



March 2021

www.blacklensnews.com

Vol. 7 Issue No. 3

Spokane's Black Community News Source

THE
BLACK LENS
SPOKANE
NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

BRING U.S. TOGETHER



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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

They are Falling All Around Me

Years ago I created a video that I played at the memorial service of one of my closest friends. Her death had taken me by surprise and I was trying my best to figure out how to make sense of her absence from my life and the hole that it left there.

I found a song that spoke to my heart and so I used it to create a video and set photos of my friend to the music. The words in the song said what I was unable to find the words to say myself.

I have been thinking a lot about that song over the past several weeks, I guess because I have found myself, once again, at a loss for words.

My mom lost a dear friend a few weeks ago. Her death was not a surprise in the same way that my friend's had been, but still it caught us off guard.

Jean and my mom talked every day. They laughed. They joked. They gossiped. They shared stories. They gave each other advice. They critiqued the Sunday church service. They talked about everything. And they talked about nothing. Every day.

And even though those phone calls were not meant for me, I felt like I was a part of them too. Every day. And I miss them. I miss Jean.

There's a depth and a breadth of friendship that women my mom's

age are able to share with each other that I am envious of. Maybe it comes from having lived through so very much and having overcome so much more that they are both able to understand each other in a deeper and more profound way. I don't know. But I do know that I learned what friendship is by watching the two of them and listening to the two of them, and for that, I will always be grateful.

So, Jean, I'm playing this song right now for you. Rest in Power!

They Are Falling All Around Me
By Bernice Johnson Reagon
(Founder, Sweet Honey in the Rocks)

They are falling all around me
They are falling all around me
They are falling all around me
The strongest leaves of my tree

Every paper brings the news that
Every paper brings the news that
Every paper brings the news that
The teachers of my sound
are movin' on

Death it comes and rests so heavy
Death it comes and rests so heavy
Death comes and rests so heavy
Your face I'll never see no more

But you're not really going
to leave me
You're not really going to leave me
You're not really going to leave me

It is your path I walk
It is your song I sing
It is your load I take on
It is your air that I breathe
It's the record you set
That makes me go on
It's your strength that helps me stand
You're not really
You're not really going to leave me

And I have tried to sing
my song right
I have tried to sing my song right
I will try to sing my song right
Be sure to let me hear from you



THE BLACK LENS NEWS

The Black Lens is an independent community newspaper, based in Spokane, WA, that it is focused on the news, events, issues, people and information that is important to Spokane's African American/Black Community and beyond. The paper is published on the first of each month.

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Subscriptions:
Delivered monthly by mail - \$45/year or online by e-mail - \$12/year

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RAZE
verb [reyz]
to tear down; demolish

How we will **rewrite** the story of Black American children in Spokane.

In 2019 a study by the Washington State Chamber of Commerce found that the Black children of Spokane were some of the most underserved in the State.

Since then we've connected with the community to explore exactly what **education for us and by us** looks like:

- A curriculum and class environment that infuses a holistic Black American history
- Culturally responsive teaching strategies that validate and affirm black culture within the program and honors parents as the first and most important teacher
- Early learning and development centers in the community with hours that work for working families
- Culturally engaging school age programs before- and after-school
- Mentorship opportunities for black males by black males

We hope to bring two new early learning centers and one new after-school program in 2022! Email us at razeeldc@gmail.com or find us on Facebook (@Razespokane) and Instagram to connect.

Our team is Pastor Kendricks of Morning Star Baptist, Pastor Jasmin of Jasmin Ministries, Luc Jasmin III and Kathryn Garras of Parkview Early Learning Center, and Kerra Bower of Little Scholars Development Center.

Tell us what Black-centered child care and education means **to you**.
Complete our survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SpokaneCC>
Find us on Facebook at: @Razespokane



YOU SHOULD KNOW

(Or Things You Probably Didn't Learn In School)

Breaking the Race Barrier in Nursing

Spokane Resident Among Black Nurses Recognized by Historic Marker

(Source: chsnaa.org; colatoday.6amcity.com; columbiabusinessreport.com)

On October 25, a historical marker was unveiled at the corner of Harden and Washington streets in Columbia, South Carolina to commemorate the former Columbia Hospital's unit for Black patients and nursing students.

The marker, which was unveiled during a ceremony that featured Richland County Council Chair Paul Livingston, Columbia Mayor Stephen Benjamin and the Columbia Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association of Black Nurses, recognizes the Black nurses unit from the former Columbia Hospital.

The School of Nursing for Black Students began in 1935, with its first, 10-person class graduating in 1938. According to the association's website, the first graduates were Janie Sumter, Everlou Cook, Bernice Spry, Elizabeth Haigler, Cardell Kyser, Mattie Kirkland, Connie James, Jeanette Williams, Inell Richardson and Bertha Brown.

Although the school was segregated, the lectures and course work were the same for both Black and white students. Later, the Black and white nursing students were taught by the same faculty.

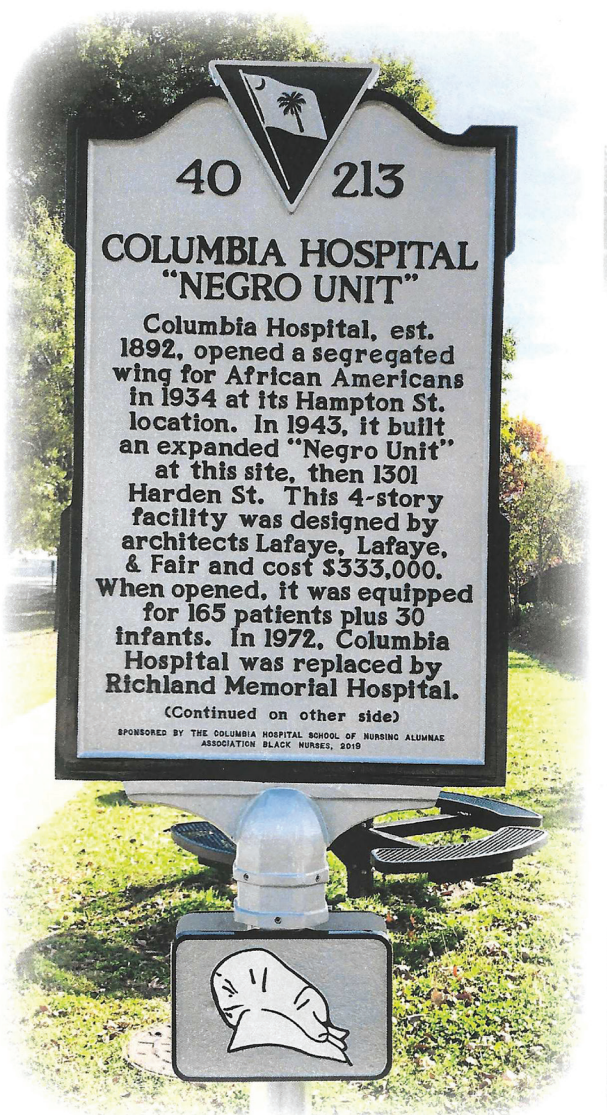
After the establishment of the School of Nursing for Black Students, the Alumnae Association for the Black Nurses was organized in 1941 by Mary Lou Corley, Helen Stahler and Minier Padgette, in hopes of providing support and promoting high standards within the nursing program.



First Black Student Nurses and Headnurses
(Students were part of the first graduating class)
1938



Class of 1965
(Last Graduating Class)



Ms. Spry, one of the students in the first class of graduates, was elected president.

Columbia Hospital School of Nursing trained and educated Black nurses for 27 years, from 1938 - 1965, graduating 401 nurses before eventually closing in 1966. The last class of Black students graduated May 7, 1965. The five students who graduated were: Jettiva Simuel Belton, Janice Jean Frasier, Harriet Elaine Hunter, Shirley Johnson, and Carrie May Gudger Norton.

In 1972, Columbia Hospital was replaced by Richland Memorial Hospital, which has now become a part of the Prisma Health System.

Today, the Columbia Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association (CHSNA), which began as the "Negro Alumnae Association", is almost 80 years old and the group remains active, continuing to sponsor reunions to help to raise scholarship funds for minority nursing students. It was the efforts of Alumnae members that layed the groundwork for procuring the marker through a partnership with the City of Columbia and Richland County.

"It is an honor that on October 24, 2020, we unveiled the Historic Markewr that will be present for all to remember now and in the future the legacy of the Negro Unit of Columbia Hospital, the Negro Nurse's Dormitory and the contributions made by more than 400 Black nurse graduates of the Columbia School of Nursing." - Jettiva S. Belton, President CHSNA (class of 1965)

For information about the Columbia Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Associat visit: <http://chsnaa.org>.

Wilhelmenia Williams, RN

Spokane resident, Wilhelmenia Williams, was among the 400 Black nurses that were recognized by a marker placed at the site of the "Negro Unit" of Columbia Hospital School of Nursing, in Columbia, South Carolina. Williams graduated from the segregated nursing school in 1956 and went on to work as a registered nurse for over 40 years in hospitals and clinics around the country, including South Carolina, California, Hawaii, and locally at Fairchild Air Force Base Hospital before retiring.



Wilhelmenia Williams, Class of 1956



GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

T'wina Nobles First Black WA State Senator in a Decade

In January, T'wina Nobles, CEO and President of the Tacoma Urban League was sworn in as Washington's first Black State Senator in ten years, unseating Republican incumbent Steve O'Ban in the November election. Nobles is a wife, mother of four, former small business owner and an elected school board director, who rose out of a childhood history of abuse, homelessness and the foster care system. Senator Nobles agreed to an interview with the Black Lens, here is an excerpt of that interview:

Was there a specific catalyst that got you to step into politics?

My foster father. I was volunteering in my community before I was in foster care, just to get out of the house, just to have things to do. I would volunteer at the Boys and Girls Cclub or I volunteered at the shelters we lived in. But my foster father was a former elected official and once I learned what it meant to serve on the city council, I knew that I wanted to serve my community. That was the catalyst, I had a role model. I saw someone, I lived with someone who had that experience and it opened my eyes to what I could do, who I could be.

You were very successful, head of the Urban League, what was it that made you decide to go for being a state Senator?

I'm still the president and CEO of the Tacoma Urban League, that hasn't changed. I only announced that I would be leaving once we hire someone new, and I currently also serve as a school board director. I ran for the school board for the first time five years ago and I ended up running unopposed, so I won. Then I ran for election in November 2019. I'm now on my second term as a school board director. So, it wasn't my first time running for office.

It was a missed meeting with my Senator that really inspired me to run. A lot of people had been asking me to run for Senate and I said maybe when I'm older. Maybe at another time in my life. It doesn't seem like something exciting for me right now. But I was open to running for something, potentially after School Board. I had a meeting



scheduled and I thought I would be meeting with my Senator and he didn't show up. I think what it triggered was just a lot of folks in our community who had been lied to, who had been dismissed. Senators can't make meetings all the time, but I was excited for that meeting in particular. So, when I missed that meeting, I said, there's something that I can do. I want different representation. I'm going to run for this seat, so we have someone who is attentive to our needs, that is honest with us and better representative of what we want to see in our district.

What did you learn about yourself during the election campaign that you didn't know already?

What I can tell you as an elected official, what I've learned about myself, is always be willing to work hard. To get here, the goal has to be to win. That's what we want. There are no moral victories. When you jump in to something, be all the way in. Fight really hard all the way to the end. And what I know from being an athlete and also a coach is that I'm a great motivator and the first person that I need to motivate is myself. And I need people around me who are going to keep me encouraged and motivated and telling ourselves that "we got this." What I learned is that I can accomplish anything that I want and achieve anything that I put my mind to. There's a potential to be successful, so I wish that people would do the things that are uncomfortable, things that they are scared of, things that they're not sure if they will be successful. Do it anyway, but just be all the way in.

