that trend take root and pass on to the next generation

So that the valley of the sun can speak life anew

In a true spoken city anything can come true.

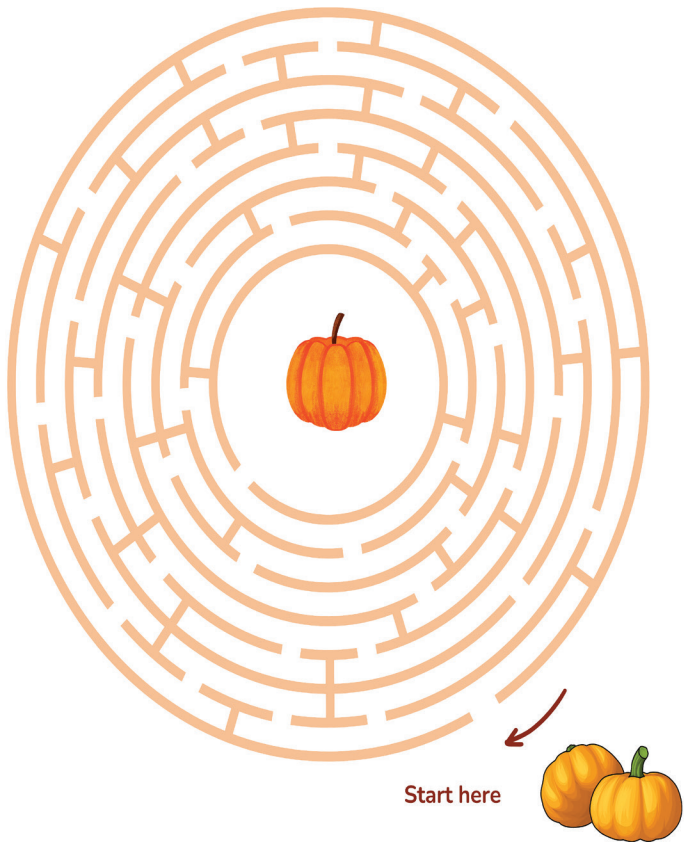


Written by: AJ the Wordsmith

KIDS ZONE

HAPPY FALL
MAZE PUZZLE

Instruction: Can you find your way to the pumpkin the center?



BLACK JEOPARDY

Cast your best guest at these Black historical and pop culture questions:

Which of the following actresses is an EGOT recipient (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony)?

- A) Octavia Spencer
- B) Queen Latifah
- C) Whoopi Goldberg
- D) Regina King

At what age did Serena Williams win her first U.S. Open?

- A) 22
- B) 20
- C) 17
- D) 19

Which singer is remembered as the 'queen of jazz'?

- A) Nina Simone
- B) Aretha Franklin
- C) Ella Fitzgerald
- D) Billie Holiday

BLACK JEOPARDY ANSWERS

EGOT: C) Whoopi Goldberg; Serena Williams: C) age 17; Queen of Jazz: C) Ella Fitzgerald

CURTIS • BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

OVER THE YEARS MANY
HAVE DISAPPEARED
WITHOUT A TRACE!

A cartoon illustration showing a boy in a white shirt and dark pants shouting "BOYS, STOPPIT!!" with a speech bubble. He is reaching out towards two other boys who are lying on the ground, looking shocked. One boy is wearing a striped shirt and the other a white shirt. A speech bubble from the boy in the striped shirt says "MAAAA, DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID?!". There are stars and motion lines around the boys on the ground, suggesting a fall or impact.

CURTIS, YOU COME IN -
I HEAR YOU RUNNING!!
YOU COME IN HERE
NOW! CURTIS!

SLAM!

Tim Kiley

AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T INTERFERE WITH YOUR CLASSWORK, AND YOU HAVE WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM YOUR TEACHER AND ALL APPROPRIATE HALL-PASS DOCUMENTATION. OF COURSE.

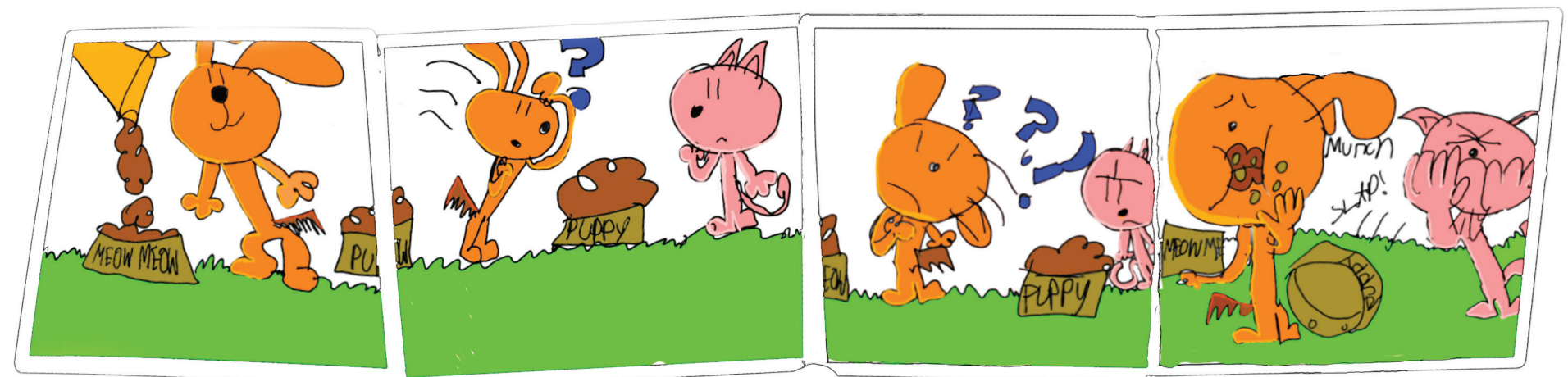
HEY, NOW! YOUR MOM MAKES A MEAN BOWL OF CEREAL..

NO. I DON'T.

HE SEEMS REALLY CHARISMATIC FOR A TEACHER.

I THINK I'D FOLLOW HIM ANYWHERE.

BY: MJ BETHELY



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 Brittney 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.

Black London's – Barber-shop. 1618 W. Second Ave., 99201, and 904 E. Wellesley Ave., 99207. (509) 537-1188 and (509) 309-7155. On Facebook as Black London's.

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.spokanearea-realestate.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.

Bummy Boss Clip's & Beauty Supply – NorthTown mall hair care. Contact (509) 315-8963 or visit bummyboss-clips.appointedd.com.

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.

Compassionate Catering LLC – Catering services. Contact (509) 934-1106 or compassionatecatering2023@gmail.com. 1014 N. Pines Road, #120, Spokane Valley, 99216.

Dennis Mitchell Empowerment Seminars – Education services by Dennis Mitchell. Contact (509) 981-0646 or dennisspeaks@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 fantasykleaning@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 ihearyousis1@gmail.com. Online at www.ihearyousis.com, TikTok: tiktok.com/@i.hearyousis.

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 Jacquelynne Sandoval. Contact (509) 460-8197 or JSandoval@windermere.com. 1620 E. Indiana Ave., Suite 1250, Spokane Valley, 99216. Instagram: instagram.com/the-realestateantui/.

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, Non-profit, dba Southeast Day Care Center – Nonprofit Child Care Center owned by League of Women for Community Action, Non-profit and Sug Villella, Day Care Director. 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@lilaccitylegends.com or michael@lilac-citylegends.com. 631 S. Richard Allen Court, Suite 205, Spokane, 99202. Also at P.O. Box 28931, Spokane, 99228.

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., Spo-

kane, 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@nlhlawoffices.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@ohfspo-kane.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.

The Way to Justice – Community law firm led and created by women of color. The Way to Justice is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization located in Eastern Washington. Contact (509) 822-7514.

WrightWay Beauty Supply – Contact (509) 703-7772 (call/text), wrightwaybeautysupply@outlook.com or visit www.wrightwaybeautysupply.com. 2103 N. Division St., Spokane, 99207.

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, 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

Refreshing Spring Church of God in Christ is located in the Nevada-Lidgerwood Neighborhood off East Broad Avenue.

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, 99202. Sunday School is 9 a.m. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

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

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 Christian Center – The Rev. Otis Manning. 9212 E. Montgomery Ave., Suite 202, Spokane Valley, 99206. Sunday Service is 10 a.m. Info: wordoffaith13@aol.com or (509) 919-4150.

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

Mount Zion Holiness Church – Pastor Elder Tommy Whitman and First Lady Karen Whitman. 2627 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202. Sunday Service is at 10 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.

Refreshing Spring Church of God in Christ – The Rev. Elder Timothy B. Buchanan. 1206 E. Broad Ave., Spokane, 99207. Info: (509) 482-7408.

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 COMMITTEE: First Tuesday at 5 p.m.

EVENTS TO WATCH FOR

NOV. 9: RACIAL COVENANTS PROJECT – Spokane Public Library hosts: Does Your Home Have a Clause Restricting All “Non-Caucasians” From Living in it? The Eastern Washington University Racial Covenants Project is a research initiative that emerged from a need to address historical racial injustices embedded in property records. Find out if your home is one of the 6,400 in Spokane County that has a racially restricting covenant. If you find that it does, visit one of our workshops listed below to learn how to remove it from your legal documents. 3 p.m. Nov. 9. Shadle Park Library. 2111 W.

Wellesley Ave. This event is free and open to the public.

NOV. 9: FREEDOM FUND GALA – The NAACP Spokane branch's annual fundraiser, which directly supports a scholarship fund for local high school students entering higher education. 5-9 p.m.. Nov. 9. DoubleTree Hotel. \$100-\$150. \$1,000 per table. Online: naacpspokane.com.

NOV. 14: PIVOT – Six storytellers tell eight-minute tales on the theme of “roots.” 7-9 p.m. Nov. 14. Washington Cracker Co. Building, 304 W. Pacific, Spokane. By donation. Online: www.pivotspokane.com/events. Info: hello@pivotspokane.com.

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.

THE BLACK LENS Contributor Meeting

NOVEMBER

12

2024

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

NOV. 12, 2024
4:30 - 6 P.M.

SCHOENBERG CENTER
800 N. PEARL ST.
SPOKANE, WA

Got Topics? Pitch Your Ideas & Become a Contributor



REST IN POWER

REST IN POWER
in Memoriam



DIKEMBE MUTOMBO
(SEPT. 30, 2024)

Dikembe Mutombo was a Congolese-American professional basketball player, who 18 seasons in the NBA. Nicknamed "Mount Mutombo," he is commonly regarded as one of the greatest defensive players of all time.



JOHN AMOS
(AUG. 21, 2024)

John Allen Amos Jr was an American actor best known for his role as the adult Kunta Kinte in the landmark miniseries “Roots” and for portraying James Evans Sr. on the CBS television series “Good Times.”



BILL LUCY
(SEPT. 25, 2024)

William Lucy was an American trade union leader. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees from 1972 to 2010, and he served on the board of directors of the NAACP.



THELMA MOTHERSHED-WAIR
(OCT. 19, 2024)

Thelma Mothershed Wair was the oldest of the Little Rock Nine, a group of Black students who integrated Little Rock Central High School in 1957, prompting one of the most important civil rights clashes in American history.



KA
(OCT. 12, 2024)

Ka was a prolific Brooklyn-based rapper whose lyrically-rich albums earned him accolades, and who was also known for his two-decade career as a New York City Fire Department firefighter, where he rose to the role of fire captain.



TONI VAZ
(OCT. 4, 2024)

Toni Vaz was an actress and the first Black stuntwoman in Hollywood, best known for being the creator of the NAACP Image Awards. She had over 50 TV and film credits doing stunt work, including doubling for Cicely Tyson on “Mission: Impossible.”



ED WHEELER
(AUG. 21, 2024)

Ed Wheeler was a veteran actor whose work included shows like “Law & Order,” “Blue Bloods,” and “One Life to Live.” He was a character actor since 1973.



CISSY HOUSTON
(OCT. 7, 2024)

Cissy Houston was a legendary gospel and soul singer, as well as the mother of Whitney Houston and the aunt of Dionne and Dee Dee Warwick. AShe was in the Sweet Inspirations.

ENTER TO LEARN, DEPART TO SERVE: THE LEGACY OF DR. MAXINE MIMMS



By Teresa Brooks
THE BLACK LENS

Dr. Maxine Mimms (1928-2024) was a beacon of hope and progress for Black communities throughout Washington state, including Spokane. Her recent passing on Oct. 8, 2024, marks the loss of a remarkable advocate for justice and equity, whose legacy will continue to shape generations to come.

Dr. Mimms was a tireless educator, community leader, and visionary whose work touched countless lives and helped pave the way for African American students to achieve their full potential.

Dr. Mimm’s impact on higher education is best exemplified by her founding of the Evergreen-Tacoma campus. Under her leadership, the campus was formally established by 1982 with a mission to increase the number of African Americans with college degrees in Washington state. As enrollment grew, the Tacoma campus changed locations several times before finding a permanent home in 2001.

Dr. Mimms’s commitment to educa-

tion extended beyond traditional academic settings; she became a national consultant in curriculum design and instructional methods, shaping educational strategies across the country.

Dr. Mimms did not limit her dedication to higher education. In 2004, she founded the Maxine Mimms Academy, a nonprofit organization located in Tacoma’s Hilltop neighborhood. The academy was established to serve youth who had been expelled or suspended from public schools, providing a second chance to students who had been underserved by the traditional education system.

Throughout her life, Dr. Mimms embodied the principle of “enter to learn, depart to serve” a mantra that she imparted to all who had the privilege of learning from her. Her vision and commitment not only increased educational access but also cultivated a culture of service and social responsibility.

Her passing is a profound loss, but her legacy lives on through the countless individuals who continue to benefit from the doors she opened the barriers she helped dismantle.

REST IN POWER

PAULA EDMUNDS

Dec. 9, 1965 ~ Sept. 17, 2024

On Sept. 17, 2024, our beloved Paula Edmunds passed away into God’s graces. A strong-minded individual throughout life she was resilient no matter what challenges she faced, Paula was known to sing the roof off every venue she performed in.

She was naturally gifted as a songstress and played piano by ear. Her skills were cultivated and nurtured in her father and mother’s church. In the latter years of her life, she became closer to the Father who now embraces her.