You're Washington's first Black Senator in decade, what impact do you hope to have on the state legislature?

Obviously, I don't represent every Black person. The Black community is so diverse, but I hope to make the Black community proud. I hope to take my lived experience and my professional experience to make really good decisions as a state Senator. I also hope to learn. There are so many high level decisions that we are making and I feel that the community is the experts, so I want to work with the community to better understand these issues and how they impact folks. Things that are not connected to my life story, like dealing with disabilities or immigrant issues. There are so many issues. Although I've been through so much, there are so many things that I have never experienced and I need to lean on the community to do so. So, being a Black community member, a Black woman, means I get to bring those things to the table, but I also get to pause and create the space for other folks to join me and to learn with me so that we can create real change.

Continued on Page 13

Congresswoman Joyce Beatty Named Chair of CBC

Congresswoman Joyce Beatty was elected to serve as the 27th Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).

As chair, she is leading the CBC's historic 58 members during the 117th Congress. Since its establishment in 1971, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) has been committed to using the full Constitutional power, statutory authority, and financial resources of the federal government to ensure that African Americans and other marginalized communities in the United States have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

Congresswoman Joyce Beatty is a native Ohioan with a strong history of connecting people, policy and politics to make a difference. Since 2013, Beatty has proudly represented Ohio's Third Congressional District.

She sits on the exclusive House Committee on Financial Services and serves on two Subcommittees: Chair of Diversity and Inclusion, and Housing, Community Development and Insurance. The Financial Services Committee oversees the entire financial services industry, including the nation's banking, securities, insurance, and housing industries, as well as the work of the Federal Reserve, the United States Department of the Treasury and the United States Securities and Exchange Commis-



sion. As Chair of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion, Beatty leads efforts to ensure the financial services industry works better for all Americans.

Prior to her service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Beatty was Senior Vice President of Outreach and Engagement at Ohio State University and a member in the Ohio House of Representatives for five terms. During her tenure in the Ohio House, she rose to become the first female Democratic House Leader in Ohio's history and was instrumental in

spearheading and enacting pieces of legislation to require financial literacy in Ohio's public school curriculum, to expand STEM education, and to secure funds to help under- and uninsured women access breast and cervical cancer treatment.

Congresswoman Beatty is Chair of the powerful Congressional Black Caucus, Region 10 designee on the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, and is an influential member of the Democratic Seniors Task Force, Co-Chair of the Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus and Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition, Deputy Vice-Chair of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, and founder of the Congressional Civility and Respect Caucus.

Outside of her committee and numerous caucus memberships, Beatty is a committed and vocal supporter of early education, women's equality, concussion awareness, and the Office of Minority and Women Inclusion (OMWI), which seeks to increase the participation of women and minorities in all facets of the financial marketplace, among many other priorities.

Congresswoman Beatty is active in The Links, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Columbus Urban League, The American Heart Association—where she previously served on the board and she

was previously named one of Ebony Magazine's 150 most powerful African-Americans in the United States.

She received her Bachelor of Arts from Central State University, her Master of Science from Wright State University, and completed all requirements but her dissertation for a doctorate at the University of Cincinnati. Congresswoman Beatty has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from Ohio Dominican University and Central State University, as well as an honorary juris doctor from Capital University Law School. She is married to attorney Otto Beatty, Jr. and a proud grandmother to Leah and Spencer, who lovingly call her "Grammy."

While the CBC has predominately been made up of members of the Democratic Party, the founding members envisioned a non-partisan organization. As founding member Rep. William L. Clay, Sr. said when the CBC was established, "Black people have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies...just permanent interests."



For information or to connect with the Congressional Black Caucus, visit: cbc.house.gov.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Cicely Tyson, Pioneering Actress and Fashion Icon, Dies At The Age Of 96

By Victoria Uwumarogie

(Reprinted from Madame Noire, madamenoire.com; Photos: Tommaso Boddi / Getty)

After a storied career on stage and in film spanning more than 70 years, and a well-lived life, actress Cicely Tyson passed away on Thursday (Jan. 28) at the age of 96.

According to the AP, the news of her death was shared by her manager, Larry Thompson, who confirmed that her family said she passed this afternoon. He didn’t share any details about a cause of death, instead asking for some privacy.

“With heavy heart, the family of Miss Cicely Tyson announces her peaceful transition this afternoon,” a statement from Thompson obtained by the AP read. “At this time, please allow the family their privacy.”

Tyson was most recently doing interviews to promote her memoir, Just As I Am, which was just released on Jan. 26. In a recent interview with Bustle, she explained why she waited so long to share her life story at 96 years young.

“People wanted to know all about my personal life, and I said, ‘That has nothing to do with my acting,’” she said. “My personal life allows me to bring some kind of



contribution to my career life. You have to have something feeding you. If you do not allow yourself to be fed by life, then you have nothing to give an audience. The characters that you read about come from a human life.”

Tyson, who became something of a fashion star and hair inspiration in the last years of

her life, was best known for her work in films like Sounder, for which she was nominated for an Academy Award, as well as The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, which garnered her two Emmy awards.

In recent years, she had a resurgence in popularity, appearing in films like The Help and A Fall From Grace, as well shows

like How to Get Away With Murder. In her return to the Great White Way, she won a Tony for her work in 2013 in the Broadway play The Trip to Bountiful. Always a mysterious figure, Tyson was a Kennedy Center honoree in 2015, and when that celebration came about, she decided to open up about her age.

“For decades up to then, folks had been trying, and largely failing, to guess how old I was,” she stated in Just As I Am.

“The truth is, I’ve always been quietly proud of my real age,” she added. “But when the Kennedy Center honor came around, I felt it was important to at last set the record straight.”

Tyson was previously married to Kenneth Franklin from 1942 to 1956 and wed jazz legend Miles Davis from 1981 to 1988. She has no children from those relationships, but she certainly has a lasting legacy overall. After her Broadway run with A Trip to Bountiful, Tyson expressed her thankfulness for the career she’s had.

“This last year has been absolutely phenomenal,” she said in 2014 to Emmys.com. “I know, and I let Him or Her know, how blessed I have been throughout my whole career. And I never fail to give thanks.”

These Three Brothers Are Raising Canada’s Largest Venture Fund For BIPOC Founders

By Rebecca Szkutak

(Reprinted from Forbes, forbes.com; Photos: Nicole De Khors)

In early 2020, Sheldon James approached his brothers, Stephan James and Shamier Anderson, with a business pitch. A Canadian military veteran, James, 25, had struggled to get a cannabis business off the ground. Sheldon James had watched his brothers — accomplished actors with a Golden Globe nomination and credits including Homecoming and Halle Berry’s film Bruised — make progress in combating racism and promoting Black actors in Canada’s entertainment industry through their non-profit, B.L.A.C.K. Together, the three could do the same for BIPOC entrepreneurs.

“I met a set of challenges as an entrepreneur that were difficult to overcome,” Sheldon James says. “That’s what brought us into venture capital: to implicate that change for BIPOC entrepreneurs around getting financing for a business, and being able to scale it.”

With Stephan James, 27, and Anderson, 29, he’s launched a new fund, the Bay Mills Diversity Fund, to put dollars behind that mission. Part of their firm Bay Mills Investment Group, named after community housing project in Toronto where the three grew up the sons of a single mother from Jamaica, Bay Mills Diversity Fund has closed \$15 million Canadian dollars of a planned CA\$100 million fund to back early-stage



startups, mostly at the Series A, that have a least one full-time BIPOC founder.

James, James and Anderson say they hope to make about 50 investments from the fund, writing CA\$500,000 to CA\$5 million initial checks into startups across categories, but with an emphasis on fintech, real estate, edtech, medtech and cannabis — sectors that Sheldon James, the firm’s CEO and managing partner, says fit their areas of interest and appeared to have strong, underserved BIPOC talent.

“We are really speaking from a place of experience,” says Stephan James, a member of the Forbes 30 Under 30 Entertainment list for 2020 for his acting on projects including

film “If Beale Street Could Talk” and Amazon series “Homecoming,” for which he received a Golden Globe nomination.

“We realized we built these businesses, these careers that have fortunately transcended to the U.S. and the world, but not everyone is in that same situation.”

With B.L.A.C.K — short for Building A Legacy In Acting, Cinema and Knowledge — Stephan James had already worked to fight a brain drain of BIPOC acting talent away from Canada with Anderson, who starred alongside Halle Berry in her directorial debut, Bruised, last year. “We are no strangers to doing work that is important and speaks to the culture and speaks to the

zeitgeist in this way,” says Anderson. “It made perfect sense when our little brother Sheldon came to us and said, ‘You’ve done so much societal change to the arts, have you thought about our community and the financial side?’”

First-time fund managers, James, James and Anderson still have a long way to go to reach their fund target, having raised an initial CA\$15 million from a mixture of high net worth individuals and small Canadian corporations; the trio expect to raise the rest in tranches of about CA\$25 million in order to invest as they go. Accounting firm PwC and law firm Miller Thomson have committed to offer pro bono accounting and legal advice to companies in the portfolio, the brothers say.

With Stephan James and Anderson still landing roles, Bay Mills has brought on Melissa Allen, a former financial advisor at Desjardins Group, a Canadian financial services firm, as a partner and chief operating officer. Bay Mills’ founders hope to raise the rest of their fund by year’s end, while also launching a program for budding Black founders looking to start businesses in partnership with the Jr. Economic Club of Canada, a nonprofit that provides entrepreneurship training.

“Doing this today, we are shaking a lot of things up and changing the energy that exists in VC,” Sheldon James says. “We are leading by example and are super proud to be doing it.”

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

WNBA Star Renee Montgomery Co-Owns Atlanta Dream, Ousting Former Owner

by Charise Frazier
(Reprinted from NewsOne, newsone.com; Photos: Icon Sportswire / Getty)

The WNBA and the NBA approved the sale of the Atlanta Dream on Friday, placing ownership in the hands of investor group led by Northland real estate Chairman Larry Gottesdiener, company COO Suzanne Abair and former Dream star Renee Montgomery.

Montgomery retired this month after 11 seasons in the WNBA and became the first former player to own a WNBA team.

This is Montgomery's second venture into owning a sports franchise. In January she partnered with former NFL player Marshawn Lynch as co-owner of Team Beasts in the new Fan Controlled Football League.

Friday's announcement ended the 10-year investor stake for owner Kelly Loeffler, who lost her bid for Senate last month.

Splintering between the former Georgia senator and Dream players began last year during the Black Lives Matter protests, where sports athletes played a large role in megaphoning the moment to the masses.

Loeffler, a conservative who aligned herself with overt racists, bigots and white supremacists, opposed the social



justice initiatives led by sports teams. Loeffler penned a letter to WNBA commissioner Cathy Englebert last summer in an attempt to reduce the importance around the organization's social justice initiatives.

Loeffler's stance created tension for Black WNBA players, an organization with a large percentage of Black players who were affected by the ongoing killings of their community members around America. 70 percent of WNBA players are Black, similar to the NBA where 74.2 percent

of the players are Black. Players began advocating for Loeffler to sell her stake in the team.

"We are the women of the Atlanta Dream," Dream players said in a July 10 statement. "We are women who support a movement. We are strong and we are fearless. We offer a voice to the voiceless. Our team is united in the Movement for Black Lives. It is not extreme to demand change after centuries of inequality. This is not a political statement. This is a statement of humanity. Black lives matter," the team said in a response to Loeffler's criticism.

At one point they even donned t-shirts that said "Vote Warnock," advocating for Loeffler's opponent at the polls during the Senate runoff races, Rev. Raphael Warnock.

Montgomery sprung into action around ownership after NBA star LeBron James expressed interest in purchasing the team earlier this year.

Loeffler and former co-owner Mary Brock released a statement in support of the new ownership.

"It was also important to us to help level the playing field for women's professional sports. We are proud of what we accomplished and wish the team well in their next chapter. We will always value the hard work and dedication, and the memories, fans and friendships that sustained our commitment to the Atlanta Dream over the last decade."

BLM Gets Nominated For Nobel Peace Prize

by Martin Belam
(Reprinted from The Guardian, theguardian.com)

The Black Lives Matter movement has been nominated for the 2021 Nobel peace prize for the way its call for systemic change has spread around the world.

In his nomination papers, the Norwegian MP Petter Eide said the movement had forced countries outside the US to grapple with racism within their own societies.

"I find that one of the key challenges we have seen in America, but also in Europe and Asia, is the kind of increasing conflict based on inequality," Eide said. "Black Lives Matter has become a very important worldwide movement to fight racial injustice.

"They have had a tremendous achievement in raising global awareness and consciousness about racial injustice."

Eide, who has previously nominated human rights activists from Russia and China for the prize, said one other thing that impressed him about the Black Lives Matter movement was the way "they have been able to mobilise people from all groups of society, not just African-Americans, not just oppressed people, it has been a broad movement, in a way which has been different from their predecessors."

The Black Lives Matter movement was co-founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi in response to the acquittal in the US of the man who shot Trayvon Martin. It gained wider recognition in 2014 following protests over the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, and was the well-spring of a series of global protests in 2020 following the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Nominations for the Nobel peace prize are accepted from any politician serving at a na-

tional level, and they are allowed just 2,000 words to state their case. The deadline for this year's submission is 1 February, and by the end of March the committee prepares a shortlist. The winner is chosen in October and the award ceremony is scheduled for 10 December. There were more than 300 nominations for last year's award, which was ultimately won by the World Food Programme.

The committee awarded the WFP because it wanted to "turn the eyes of the world to the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger".

Eide, however, said he didn't want his nomination for Black Lives Matter to be seen as a comment on domestic US politics. And he dismissed criticism from rightwing voices that the group had been behind violence in US cities. "Studies have shown that most of the demonstrations organised by Black Lives Matter have been peaceful," he said. "Of course there have been incidents, but most of them have been caused by the activities of either the police or counter-protestors."

"There is actually a tradition for doing this," Eide said. "It's a strong linkage between anti-racism movements and peace, and a recognition that without this kind of justice, there will be no peace and stability in the society."

His written nomination concludes: "Awarding the peace prize to Black Lives Matter, as the strongest global force against racial injustice, will send a powerful message that peace is founded on equality, solidarity and human rights, and that all countries must respect those basic principles."



Regina King Plays Shirley Chisholm in New Biopic, Shirley

by Rosy Cordero
(Reprinted from Entertainment Weekly, ew.com; Photos: George Pimentel/Getty Images; Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

A longtime dream of Regina King's is finally coming to fruition.

The Oscar-winning actress will portray Shirley Chisholm, the first Black U.S. congresswoman, in the feature film, Shirley, which she will also produce alongside her sister, Reina King. Fellow Academy Award winner John Ridley will serve as the film's writer and director.

Reports tracing as far back as 2012 touted King's participation in a Chisholm biopic. She said it took a decade to get a green light for the film.

"Shirley Chisholm's fearless determination has been an inspiration to so many of us, and with this film, we hope to inspire many generations to come," King said in a statement released by producing partner Participant. "To collaborate once again with my friend and mentor, John Ridley, and the team at Participant, makes



this decade-long journey even sweeter."

Shirley will give viewers an intimate and behind-the-scenes look at Chisholm's life, and her groundbreaking run for president as a democrat in 1972.

Brooklyn-born Chisholm was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1968, representing New York's 12th congressional district from 1969 to 1983. She earned the respect of her constituents and her peers while climbing the political ladder. She became the first African-American candi-

date to earn a major party's nomination in 1972.

Ridley praised King's determination to get the film made in a statement on Wednesday.

"Regina's passion for bringing a complete and very human portrait of Shirley to life has been evident since literally the day we first met," he said. "I'm very thankful to both Regina and Reina trusting me to partner in telling the story of this truly remarkable individual."

Production on Shirley is set to begin later this year.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Hundreds Of Schoolgirls Abducted In Nigeria, Government Official Says

By CNN's Stephanie Busari, Nimi Princewill and Isaac Abrak

(Reprinted from CNN, cnn.com; Photo Credit: Reuters/Temilade Adelaja)

Hundreds of schoolgirls were abducted in the early hours of Friday when armed men raided a state-run school in Zamfara State, northwest Nigeria, a government official told CNN.

The schoolgirls were taken from their hostels by gunmen who raided the Government Girls Secondary School in the town of Jangebe, a high-ranking government official with knowledge of the incident told CNN.

A police officer was killed in the attack, according to the source, who did not want to be named as he did not have permission to speak on record.

"They came on about 20 motorcycles and they marched the abducted girls into the forest," the source said. "The bandits arrived around 1:45 a.m. and they operated 'til about 3 a.m.

"The sad part is that there's a military checkpoint that is about four minutes away from the school," he added.

About 500 students are normally at the boarding school, of whom around 315 were taken by the gunmen. Others managed to flee and

return to their hostels, the source said.

A spokesman for the state police told CNN that a detailed statement would be released as they piece together what happened. He declined to comment on the number of students kidnapped.

Later on Friday the force said in a statement that a "heavily-armed" joint search and rescue operation had been launched.

The distraught parents of some of the schoolgirls spoke to CNN on Friday, with one saying her daughter was apparently seized in her pajamas.

"My daughter is among those who were taken away because I saw her things left behind," Jummai Haruna, mother of Hafsat Abubakar, told CNN.

"I believe she was taken away wearing only her sleeping clothes because I found her hijab and her school uniform."

"I miss her so much already. Nobody has told me anything about her whereabouts of my daughter. She has always been with me. Her father died when I was still pregnant with her. Now I don't what to do," Haruna said. Narama Umar's niece, Asmau Lawali, 14, is also among the missing.

"The government should please help bring our daughters back. There were a lot of par-



ents in the school crying. This is very sad, we want our daughters back," Umar told CNN.

Another resident, Safiyanu Jangebi, told CNN he heard gunshots at the time of the kidnapping and described how onlookers clashed with the police at the scene.

"There are policemen all over the school, the youths are angry and are now throwing

stones at the police. The governor's wife was also here. They also threw stones at her, chanting 'Allah will punish you' and 'We will not forgive you,'" Jangebi said.

In a statement released on social media Friday, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said the abduction was "inhumane and totally unacceptable."

"This administration will not succumb to blackmail by bandits who target innocent school students in the expectations of huge ransom payments," Buhari said in the statement, which was posted by his official spokesperson.

He added: "We have the capacity to deploy massive force against the bandits in the villages where they operate, but our limitation is the fear of heavy casualties of innocent villagers and hostages who might be used as human shields by the bandits.

"Our primary objective is to get the hostages safe, alive and unharmed."

Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres also condemned the attack.

"The Secretary-General calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted children and for their safe return to their families."

First Black Woman To Lead WTO Will Prioritize Fair Trade, Access To Covid-19 Vaccines

(Reprinted from aljazeera.com/news; Photo Credit: cgdev.org)

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was confirmed as director-general of the World Trade Organization on Monday, becoming the first woman and the first African to lead the global trade body.

Okonjo-Iweala was appointed by the WTO after the last remaining rival candidate, South Korean trade minister Yoo Myung-hee, withdrew from the race. She will take up her post on March 1, initially for a term that runs until August 2025.

An economist and former finance minister of Nigeria, Okonjo-Iweala enjoyed broad support from WTO members including the European Union, China, Japan and Australia. The United States, under the Trump administration, had favored Yoo.

The WTO was established in 1995 with the aim of promoting open trade for the benefit of all. It negotiates and administers rules for international trade and tries to resolve disputes among its 164 members.

But the organization has struggled to prevent trade spats among member states, most notably the United States and China. The Ge-



neva-based body has been without a permanent director general since Roberto Azevêdo stepped down a year earlier than planned in August. Okonjo-Iweala has acknowledged the need for reform.

"It feels exciting and it feels daunting at the same time. I look forward to the challenge ... deep reforms are needed to rebrand and reposition the organization," she said during an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour. Okonjo-Iweala said ramping up global efforts to combat Covid-19 was also a priority.

"One of ... top priorities that I have, that I'm passionate about, is how can trade and the WTO play a stronger role in bringing solutions

to the Covid-19 pandemic, both on the health side but also on the economic side," she told CNN.

Okonjo-Iweala said that while economic recovery was reliant on trade, solving public health challenges also required "good trade."

Okonjo-Iweala spent 25 years at the World Bank as a development economist, rising to the position of managing director. She also chaired the board of Gavi, which is helping to distribute coronavirus vaccines globally, stepping down at the end of her term in December.

In response to concerns that rich countries are not doing enough to share vaccines, Okonjo-Iweala said that the WTO needs "rules that will allow access and equity for vaccines, and therapeutics and diagnostics."

"That's a big issue for me, how do we get the solutions to the present pandemic?" she said during the interview.

Okonjo-Iweala's appointment has been hailed as a significant achievement by people in her native Nigeria and an #ankaraarmy — referring to the distinctive African print she wears — has already formed online.

Coca-Cola appoints Debra Mallowah as VP for East, Central Africa Franchise

By Rédaction Africanews (Reprinted from Africa News, africanews.com; Photo Credit: africanews)

Kenya's Debra Mallowah has been appointed as the new Vice president for Coca-Cola's East and Central African franchise, effective February 15, 2021.

The role based in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, will see Mallowah oversee the development and implementation of business strategies across the East and Central African franchise for the global soft-drinks company.

On Monday, President of Coca-Cola Africa operating unit, Bruno Pietracci, described Mallowah as "a highly accomplished leader" with a wealth of experience gained within leading multinational entities.

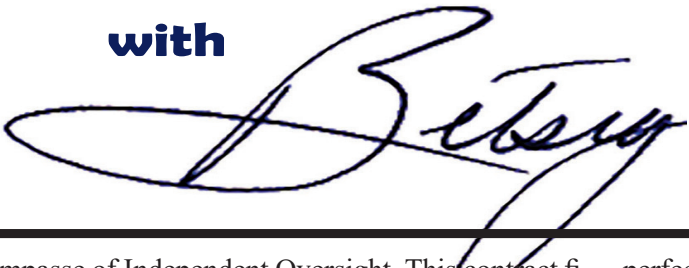
Mallowah has held senior leadership positions in fast-moving consumer goods, including the beverage industry, manufacturing and tech companies.



The Kenyan was optimistic as she took up the new role. She notes that "a lot has changed around the environment we operate in especially in the last year driven by the ongoing pandemic, but there are many growth opportunities for the Coca-Cola business and that is my focus".

Mallowah joins Coca-Cola from Safaricom Plc. of the Vodafone Group, where she was Business Development Officer and played a crucial role in developing a blueprint for entry into geographical territories and expanding the business to new growth areas.