Paula is preceded in death by her father (Grant Moore), mother (Louisiana Moore), brother (James Mitchell), and sister (Alice Doss). She is survived by her 3 children (James Bowens, Sherell Bowens and Antwan Bowens), 3 brothers (William Herd, Albert Mitchell, and Dennis Mitch-



ell), a sister (Betsy Wilkerson), 13 grandchildren, a host of nieces, nephews, and several friends that became family.

LEMUEL SHINES

July 3, 1940 ~ Oct. 11, 2024

Lemuel “Pearl” Shines was born on July 3, 1940, in McKinney, Texas, to Lemuel Kirkum and Lillie Mae Kirkum. She was one of five siblings: three sisters, Sandra Nell Kirkum, Lillie Mae Norris and Betsy Kay Jones, and one brother, Melvin Kirkum. Her parents and siblings preceded her in death.

In her early years, Pearl was an electrician at Raytheon where she assembled radios. After doing that, she became a licensed cosmetologist and enjoyed being a service to others during her adult years.

Later in life she had a genuine passion for helping those in need and taking care of everyone around her. Her commitment was being a caregiver in and outside of her home, giving most of her nurturing to the disabled and the elderly. She took care of generations of families with no hesitation.

Pearl accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and savior in 1959, in California, where she met and married Charles Shines. They moved to Texas in 1971, where they raised their two children Darrell and Karen (KK). She was the First Lady at True Holiness Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Plano, Texas, where she was involved with multiple ministries including directing the choir, being the YPWW president, Sunday school and Bible band teacher, as well as youth director, until 1985, when they moved to Spokane, Washington.

Once in Spokane they became members of Refreshing Springs COGIC, under the leadership of Pastor Timothy Buchan-



an. In the late 1980s, they moved their membership to Holy Temple COGIC, under the leadership of Pastor Ezra D. Kinlow where she was a member until she gained her wings.

During her time at Holy Temple, she was a member of the “Golden Girls Circle,” an active member of the women’s department, a devoted sponsor to the Rehoboth Dancers, and a Sunday school and bible study teacher. She was also an Honorary Member of Mt. Zion Holiness Church, under the leadership of Pastor Tommy Whitman.

Mother Shines loved nature and the outdoors. She enjoyed gardening and watching her favorite shows. At any given time, she would have her gospel music playing throughout her home. Mother Shines made sure she had her nails and her hair done routinely and she took pride in her appearance. She loved to cook and go out to eat with her friends and family. She was able to fellowship with anyone around her and everyone loved her company.

Left to cherish her memories are her two children, Darrell of Paris, France and Karen Whitman (Tommy) of Spokane. She also leaves behind her grandchildren, Brittiny, Martin Jr, Zechariah, Hannah, Nina and Caito; five great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces and, nephews; and other extended family; as well as a large church family and community.

WELLNESS

DEEP ROOTS, STRONG WOMEN

LOVE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

“Love begins in the belly.” Pregnancy is one of the most beautiful journeys for a woman. It is a universal gift for a child to hear the voice of its mother from the inside out. Pregnancy bonding lays the foundation for a baby that is filled with love. But what happens when love hurts from the inside out?

The National Library of Medicine says that violence against women has a devastating effect on women’s sexual and reproductive health and affects the health of their children. Violence can begin to escalate in pregnancy and has significant consequences for woman, fetus, and child.

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Ac-

cording to statistics in Washington State, the rate of all pregnancy-associated deaths for non-Hispanic Black people and non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island people was more than 2.5 times the corresponding rate for non-Hispanic white people.

Domestic Violence has profound and specific impacts on women of color during and after pregnancy, there are health risks, mental health consequences, socioeconomic challenges, impact on maternal and infant health postpartum, and barriers to support and find resources.

Addressing domestic violence among women of color, especially during and after pregnancy, requires culturally competent

care, improved access to mental health resources, and systemic changes to reduce racial and economic inequalities.

Surviving domestic violence is a journey, it’s not just about enduring. It’s about rising above the shadows of pain to rediscover the light within. It’s about taking every step toward freedom and having a courageous act of reclaiming one’s life! Taking each day as an opportunity to rebuild, renew, and do more than survive but thrive! This journey is a testament to resilience, hope, and the unbreakable strength of the human spirit to stand up and say, “I remember, but it doesn’t hurt anymore.”

Shades of Motherhood Network is a place that addresses



By Stephy Nobles-Beans
THE SHADES OF MOTHERHOOD NETWORK



many issues regarding maternal health where women can come and find a safe space, to share their joys and find resources such as support groups and organizations dedicated

out for help is not a weakness, it’s a sign of wisdom and strength. Connecting with others who understand your experience can provide a sense of community and remind you that you are not alone on this journey.

If you need help, here are a few local resources:

MiA Mujeres in Action: (509) 869-0876

YWCA Spokane Helpline: (509) 326-2255 or text: (509) 220-3275

Lutheran Social Services: (509) 747-8224 or text: (509) 624-7273

Surviving domestic violence is not just about escaping harm; it’s about embracing the freedom to live a life that reflects your true worth. It’s about reclaiming your power, finding joy, and building a future filled with love and peace.

Remember there is a beacon of hope, your best days are still ahead.



GETTY IMAGES

Seasonal depression, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), often affects people during fall and winter when temperatures drop, and sunlight decreases.

Managing seasonal depression

By Prosperetti Coleman
THE BLACK LENS

As the leaves begin to change color, the air cools, and the days grow shorter, our bodies often go through their own transformations. This change is a natural opportunity to slow down, reflect, and nurture ourselves. Many people may feel a sense of unease or fatigue, but these feelings are part of the body’s natural response to the changing environment.

Our bodies constantly communicate with us, responding to changes like reduced daylight before we consciously notice. You might feel more tired, sensitive, or emotionally heightened as the season shifts. These subtle signals, such as the need for rest and stillness, are your body’s way of adapting. Seasonal depression, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), often affects people during fall and winter when temperatures drop, and sunlight decreases.

According to mental health experts, SAD uniquely impacts Black Americans due to both biological and societal factors. One key biological factor is Vitamin D deficiency, more common in Black individuals because melanin-rich skin requires more sunlight to produce adequate vitamin D. As psychotherapist Farah Harris explains, the lack of sunlight during the colder months can significantly affect mood in Black Americans, making them more vulnerable to SAD

Depression in Black communities often manifests differently than in other groups, leading to underdiagnosis. The compounded stress of systemic racism and economic disparities further heightens the risk of more severe symptoms. Experts emphasize that increasing awareness about SAD in Black Americans can help create culturally relevant mental health solutions. SAD presents unique challenges for Black Americans, but by tuning into our bodies and honoring our needs, we can find ways to manage symptoms and seek comfort during the colder months. Through a blend of self-care practices and supportive community connections, it’s possible to ease symptoms as we move through this season.

Honoring your body’s need for rest

When we give ourselves permission to rest and adjust to the season, we allow the body to align with nature’s rhythms. This can create a balanced state, both physically and emotionally. Incorporate rest into your routine, whether it’s sitting quietly with a cup of tea or admiring nature. Supporting your body with consistent bedtime rituals like a warm bath or gentle movement can help you wind down, release tension, and prepare for restful sleep. Additionally, warming soups or stews and herbal teas can bring comfort and help your body adjust.

Creative and soul care

When outdoor activity is limited, creativity becomes essential for expression and mental relief. Engage in art projects or crafting, which provide an outlet while keeping your hands busy. Combine this with music and movement – whether dancing or swaying to rhythms that lift your mood. Reading for pleasure also offers a break from stress, and vision boarding helps focus your intentions for the season. Meditation and visualization focused on warmth and renewal can shift your mindset during darker, colder days.

Community and collective care

While personal nurturing is important, collective care is essential for Black and Brown communities. Community care, leaning on and supporting those around you is vital, especially during seasonal changes. As Dominique M. Brown highlights in her work on somatic experiences and African ascendance, the strength of communal ties can nurture us during transitions. Whether through small gatherings, shared meals, or simply being with loved ones, community care helps break the isolation that often accompanies seasonal depression. As autumn fully begins, remember that caring for and honoring your body’s need for rest, nurturing your mind and soul, and leaning on the community for support can help us adjust to the new season.

BLACK GENEALOGY
THE HARD HISTORY

WHO ARE WE? Embark on a Journey of Self-Discovery by Exploring Your Heritage with Black Genealogy and History. Understanding our heritage is not just a matter of curiosity; it is a fundamental part of our identity.

Documenting the history of enslaved ancestors is a daunting task. During slavery, enslaved people were seen as property, forming an integral part of the slaveholder’s estate. Uncovering your enslaved ancestors requires delving into the records of the families who “owned” them. Finding your ancestors linked to a dollar value and listed alongside farm animals, equipment, crops, and household items can be an intensely emotional and overwhelming experience, evoking a connection to the past and a sense of the living conditions and livelihoods of those who came before us.

Enslaved people were prohibited from learning to read or write, leading to limited records. The lack of documentation has made it challenging for African American genealogists to fully reconstruct their ancestors’ lives.

Having made progress using your home sources to fill in your pedigree chart and family group sheets, it is time to take the next step. There are still some gaps that need to be addressed. The next step involves using public sources, such as the federal census, to locate and complete the picture of your ancestors. This process will help you fill in the missing pieces of your family history.

The census records

The census is a count or survey of the people in the United States, recording various details about the individual. Although the census was not taken for the genealogist, it is beneficial in genealogical research. The primary purpose of the census is to determine the number of seats for each state in the House of Representatives. It is taken every ten years and released after 72 years for confidentiality. All people living in the United States at the time of the census must take it as mandated by the Constitution, including citizens, non-citizen legal residents, long-term visitors, and undocumented immigrants.

The 1870 census is critical for researching enslaved ancestors. It is the first census to enumerate formerly enslaved people by name after the Civil War. The first census was taken in 1790, and the last was in 1950. The 1790 to 1860 censuses have limited value to African American genealogists. Heads of household, including “Free



By Patricia Bayonne-Johnson
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



Colored Persons,” were named. All other family members in a free household were tick-marked. Enslaved people were enumerated with tick marks on

the censuses from 1790 until 1840.

The Census Bureau created two censuses in 1850 and 1860: Schedule 1 for the free general population and Schedule 2 for slaves, also known as Slave Schedules. Schedule 2 lists the names of slave owners and provides details about the enslaved people, including age, sex, and color, but no names. “Slaves over 100 years old were given special treatments; their names were noted, and sometimes a biographical sketch was included,” according to Kelly L. Schmidt and Ceilia Wright, *About the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census Slave Schedules*.

The 1890 census was mostly destroyed by fire. Some schedules and fragments remain for select states.

Census records can be found online at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Family Search, public libraries, and Ancestry.com (there is a subscription cost for ancestry.com).

Recommended readings

Burroughs, Tony. *Black Roots: A Beginner’s Guide to Tracing African American Family Tree*. New York: Fireside, 2001.

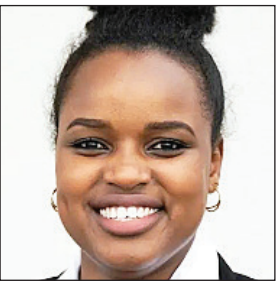
Smith, Franklin Carter, and Croom, Emily Anne. *Genealogists Guide to Discovering Your African-American Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 2003.

Lackey, Richard S. *Cite Your Sources: A Manual for Documenting Family Histories and Genealogical Records*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press, 1985.

EPIGENETICS AND GENERATIONAL TRAUMA: A VICIOUS CYCLE

Epigenetics is scientifically defined as a field of study focused on the changes in DNA that do not involve an actual alteration to the sequence of DNA, but rather changes in the structure of DNA. The ever-evolving term describes how chemical modifications affect the expression of a gene in relation to environmental and behavioral factors and how these modifications can be passed on from one generation to the next. This understanding raises the following question: does stress and trauma experienced within our family lineage affect our genetic makeup generations later? This article explores how epigenetic correlates to generational trauma in the Black community.

One way to examine the prevalence of psychological trauma in the Black community is through the lens of historical and intergenerational trauma. Andrea L. Roberts of Harvard School of Public Health found that Black



By Charity Resian
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



communities experience traumatic events at a higher rate than other racial groups. She speculates the element of race-based trauma, and exposure to historical and intergenerational trauma to be the reasons for this dispar-

ity. For the Black community, historical trauma is embedded in the enslavement and Jim Crow eras. To give further insight into why Black individuals experience traumatic events at a higher prevalence, this article elaborates on societal factors that perpetuate adversity, advancing disparities and persistent discrimination.

One example of historical trauma that persists is through well-documented systematic biases in the criminal justice system. Policies within the criminal justice system not only negatively impact the person behind bars, these policies also impact their entire family. So many Black children whose parents are incarcerated tend to have minimal contact with their parents while in prison. They are apt to experience food insecurity, and are more likely to live in neighborhoods that are socioeconomically disadvantaged. These neighborhoods are associated with poorer

quality schools, a concentration of environmental hazards, fewer safe outdoor spaces for children to play, and higher rates of crime and community violence, among other adversities. These factors and childhood trauma may affect the epigenetics regulation of gene expression in an individual.

Professor F Brouns, a nutritionist, elaborates on how psychological stress from exposure to violence, discrimination, trauma and other negative life events are risk factors for negative health outcomes including mental illness, hypertension, breast cancer, pre-term birth, and others that are transmitted through epigenetic influences on the next generation, a phenomenon faced in Black families, that runs a great risk of continuing through generations if not realized and addressed.

If you begin contemplating the depth of historical oppression, and how traumas passed down to

affect one’s health and wellbeing, we must analyze the influence of habits, behaviors, practices, mindset, and perspectives, even when these experiences are indirect encounters in families. Science tells us that the human body adapts to the reality of trauma. This competes dangerously with healthier lifestyle narratives. Dr Shawn Ginwright, professor, activist, and author of “The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma Care to Healing Centered Engagement” states that understanding how humans respond to these exposures is critical for service providers to first understand overt of systematic trauma. Additionally, she asserts that covert institutional norms that continue to perpetuate racism in the United States must be exposed and eliminated, coupled with the integration of trauma informed care. Healing centered around engagement is a strategy to finding true healing in the Black community.

HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY

WELLNESS FROM THE WATERS' EDGE



By Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Bartlett
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



Wild Places, "People of color will no doubt be the new stewards of the land, sentinels on watch for environmental protection as the nation's population demographics change, shifting away from the once white majority." The real question is, "Will the projected majority be prepared for this enormous task?"

I grew up outdoors, near the East Coast, surrounded by Black folks. I never imagined that someday I would settle in the "upper left." The journey West, then North, began with an Army snafu that sent me from Vietnam to Colorado in '72. Now, over fifty plus years out West, I still have a longing for the familiar geography of my childhood. I miss most the Fall colors, the familiar creeks and the everyday company of Black faces in wild spaces.

On September 10th of this year my fa-

ther would have turned 103. Pop and his friends taught me everything they knew about living with, surviving and respecting nature. His first serious lesson was, "Leave it better than you found it." Although Pop has been gone from this earth for well over a decade, I still miss him dearly, especially when I set foot in nature, in a trout stream or float a river, which I always try to do on his birthday. He would be thrilled with Dudley Edmondson's prediction.

During my youth I developed a deep passion for visiting, playing and working outdoors. Yet, never once did I consider turning that passion into a profession. There are published accounts in my family archives of one of my great, great relatives who was actually paid to hunt and fish, but that's it. As a young adult I did not know a single Black person who worked for the Department of Fish and Game, the Forest Service, or National Park Service. Like so many young Black kids I cast my lot at sports. I was a three-sport athlete but I was the best at football. Playing in the NFL was my dream job.

Visiting, playing, volunteering or working in the outdoors needs to be front and center in our Black collective thinking. According to a 2020 report, only 4% of National Park Service (NPS) Rangers were Black. The NPS is considered one of the least diverse in the federal government. Of the visitors to the 419 national parks in this country 23% identified as people of color and only 1% self-identified as African American. At some point we must have come to believe that we do not belong out there.

However, Black men have historically



COURTESY

Robert "Bob" Bartlett and fishers with the Ubuntu Fly Anglers pose during a meeting.

been 'out there' and involved in protecting and preserving large tracts of public lands, a practice officially started soon after the Civil War. Vast tracks of land in the West were already under Federal protection. The Army supervised these lands that became national parks in 1916. The first park rangers were Black – Buffalo Soldiers – stationed at what is now Yosemite National Park.

In 1903 Charles Young, a Black man born into slavery in 1864, became the third African American graduate of the United States Military Academy in 1889. Captain Young was assigned to lead the 24th Regiment of Infantry and the 9th Regiment of Cavalry, at the Presidio of San Francisco. While there, Young was appointed the first acting Superintendent of Sequoia and General Grant National Parks.

Unlike the Buffalo Soldiers who fought in the Indian Wars, these troops were there to protect the natural resources of the Parks from being exploited. They built park infrastructure and hosted tourists and politicians. Young also established the practice of dedicating trees in honor of prominent figures as a means of promoting their preservation. For example he dedicated the Redwood to Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee University. It is said that Young and his men helped shape the role of the modern-day park ranger. So, who are going to be the next river protectors and stewards of the land? We are!

Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Bartlett is a retired educator. He retired from Gonzaga University in 2007 and Eastern Washington University in 2020.

FAITH AND FEAR: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN



By Jasmine Linane-Booeey
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



Breathe in. Breathe out. Begin.

Fear protects us. It is the body's response to perceived danger that keeps us alert and safe. It is a deep trust or knowing that things will not work out in our best interest – perhaps even, at our detriment. In a moment of fear for perceived danger, the body launches a full response by activating the systems we need for survival (i.e. releasing stress hormones that cause the heart rate and blood pressure to increase, pumping extra blood to the muscles to get ready to respond, and speeding up breathing) and slows or shuts down the

systems we do not (i.e. the full digestive system, a weakening of the immune system, and impairment in the long-term memory). Anytime this response is activated, it gets stored in the mind to help us avoid the potential of these situations again. Whether threats to our safety are real or perceived, the fear response in the body is the same.

Pause. Take a moment to notice your body. Do you observe any changes in your heart rate, your stomach, the muscles in your face or limbs, or the temperature of your body? Just notice.

Invite a full breath into the body.

And a full breath out.

Begin again.

My path into this work has been organic as I've worked to soothe my own body's response to fear and anxiety. I navigate the world with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), a mood disorder linked to the natural

One Minute Wellness Invitation

Somatic Redirection Practice

When experiencing a moment of fear, frustration, mental blockage, etc., take a pause.

Look straight ahead and say out loud or in your head what it is you're struggling with. Stay here until you've stated your issue.

Then, move slowly and with intention and breath, turn your gaze to the left, using your neck and hips to try and look as far behind you as you can. Do the same on the right.

Come back to the center and look up and down.

Now, look straight ahead again, and say outloud or in your head, positive affirmations aligned with a faith mindset and/or framed with curiosity. (Ex: "I am _____ enough", "I know I can _____", "I am curious about this feeling, where does it come from?")

Take a breath and pause to notice any changes in your being.

Resources for Deeper Exploration and Support

Book: My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem

Phone Call: Nap Ministry Hotline for a recorded Rest Message at (833) LUV-NAPS

hormonal fluctuations of my menstrual cycle. Though it varies in severity, I experience monthly episodes of depression that, if not properly cared for, can roll into anxiety, paranoia, self-hate and suicidal ideation. As a woman, and specifically a woman of color, it took years to receive this diagnosis and start to understand how to care for myself and communicate with loved ones. It was through the process of understanding my body's natural

response to these heightened states that I could begin the process of acknowledging past guilt, trauma, and shame and move into a space of healing. Through reconnecting with my body and learning to be receptive to its own unique form of communication, I began to exist in relationship with my body rather than against it.

In an effort to counter fear; the fear in the middle of an episode, the fear an episode will come back, the fear of really seeing myself and not liking the reflection. I had to find the antidote: faith. Faith boasts the same power as fear: it is a deep trust or knowing that things will work out in your favor. As it turns out faith and fear are two sides of the same coin. They both demand you believe in something you cannot see. Which means that outside of immediate situations of danger, you get to choose. A strong connection to faith, whether religious or secular, can reduce stress, improve immune function, and have overall positive ripple effects on our physical and mental health. At a time in our society where fear is a tool used to keep us caged and compliant, faith offers a possibility of expansion. If we can learn to lean into faith through various mindfulness practices, we are provided an opportunity to grow our perspectives and views of both ourselves and the world around us. Start small and notice when in your daily life there is an opportunity to meet fear and nurture it into faith. As you become attuned to those moments, witness the subtle but profound effects as your body softens into faith. For deeper support in working through fear and anxiety held in the body, reach out to a mental health professional.

Jasmine Linane-Booeey of Kazuko Wellness is a Somatic Energy Guide. She holds two certificates in Reiki (Paris, France and Spokane, WA), over 10 years experience as a certified yoga and meditation guide (Goa, India), a certification as a Somatic Energy Practitioner (Spokane, WA), and is a trained Psilocybin guide and wellness coach. Contact: hello@kazukowellness.com | www.kazukowellness.com

17 innovative community-led programs to help follow the roadmap to prosperity

By Teresa Brooks
THE BLACK LENS

Creating a sustainable and impactful community in Spokane requires all of us to work together with a shared vision and collective responsibility. We must be accountable for addressing our own needs, ensuring that the programs and initiatives we support are sustainable and provide benefits for everyone involved. If we truly aim to see active change, we cannot wait for others to solve our problems – we must take the lead in building the community we envision.

The Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) funds 17 innovative, community-led programs across Washington that are specifically designed to create lasting benefits for Black, Latine, and tribal communities. These programs are tailored to address diverse needs and focus on four primary areas that are crucial for building a stronger, more resilient Spokane:

Economic Development
• **Small Business Support and Entrepreneurship Training:** Offering resources and training for local entrepreneurs to start, grow, and sustain their businesses, creating pathways to economic independence.
• **Workforce Development and Job Training:** Equipping community members with the skills needed for high-demand

careers, ensuring a prepared workforce for current and future opportunities.

• **Financial Coaching and Wealth-Building Initiatives:** Providing financial education, credit counseling, and asset-building programs to help families secure economic stability and build generational wealth.

Legal Assistance

• **Legal Aid Services and Record Clearance Support:** Ensuring that people facing legal challenges, particularly those from underserved communities, have access to fair representation and support. This includes help with record clearance to remove barriers to employment and housing.

• **Family Reunification Programs:** Supporting families affected by incarceration or the justice system to reunify and thrive together.

Violence Prevention and Intervention

• **Community-Based Intervention Programs:** Working with local organizations to implement programs that address root causes of violence and create safer neighborhoods.

• **Re-entry Services and Comprehensive Support for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals:** Assisting individuals returning from incarceration with resources and guidance to help them reintegrate into the

community successfully.

Youth Empowerment

• **Youth Empowerment Initiatives:** Providing opportunities for young people to engage in leadership development, mentoring, and programs that build life skills and resilience.

By actively engaging in these areas, we can address both immediate and long-term needs in the community. It is critical that we create programs that not only serve our current needs but also have the potential to evolve and grow as circumstances change. When we come together with a unified plan, we can ensure that our efforts lead to sustainable growth, meaningful support, and real progress for everyone in Spokane.

Let's commit to building an inclusive, vibrant future for our community – one where all voices are heard, and everyone plays a role in shaping the path forward. Together, we can transform Spokane into a place where equity, opportunity, and justice are not just ideals, but everyday realities.

Based on CRP funds 17 innovative, community-led programs designed to create lasting benefits for Black, Latine and tribal communities across Washington. These programs span four areas:

1. Economic development
• Small business support and entrepreneurship training
• Workforce development and job training



• Financial coaching and wealth-building initiatives
2. Legal assistance
• Legal aid services
• Record clearance support
3. Violence prevention
• Community-based intervention programs

• Youth empowerment initiatives
4. Re-entry services
• Comprehensive support for formerly incarcerated individuals
• Family reunification programs

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

CHAUNCEY

Continued from 1

Habitat so they can get their families in there. The rentals that we have, for the most part, are smaller scale, up to four-plexes.

What is the most common reason that you see when people are without housing?

Well, everybody’s story is different. I think there is not one common reason. It could be job loss. It could be something from a traumatic experience before. And yes, we have instances where there are issues with either mental health or possibly substance abuse. There are all kinds of reasons why someone can be unhoused. But I do know that Black and indigenous people are at the highest rate of homelessness in Spokane, Washington.

How hard is it to become a homeowner and how does financial literacy play into this?

It’s all going to be relative. It’s called financial literacy for a reason. It’s educating yourself and being surrounded by people who are in the business, really doing the research yourself. If your mindset has been third, fourth generation renters, and we know that that’s been the case, then you have to surround yourself with people who can help you get out of that mindset. I don’t care how much you make per hour, until you find a way to make money while you’re sleeping, you’re not going to be able to build wealth. That’s why you see a lot of people living paycheck to paycheck. I think they said 75% of all people in the in America couldn’t afford a thousand-dollar emergency right now. So that’s telling you a lot of times the relationship with money. Let’s start looking at building our wealth esteem to be able to say, “Hey, I de-

More Information



Learn more about Take Up the Cause by going online to www.takeupthecausenw.org.

Watch a video to see the Take

Up the Cause team by visiting the attached QR code.

serve to be able to reimagine generational wealth.” I don’t think anything life changing should be easy. When you look at it, we know the historical context of what got us here; we’re talking about redlining, the Fair Housing Act, racist covenants, a lot of those different things.

What was the Black Home Ownership Spokane Summit that happened in September?

So, the summit was on the heels of an event called Housing Washington. Housing Washington was in Spokane (this year). A lot of organizations that were local and/or from the west side who participated in Housing Washington stayed back to see the work that Black Homeownership Spokane is doing, to see what some of the planning is for the future, to keep this sustainable and ongoing. We looked at the data in Spokane when it comes to home ownership; who’s being rejected, and why are they being rejected. Debt to income is an issue when it comes to being turned away in our community. Altogether, 70% of Black people who were going to get a home loan were getting rejected. The number in Spokane of Black people who own their homes is 30%. So, 70% are getting rejected, right? Or their loan is, it’s not making it to the finish line. And it’s debt. What is the relationship with money? Where does the trauma come from? The scarcity mindset is, you

know, “the system is not designed for me, so there’s nothing I can do.” But you can say “the system is not designed for me. I’m going to figure out a cheat code.” When we’re talking about the wealth transfer, too many of us are passing away without leaving any true assets.

What is the impact of credit scores?

We know that just like with a lot of things that are systemic, it wasn’t designed for us. So, if it wasn’t designed for us, typically it’s designed to keep us out; (for example) when you realize that credit scores are tied a lot of times to life expectancy. If we just take 99202, East Central, near and dear to my heart, the life expectancy in East Central is, I think, between 64 and 68, right? If you head south of Comstock and 55th Street and above, the life expectancy is 81 years old, right? Same city, literally a couple miles away, but the life expectancy is 13 years more in those areas. And so that goes back to things being systemic. What, what are you doing with the dollar?

Where do you see Black home ownership in the next five years?

That’s a great question. So, in the next five years, our goal is to continue to get the education out there, get more people involved in these cohorts. Imagine if 50 people were able to get across the finish line, what that would do. So that’s probably going to take the 30% up to 35%, right. Let’s build your wealth esteem in the meantime. So the goal is to ... start normalizing this conversation of wealth building and asset building in our community.

When is the next cohort?

The next longer cohort is going to be in January, but we are also doing some mini five-week cohorts where people can go there and get some education.



APRIL EBERHARDT/THE BLACK LENS

The Links, Inc., support voter education at the NW Trilogy event at Liberty Park.

TRILOGY

Continued from 9

successfully brought the community together to celebrate and resurrect history that paved the way through generations. Williamson-Serquinia has a vision.

“The long-term plan is for a museum honoring African American history, past and present, in Spokane and environs,” Williamson-Serquinia said. In the meantime, she is at

work, spearheading events like “NW Trilogy” and “Our Stories” in collaboration with community partners. She shared that the idea for NW was planted by Natasha Hill, in a conversation they had earlier this summer.

She shared, “If folks would like to share info about their family’s history,” contact ourstories789@gmail.com.

Stay tuned in for more opportunities to learn more about Spokane’s Black history.

UBUNTU

Continued from 1

he doesn’t want to see any of us limited by our lack of imagination. Expressing what lies ahead in 2025 for the Ubuntu Fly Anglers, he exhorted the importance of growing their wisdom circle.