A Different View

with 



Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council

On Monday, February 22nd, I was chairing the Finance & Administration Committee and the Mayor and Chief Meidl brought forth something that the City has been waiting for, for four years now. A tentative agreement between the City of Spokane and the Spokane Police Department.

First let me take you back to last July, just eight months ago, when I told you about the situation at City Hall. Here’s what I wrote in the Black Lens back then:

“So what’s happening at City Hall? Before George Floyd’s death the police contract had come before the council for a vote. To approve or reject. We are set to vote today. I am writing this hours before that vote. I will be honest and say that I have my concerns, there were already concerns expressed with the language regarding the Police Ombudsman Office (OPO) before all the protests. The rub is it is not in alignment with the amendment to the City Charter that was voted on in 2013 by 70% of the population. In fairness this contract was already negotiated before the current administration came into office. That began my deep dive into contract negotiations, bargaining, The Police Guild and arbitration. The Mayor and her office have been working with Council to work through this impasse. There have been numerous Resolutions and Ordinance changes floated, but no agreement to date.”

Eight months ago, I joined the rest of the City Council to unanimously reject the tentative agreement that was presented to us. Eight months later, I am writing this before the vote on Monday the 1st of March 2021. To approve or reject.

The Mayor and her office have continued to work with Council through this contract and the major

impasse of Independent Oversight. This contract finally aligns with the amendment to the City of Spokane Charter that was voted on in 2013 by 70% of the voters of Spokane.

Here are some points in the Tentative Agreement*:

- Extends the authority of the Ombudsperson to the Deputy Ombudsperson, including the ability to participate in internal affairs interviews, request further investigation, recommend mediation, make the determination that an investigation is thorough and objective, review and provide input on internal affairs case summaries, and attend review board meetings for use of force, collisions, and deadly force.
- Expands Ombudsperson access to body camera footage.
- Provides that the Ombudsperson may appeal the classification of a complaint and the type of investigation selected by the Police Chief.
- Clarifies that all complaints may be independently investigated by the Ombudsperson.
- Establishes that the Ombudsperson may request further investigation of major complaints and request that the Police Ombudsperson Commission direct further investigation by the Ombudsperson or a third-party independent investigator.
- Adds the authority for the ombudsperson to issue a closing report after the completion of a full department investigation, chief’s determination, and/or a third-party investigation that may opine on what happened.

My vote this time will be an affirmative, “Aye”, as a result of many meetings between The Mayor, The Police Guild and your City Council. This is not a

perfect contract by any means, and I will continue to fight for change and meaningful reforms in how we “protect and serve” the People of Spokane. It has been 4 years, 5 if we include 2021, since our officers have had a raise. We must recognize that police officers are people too with families, sons, daughters, mothers and fathers. We must take care of them if we expect them to take care of us. Over the course of this contract the average COLA (cost of living adjustment) will be 3.5% (inclusive of benefits).

This contract expires at the end of December 2021, so we will be back to negotiations shortly. Community, we cannot stay in this valley of indecision and dry bones! This contract allows us to start building with your input into the new contract! The Mayor has pledged to hold more community conversations, I pledge to continue to bring your stories, your concerns and your voices to not only those conversations but also to the negotiation table and push for as much transparency and public input to the negotiations for the new contract as possible.

Let us continue to meet this challenge and not grow weary of fighting to create a City of Promise where everyone, and I mean everyone thrives.

In Solidarity,



Council Member Betsy Wilkerson
Spokane City Council District 2, Position 2
bwilkerson@spokanecity.org

**From the Woodward Administration’s presentation of the Tentative Agreement. Presented on 2/22/2021 to the Spokane City Council Finance & Administration Committee.*

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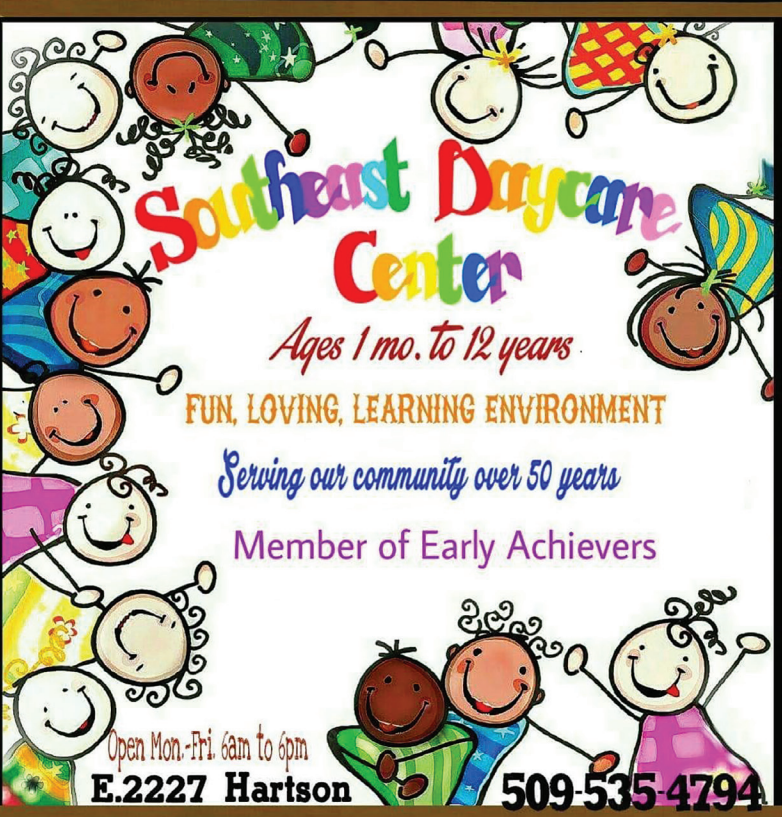
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FindYourPhaseWA.org



Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears

Black Church Rising



February’s Black History Month was both amazing and overwhelming. It was impossible to totally consume the wealth of documentaries, historic dramas, biographies, movies and films that aired on the many streaming platforms. There was a wealth of insight and information shared on social media and the constant revelation about Black inventors, pioneers, and women in the civil rights movement of whom we knew little or nothing. The best news about Black History Month is that, at long last, it’s no longer one month only. Offerings by Black artists, film makers, newsmakers and authors thankfully now find amplified voice year-round. But it’s nice to have the laser focus in February.

Of all the Black history offerings last month, my favorite was Henry Louis Gates’ PBS special series, *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song*. What most struck me in this series is how the Black Church in America has evolved and adapted to meet both spiritual and social needs throughout its history. I was gratified by the series’ clear illustration that while the Black Church is a revered institution, it has never been a monolithic institution.

Our ancestors came to these shores from many different areas of Africa, each with its own language, spiritual beliefs and expressions. There were similar rites and rituals, music and dance, but there were also practices unique to each culture. Islam was one of those religious beliefs, and it was a religion that took some root in the Georgia Sea Islands – particularly Sepelo Island, where an enslaved West African Muslim named, Bilali Muhammad actually penned a book on Islamic law in Arabic. On Sepelo Island, First African Baptist Church worships in the original building, erected in 1859 by slaves. On the original pews in the balcony are writings done in a classic West African Arabic script from the 1800s.

Christianity was originally thrust upon kidnapped Africans and their immediate descendants. It was a foreign spirituality to them. At first, slave masters did not

want slaves to become Christians. Slaves after all, were not even fully human. But mostly they didn’t want them educated and able to read the Bible. Once slave owners became convinced that the Bible could be taught in such a way as to ensure that slaves understood Christianity as a religion of submission and subservience, it became less threatening. For years Black Christian worship was closely monitored by the masters. But the enslaved people found secret ways to gather and worship aloud in their own manner.

It was not long before enslaved Blacks began to adapt European Christianity into their own theology and expression of worship. No matter how the masters tried to brainwash them or beat it out of them, Mother Africa dwelt deep within their souls. Spirituality was incarnate. The rhythms and sounds of ritual ancestral worship lived in their bodies. Rituals like call and response, movement and dance would rise again into consciousness. White theologies and Biblical interpretation morphed into ways of understanding God and Jesus to which they could easily relate. It was in this evolution that a distant divine Christian God became truly Emmanuel, “God among us” in the person of Jesus. God and Jesus were not far off deities. God moved in human affairs and made a way out of no way. Jesus walked with them through trial and tribulation.

From the beginning, it was the Biblical story of liberation that called to Black people. Jesus, by his life, death and resurrection, became the great liberator. Jesus, crucified servant in this world, rose to oppression-free glory and new life with God in heaven. So too, through the promises of God and the love of Jesus, the enslaved could endure their suffering in this world because, “... soon and very soon” they would be welcomed into heaven by Jesus, and they would see God face to face. They longed for heaven where there would be, “no more weeping and wailing.”

Soon other Biblical liberation themes spoke to them, this time from the Book of Exodus and the story of God’s mighty work, through his servant Moses to free the enslaved Hebrew people from bondage in Egypt. They didn’t have to suffer until they died and rose to glory. God’s hand would lead them to freedom in the north just as God had lead Moses.

The evolution of the Black Church goes on through emancipation, through reconstruction, the beginnings of Jim Crow, and into the late 19th- early 20th century Great Migration from the rural south to east coast cities like New York, and large Midwest cities like Chicago. In the early years of the 20th century, Black Churches in the north would adopt the Social gospel of Jesus in which the Christian faith is not just a call to personal conversion, but to social reform. The call to live the social gospel at first concentrated on reforms, like ending poverty and boosting literacy within local Black communities. Black businesses thrived and the Black churches rapidly grew. But the north had its own brand of white supremacy and oppression. A social justice movement beyond the immediate community began to rise and became deeply embedded in Black Church consciousness and mission.

In this time the Black Church would find itself divided. First, by vast differences of religious expressions in worship. Rural Black migrants from the south would find their embodied, participatory and ecstatic form of worship, unwelcomed by established mainline Black Churches in the north, where The Politics of Respectability reigned, and the emulation of European Christian worship was the order. It was seen as more “civilized”.

The Church would also splinter in other ways. The Rev. Marcus Garvey rose to some prominence with his Back to Africa movement. Garvey told Black people that “God was Black”, and he condemned Black adoption of a white supremacist Christianity. In 1930, the Nation of Islam was born and evangelized young Black men in the cities into its unique interpretation of the Islamic faith, with great success. It rejected traditional Black church practices and traditions altogether and taught that white people were indeed inferior to Black people. Long before the 1960’s, the Nation of Islam led a Black Power Movement and proclaimed that Black was beautiful. It taught that Black folks were made in the image of God and should not adopt the white aesthetic by straightening their hair or otherwise glorify the white ideal by emulating white upper-class social customs.

The Black Church’s greatest hour came with the modern Civil Rights Movement of the 1950’s and 60’s. Black Churches were at the forefront of the battle in the south for an end to racial segregation and the right to vote. It was a mass movement, organized and galvanized in Black churches throughout the south. The Movement’s leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. held a BA in sociology from Morehouse College and a PHD in Theology from Boston Divinity School. He might have done anything with his life,

but the young minister returned home to Atlanta to serve his community.

With its rich plurality of theological emphasis, diverse expression of worship from Baptist to African Methodist Episcopal, and a multiplicity of Black denominations beyond and in between, the Black Church, with some denominational exceptions, has been a powerful force against the sin of racism and oppression.

The Black Church has reinvented itself over and over. It has survived and thrived from secret worship meetings at hidden Praise Houses on plantations, to 19th century, exuberant, integrated outdoor worship called, Camp Meetings. It has thrived from early and mid-20th century mainstream mega-churches in large cities, to mega-Pentecostal denominations, to mega-prosperity theology churches. The Black Church has remained alive in storefront Holiness Churches both urban and rural. It has brought the fire and defiance of Rev. Marcus Garvey, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Jr, Malcom X, and Rev Jeremiah Wright. The Black Church has been a powerful force for justice from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Rev. Dr. William Barber.

Through Divine Grace the Black Church has adapted, evolved and diversified itself to meet the spiritual and social needs of Black people. But to remain viable, to attract a younger generation less churched, and less interested in organized religion, it must continue to evolve. What will the Black Church be going forward? The fight for racial justice and against economic oppression is never ending, but there are other critical, contemporary social issues to be addresses, and spiritual needs to be met.

Can Black Churches make room for more liberal Christian theologies alongside traditional Christian Theology? What is the Black Church’s response to Black Lives Matter? What is the Black Church’s response to environmental justice? Will LGBTQ+ people be welcomed into full fellowship and free expression in Black Churches? What is the Black Church’s response to patriarchy, gender equality, and clergy sexual misconduct and abuse? What is the Black Church’s response to religious xenophobia, and an ever-growing multicultural, multiethnic America?

Black history is American history, and the Black Church is central to that history, but for the Black Church to remain truly relevant, it must be as it has always been, an Evolutionary Church. The Black Church must be a dynamic movement not simply a revered institution.

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Rev. Beverly Spears is an ordained American Baptist minister, teacher and preacher of Evolutionary Christianity.



Spokane Faith & Values

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“I Am Beauty”

A Poem by Bethany 'B.Lyte' Montgomery
Founder & President of Power 2 The Poetry

I will not conform to society’s standards
Therefore, I make a political statement
By not shaving my armpits
And if you think it’s disgusting
Then boo hoo

I am beautiful
And my hairy body contributes
to that beauty
I don’t need large breasts or a juicy booty
I do not need silky smooth legs
My body does not need to be
bottle shaped

I don’t need luscious lips
With painted on coats of red
I don’t need a 22 inch Brazilian weave running down my head
I love my dreads and my hairy legs
I do not cover the scars that are on my face

I have no shame
I know my teeth are stained
I embrace my muffin top
I am content with my cellulite
And my winding River stretch marks
My bushy eyebrows
Are due to my genetics
I am proud of who I am
I give my momma
And my daddy credit

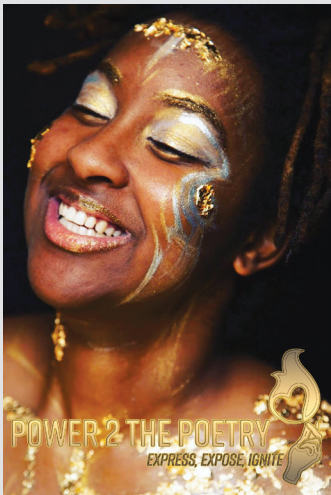
I don’t need to look like a Barbie
To be considered beautiful
And let me tell you little secret
Barbies are made of plastic
And the only way to look like that
Is with lots of help from Dr. Miami (famous plastic surgeon)

We live in a superficial society
Where women are expected
To be something totally unrealistic
The bar that has been set
Is absolutely ridiculous

But guess what I don’t need to reach it
Because I know I am beautiful
And I’m the only one
Who needs to believe it

Therefore, I will not conform to society’s standards
I know I am a Black queen
And nothing is as beautiful as when
I Do Me

I am beauty



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YOU REALIZE YOUR HOUSE IS
TOO BIG?
TOO SMALL?



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The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported in part by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. NWFHA is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication.

Release Date August 2021



"Respect", from MGM Studios, is the true story of legendary music star Aretha Franklin’s journey to find her voice in the midst of the turbulent social and political landscape of 1960s America. Academy Award®-winner Jennifer Hudson (2007, Best Supporting Actress, "Dreamgirls") -- handpicked by Franklin -- headlines an all-star cast that includes Oscar®-winner Forest Whitaker (2007, Best Actor, "The Last King of Scotland"), Mary J. Blige, Marlon Wayans and four-time Emmy®-nominee Tituss Burgess. Originally scheduled to be released in December 2020, the film is not scheduled for release in August 2020. Visit <https://www.mgm.com/movies/respect> for more information.

T'wina Nobles

Continued from Page 5

What would you say to the Black community in terms of why there should be an interest in politics and government or why they should be motivated to participate?

As well meaning as a lot of our allies are, if it's not by us, it's oftentimes not going to be for us. So, as daunting or boring or if there's lack of trust or lack of interest or whatever reasons people have to not want to engage with government, if we are not represented in government then people will make decisions not knowing our needs. I have lots of colleagues who mean well, and want to fight for racial equity and anti-black racism and equality and all of these things, but without the lived experience they're limited. So, we need more folks who are Black, more folks who are women, more folks who are moms, more folks who are working class community members who really know the issues that impact those communities. Its a beautiful thing having intersectionality, but more people like us have to be at the table advocating for our needs. So, I encourage folks to get involved so that we have representation. It's the least that we can do.

Women's History Month: A Tribute

By Stephy Nobles-Beans

As we remember Women’s History Month of times gone by...I am honored for the Black Women who made history each and every day. To the Nubian Queens who poured their lives out as a sacrifice, as a “Black-Print,” (not a Blueprint), to pave the way for all to follow. Lauren Hill said, “I consider myself a crayon...I may not be your favorite color, but one day you’ll need me to complete your picture.”



So here is an Ode, a tribute to all the Black Women who month after month, year after year stepped into a world that was not ready for them, but they parted the waters, stepped onto shore to simply say “I am here.” To the mothers, daughters, sisters, girlfriends, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, I pay homage to you.

To the ancestors who stepped onto shores of unfamiliar territory, enslaved and shackled, you blanketed the earth with your royalty, your strength, your resilience, you carried the burdens of so much, and I must say you carried it well. I pay homage to you.

To the melanin women, copper, ginger, hazelnut brown, red boned, darker than hue, richer than chocolate, purple as the night, and black as the night skies, I pay homage to you.

History could not have been made without you. Your contributions are endless, from inventions, science, medicine, politics, and education. Books can never hold what you have given to this world. I pay homage to you.

The Saga shall continue, for you have given to us the epic stories for us to hold close to our hearts. You have yarned a history that can never be unwoven, a legacy for us to be proud of. We shall be your storytellers, and we will continue to write the narratives of the great women that you are...For this is a history that “will’ be repeated and repeated until the ends of time. I pay homage to you.

Stephy Nobles-Beans is an educator, professor, self-published writer, poet, and national speaker. ~SNB Motivates (empowerment60@gmail.com)

The Battle is Within



By Des'ree and Deja Henry

Growing up in a predominantly white city as Black girls made it difficult for us to feel loved. From trying to find beauty products for our curly hair, to having all white teachers throughout our public school years, our love wasn't well represented. Not only that, but also feeling uncomfortable with our bodies because we were shaped differently from the white girls. Our long curly hair and brown skin made us feel completely alone in a place we considered to be our home. But as twin sisters, and best friends, we always had each other and supported one another whenever one of us was feeling down.

Today, we are students attending Eastern Washington University and majoring in Sociology and Africana Studies. We decided to take a mass incarceration class this Winter quarter. In this course, we were fortunate to attend an anti-oppression and mass incarceration workshop carried out by the Freedom Project. Their core values are accountability, connection, empathy and equity. They see a society without prisons and where people can heal and grow. The Freedom Project has workshops for people to learn more about how oppression affects us and society. As well as how prisons are used as a tool to continue to oppress African Americans. This workshop was like nothing we have ever experienced and has shown us what it means to heal.

Hearing the stories of Jermaine Williams, Orlando Ames and David Heppard made the biggest impact on us. Time is something that cannot be not taken back, and the amount of time they lost due to being in prison

is something that really devastated us the most. Something that David Heppard, the Executive Director of Freedom Project, said that really resonated with us was "that people don't change, they heal".

As young Black women we were taught to not show our emotions. To suppress any negative feeling because in order to be strong you have to look strong. In order to survive in this world you have to hold your head up high and keep pushing forward. However, we learned that healing is revealing the parts of you that are hurt, and learning how to not let those traumas stop you from being your authentic self. When we are vulnerable and express our emotions, it allows us to be honest and gives us the space to grow. The reason we didn't feel loved for the majority of our lives was because we were suppressing our emotions and traumas that made us feel like we were not enough. In other words, we prevented ourselves from feeling any emotion and therefore lost the ability to truly love ourselves.

The Freedom Project Workshop is not like your ordinary workshop. We opened up the beginning of the workshop with a meditation. Allowing us to return to center and have an open mindset. This quick exercise made us feel like we were free from our thoughts and allowed us to be truly present in the moment. Feelings such as fear, worry and doubt were no longer present and made the space feel more accepting. This meditation opened our eyes to how we are all not so different, and in many ways, how we are the same. Labels and categories separate us from one another. And when we consciously make a space that is accepting and understanding, this allows us to be our authentic selves. Focusing on ourselves pushed us to be vulnerable, something neither one of us liked to openly express. But as we continued through the workshop and stopped running from our feelings, the easier loving ourselves became.

A workshop activity that we enjoyed was the Power Flower exercise. This activity showed us that power is from within and the rankings and social identities that people place onto us does not define who we are. This part of the workshop made us feel empowered and confident in who we are because even though most of our petals were not part of the dominant culture, we were still flowers. Our society is built off inequality; therefore, social categories and labels hinder our ability to grow. But despite the obstacles we face, we are not incapable of growing. When we learn to reconnect with who we are, society's limitations and control no longer affect us. James Baldwin once said that "people invent



Deja Henry

categories in order to feel safe". We as young Black women do not have to stay constricted to society's norms and labels in order for others to feel safe around us. The only responsibility we have to ourselves is to be the person we are meant to be.

Overall, it was beneficial and an honor to be a part of the workshop. Mass incarceration and racism may not directly impact everyone, but it is still affecting our society as a whole. This is contributing to the disproportionate incarceration of African Americans. The Mass incarceration crisis highlights the African American male perspective and often neglects the experiences of Black women. This prevents Black women from feeling acknowledged or cared for because their experiences are often ignored in the public eye. As Black women who experience far more oppression and discrimination than our white counterparts, it's liberating to know that our traumas are what make us resilient. That despite the constant obstacles and systems of oppression that fail to help us, we have the power to be successful and uplift others to create a better world.

We have realized that self love is a process and is something that cannot be obtained overnight. However, we can start learning how to love the parts of us that society fails to fulfill. As the legendary Toni Morrison once said, "love is never any better than the lover". Afterall, the battle is not fought from the outside, but within ourselves.

For information contact Jermaine Williams at jermaine@freedomprojectwa.org or visit <https://freedomprojectwa.org>.



Des'ree Henry

Do You Know a Young Person Interested in Social Change? Grow Workshop Series with PJALS Youth Organizers

You're invited to the new Peace and Justice Action League series, GROW: Grassroots Organizing Workshops!

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane engages everyday people to build a just and nonviolent world through community organizing and leadership development for human rights, economic justice, and peace: majorly through youth engagement, cultivating youth leadership and long-term involvement.

Since the onset of the pandemic last March, the Peace and Justice Action League has committed to an entirely virtual method of community organizing. PJALS is excited to announce that with the online format youth organizers Sarah & Ivy will be bringing engaging content to an intergenerational platform with interactive workshops on grassroots organizing and timely methods of engagement



such as power-mapping, recruitment, public speaking, campaign planning, self-care, and more!