“As ambassadors, we continue to be intentional in finding ways to nurture our replacements outdoors and in the organizations we belong to,” Bartlett said.

The mission of Ubuntu Fly Anglers, according to their website, is “building community, education, and leadership.” This is centered around “changing the complexion and larger perception of black and brown people outdoors, growing future fly anglers and environmental activists who look like us, making positive changes in angling and in environmentally conscious organizations, nurturing relationships with others like

us who can benefit from angling as a pastime or as a profession, and making the invisible of us visible.”

Being one with nature is a core piece of our identity that, when cultivated, expands our world view and creates a sense of belonging that transcends materialism and social competition. Bartlett’s team includes a variety of fly anglers from various locations in the U.S. who challenge each other to continually embrace fishing as recreation. Bartlett and Crawford demonstrate that it is okay to be unapologetically excited about the environment. Nature is a part of our existence and representation matters when it comes to modeling the relationship between the BIPOC community and creation. It is where we belong.

To learn more, visit the Ubuntu Fly Anglers at ifishibelong.org/ubuntu-fly-anglers/ or follow them on Instagram: @ubunutflyanglers

WILLIAMS

Continued from 1

for me and so many others in the community. You continue to be a beacon of love, wisdom, and resilience for all of us. We are

blessed to have you, and I look forward to celebrating many more years with you. Your life is a testament to the power of kindness and the impact one person can have on an entire community.

LOVE YOU ALWAYS!

LEGAL

Continued from 1

Zaglin to hear about their experiences and the key takeaways from the National Self Represented Litigants Conference in Salt Lake City.

Zaglin shared some eye-opening national statistics that illustrate the challenges in accessing legal services. According to Dean Elizabeth Kronk Warner of the S.J. Quinney College of Law, there is an estimated \$4 billion gap in access to justice in the United States. Zaglin highlighted a 2017 study conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, funded by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), which found that 86% of civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help. This illustrates a significant gap in legal resources for the most vulnerable populations.

Zaglin also noted that some legal aid organizations are expanding their reach by providing free legal representation to individuals with household incomes up to 400% of the federal poverty level. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this threshold covered around 130 million people, or approximately two out of every five individuals in the U.S. The Carl Maxey Center aims to bridge this gap locally by offering legal clinics to the community.

Maxey shared some powerful insights and memorable quotes from the conference that resonated deeply with her. One comparison particularly stood out: the experience of a layperson going

to court was likened to playing a basketball game against LeBron James without a ball, shoes or an understanding of the rules. This metaphor highlights the inequities faced by individuals who navigate the legal system without legal representation.

She emphasized that “the court is not neutral when one side always has an attorney,” especially in cases involving housing or debt disputes, where the stakes are often high for those unable to afford legal counsel. Maxey was inspired by California’s proactive measures to address these issues, as the state has adopted a court rule mandating self-help centers and invested \$31 million to support them. In California, each judge is assigned a self-help professional who can also assist with mediation, creating opportunities for dialogue between the courts and the community. This approach to court reform shows a promising model for making the legal system more accessible and fair for all.

The Carl Maxey Center’s upcoming legal clinic will continue these efforts, aiming to provide crucial support to those in need. Maxey’s and Zaglin’s experiences at the conference underscore the importance of advocating for equitable access to justice and the role that community-based organizations like the Carl Maxey Center play in closing the justice gap.

If anyone requires legal assistance, they are encouraged to attend the clinic or reach out to the center’s self-help team via email at selfhelplegal@carlmaxeycenter.org.

Free for 11-17yrs olds

1:30pm-4:00pm @ The Hive

Dec 14th

Youth

Self-Care

Summit

This event includes special workshops, raffle prizes, and self-care goodie bags to take home at the end.

Any young person 11-17 years old, inclusive of all genders, is welcome to register as long as they are comfortable in a space that centers the experience of individuals who identify as young women of color. (50 slots available!)

Register:



Scan the QR code to register online.



Questions?

Jaime Stacy 509-385-2320

transformations@ywcaspokane.org

ywcaspokane.org/summit

Provided to you by:



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
SPOKANE

ARTS AND INSPIRATION

NW Trilogy event revives Spokane’s Black history

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

Sandra Freeman and Julie Williamson-Serquinia remember when Liberty Park was the fulcrum of Spokane’s Black community in the 1960s. Nostalgia takes Williamson-Serquinia back to the era of the Delfonics, when “La La Means I Love You” played on the airwaves. She and her friends would meet at Liberty Park regularly to hang out, a familiar gathering place that felt like a comfortable pair of shoes for so many back then.

“We just showed up, you know, we’d go down there,” Williamson-Serquinia said. “I couldn’t swim, but I’d get in the pool, and you’d meet your friends there and kind of congregate. The airmen would be down there, and we’d be looking at them. It was just the spot to be. Kind of like Riverfront Park is now. You’d just walk around, stroll around, socialize.”

Enter the I-90 freeway in the 1960s. It cut through the heart of the East Central community like a knife. Things have never been the same.

“Well, it basically split East Central. Came right through the middle of it,” Williamson-Serquinia said. “That actually happened after we lived there. Yeah. We lived on the other side of the freeway on a street called Grant, kind of over by where the Goodwill is now, before the freeway came in. But then after that we lived on that same side, and the freeway just took out that whole middle. It did, in fact, cut the community in half.”

Freeman left Spokane when she was 18 years old. She returned seven years ago.

“I was just so excited to come back to Spokane, to my roots,” Freeman said. “I felt like this is the place that I needed to be, to tell the story. There are just so many more new people here, younger; if we can bring the community together to share the rich Black culture that was here in the past, (we can) bring it all together.”

Freeman’s parents were Francis and Clarence Freeman, and they worked on the Liberty Park Improvement Group in the 1960s. In the aftermath of the freeway, the Black community was scattered. Liberty Park was a shell of its former self. Williamson-Serquinia remembers her mom talking about how they protested the construction of the freeway. Freeman recalls how her parents rallied to revive Liberty Park to a place of beauty. Their efforts brought back a children’s wading pool, a changing area, and landscaping.

“They raised between \$40,000 and \$50,0000 to improve Liberty Park, along with the Parks Department,” Freeman said. “They also worked with a local artist named Keith Oka. And so, with that money, they got sidewalks installed, because it was just dirt. They wanted it to be a nice place.”

Knowing the strong sense of community that Liberty Park provided, Williamson-Serquinia and Freeman teamed up to plan an event that occurred on Sept. 28: “NW Trilogy: Black Farmers, Cowboys, and Soldiers.” Often, stories about the Great Migration detail journeys of Black families from South to North. The pair wanted to tell the stories of Black Americans right here in

our region; pioneers of the Pacific Northwest. With the help of Marsha Rooney, photos of Black homesteaders and pioneers in our region were provided by the MAC museum for an exhibit.

One of those photos was of Calvin and Lunar King from Desmet, Idaho. They were relatives of Freeman. She recalls going to King Valley to visit them as a young child.

“It dawned on me that it was unique because there weren’t any other Black people down there,” Freeman said. “Now as an adult, I really recognize how unique this was because they came in 1910 to homestead in the King Valley; there was nobody around. Yeah. This was some land that they got through a lottery.

“They lived in Spokane for a few years and then moved. It took them two days to get from Spokane to Desmet, Idaho, which now takes me like an hour and a half to go by car.”

They did this, shared Freeman, with seven kids in tow.

The NW planning team wanted this occasion to be family centered.

“We tried to have an all-encompassing event, so it would attract different people from different generations,” Freeman said.

There was a DJ, horse rides, the Buffalo Soldiers motorcycle group, line dancing, and a vocal performance by Alethea Dumas. Themed as a western affair, RJs So Southern Barbeque and Catering offered chili and cornbread for purchase. The Spokane Branch of the NAACP, the Carl Maxey Center, The Alliance, Fresh Soul, SWAG, and the Jasmin Group helped finance the event.



PHOTOS BY APRIL EBERHARDT/THE BLACK LENS



Horse rides were part of the “NW Trilogy: Black Farmers, Cowboys, and Soldiers” event at Liberty Park.

At right: Cowboy hats were part of the attire for attendees at the NW Trilogy event at Liberty Park in September.

Below: Robert Lloyd holds up a print for the NW Trilogy event at Liberty Park.

Local artist Bob Lloyd also collaborated with the planning team to create a poster that was sold as memorabilia to help financially support this initiative. The Spokane Branch of the NAACP and The Links Inc., Spokane Chapter partnered to encourage voting in the Nov. 5 election.

In June, “Our Stories: Black Families in Spokane”

See TRILOGY, 10



BLACK JOBS

NOW
HIRING

JOB TITLE
Community Empowerment

JOB CATEGORY
Service

LOCATION
Spokane Washington

TRAVEL REQUIRED
None, start where you are

SALARY
Generational Wealth

START DATE
Immediately

TRAINING
Yes, all applicants

END DATE
Never

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED BY
The Black Community

ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be Present!
- Attend of engage in organizations and initiatives that build the Black community
- Commitment of Time and/or resources

QUALIFICATIONS

- Willingness to serve to promote healing, restoration, and education to uplift others
- Energetic and committed
- Forward Thinking
- Engaging
- Innovative

IDEAL APPLICANTS

- Mothers
- Fathers
- Singles
- Youth
- Elders
- Kings
- Queens
- ALL OF US

By James Smith/For The Black Lens

Our community is at a point of inflection. Let’s get to work.

IN HER WORDS

HAVING CULTURAL
COMPETENCE
IMAGES AND
THEIR NEGATIVE
IMPLICATIONS

By Teresa Brooks
THE BLACK LENS

Living in Spokane, we often talk about the importance of community and respect. That respect should extend to how we use images to portray people, especially when it comes to Black individuals. Images can tell powerful stories, but taking a picture of someone without their consent and using it to fit a narrative can cause harm, whether intended or unintended.

As a leader in the community, it’s important to be present and engage with people at events, but when our pictures are taken and used, our permission should be mandatory. Recently, I was out on a bike ride and decided to stop by an event because I saw some familiar faces. To my surprise, I later found my picture on the front page of a newspaper. I had no idea my photo was being taken, let alone that it would be used publicly. Spokane has always

been a place where we strive to ensure everyone feels safe and has the space to be themselves. That sense of safety includes being able to enjoy events without worrying about our image being used without consent. A picture of me dancing, socializing or just enjoying my time with the community shouldn’t be featured without my approval, and certainly not as a way to fit someone else’s story or agenda.

When images of Black individuals are used in the media, they can often perpetuate harmful stereotypes or narratives. It’s crucial that we don’t reinforce negative imagery or misuse someone’s likeness for a headline. Getting approval on use and context is important and gives a sense of dignity to the subject of the photograph.

Respecting someone’s image is an extension of respecting their space, their identity, and their right to feel safe in the community.



GETTY IMAGES

When images of Black individuals are used in the media, they can often perpetuate harmful stereotypes or narratives.

EDUCATION

HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR PASSIONS

College and career readiness conference at EWU was an eye-opener

By Anesu Whacha
SHADLE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

I am so happy to know that first-generation college students have their paths cleared for us by people willing to provide proper coaching and preparation. I personally have always known what I wanted when I got older: to be rich. The million-dollar question is how? When I feel like I have gotten it all figured out, I either come across pessimistic people who make things worse or I come across information that makes it hard for me to move forward.



By Anesu Whacha
SHADLE PARK HIGH SCHOOL



much as I did. The two speakers, Dr. Fredenburg and Dr. Bates helped me change my mind about career options. I honestly used to worry about what I was going to do next. Watching the presentation about how to make college move us towards a career and passion, has helped my fear of uncertainty go away.

Their guidance helped me understand how my future will look and many of my worries and doubts have been cleared. Dr. Bates and Dr. Fredenburg talked about a lot of different things, but they all led to one thing: connections. Many times, we see or know exactly what we wanted to do, then suddenly go off-track. Our direction changes. The reason is because we interact or network with the wrong people and things. Creating good relationships with people in the career of your choice is an advantage. Even when we have amazing plans, sometimes we lack direction. Without direction, it is hard to know where we are going. The good thing is that we have people to correct and guide us and we really appreciate it. We often overlook people like mentors, but studies show that they have played a vital role in molding the lives of successful individuals. Most people often give up on their dreams and ambitions because they lack good advice, and they begin to think that what they want is out of reach or utterly impossible. They are wrong. We are all unique and if we take the time to acknowledge and appreciate that, the world will be a better place. My generation is full of people with greatness, and we are incredibly happy to have people and organizations willing to help us reach our full potential and bring out the best in us.

Another reason people do not really fulfill their dreams is lack of exposure and lack of involvement. I strongly believe that you cannot be what you do not know. What I mean is, that you cannot say you want to be a medical doctor and spend most of your time networking with music producers and artists because the influence is not the same; risking chances to learn specifically about your focus doesn't help you grow. Also, we cannot choose things that make us forget who we are.

There is a saying that says, "you are what you spend your time doing." At the end of the day, how you network, what you choose to learn, who you choose to learn from, strengthens your journey. The advice I would give to everyone is to focus on what you want to do, and make sure that you are the best in that field; the work begins now, so work hard and secure your place in the high ranks of society. Our actions can weaken our passions or strengthen our passions. This visit to EWU was an amazing day and the presentations were wonderful.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION AND THE ROLE OF HBCUS



GETTY IMAGES

This is building was dedicated to Frederick Douglass on April 30, 1935. Howard University is the leader in the Green Revolution.

By Dr. Sharah Zaab
THE BLACK LENS

Rechargeable batteries have ushered in a new era of technological innovation, touching every corner of our lives. Their ability to be recharged and reused over extended periods – days, months, or even years – has dramatically reduced waste and the need for single-use energy sources. This technology plays a vital role in everything from the smartphones we use to the electric vehicles we drive, and even the ways we approach education and remote learning.

As the world pushes toward a future powered by renewable energy, the focus on battery technology, particularly rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, has become critical. These batteries allow for energy storage that is pivotal to electric vehicles (EVs), wind farms, and solar power systems, advancing the global shift toward a cleaner, more sustainable energy future.

Howard University: A Leader in battery technology

Howard University stands out as a beacon of innovation in the realm of rechargeable battery technology. As one of the nation's premier HBCUs, Howard is committed to not only advancing scientific knowledge but also preparing its students to become leaders in the green energy sector.