The workshops will be the fourth Wednesday of every month through

July and will be recorded and available via registration links at 'peace-justice.org'.

All ages and experience levels are welcome!

Over the past months, youth across the nation have stepped up to the forefront of social movements on a myriad of topics from climate change, to gun reform, to racial justice.

Locally, the Peace and Justice Action League continues to grow a young Spokane coalition of social justice leaders through YALP, the 'Young Activist Leaders Program'. YALP is a community space for young change minded individuals to learn grassroots organizing strategies, share and collaborate on projects, and both develop as activists for the future and realize their potential today.

You can find all new series workshop titles and descriptions at peacejustice.org under 'Webinar Wednesdays' along with their sign up links!

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Dr. Ebony Hilton Leads Call for ‘Secretary of Equity’

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National
Correspondent, @StacyBrownMedia

(Reprinted from blackpressusa.com)

An honest and comprehensive reckoning with America’s racial history and enacting solutions to address it is perhaps the transcendent issue of our time, argues Janet Murguia, the president of UnidosUS, a D.C.-based advocacy organization.

“The path forward may be difficult, complicated, and contested, but it is essential to pursue,” Murguia remarked in a news release where she and other advocates form the Racial Equity Anchor Collaborative.

The collaborative is the foremost diverse coalition of national, racial justice, and civil rights organizations representing and serving more than 53 million people in the U.S.

The group calls on President Joe Biden to create an office within the White House to coordinate efforts to reduce racial inequality in all its forms.

Shortly after his Jan. 20 swearing-in, President Biden issued an executive order to advance equity and support for underserved communities.

The President had pledged to do his part in the fight against systemic racism in America, and his executive order charges all federal agencies with reviewing equity in their programs and actions.



President Biden has demanded that the Office of Management and Budget analyze whether federal dollars are equitably distributed in communities of color. The coalition argues that the new administration also should establish a White House Office

on Racial Equity and Inclusion. The office would coordinate the full range of federal agency efforts to advance racial equity, centered on the administration’s promise to confront systemic racism and heal the “soul of our nation.”

Murguia declared that creating such office is “a crucial first step toward ensuring that our country lives up to its core shared value of equal opportunity for all Americans.”

The coalition is not alone in pushing the Biden administration to create an office responsible for racial equity.

Dr. Ebony Hilton, the medical director and co-founder of GoodStock Consulting, LLC, and an anesthesiologist and critical care physician at the University of Virginia, has started a change.org petition for the Biden administration to create and appoint a “Secretary of Equity.”

Comparable to a Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer of an organization, the Secretary of Equity would serve as a catalyst to initiate equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) assessments and policies while leveraging best practices and resources across various federal agencies, Dr. Hilton wrote in a letter on behalf of GoodStock Consulting.

“The vision of the position is to use objective information and analytics to create and support a culture of inclusion and belonging where individuals from all diversity dimensions, racial and ethnic identities, ages, nationalities, social and economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, religious, political and ideological perspectives, and physical and mental abilities, are able to thrive and be actively engaged,” her letter continued.

Continued on Page 21



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Covid-19 Small Business and Nonprofit Legal Clinic

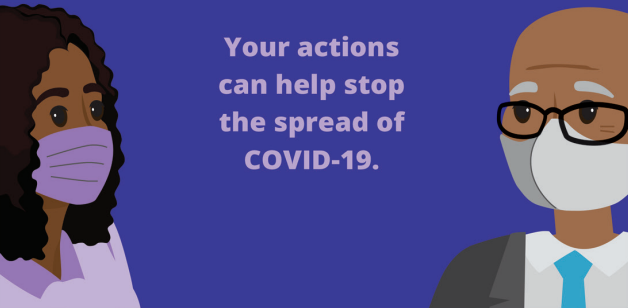
Communities Rise offers free 60-minute legal clinic consultations by phone or video conference for small businesses and nonprofits with 50 or less employees who have been negatively impacted by Covid-19.

We will only be giving general legal advice and will not be filling out application forms for Covid-19 relief programs.

For intake form: <https://communities-rise.org/covid-19-resources/legal-inquiry>

Free resources: <https://www.smallbizhelpwa.com/resources>

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19.



Your actions can help stop the spread of COVID-19.

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Limit close contact to a small group of people and avoid crowds.

Wear a mask

Use a face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.

Stay six feet apart

Physically distance from people who don't live in your household.

Wash your hands

Wash for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

Stay home if you're sick

Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms of COVID-19.

Get tested

Get tested if you have symptoms or were exposed to COVID-19.

coronavirus.wa.gov

When should I get tested for COVID-19?

Get tested if you are showing symptoms or have been near someone else who tested positive. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.



COVID-19 symptoms may include:

- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat

What if I don't have symptoms?

Even if you aren't showing symptoms, you can still transmit the virus to others! Self-isolate until you know your results.

Where do I get tested?



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Community clinics, health centers and pharmacies



Drive thru and walk-up testing sites

Is the vaccine safe? Should I get it?

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Are you a tenant facing eviction, or a property owner dealing with non-payment of rent?

If you live in **Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, or Thurston County**, find out how the **Eviction Resolution Program** can help you.

About the Program

The "Eviction Resolution Program" (ERP) allows tenants and landlords to meet with an impartial mediator before an eviction lawsuit is filed. The ERP is free to the tenant and landlord.

Participating in the Program

After the state eviction moratorium ends:

- Landlords must give tenants the option to participate in the ERP before the landlord can file an eviction lawsuit in court.
- Tenants may choose whether or not to participate in the ERP.
- If a tenant chooses to participate, the landlord must participate.
- The tenant has a right to be represented by a lawyer. A lawyer may be provided free of charge.

About the Process

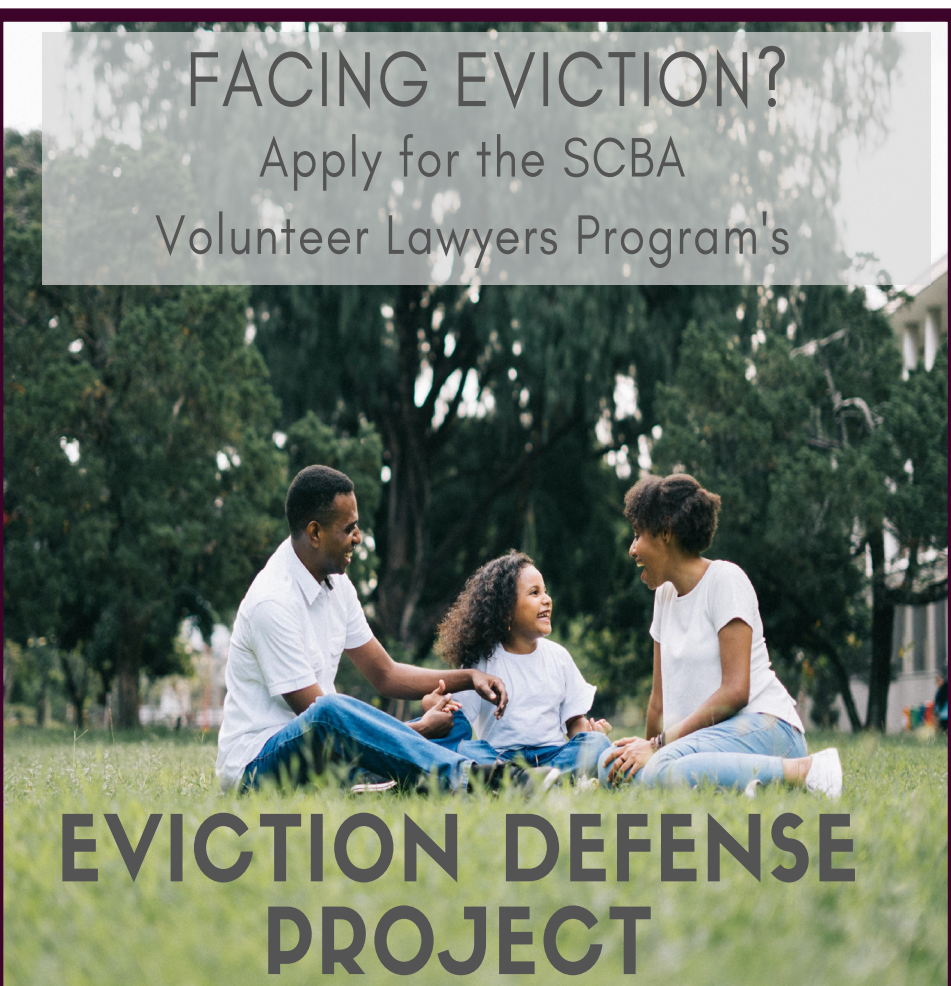
- A neutral third party early resolution specialist (ERS) with a Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) facilitates the ERP process.
- The ERS will try to connect tenants to any available rental assistance.
- If the tenant does not participate in the ERP, or if the ERP is unsuccessful, the landlord may file an eviction lawsuit. The tenant may ask a lawyer for help defending them in an eviction lawsuit. There are free Eviction Defense Clinics and Housing Justice Projects in each of these counties.





For more information www.courts.wa.gov/EvictionResolutionProgram

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"The pandemic has been tough, especially for black and brown communities who have been hit especially hard by unemployment and health issues. If you are facing eviction, please contact the VLP for help today!"

- Natasha Hill, Spokane Attorney

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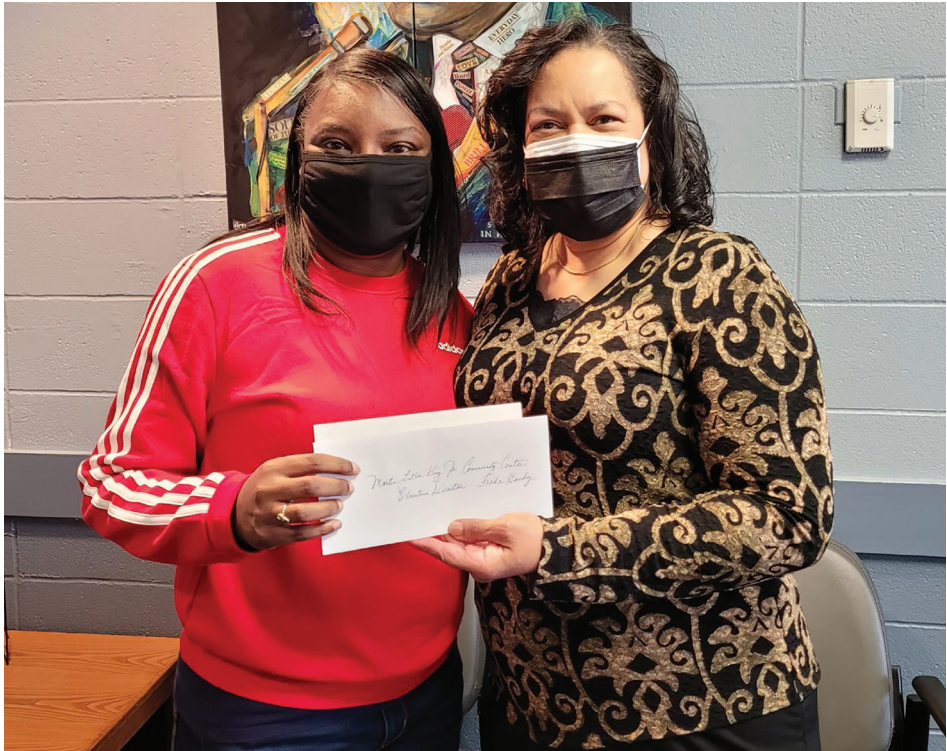
The Carl Maxey Center is excited to share Spokane's Black Business Directory at www.BlackSpokane.com. The businesses are listed in alphabetical order and searchable by category.

This is just the beginning. Our goal is to eventually make this a comprehensive snapshot of Black Spokane, including Black businesses, organizations, professionals, churches and events.

If you are an African American professional or a business that is at least 51% Black owned and would like to be included in the directory, please contact the Carl Maxey Center at carlmaxeycenter@gmail.com.

To add your business call 509-795-1886.

MLK Center Receives Support from Inland Imaging



Faith Washington presented a check in the amount of \$500 to Freda Gandy, Executive Director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center located at the East Central Community Center. The check was presented during Black History month on behalf of Inland Imaging's newly created, employee driven, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC).

The Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center is a non-profit, community- based social service center located in East Central Spokane, one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Spokane County. The Center was created over 40 years ago as a community response to a community need. Living out the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr, the Center today is a regionally recognized community social service center providing comprehensive education, social services and cultural enrichment programs for children and families. For more information or to make a donation visit: <https://mlkspokane.org>.



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President Biden’s Racial Equity Initiative: Moving Marginalized Communities Toward America’s Bounty

By Charlene Crowell



(TriceEdneyWire.com) - On January 26, President Joe Biden took steps to bring the nation towards the long-promised, but never realized, pledge of racial justice. Four executive orders signed that day make clear that the new Administration will take meaningful and corrective actions.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was directed to take steps necessary to redress racially discriminatory federal housing policies that have contributed to wealth inequality for generations. Similarly, the Department of Justice (DOJ) was ordered to end its use of private prisons. The whole of federal government also recommitted to respect Tribal sovereignty and strengthen the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the United States and Tribal Nations. Finally, President Biden committed to combatting xenophobia against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

“We have never fully lived up to the founding principles of this nation, to state the obvious, that all people are created equal and have a right to be treated equally throughout their lives,” said Biden. “And it’s time to act now, not only because it’s the right thing to do, but because if we do, we’ll all be better off for it.”

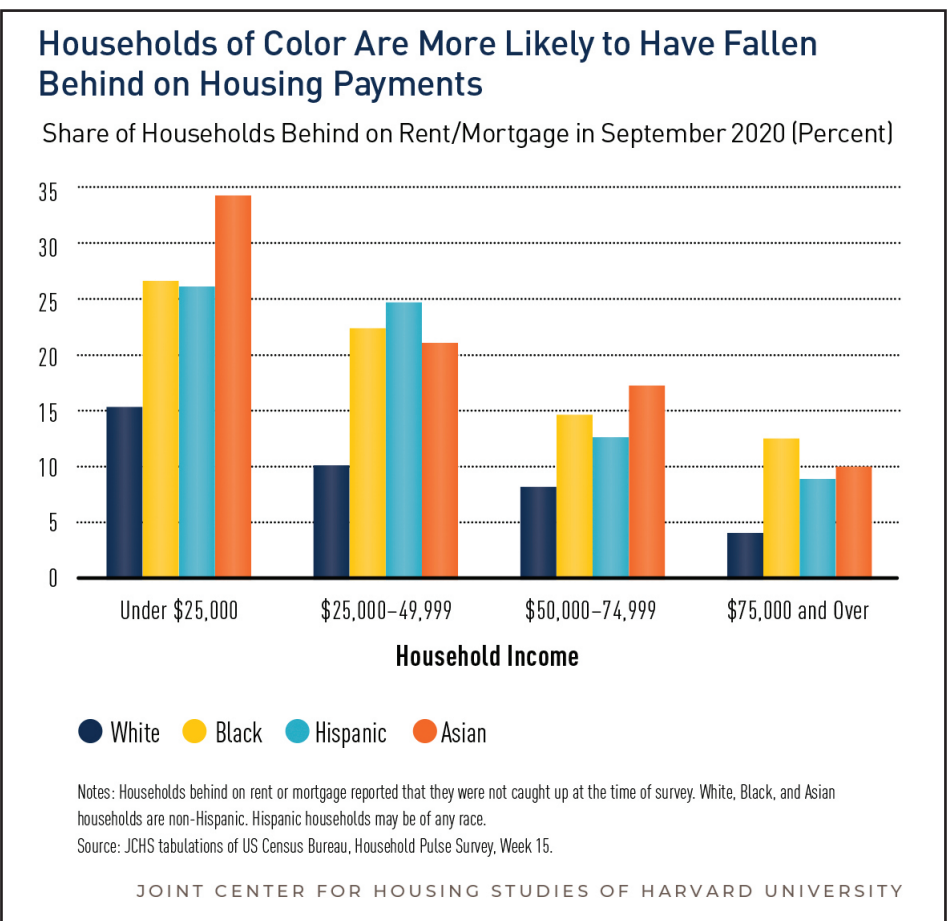
“Yes, we need criminal justice reform,” he continued, “but that isn’t nearly enough. We need to open the promise of America to every American. And that means we need to make the issue of racial equity not just an issue for any one department of government; it has to be the business of the whole of government.”

Responsibility for implementation and oversight will rest with the White House’s Domestic Policy Council, led by Director Susan Rice, a former Obama Administration appointee who served as National Security Advisor and U.S. Representative to the United Nations and a Black woman..

Millions of marginalized people – many who are Black and Latino -- face imminent financial disaster. When people are poor, they face compounding struggles – ranging from food insecurity, to the threat of losing utilities, and the risk of homelessness – and hardships seemingly multiply each day. During this still-raging pandemic, a new kind of poor – those who were formerly gainfully employed -- are learning the harsh realities of how hard life becomes when adequate income and decent health insurance are no longer available.

Regardless of income – or the lack thereof – every family still needs a home, one that provides shelter and sustenance. As much as America needs vaccinations from the pandemic, its people need and have a right to housing.

In 2020, to address this newly urgent need, a focused and collaborative national policy endeavor began, called the Housing Playbook Project. The effort was led by Community Change, a nonprofit with the mission of changing the policies and institutions that impact the lives of low-income people – particularly those of color – with support from the Ford Foundation. The sum of the project’s insights and recommendations specific to housing challenges



were contained in its report released on January 25th.

Entitled A New Deal for Housing for Housing Justice: A Playbook for the Biden Administration, it is a road map to achieving housing justice that details bold federal actions that can effectively respond to the housing crisis and charts a path for leveraging policymaking to build power in the nation’s most neglected communities.

“We face a housing affordability crisis, an evictions crisis, and a homelessness crisis like this nation has never seen,” noted Julian Castro, project co-chair and former HUD Secretary and San Antonio Mayor. “The Housing Playbook outlines a bold and ambitious blueprint to tackle these crises head-on, with housing justice and racial equity at the forefront. This is how we ensure housing is not just a commodity, but a basic need and a human right granted to every single American.”

“Regardless of where we come from, what we do for work, how we identify or whether we’ve been caught up in our unjust criminal system, everyone deserves a roof over their head,” added Community Change President Dorian Warren. “The Biden-Harris Administration has signaled that they would make racial justice and equity in COVID-19 relief and long-term economic policy a priority. Safe and reliable housing is the cornerstone to economic security. This proposal is a blueprint for how to help move the country toward that vision.”

The report’s seven specific policy recommendations include:

Provide COVID-19 federal relief financial assistance to renters on the verge of eviction and homeowners in danger of foreclosure.

Additionally, the report calls for the relief package to **award community control of foreclosed and abandoned properties** – a nagging blight in neighborhoods of color since the foreclosure crisis;

Create a renter’s tax credit for consumers who pay more than 30% of their income on housing, thereby affording renters a comparable tax break to that of homeowners;

Enact a Presidential Commission on Reparations comprised of lawmakers and diverse perspectives of community organizations and advocates who would together formulate 10-year goals to undo the legacy of anti-Black federal housing policy, establish long-term household, community, regional, and national metrics to track success in achieving the goals;

Guarantee all low-income families a home by passing legislation to make housing choice vouchers an entitlement for eligible families.

Create 500,000 new vouchers for families with children under age six.

The urgency of America’s housing needs during the pandemic are poignantly an-

alyzed in the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies’ (JCHS)State of the Nation’s Housing 2020, an annual report that analyzes the changes and challenges in American housing.

As of last September, the Black-White homeownership gap stood at 31%, according to the annual report. Additionally, 49% of renters and 36% of homeowners experienced employment income loss between March and September of last year. Those marketplace dynamics contributed to late rental payments that also reflected racial disparities affecting 10% of Whites, but 23% of Blacks and 20% of Latinos.

The JCHS report also found that from 2019 to 2020, the total number of homeless people grew in part because 17,000 more people needed shelter. In all, America’s homeless that could be measured came in at 568,000 people.

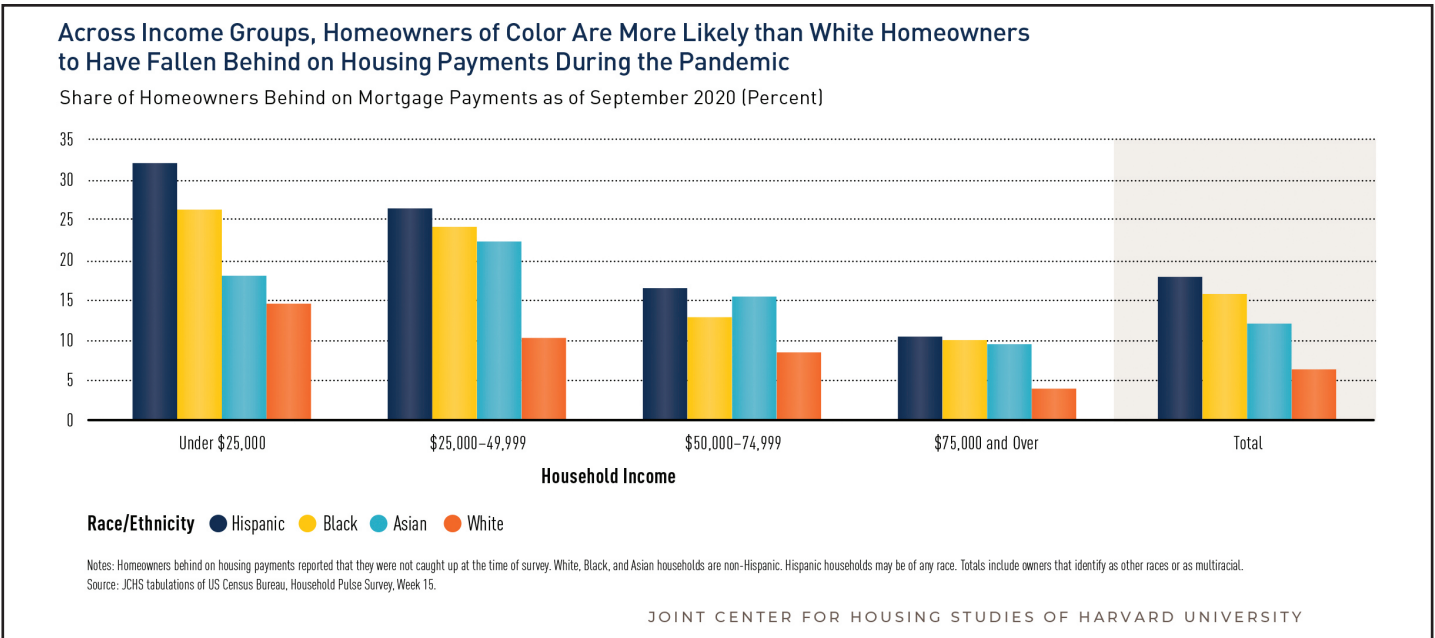
“Widespread calls for racial justice have pointed out the high degree of residential segregation and economic inequality that still exists in the US,” says Daniel McCue, a JCHS Senior Research Associate. “In fact, the sharp racial disparities in housing are both a cause and a consequence of other social inequalities.”