Innovative research in lithium-ion batteries

At the forefront of this research is the Howard University Battery and Energy Storage Technology (BEST) Lab. The lab is dedicated to developing safer, more efficient, and cost-effective lithium-ion batteries, which are essential for modern portable electronics and electric vehicles. The university's research teams focus on improving the chemical processes used in battery production and creating materials that are more sustainable and environmentally friendly, contributing to the global push for greener energy solutions.

The BEST Lab's work encompasses various aspects of battery technology, including enhancing battery performance, longevity, and scalability. These factors are crucial for making electric vehicles and renewable energy storage more affordable and accessible to the broader public. Through collaborations with industry partners

and government agencies, Howard ensures that its students engage in real-world applications of their research, positioning them as future leaders in the clean energy industry.

Dr. Quinton Williams and composite materials research

A key figure at Howard University driving innovation in battery technology is Dr. Quinton Williams, whose research focuses on using different composite materials to improve the performance and efficiency of lithium-ion batteries. Dr. Williams is exploring how the integration of novel composites into battery electrodes can enhance energy density, increase charge cycles, and reduce degradation over time. His work aims to make batteries more durable and longer-lasting, which is essential for the growing electric vehicle market and renewable energy storage.

The battery research group is exploring advanced lithium-ion material compositions using nanomaterials such as metallic nanoparticles, carbon nanotubes, carbon nanofibers, and graphene. These materials are showing significant promise in improving battery capacity, energy density and durability, pushing the limits of what current batteries can achieve. This research is paving the way for the development of batteries that are not only more efficient but also environmentally sustainable, aligning with the goals of the global Green Revolution.

Educational opportunities and student engagement

Howard University actively encourages its students to participate in hands-on research and initiatives related to battery technology and renewable energy. By integrating practical experience into their academic programs, Howard empowers students to explore various facets of green technology – from materials science to energy policy and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, Howard's research initiatives often include community outreach and partnerships, ensuring that advancements in battery technology benefit not just the university but also the wider community. This focus on service and sustainability reflects Howard's commitment to social responsibility and equity.

Industry collaborations

Howard's strategic collaborations

with industry leaders enhance its research capabilities and provide students with invaluable networking opportunities. By working alongside professionals in the field, students gain insights into the latest trends and challenges in battery technology and renewable energy, preparing them for successful careers in this rapidly evolving sector.

The role of Other HBCUs in the Green Revolution

While Howard University plays a leading role, other HBCUs also contribute significantly to the Green Revolution:

North Carolina A&T State University has developed extensive programs dedicated to solar and wind energy technologies, alongside battery storage systems that make these sources viable for everyday use.

Florida A&M University (FAMU) fosters student-led innovation in green technologies and has a Sustainable Energy Research Center focused on integrating renewable energy into the grid.

Morgan State University is heavily invested in urban sustainability research, emphasizing renewable energy storage and electric vehicle integration.

Spelman College and Morehouse College are integrating sustainability into their curricula to prepare students to tackle the challenges of the Green Revolution.

Conclusion: Howard University at the heart of the Green Revolution

As we move forward into a future powered by renewable energy, Howard University is proving to be not just a participant but a leader in the Green Revolution. Its commitment to innovation, education, and community engagement ensures that African-American scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs are at the forefront of the transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy systems.

Howard University's contributions – including the groundbreaking work of Dr. Quinton Williams and the exploration of nanomaterials like carbon nanotubes and graphene – will help shape a world that is not only more energy-efficient and sustainable but also more inclusive and equitable, making it a crucial player in the ongoing Green Revolution.

Experts present strategies for supporting first-generation college students

As a first-gen online student living in another state (Oklahoma), I was blown away at how much I did not know when preparing for a career that matters and I enjoy rather than a career that will help pay my student loans off. I have always been under the impression that I am on my own in that arena

-A testimony from an EWU online student

If you ever get an opportunity to visit Eastern Washington University, and walk through the Arevalo Student mall, you will see a stone monument at the center of it that reads, "inspiring the future." No truer words to hold dear as EWU leans into their next chapter of becoming the region's first hands-on, polytechnic university. EWU has the unique obligation of contextualizing how this shift undergirds its population of students, particularly, the 44 percent that are the first in their families to ever go to college. According to the Center for

First Generation Student Success, not only do 1 in 3 undergraduate students identify as first-generation, but only 27% will attain their degrees within four years, according to the book "First-Generation Student Success: A Landscape Analysis."

To meet these challenges within our campus communities, there is a strong initiative at many colleges and universities to integrate career education into more academic programs. In addition to providing more career readiness programs for first generation students.

To help EWU move the needle towards this initiative, the EWU's Career Center (a branch within Student Affairs) invited Dr. Tierny Bates (Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at University of South Carolina Upstate) and Dr. Joshua Fredenburg (International Speaker and Founder of the First-Generation Student Career Conference) to conduct a day-long training on how to maximize the collegiate experience for

first-gen students. The day consisted of a faculty and staff workshop, a keynote presentation and a student workshop.

Dr. Bates and Dr. Fredenburg provided participants with a deeper understanding of the specific career and leadership skills that need to be considered with first-generation students and strategic ways that they can effectively integrate career education into their leadership development and extracurricular programs for first-generation students. The goal is to prepare students for prosperous careers and leadership success, both in college and beyond.

The morning session was packed with over 40 staff, faculty and administrative bodies. Dr. Bates and Dr. Fredenburg spoke extensively on ways faculty and staff can work together to create a culture of belonging in order to better prepare our students for career success.

Dr. Bates wasted no time in explaining that, "When it comes to working with our stu-

dents, we have to think about our debt-to-income ratio, because over 50% of college students are financing their own education. With how expensive college is, we want to make sure that they graduate with jobs that can pay." He goes further in explaining that "faculty struggle with the ideation that higher education should be about employment, but this has to be the focus." Dr. Fredenburg took a more interpersonal approach as it relates to supporting and empowering our students to grow as leaders.

"Leadership and proper development of soft skills matter just as much as a college degree," he says. He goes further in saying that, "80% of employers stated that they look for some form of leadership experience in a resume. This means that in order to gain the competitive edge, you must have the proper leadership skills."

The keynote address took a deeper dive into the top career and leadership compe-



By Romeal Watson
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR EMPLOYER RELATIONS



tencies for first-generation students as noted in various NACE (National Association of College and Employers) journal articles and studies.

For the final workshop, students learned about the Life Design and S.H.A.P.E. Models, which is a concept, through a set of questions, aimed to not only increase their self-awareness, but help them gain clarity about how they can maximize their collegiate experience.

Dr. Tierny Bates and Dr. Josh Fredenburg presented on Monday, Oct. 21, at Eastern Washington University in the Pence Union Building.

YOUTH CONNECTION

LIFE CYCLE

It was a perfect afternoon in June to ride the trails of Beacon Hill; staying home would've been a crime. The sun beamed down without a cloud in the distance, reflecting its rays off my vibrant red and glistening silver Marin Bobcat Trail 4. But after two exhilarating hours of ripping corners and soaring over jumps, disaster struck. My chain snapped and fell to the ground. My session was over. This setback, though, didn't diminish its value; I had faced broken chains before. I just needed to fix it again. Inspecting it closely, I noticed other flaws in its mechanics, proof of repeated crashes. That afternoon, I spent hours fine-tuning and testing each component.

As I dismantled the bike down to its frame, I realized that every piece represents an aspect of who I am. Brakes give control to slow down when moving too fast, a control that I've learned to apply to my own life. For almost eight years I have swum for a highly competitive team. Being in the water is a gift of peace and clarity where I can forget everything and only focus on the movements of my body. But I found myself relentlessly pushing to the point of losing my passion and love for the sport. Swimming no longer seemed as if I was free in space; instead, it felt more like I was locked away in 25 yards of pain.

This left me miserable, even causing me to miss practices. I decided to take a step back and slow down, balancing my life with what makes me happy: the outdoors. Without brakes, I lose control of my ride and crash. I slowly regained my love for swimming and came back stronger than before, hitting personal records in my 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, and 100 fly.

Moving the bike forward demands continuous pedaling, or it goes nowhere. My love for the outdoors acts as my pedals, pushing me toward new goals, including a future career immersed in nature. Whether hiking through woods around the Pacific Northwest, riding the trails of Beacon Hill, or fishing the open waters of the Spokane River, being outside compels me. There is something magical about the



By Braden Chambers
YOUTH CONTRIBUTOR



wind slicing through the trees, making a swooshing noise as I trek. How my tires grip the ground after landing a massive jump, leaving their tread imprinted in the dirt. Or the adrenaline rush I get from fishing, especially when I land a trophy trout. Like pedals, passions may change over time, but their purpose and drive remain constant.

My bike is held together by a solid frame, serving as its backbone and keeping everything stable and cohesively functioning. Similarly, the relationships I share with my family form the framework of my life. Without them, like the bike, I wouldn't be complete. When I think of my family, I remember the red brick house my great-grandfather built on Moses Lake. Grandpa Uppie was the anchor of our family, and that red house was our foundation. Whether everyone wanted to or not, we spent every holiday and family gathering at his home, ultimately teaching me the value of community and empowering me to face new challenges with confidence.

With the final piece in place, my bike was whole again. The repaired chain, tuned brakes, and sturdy frame all came together, ready for the next adventure. The same bike that had carried me along countless trails, climbs, and descents was ready once more. At that moment, I knew it wasn't just about fixing what was broken; it was about appreciating how each part contributes to the ride ahead. Now, as I look toward college, I'm eager to see how my bike will evolve and what new trails it will take me on during this next chapter of my life.

BLACK FARMERS FINALLY SEE JUSTICE: COMPENSATION FOR YEARS OF LOAN DENIALS

For decades, Black farmers in America struggled to obtain the financial aspects needed to keep their farms running. Discriminatory practices within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and local lending institutions created barriers that left farmers unable to reach the necessary funds to invest in equipment, seeds, or essential infrastructure. These practices, which often led to financial ruin, have been acknowledged, and compensation efforts are being taken into effect.



By Z'hanie Weaver
YOUTH CONTRIBUTOR



ment, seeds, or essential infrastructure. These practices, which often led to financial ruin, have been acknowledged, and compensation efforts are being taken into effect.

Black farmers have faced several obstacles, including systemic discrimination that occurred within the USDA, as Black farmers were routinely denied loans or had applications delayed, resulting in missed planting seasons and financial hardships that escalated into foreclosure and loss of land. The number of Black-owned farms has dwindled from nearly a million in the early 1900s to fewer than 50,000 today. The disparity was most evident in loan approval rates and the time it took to process applications. While white farmers often received loans promptly, Black farmers experienced delays, making it impossible to compete effectively.

This racial bias in lending practices not only impacted the financial stability of individual families but also led to a significant decline in Black land ownership. A call for reparations and compensation for Black farmers has been growing louder, fueled by both historical accounts and ongoing legal battles. The most prominent effort came in the form of the Pigford v. Glickman class-action lawsuit in 1997, in which thousands of Black farmers sued the USDA for racial discrimination.

The settlement, known as Pigford I, awarded over \$1 billion in compensation to farmers who had been unfairly denied loans between 1981 and 1996. A second lawsuit, Pigford II, followed in 2010 to address those who were left out during the first settlement. Despite legal victories, many farmers continued to face bureaucratic challenges in receiving compensation, with some



GETTY IMAGES

The compensation efforts by the USDA serve as a step toward healing and rebuilding for Black farmers.

payments arriving years later or not at all. Recently, a renewed momentum to compensate Black farmers for the injustices they faced. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package, allocated \$4 billion in debt relief specifically for socially disadvantaged farmers, including Black farmers. This measure was designed to forgive USDA loans and offer a fresh start for those who had suffered under discriminatory practices. However, legal challenges delayed the implementation of this debt relief program, as several lawsuits argued that providing aid based on race was unconstitutional. This resulted in the debt relief being halted, forcing lawmakers to find alternative ways to address the harm done to Black farmers.

In response, Congress passed a revised measure in 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act, which replaced the race-based debt relief program with \$3.1 billion in relief available to all farmers who faced discrimination, regardless of race. Additionally, the law set aside \$2.2 billion specifically for farmers who experienced discrimination in USDA loan programs, providing another avenue for Black farmers to seek redress. Compensating Black farmers is a significant step toward addressing the historic injustices they endured, but many challenges remain. The fight for land retention, economic equity, and fair treatment in future loan programs continues.

Advocates argue that compensation alone is not enough; systemic reforms within the USDA are needed to ensure that discriminatory practices are eradicated. Moreover,

some Black farmers have pointed out that monetary compensation cannot fully repair the loss of land and generational wealth.

For many families, the damage has already been done, with generations of farmers losing not only their income but also their legacy. The land that was lost, often to foreclosure or forced sales, represents more than just acreage; it symbolizes lost opportunities for community development, cultural heritage, and economic independence.

Beyond compensation, there is a need for initiatives that support land acquisition, sustainable farming practices, and agricultural entrepreneurship within Black communities. Programs that provide technical assistance, training, and market access can help ensure that Black farmers thrive once again. Furthermore, acknowledging and teaching this history is essential. Many people remain unaware of the extent to which Black farmers contributed to American agriculture or the discrimination they faced. Educating the public and policymakers about this legacy is crucial for building a future in which all farmers have equal opportunities.

The compensation efforts serve as a step toward healing and rebuilding. For Black farmers and their descendants, these payments symbolize recognition of the injustices they suffered and a commitment to a fairer agricultural system. While financial settlements can never fully restore what was lost, they offer a means of rectifying the past and paving the way for a more equitable future.

Unpacking mental health and suicide in the Black community

By Daniella Musesambili
SHADLE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Understanding suicide rates among the Black communities is a complex issue. Suicide is a critical public health concern that affects individuals and communities across the world; this topic is nuanced and requires a deeper understanding of various contributing factors, including systemic inequities, cultural stigma, and access to mental health resources. The contributing factors, according to an article by Arielle H. Sheftall, PhD (Association of Medical Colleges) are as follows:

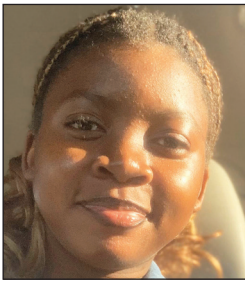
Systemic inequities: Historical and systematic racism has led to a significant disparity in education, employment, health care, and housing for Black individuals. These inequities contribute to chronic stress and feeling of hopelessness which are risk factors for suicide.

Cultural stigma: In many Black communities, mental health issues are often stigmatized, seeking help can be seen as a sign of weakness and this may prevent individuals from accessing the mental health care that they need.

Access to mental health care: Barriers such as lack of insurance, insufficient mental health resources and a shortage of culturally competent providers can hinder access to care. Many individuals may not receive the necessary support due to these systemic challenges.

Social isolation and disconnection: Economic and social pressure can lead to feelings of isolation. Community support systems that once provided resilience may be strained, exacerbating feelings of loneliness and despair.

From 2018 to 2023, over 49,000 people of color have committed suicide due to the reasons listed



By Daniella Musesambili
SHADLE PARK HIGH SCHOOL
YOUTH CONTRIBUTOR



among young adults have emerged as a critical public health issue that demands urgent attention despite of significant advancements in mental health awareness continues to face unique challenges that contributes to elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

The suicide rates among young adults have seen alarming increases in recent years. Black youth are disproportionately affected by mental health challenges, particularly after COVID-19.

The dual nature of social media

Social media can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it offers opportunities for support and connection. Online communities can provide solace to those facing mental health challenges, fostering a sense of belonging. On the other hand, the constant exposure to curated lives can lead to comparison, isolation, and despair. This duality plays a significant role in the mental health landscape of young adults. Data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Admin-

istration outlines factors that link social media to suicide risk.

Comparison and self-esteem: Social media platforms often showcase an idealized version of life, leading users to compare themselves unfavorably to others. This comparison can result in diminished self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy, contributing to depressive symptoms.

Cyberbullying: The anonymity of social media can facilitate bullying and harassment. Victims of cyberbullying may experience profound emotional distress, increasing the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Studies have shown that those who experience bullying online are more likely to contemplate suicide.

Isolation and loneliness: While social media connects people, it can paradoxically lead to feelings of loneliness. Young adults may find themselves engaging with others online while feeling disconnected in real life, fostering a sense of isolation that can exacerbate mental health issues.

Addiction and overuse: Excessive use of social media can lead to addiction-like behaviors, where individuals prioritize online interactions over real-life relationships and responsibilities. This can create a cycle of neglecting one's mental health, leading to increased anxiety and depression.

Exposure to harmful content: Social media platforms often expose users to distressing content, including images and discussions about self-harm and suicide. This exposure can normalize these thoughts and behaviors, making them seem like viable options for those in distress.

Prevention and intervention strategies

Promoting positive use: Encouraging healthy social media habits is crucial. This includes educating young adults about the importance of curating their feeds to include positive, supportive content and unfollowing accounts that negatively impact their self-esteem.

Enhancing digital literacy: Teaching young adults to critically analyze the content they encounter online can empower them to navigate social media more safely. Understanding the difference between reality and curated online personas is essential for maintaining mental well-being.

Providing resources: Social media platforms can play a proactive role by providing mental health resources and support options. Many platforms have

already implemented features to report harmful content and offer hotlines for individuals in crisis.

Encouraging open conversations: Creating spaces for open dialogue about mental health, both online and offline, can help reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek help when needed. Supportive communities can make a significant difference in someone's willingness to talk about their feelings.

Collaboration with mental health organizations: Social media platforms can collaborate with mental health organizations to promote campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the effects of social media on mental health, providing users with the tools they need to seek help.

Echoes of Hope

By Daniella Musesambili

Voices deep, where silence reigns,
A heart cries out, yet its being held in pain,
The weight of dreams, a burden of fate,
In the hush night they contemplate,

But within a heavy storm whisper,
Of love and hope, and brighter things,
In the tapestry of struggles faced,
A thread of strength can never be erased,

For every tear that falls unseen,
Every call for help unheard,
Every cry for help unheard,
Is a testament to what has been,
Together we rise from ashes and dust,
In the bonds we share, we find our trust,

Breaking the silence, no need to hide.
In unity, we break the taboo,
For in our pain there is healing too.

BUSINESS

SIPS ‘N’ TIPS: FIGHTING FINANCIAL ILLITERACY

Every day, thousands and thousands of Americans need financial help with absolutely no one to turn to. People do not know what they don’t know. It is a fact that 78% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck (2023 survey conducted by payroll.org) and 27% of US adults have no emergency savings (Bankrate 2024, Annual Emergency Savings Report). In 2023, 82% of adults had at least one credit card in their wallet , implying credit card debt (Credit Card Statistics and Trends 2024, Forbes Advisor). In fact, the average credit card debt in 2024 was \$8,024 and 28% of Americas have \$0 saved for retirement (lendingtree.com).

In 2022, 6 million Americans or 1 out of every 10 Americans aged 65 years and older retired in poverty (www.ncoa.org and businessinsider.com). Another 45% of Americans will run out of money in retirement. Yet only 23% of Americans are debt-free (Federal Reserve). What causes this huge rift? Why are over 80% of Americans in trouble? Because we are not taught the basics of financial literacy. We don’t plan to fail; we just fail to plan due to lack of knowledge.



By Rhonda Leonard-Horwith
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



Let’s get started. There are basically two paths of thinking financially. For simplicity’s sake, let’s call them groups A and B. This multi-part series will compare the unique characteristics of groups A and B, their unique relationship with money, unique understanding or lack thereof as to how money works and the lasting impact on families and the ability to pass on generational wealth. Group A represents about 95% of working middle class American.

- This group tends to be drawn to or focus

- on temporary solutions.
- Although in 2022, middle American income tended to span \$56,600 to \$169,800. Group A is considered to have a \$100,000 or less per year in income (Pew Research Center).
- They have a job working for someone else like a company, schools or the government. This means they do not have control over their time or how much they can earn. This often also dictates where Group A lives and where their children go to school.
- This group has been taught for years to put their money in the bank and averages about \$13,000 in savings earning simple interest at very low rates.
- If Group A has insurance it is Term life insurance provided by the employer. This insurance is not permanent, terminates about age 80, terminates should the individual leave the employer, gets more expensive with age, does not have a cash accumulation component and usually does not provide living benefits.
- Group A carries a lot of debt in the form of credit cards and mortgages. They rely on credit cards for emergencies or when

- large expenditures are needed. This results in Group A living above their means. This group is under the illusion that they “own” their own home. The reality is if the mortgage is still being paid, then they are in dual ownership or partnership with the bank. Additionally, the bank remains the majority owner in the house for quite some period of time. They do not own their home until the average 30-year mortgage is paid off. If the buyer defaults on the mortgage, then the bank owns the home.
- There is minimal tax advantage to shield income.
- The individuals tend not to have a financial advisor or financial plan.
- If there is retirement savings taking place, Group A utilizes 401k or 403b plans. These plans often do not allow the individual the freedom to determine where the money isn’t invested, are at the mercy of the stock market, are laden with fees, have an age limitation on when you have access to the money and has an age at which you must pay taxes on these money or suffer penalties.

My next article will explore Group B.

FUNERAL COSTS:
THE MOST GUARANTEED PART OF
LIFE IS THE LEAST PREPARED FOR



GETTY IMAGES

There is little worse than not having a plan for a funeral and trying to scrape everything together when in the throes of grief.

Very seldom do we plan for dying.
How expensive it is, what funeral home we will use, how our bodies will be handled; whether that be burial, cremation, body donation **or something in between**.

By Jaeylin Severino
THE BLACK LENS

With the holidays coming up, remember not to take gatherings with your loved ones for granted. No matter if you celebrate or not, the time we have now to gather, rejoice, celebrate and love one another openly is not something our ancestors got to enjoy. With that being said, surely everyone is thinking of their winter plans and Thanksgiving, Christmas shopping, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah celebrations.. But there is another thing everyone should be prepared for that is far less talked about and often avoided: the occasion of death.

Very seldom do we plan for dying. How expensive it is, what funeral home we will use, how our bodies will be handled; whether that be burial, cremation, body donation or something in between. This is a very grisly and uncomfortable topic, albeit an important one. Back before slaves were allowed to congregate and have funerals, Black people were silently buried in the middle of the night, away from prying eyes, in unmarked graves. Slaves were prohibited from gathering in groups of 4 or more. Often-

times, they weren’t allowed to be openly mourned for, and it was against the law for slaves to give loved ones a proper burial. Up until the Civil War, Black bodies were disregarded, something to gawk at, an object to poke, prod, and evaluate. The bodies of Black fallen Union soldiers were not allowed to be taken to the same funeral homes as those of their white counterparts.

Black funeral homes were a staple in many communities, a place where loved ones could come to grieve the way they needed to, usually in the joyous fashion of our ancestors where death was a homegoing celebration, a way to celebrate freedom from bondage. The formation of Burial Societies guaranteed that Black folks had an opportunity to openly grieve and be with their communities during the hardest times of their lives. Burial Societies would raise money for burials with donations and fundraisers, and provide a space for people to come together not only to celebrate the homegoing of their loved ones, but to also talk about the oppression, and hateful policies they so despised.

The funeral industry was one of the first viable types of entrepreneurship, debut-

ing after the end of slavery. These funeral homes often took care of many generations of Black families. Even with the high price tag of end of life services, price adjustments were often made. Unfortunately, with the emergence of corporate funeral homes, there are not as many Black owned funeral homes anymore. Many of these funeral homes are being bought out, ending family business legacies, thwarting many Black families’ access to such an important part of the community, in a space of familiarity and trust.

According to a report by the National Funeral Directors Association, the current national median cost of funeral services, with viewing and burial, adds up to about \$8,300.

So, during your holiday celebrations, have the hard talks. One of the hardest parts of life is death, and grief. After hundreds of years of silently grieving, being buried in unmarked graves, turned away from white funeral homes, we finally have more opportunities than we ever have before to have our dying wishes made. There is little worse than not having a plan and trying to scrape everything together when in the throes of grief.



COURTESY

People pose at the Black Business Forum and Expo.

Washington African
American Chamber
of Commerce hosts
Black Business
Forum and Expo

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

On Saturday, Oct. 19, under the leadership of Chauné Fitzgerald, founder and CEO of the Washington African American Chamber of Commerce (WAACOC), the Black Business Forum and Expo took place in Kennewick, WA. According to their website, the WAACO “is a membership-based organization that provides networking opportunities, business resources, and advocacy for local businesses in the waacoc.com area.” The mission of the organization “is to promote economic growth and community development by supporting the interests” of its members.

Dozens of business owners, non-profit organizations, and industry experts were in attendance. Mike Pellicciotti, the Washington State Treasurer also showed support. The panel, moderated by Joel Nania, the Small Business Administration Branch Manager for Spokane, included Ana Ruiz Kennedy (Craft 3), Jessie Johnson, (WA Treasury Office), and Jacquelynne Sandoval, (Spokane realtor).

Entrepreneurship is one avenue toward building generational wealth, and successful outcomes happen when the right tools are readily available and clearly outlined. Due to lack of exposure, Black business owners navigate uphill oftentimes. Sandoval shared insights about Black entrepreneurship.

“It’s important because they’re bringing the tools that we didn’t even realize were there,” Sandoval said.

On the panel, Sandoval discussed access to capital when starting and operating a business. She highlighted owning versus renting, understanding profit and loss, realizing the weight of your personal credit score when just starting out, and pinpointing where to find small business loans and grants. For instance, the Linked Deposit Program was created when the Minority and Women Owned Business Assistance Act was passed in 1993.

“Linked Deposit is something where banks are given money specifically to loan to minority businesses and with this program, you can go onto

the website and find which banks they are; they literally have money that is sitting there for us,” Sandoval said.

Sandoval said it is important to keep your business mission and vision front and center, in addition to having a strong business plan as reinforcement. Having statistics and data to back up your business production and activity are also paramount in telling your entrepreneurship journey.

“Nobody is going to loan you anything if you do not have a solid plan,” she said.

She said that being an entrepreneur is a process of continual learning.

“You need to tell them why you’re not as much of a risk,” Sandoval said. “We did talk about how you have to keep going and you need to educate yourself. It does give us a voice. It gives us power when we are owning our own things.”

She shared that there seems to be a knowledge and opportunity gap when it comes to Black entrepreneurship in Spokane, with the bulk of the information going to larger cities on the west side of the state. Calling it the great state divide, Sandoval wants to see Spokane’s 2% Black population grow. She stresses the importance of mentorship. On the matter of generational wealth, she says that we build community wealth when we have businesses for the next generation to pick up.

“Don’t gatekeep the information that you know,” Sandoval said. “Become a mentor. Bring somebody else in so this way we can do it; they talked about how there’s some businesses that people have owned for a long time, but they legitimately just closed because there’s nobody there to keep that place going.”

One last word of advice for those who want to venture into owning their own business: “Write your plan out. Write your vision and make it plain. You need to know what your vision is. What are you trying to do? Start doing it on a small scale and know that it takes time.”

The Black Lens looks forward to highlighting more local entrepreneurs in upcoming issues.

POLITICS

IN HER OWN WORDS

CONTAGIOUS COURAGE

When Kamala Harris was selected the Democratic nominee for President on Aug. 5 at the Democratic National Convention, I was so excited and proud to be a Democrat, and a Black woman. I felt the same exhilaration as the time former President Barack Obama was selected as the first African American Democratic nominee on Aug. 27, 2008, at the DNC.

If Kamala Harris and Tim Walz are elected as our president and vice president, our nation has a chance to heal and create a better future for the next generations. Harris, throughout her campaign has stated that this election has a profound opportunity to move past bitterness, cynicism and divisiveness, operating as Americans and not as political party rivals.

As for our Black women, young and old, Harris has demonstrated the belief that she is worthy. She has broken barriers and been steadfast in pursuing her goals with confidence, emotional restraint, independence, and resilience. Most importantly, she epitomizes family values of ethical and moral principles as evident in her love for her family.

With this election, I feel empowered to be an example to young



By Dr. Gloria Baynes
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



women and girls who face adversity in their jobs and in school. As a Black woman with a platform, I feel I have a responsibility to show up prepared to push open doors that have been shut. That is the energy of this election: hope and positive change for our society.

Kamala Harris' campaign is a milestone. She aims to shatter the glass ceiling for the president seat, and she has already shattered the ceiling as vice president. As Malcolm X once said, "The most dis-

respected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman." Today, many Black women have challenged those narratives, and, even though true, they have worked to counter those narratives as false.

From the liberating poetry of Phyllis Wheatley, to the heroism of Shirley Chisholm, to the fortitude of Ida B. Wells, to the tenacity of Fannie Lou Hammer, to the resolve of Stacey Abrams, Black women have been involved in American socio-political issues, advocating for the community since the American Civil War era. Whether it is Carol Moseley Braun, as the first Black woman to be elected to the Senate or New York Attorney General Letitia James or Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell, a record number of Black women serve in federal and state government. We have fought on the frontlines against the disenfranchisement of the marginalized, and this election is a reminder of that history.

As former First Lady Michelle Obama says: "History has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own."



History has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own."

Former First Lady Michelle Obama



GETTY IMAGES

Former first lady Michelle Obama speaks on stage Aug. 20 during the second day of the Democratic National Convention at the United Center in Chicago.

FORMER PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA URGES BLACK MEN TO SUPPORT KAMALA HARRIS



GETTY IMAGES

FINAL DAYS TO VOTE

Returning your ballot

Ballot drop boxes close promptly at 8 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 5. No postage is required. Mailed ballots must be postmarked by Nov. 5.

Results

Unofficial election results will be available at 8:15 p.m. on election day. The general election is certified on Nov. 26.

Learn more

Learn more about or local elections online at www.spokanecounty.org/178/Current-Election

Former U.S. President Barack Obama reaches out to supporters as he is introduced at a get-out-the-vote rally as he campaigns Oct. 19 for Democratic presidential nominee and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris at Cheyenne High School in North Las Vegas, Nev.

About Win With Black Women

Win With Black Women is a collective of intergenerational, intersectional Black women leaders throughout the nation.

WWBW is motivated by its collective concern with the narrative and treatment of Black women within the current political cycle. The group believes that no matter your political affiliation, you should have been outraged by the treatment of Black women in that process.

Founded by business executive, social impact strategist and investor Jotaka Eaddy, WWBW first gathered on a zoom call in August 2020 – 90 women gathered that night after an urgent email calling for action. Since then, WWBW has grown to more than 4,000 women within its network. The group met virtually nearly every Sunday thereafter.

Additionally, the group has successfully advocated for appointing Black women to senior positions within the Biden-Harris administration.

WWBW continues to support efforts to advance the policy agenda of Black women championed by Black women-led organizations.

Source: <https://www.winwithblackwomen.org/>



An attendee holds up a sign in an overflow area while waiting for former U.S. President Barack Obama to speak at a get-out-the-vote rally Oct. 19.

GETTY IMAGES

By Anyla McDonald
THE BLACK LENS

Former President Barack Obama has been actively campaigning for Kamala Harris. His endorsement of Harris, especially among Black men, has raised questions about why he is advocating for her and what impact this may have on Nov. 5. From slavery to Jim Crow laws to mass incarceration, Black men have been disproportionately affected by policies that have hindered their ability to fully participate in society. This context is important to understand in why Obama, a symbol of hope and progress for many Black Americans, is using his platform to encourage Black men to vote for Harris.

Vice President Kamala Harris is the focal point in an urge to move the needle for Black progress in the 2024 election. As a former prosecutor and Attorney General of California, Harris has a complex record on criminal justice decision making that has garnered both praise and criticism. Some view her as a trailblazer while others see her as a symbol of a broken system that has perpetuated harm. Obama's support of Harris may be seen as a signal that he believes she can help address the issues facing Black Americans.

In a recent podcast episode of "The Young Man and The Three," Obama postulates that while progress is slow, small strides should not be negated; he implores Black males to consider what has been accomplished that has never been

done before. Progress as in a decrease in the number of people who went to federal prisons under his leadership and a lower crime rate. While criminal bias was not eradicated, rationalized Obama on the podcast, incremental change still helped create a shift.

Pressing issues in our nation, health care, ethical policing, and earning a decent minimum wage, are all factors that culminate into a much larger picture of prosperity, and these are the issues are on the ballot.

Influential celebrities and thought leaders have helped shape the conversation around why Black men should support Harris and have mobilized communities to vote in the upcoming election. Focusing on battleground states, Obama is working on Harris' behalf to earn the support of Black and Latino males.

By highlighting Harris' accomplishments and qualifications and challenging the perceptions of those who doubt the potential for transformative change, Obama uses the logic that change is slow and steady, but baby steps are still effective.

Obama may be able to inspire Black men to see themselves in her and to believe that their voices matter in shaping the future of the country. This could have a ripple effect on other marginalized communities, leading to a more inclusive and representative government.

Looking ahead, the impact of Obama's endorsement of Harris on Black men's voting behavior remains to be seen. It will be important to continue to engage with these communities, listen to their concerns, and work towards creating a more just and equitable society for all, even after the election.

Obama's support of Harris is just one piece of the puzzle, and it will take a collective effort to ensure that Black men's voices are heard, and their needs are addressed in the political arena.

NAACP hosts town hall, candidate forum

By Charity Resian
THE BLACK LENS

On Oct. 15, the Spokane branch of the NAACP hosted a candidate forum and town hall. The highlights are below.

Meet the candidates

Republican Al French has served four terms as a Spokane County Commissioner. Molly Marshall, a first-time democratic candidate and a retired member of Washington's Air National Guard, is challenging French to retain his seat as the Spokane County Commissioner for District 5 for what would be his fifth term.

During the Spokane NAACP Candidate Forum these leaders addressed the issues affecting the Spokane community and the policies they plan to implement to serve their community.

Food insecurity

Both candidates agreed that addressing food insecurity in Spokane County is critical and is one of their priorities if elected. French argued that the county has been a party partner with food banks for many years, and that during the COVID-19 crisis it provided millions of dollars to food banks, school districts, agencies and nonprofits to work on addressing this issue within the communities in need. French promised to continue to work with the programs that serve the community.

Marshall also acknowledged the challenge of food insecurity, and emphasized the importance of working with outstanding organizations to tackle it, especially with the youth. She suggested partnering with organizations such as Second Harvest and other agencies to expand opportunities for schools feeding programs, in addition to passing legislation that ensures sustainability.

Overcrowding of county jails

Marshall mentioned that she first visited the county jail to understand more about this issue at the beginning of her campaign. She admits being surprised by how the county jail was overpopulated, understaffed and outdated. She said if elected she plans on building a new jail and developing an updated jail system, which will enhance and support services such as behavioral addiction services, rehabilitation, and integration services. She does not want to see a waste of taxpayer dollars, and commits to bringing the necessary resources.

French, in response, broke down the role the county plays within the county criminal justice system, stating that a lot of work has been put in for many years, engaging the community and collaborating with experts to try to find the right model. "I was there when we started the blueprint for reform, because I was aware we needed to reform the criminal justice system. It's much more than the jail cell, it's about how you keep the community safe and how do you make sure that the right people are incarcerated and those that are suffering from mental illness, drug addiction or some other ailments are not made criminals in the jail system."

Homelessness

Both candidates agree that those who are unhoused affects the entire region, and that if elected they will provide financial resources and continue to support nonprofit services that address the need of homelessness in the community.

Washington state Legislative 3rd District candidate Natasha Hill

Hill, a lawyer and community organizer continues to ensure that the African American community has a strong voice and connection across Spokane County. She believes that it is important for her to send a strong message that representation from people with lived experience matters. "We must listen to people who have lived it, who have done it, who have overcome it and actually go back and show up in their community for people who are still dealing with it."

When asked about how she intends to tackle the mental health crisis in public schools, Hill said she wants to be a champion education and work hard to de-escalate mental health issues in ensuring they are not cutting off educational programs. Her top legislative priorities are affordable housing, rent stabilization, and improvement of public health and safety.

U.S. Rep. Congressional 5th District candidate Carmela Conroy

Conroy seeks to advocate for American interests over political persuasion. A former deputy prosecutor, Conroy highlighted a priority in supporting working families so that their kids can see a path forward to access equal opportunities. Pro-union, if elected as congresswoman, she will ensure that her constituents will have what they need. She aims to employ a holistic approach to tackling crime, substance misuse, and supporting mental and behavioral health while integrating local solutions. On what she could do to ensure student loans debts are evaluated or mitigated in the context of racial wealth gap, Conroy acknowledges the lack of generational familiarity of higher education processes for first generation students. These challenges include the inability of families to provide financially for their students, withdrawal of federal support from university education over the past 40 years, and much higher prices in the cost of public universities. This all leads to a high debt ceiling for students who want to get ahead by accessing opportunities. Conroy stated that loans being turned over to for-profit contractors needs to be evaluated along with loan forgiveness shortfalls for public servants. She believes that federal funding should not be available for diploma mills that exploit students.



Conroy

NEWS

U.S. Senate, 5th Congressional candidates debate on stage

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

On Oct. 8, a candidate debate facilitated by Northwest Passages in partnership with Gonzaga University, Sen. Maria Cantwell and Dr Raul Garcia debated their stance on a variety of issues as they both contend for the U.S. Senate seat. Soon after, Carmela Conroy and Michael Baumgartner took the same stage as they both work toward garnering enough votes for the 5th District Congressional seat. Ballots are due Nov. 5.

Sen. Maria Cantwell

Sen. Cantwell believes in growing the middle class by bolstering our manufacturing supply chain, fighting inflation by lower costs across the population, providing affordable housing, and building apprenticeships for jobs of tomorrow to drive up income. She supports federal student loan forgiveness especially for public sector jobs so that student loans are not prohibiting Americans from gaining access to economic growth. She believes in a value based health care delivery system and is concerned that Project 2025 threatens Social Security and Medicare and that we should enact a process where the government pays for policies as they go.

On the matter of abortion, she believes that decisions should be made between the patient and doctor, and aims to restore a woman's right to choose at the national level.

On the matter of climate change and clean energy, Cantwell worked on the Yakima Basin Project to strategically get more water while also saving fish, and believes in maintaining our treaties on tribal lands in the preservation of salmon. She supports innovating and diversifying energy sources to keep electric costs low.

On the matter of the Israeli/Palestine conflict, Cantwell wants to bring hostages home, and says that Israel is our ally, and collectively, with neighboring nations, a two-state solution and ceasefire should be the objective. On the matter of Ukraine, Cantwell supports efforts to stabilize the country against Russian aggression.

On the matter of immigration, Cantwell advocates for allowing a legal process to be established for those who want to work in the U.S., effective border appropriations for national safety, and she stated that "demonizing the backbone of who built America is not the way to go."

On the matter of the fentanyl crisis, she helped pass the Fend Fentanyl Act, which enabled a national emergency. This gave the government new tools to go after cartels and money at the border for detection and

surveillance. She believes in low barrier treatment for addicts.

On the matter of homelessness, she understands the nuances of being unhoused, and that not everyone in that predicament is on drugs or mentally ill. She is in favor of programming like Gonzaga Haven, which provides resources to help people become productive members of society.

On the matter of health care, Cantwell believes that "pharmacy benefit manager middlemen" are counter-productive, as they are the third- and fourth-highest entities on Wall Street, serving their financial bottom line versus what is in the best interest of the patient. She believes in negotiating the cost of medication. On the matter of online privacy protections, she will fight to pass a federal privacy act and believes that American people should be given the leverage to hold tech companies accountable when they breach privacy rights and agreements.

Dr Raul Garcia

Dr Raul Garcia stated that he is not a career politician, but a scientist. As a medical doctor, he will look for science-based solutions to crime, open drug use and accountability for government spending. He appreciates legal immigration and relates this topic, as his family emigrated from Cuba. He says that he accomplished success through the opportunity of immigration and hard work. Below is a synopsis of Garcia's stance on various issues impacting citizens.

On the matter of inflation, Garcia believes that government spending needs to undergo an audit as a measure of accountability and funds that are not being spent effectively should be diverted back to communities.

On the matter of student debt, he believes in the necessity of bringing resources to marginalized cultures to level the playing field.

Garcia believes in supporting Washington as a pro-choice state. He aims to support the will of the people and protecting women's rights is the will of Washingtonians.

On the matter of clean energy and climate change, Garcia is a proponent of nuclear energy, hydroelectric energy, and bringing industry back to America as a part of building clean energy, while simultaneously boosting our economy. He has studied the Snake River dams and understands the need to find balance in protecting those dams and the fish. On the matter of the Israeli/Palestine conflict, Garcia believes that America's role is to find peace. He says that Israel is our ally.

On the matter of immigration, Garcia firmly supports children who have DACA status, in addition to

a less bureaucratic process for legal citizenship. He believes that a country has the right to vet who comes in and out of its borders to remain sovereign.

On the matter of fentanyl, Garcia says he would propose the American Against Fentanyl Act, advocating for felony manslaughter charges for dealers and mandatory rehabilitation for addicts.

He also believes that to address the issue of homelessness, you must follow a process of identifying and rectifying the root causes, promote drug rehabilitation and mental health services. As a medical doctor, Garcia believes that insurance companies have too much power, and that doctors and patients should be the driving force in health care. He does not think that insurance companies belong on Wall Street.

Michael Baumgartner

On the matter of national debt, Baumgartner believes that Congress needs to reign in reckless spending, reduce regulations that cause price increases, and privatize the TSA.

He believes the cost of college is outrageous and it should be made more affordable, but does not approve of wiping out student debts that were borrowed in good faith. He thinks that community colleges and trade schools should be promoted.

He believes in a bipartisan approach to balancing the budget, and that we need to stimulate the economy by producing more American energy. He will fight to protect entitlement funding such as social security. He believes in science based protections of the environment and embracing the improvements in hydroelectric and nuclear energy, power stations being a part of. Baumgartner believes that unions should be optional. He states that the Pro Act, which would supersede the state's right to work stance, would drive up costs on public infrastructure.

Baumgartner stated that the Affordable Care Act provided access to care but falls short on the cost of health care. He advocates for price transparency and the negotiation of the cost of care.

Baumgartner believes abortion is a state matter and would not vote on any abortion legislation because it is the role of the state, to include cases of rape. He does believe in supporting young mothers and families.

On the matter of foreign policy, he believes that the U.S. military needs to be upgraded and we cannot afford to be isolationists. Baumgartner believes peace is possible, Israelis and Palestinians are all "all God's children" and we must keep

Israel strong and secure because it is the only democracy in the Middle East. He stated that Iran must be dealt with and also does not support anti-semitism.

He believes in securing the borders and that there is abuse of the refugee asylum. He believes that the wall needs to be finished and the traffic of fentanyl, along with terrorists, is a threat to American safety and sovereignty. He believes that drug trafficking in Washington is a problem and attributes that to lax laws coming out of Olympia.

He says Washington needs demand reduction to stop drug consumption and an all government approach to addressing the fentanyl crisis.

Carmela Conroy

On the matter of economy, Conroy believes that we need to look to more than domestic issues to solve our problems, that the government could make housing more affordable, and there should be affordable loans.

She believes in an open market economy, investing in good debt, a mandatory spending program, and the protection of Medicare and social security, which she firmly states are not entitlement programs, but earned benefits. She contends that climate justice should be a collaboration between the local and federal government. She is pro-union, believes in protecting workers rights, negotiating for better benefits, safety, and a respectable pension.

On the matter of health care, she believes that pharmacy prices should be negotiated and that the Affordable Care Act should cover pre-existing conditions, and the federal government should intervene to break up monopolies. On the matter of abortion, she believes that, "we the people" deserve our own rights to our own bodies, and that we should restore women's rights at the national level.

Having spent 20 years in foreign service as a diplomat, Conroy believes that the example of American democracy leads the world stage, and we should work on maintaining our alliances and lead by example.

She believes, in regards to the Israel/Palestine conflict, that the role of the U.S. should be as peacekeepers to promote a two-state solution, and we should bring our hostages home.

She believes in holding pharmaceutical companies responsible for the opioid epidemic that has now escalated into the fentanyl crisis, and she will not choose party over country in strategies to support immigrants who want to work in the U.S., while also creating effective collaborative multi-government solutions to address crime coming through the borders.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE THROUGH AN ANTI-RACIST LENS: IT'S NECESSARY

By Anyla McDonald
THE BLACK LENS

The targeting of Black men by the prison system in the United States is a deeply ingrained issue that has historical roots dating back to the era of slavery and has continued to evolve over the years. The prison system has been used as a tool of oppression of Black individuals, particularly men. Understanding the historical context of how the prison system has targeted Black men is critical in how we assess criminal justice through the lens of anti-racism.

The United States has a long and troubling legacy of institutionalized racism that has contributed to the targeting of Black men by the prison system. The Black Codes and Jim Crow eras, post-enslavement, further institutionalized policies that continued systemic oppression that

disproportionately affected Black communities. These policies, combined with economic shortfalls and social inequalities, have contributed to the overrepresentation of Black men in the criminal justice system.

Michelle Alexander is a civil rights lawyer and legal scholar whose influential book, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" shed light on the racism in the criminal justice system. Alexander argues that mass incarceration functions as a form of social control. Through her work, she has raised awareness about the structural inequalities that exist within the criminal justice system and called for reforms to address these issues.

The impact of the targeting of Black men by the prison system is far-reaching and devastating. Black men are disproportionately represented in the crim-

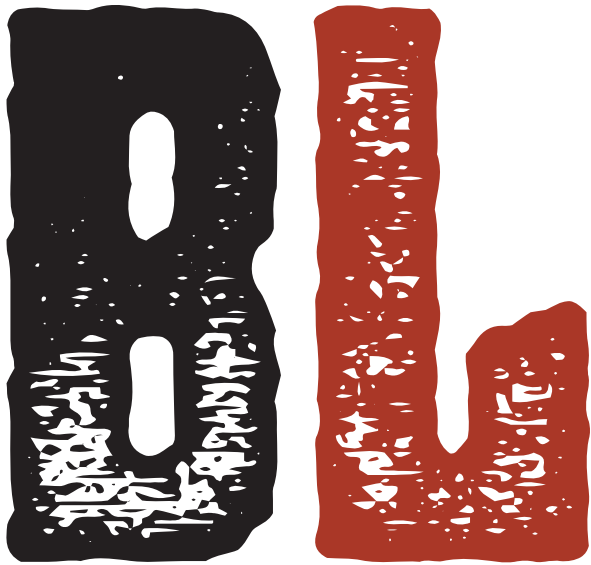
inal justice system, with higher incarceration rates and longer sentences compared to their white counterparts. This has led to the disruption of families and communities, economic disparities, and a cycle of poverty and incarceration that is difficult to break. The social stigma associated with being a Black man in the criminal justice system also has long-lasting effects on individuals, limiting their opportunities for employment, housing, and overall well-being.

Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, has worked tirelessly to address the targeting of Black men by the prison system through legal advocacy and policy reform. Stevenson's work on racial justice and criminal justice reform has been instrumental in challenging the systemic inequalities that continue to contribute to the overrepresentation of Black

men in the criminal justice system. By highlighting cases of injustice and advocating for equal treatment under the law, Stevenson has brought attention to the need for change within the criminal justice system.

The targeting of Black men by the prison system is a complex issue with deep ties to unresolved social failures and disparities. While there have been efforts to address these inequalities through legal advocacy and policy reform, the impact of this targeting continues to be felt by Black communities across the country. It is crucial to continue exploring this issue, raising awareness, and advocating for systemic change to create a more just and equitable society for all individuals. Criminal justice reform deserves political attention; our votes help advance leaders who will see this is a human rights issue.

POINT OF INFLECTION



NEWS

BLACKLENS.NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Video: White men harass Black teen

A series of viral videos have sparked an investigation by Florida police after a group of white men were seen following and harassing a Black teenager as he walked through his Sarasota, Florida, neighborhood, according to reports from Essence.

The teen, who has not been publicly identified, had gone for a walk on Oct. 10 to speak to his girlfriend on his cellphone after Hurricane Milton left their area without power and limited cell service, according to his mother, Whitney Portela, who shared the footage on TikTok and Facebook, Essence reported.

As he walked around, four white men started to follow him and asked unwarranted questions about where he lived. That's when the teenager began recording himself. The disturbing videos have since gained more than 4 million views.

"Obviously, he doesn't live here," one man says.

Portela stated that while the clips only show parts of the interaction, her son was followed for more than 10 minutes.

LeBron, Bronny James make NBA history

In the hours before his NBA debut in 2003, LeBron James remembered, he was an "anxious" teenager with a churning stomach who had a tough time getting a good night's sleep and took the court believing "everyone besides my family and friends wanted me to fail."

The 39-year-old Los Angeles Lakers star and his 20-year-old son shared their long-anticipated historic moment during the second quarter of a 110-103 season-opening victory Oct. 22 over the Minnesota Timberwolves at Crypto.com Arena, the Washington Post reported. They became basketball's answer to MLB stars Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr., who played together for the Seattle Mariners in 1990 and 1991. The universe was in perfect alignment for the James family: Bronny's debut took place on his sister Zhuri's 10th birthday, and the Griffey's enjoyed the multi-generational show from courtside seats.

With Los Angeles holding a comfortable 51-35 lead with four minutes remaining in the second quarter, LeBron and Bronny James rose simultaneously from the Lakers' bench and strode toward the scorer's table to check into the game together. Before LeBron James had ripped off his warm-up shirt, the Los Angeles crowd rose for a standing ovation.

Harris turns focus to young, Black media

Vice President Kamala Harris has spent recent weeks sitting down for interviews with podcasters and gossip sites as part of her ramped-up efforts to reach Black voters as she battles Donald Trump for the presidency.

Her decision to appear on "The Shade Room" and other less traditional platforms has left many scratching their heads. But it's a strategy to reach young, Black voters who are increasingly turning to social media for news, NBC News reported.

She has since opened up to a diverse swath of media, appearing on late-night and daytime TV and in pointed interviews with Bill Whitaker of CBS News' "60 Minutes" and Fox News' Bret Baier, along with podcasts like Alex Cooper's "Call Her Daddy" and "All the Smoke," hosted by former NBA players Matt Barnes and Stephen Jackson. Most recently, she participated in an interview with independent journalist Roland Martin, spoke with Charlamagne Tha God in an hourlong radio town hall on iHeartRadio and sat down with Justin Carter, of "The Shade Room" for a conversation about her recently announced plan aimed at supporting Black men.

Ballots are due Nov. 5.

INDEX

NEWS AND POLITICS	2
BUSINESS AND FINANCE	4
YOUTH CONNECTION	6
EDUCATION	7
HAPPENING AROUND TOWN	8
ARTS AND INSPIRATION	9
WELLNESS	11
REST IN POWER	13
EVENTS AND LISTINGS	14
COMICS AND LEISURE	15

NEWS

MEET THE BOARD

Welcome KJ January to The Black Lens board

Hi! My name is KJ (Kiki) January, and I'm incredibly honored to introduce myself as one of the newest board members of The Black Lens.

I was born and raised on the east side of Spokane, the youngest of three children, to two remarkable military parents. My mother was a dedicated teacher for 30 years, 22 of which were in District 81, while my father has run and operated a local karate school for 37 years.

I grew up watching my older siblings carve their own paths – my sister playing 14 years professionally overseas and in the WNBA and now coaching for the Connecticut Sun, and my brother following my father's entrepreneurial footsteps.

As for me, I found my calling in community work.

Growing up in the East Side during the '90s, I was fortunate to experience the embrace of a true village. I remember attending Bethel AME on Sundays, hanging out at East Central Community Center and Libby Teen Center after school, and going to Liberty Park for Juneteenth and Unity in the Community celebrations. All of which played an integral role in shaping who I am today.

As a Black, queer woman in a predominantly white, heteronormative region, the support of my family and community not only gave me the confidence to stand tall but empowered me to create a better Spokane for others like me. My community has always been there – guiding me through life's challenges and celebrating my victories.

Watching my parents lead, my sister dominate in sports, and my brother build his business gave me the tools to forge my own path, to know what it means to show up for others and for myself. I took that



By KJ January
THE BLACK LENS



mindset with me as I worked at the MLK Center, Spokane Falls Community College, as a caretaker, for the Washington State Democrats and now as the director of advocacy at Spectrum Center Spokane. Over the years, I've seen firsthand the complexities and challenges that our community faces. But, nothing changes overnight, lasting progress requires sustained effort, both from leadership and from the collective voice of the people.

And that's where voting comes in.

In the words of the great Thurgood Marshall, "Where you see wrong or inequality or injustice, speak out, because this is your country. This is your democracy. Make it. Protect it. Pass it on." Our vote is one of the most powerful ways we can speak out. Our vote matters – our lives matter, and our future depends on how we use our voice at the polls.

As Black people, we've always been creators. When systems fail us, we build new ones. I saw this spirit firsthand growing up on the east

side of Spokane, watching my community fill the gaps, meet needs, and lift each other up. That mentality, "see a need, fill a need," has shaped how I advocate today. To make real change, we can't do it alone. We need leaders who will champion our community, and voting allows us to put those leaders in place. The power is in our hands.

Anti-Blackness is a global issue, therefore it's important that we reject divisive narratives. We cannot afford to be divided by color, gender, sexual orientation/who we love, or any other difference. When we all face the same oppressive systems, we should be focused on who will truly advocate for our community and who has proven they will stand with us.

Research the candidates. Look beyond the surface. Look at their record and future policies as it pertains to the Black/Youth/ Disabled/ Queer/POC/Military/Poor/Justice involved communities. Compare several sources, and reach out to trusted community leaders.

Ultimately, this election is about the future – our future. We need leaders who understand the weight of our challenges and who are committed to confronting them head-on. Every vote is a step toward building that future. As a community, we have the power to create a more inclusive, accessible, and just society. Voting alone won't "save" us, but it's a critical step toward empowering ourselves to keep fighting injustice and creating the change we need for all. Voting is but one way to make a difference.

Former President Barack Obama said, "We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

Let's be that change. Let's vote!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16 ♦ 7 P.M.

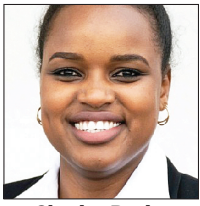
'Against All Odds'

A FILM BY CHARITY RESIAN



In this image from the film, a woman peers out of her home in the village of Ilchampai of Masai Mara in Kenya.

THE BLACK LENS EVENT



Charity Resian



"Against All Odds" is the true story of the filmmaker, Charity Resian, who grew up in a small Maasai village called Ilchampai in rural Kenya. At age 16, a film was screened in her school that would completely change her life. The film showed the devastating consequences of female genital mutilation (FGM) to the health of girls and women. As FGM is a common practice within the Maasai community, Resian strongly believed she could face the same devastation.



THE MYRTLE WOLDSON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
211 E. DESMET AVE.
SPOKANE

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND ON THE NIGHT OF THE EVENT
[SPOKESMAN.COM/NORTHWEST-PASSAGES](https://spokesman.com/northwest-passages)

MEET THE BOARD

Introducing Shamerica Nakamura

From staff reports

Shamerica grew up as a military dependent and lived in a variety of places including Alaska, Louisiana, Germany, South Carolina, and Washington state.

She made Spokane her home after graduating with her bachelor's degree in sociology. During her time as an undergraduate, she volunteered at a local youth centered nonprofit, and eventually transitioned into the role of director.

In 2015, she began her journey in education as site coordinator for another nonprofit organization, and soon became a school community specialist.

Shamerica is passionate about amplifying the voices of historically marginalized communities and has extensive experience advocating for youth and families in the Spokane community. She holds a master's degree in social work and has worked closely with organizations that foster positive relationships between schools, families and communities.

As a daughter, wife and mother, Shamerica understands the power of sharing Black voices, perspectives and experiences. She is beyond humbled to support the work, vision and legacy of Sandy Williams.



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

April Eberhardt, Rick Williams, Luc Jasmin III, Alethea Sharea Dumas, Michael Bethely, KJ January and Shamerica Nakamura

Contact us about delivery
Email.....info@blacklensnews.com

Would you like to advertise?
Email.....info@blacklensnews.com

Have a news tip?
Email.....editor@blacklensnews.com
Call.....(509) 245-1660

General information
Schoenberg Center/Gonzaga University
800 N. Pearl St.
Spokane, WA 99202



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.

Copyright © 2024

The Black Lens newspaper is published daily online and monthly in print by "comma," a nonprofit community journalism lab. For information on comma, or to make a donation, please contact Innovia at (509) 624-2606 or visit www.blacklensnews.com/donate.

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.