For people of color, the combination of concentrated poverty and under-representation in higher income areas leads to nearly two-thirds of poor Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans living in communities with poverty rates above 20% -- nearly twice that of the share of poor Whites. They also have far higher cost-burden housing rates and a disproportionately large share of the nation’s homeless.

For Nikitra Bailey, Executive Vice President of the Center for Responsible Lending, President Biden’s Racial Equity Initiative is “a critical first step by his Administration to address injustices that are holding our country back” and “will help to move the nation closer to its ideals and center solutions to discrimination that hinder opportunity, allowing marginalized communities to move closer to equal justice under law.”

“Prioritizing racial equity is needed at the outset, and fully implementing the Fair Housing Act of 1968 as part of a comprehensive racial equity agenda is essential to expanding opportunity for all Americans,” she added. “These actions give Black and Brown families an opportunity to live free of discrimination and participate fully in the economy.

Charlene Crowell is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.



Secretary of Equity

Continued from Page 15

The importance of the position is underscored by Covid-19 statistics, which show that African Americans are disproportionately affected by the virus. Data also show that access to the vaccine is eluding the Black community.

According to statistics compiled by the independent nonprofit KFF, which focuses on national health issues, as of January 19, 2021, over 12 million COVID-19 vaccines had been administered across the country.

To date, race and ethnicity vaccination patterns appear to be at odds with who the virus has affected the most, KFF reported.

Based on vaccinations with known race/ethnicity, the share of vaccinations among Black people is smaller than their share of cases in all 16 reporting states and smaller than their share of deaths in 15 states.

For example, in Mississippi, Black people account for 15 percent of vaccinations, compared to 38 percent of cases and 42 percent of deaths, and, in Delaware, 8 percent of vaccinations have been received by Black people, while they make up nearly a quarter of cases (24 percent) and deaths (23 percent).

In Pennsylvania, just 3 percent of those vaccinated are Black.

“As vaccine distribution continues, ensuring racial equity will be important for mitigating the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on people of color, preventing widening health disparities, and achieving broad population immunity,” KFF officials wrote.

Dr. Hilton noted further that the Secretary of Equity would provide strategic and

programmatic leadership for diversity and inclusion initiatives that advance diversity as a critical component of federal and local policies.

“This position will lead a team of Equity Officers that sit within these targeted federal agencies to assess the existing and potential disparities specific to that agency and its respective industries – greater than racial disparities and within all diversity dimensions,” Dr. Hilton noted.

“As mentioned, this position would work across various agencies with specific interest and collaborative partnerships with the agencies that directly impact the social determinants of health like the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Treasury, the Small Business Administration and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.”

Regarding establishing a White House Office on Racial Equity and Inclusion, the National Urban League President Marc Morial also noted his support.

“Even before 2020 exposed our pandemic of a deadly triple disease and economic hardship and racial unrest, America was a nation that still had only begun to grapple with the legacy of white supremacy,” Morial stated.

“Establishing a White House Office on Racial Equity and Inclusion is our best hope of nurturing that awakening and achieving our true potential.”

Watch Dr. Ebony Hilton’s interview with the Black Press at Facebook.com/BlackPressUSA, Twitter: @BlackPressUSA, and YouTube.com/BlackPressUSATV.



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02-003-21

Canabis VP Leads Program to Help Blacks With Previous Marijuana Convictions Become Entrepreneurs in the Industry



Blacknews.com — Khadijah Tribble is fighting hard for returning citizens with marijuana convictions. As Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility at Curaleaf, a leading medical and wellness cannabis operator, she is using her experience in government relations to help create equitable cannabis regulations that will give returning citizens a new start in the multi-billion dollar industry.

The harm caused to the Black community through the criminalization of cannabis must be acknowledged in order to set a new path forward. One out of every four individuals who have a marijuana conviction live above the poverty line. That means three out of four, or 75% of those individuals, are living in abject poverty.

This story is common for many Americans, especially for Black and Brown individuals who have become victims of the “War on Drugs.” In cities where marijuana is now legal, individuals who have been convicted of a marijuana offense, cannot invest, own, or operate a marijuana dispensary, let alone work in one. They have the connections, the capacity, and the competence to open a dispensary, but in jurisdictions across this country, they are denied a second chance.

Rooted in Good (RIG), a program that Khadijah is heading at Curaleaf, is focused on diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I), social equity, and sustainability. RIG was developed to consider the holistic health of each of the communities in which it serves around the country. This includes patients, employees, and neighbors, as well as the environments we impact, both locally and globally. The focus of its social equity initiative is on activating programs that foster repairing social harms and removing systematic barriers for people from communities most harmed by the War on Drugs and institutional oppression.

Learn more at <https://curaleaf.com/social-responsibility>

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HEALTH & MEDICINE

Doctor Susan Moore, An African American Physician, Chronicles the Racist Medical Care that Led to Her Death

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA Newswire Senior National
Correspondent @StacyBrownMedia

(EDITOR'S NOTE: You can make a donation to the GoFundMe campaign set up for Dr. Moore's funeral costs and expenses for her 19-year-old son and elderly parents. As of this writing, the campaign has raised more than \$162,000.)

(blackpressusa.com) The disparities in health care treatment for African Americans extend not only to the millions of underserved patients in U.S. hospitals and medical facilities but also, sadly, to frontline healthcare professionals.

Just weeks after Dr. Susan Moore, an African American physician, posted a video that showed the world how her doctor, who is White, downplayed her complaints of pain and discomfort, she died of complications from COVID-19.

Many say that Moore's plight illustrates the healthcare industry's institutional biases and inherent systemic racism. A pattern of operation, care and treatment that has only exacerbated the disproportionate susceptibility to the virus faced by African Americans. Others are skeptical of both of the newly approved vaccines.

“Dr. Susan Moore knew all the fancy terms and treatment nuances when she was struggling with COVID-19 in the hospital.



Yet, the doctor treating her was dismissive, and it felt to her like only one thing mattered to him: That she was Black. Dr. Moore died Sunday [December 20],” New York Times Journalist John Eligon wrote on Twitter.

Eligon wasn't the only person to express outrage.

“Today, I want to speak out on behalf of a fellow Black woman physician, Dr. Susan Moore, not to let our stories go unheard,” Dr. Omolara Uwemedimo of Long Island Jewish Hospital in New York stated.

“Sadly, while so many have fallen victim, her story is marred by systemic racism, even as a doctor.”

Indeed, in her last moments, Dr. Moore had complained about her treatment.

“He made me feel like a drug addict,” she said of the physician who downplayed her complaints of pain and suggested she be discharged from the hospital.

Dr. Moore was admitted to the Indiana University North Hospital in Carmel, Indiana.

In a December 4 Facebook video, Dr. Moore offered her complaints to the public.

She said that she only received medication after tests proved her initial complaints upon arriving at the hospital.

"I put forth, and I maintain, if I was White, I wouldn't have to go through that," Moore said in her video after explaining that her doctor only agreed to give her pain medication after a CT scan revealed new pulmonary infiltrates.

“And that man never came back and apologized.”

Dr. Moore continued:

"I don't trust this hospital, and I'm asking to be transferred. These people wanted to send me home with new pulmonary infiltrates and all kinds of lymphadenopathy in my neck.

"This is how Black people get killed. When you send them home, and they don't know how to fight for themselves. I have to talk to somebody, maybe the media, somebody, to let people know how I'm being treated up in this place."

Dr. Moore updated her post later, noting that she had spoken to the hospital's healthcare system's chief medical officer, and her pain was finally being "properly managed." She said that the CMO "stated that there will be some diversity



training” and that they were “working on” getting an apology from her doctor.

After her discharge, Dr. Moore shared an update.

"I was home for less than 12 hours," Dr. Moore wrote.

“Spiked a temperature of 103, and my blood pressure plummeted to 80/60 with a heart rate of 132. I’m back in the hospital, a different hospital Saint Vincent Carmel.”

She continued:

“Those people were trying to kill me. Clearly, everyone has to agree they discharged me way too soon. They are now treating me for bacterial pneumonia as well as COVID pneumonia. I am getting very compassionate care. They are offering me pain medicine.”

In her final update, Dr. Moore said she was being transferred to the ICU and was on a BiPAP machine to help her breathe.

“Dr. Susan Moore, a physician, residing in Indianapolis, experienced an untimely death,” the GoFundMe campaign states. “She had been fighting COVID for the past few weeks. She leaves a son who is 19 years old and her parents, both of which have dementia. The son is dealing with both situations at this time and is in good spirits.”

“Susan was a phenomenal doctor,” the campaign added. “She loved practicing medicine, she loved being a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she loved helping people, and she was unapologetic about it.”

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March 20, 2021: National Kick Butts Day

COVID-19 has resulted in disproportionate illness and death within communities of color throughout the United States. Nationally, the African American community is among those experiencing significantly higher rates of cases, death, and hospitalizations associated with COVID-19. Supporting a healthier lifestyle by quitting smoking and vaping is one way to avoid severe illness due to COVID-19.

Recent evidence shows that stopping vaping has many benefits. National Kick Butts Day, March 20, 2021, is an opportune time to begin the journey to stop smoking or vaping. The nicotine in tobacco and vapor products is very addictive, so it usually takes people several attempts to quit. Quitting is difficult, and there is help.

- Many insurances cover nicotine replacement therapies such as patch, gum and tobacco cessation counseling. Ask your doctor for a referral.
- The QuitLine is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW for people with or without insurance.

“Tobacco companies have always targeted African Americans.”

- Gene, 5 years quit

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American community who use some tobacco products (e.g. cigarettes, cigarillos, etc.) has steadily decreased over the last 10 years, the use of vapor products (e.g. e-cigarettes, JUUL, PAX, etc.) increased. African American youth are three times more likely to use a vapor product than any other type of tobacco product.

Now is a great time to talk to youth about the dangers of vaping, how to quit, or how to keep them from starting. For advice on how to start the conversation, visit www.starttalkingnow.org

If you or someone you love uses tobacco or vapor products and would like to make a quit attempt, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or talk to your healthcare provider.

National Kick Butts Day is a national movement against Big Tobacco and has been held annually since 1996. It is a day of activism that empowers youth leaders, teachers, and health advocates to speak out and organize events that raise awareness in their communities about the problems associated with tobacco use.

- Washingtonians can now text READY to 200-400 to register for free phone-based counseling, as well as text- and web-based cessation support.
 - Locally, Inland Northwest Health Services offers Quit for Good, a four-week class that can be attended in person or online. Participants receive patches and gum if it is not covered by insurance.
 - New, free quit apps are available for quitting smoking, vaping and other forms of tobacco use at www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Tobacco/HowtoQuit.
 - Other cessation resources can be found at the Spokane Regional Health District’s www.donemyway.org/cessationsheet.
- It is well documented that African Americans are one of the groups most targeted and impacted by tobacco companies and their products. While the number of youth in the African

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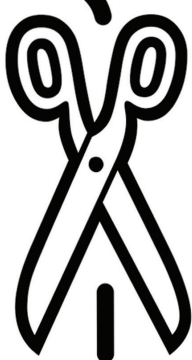
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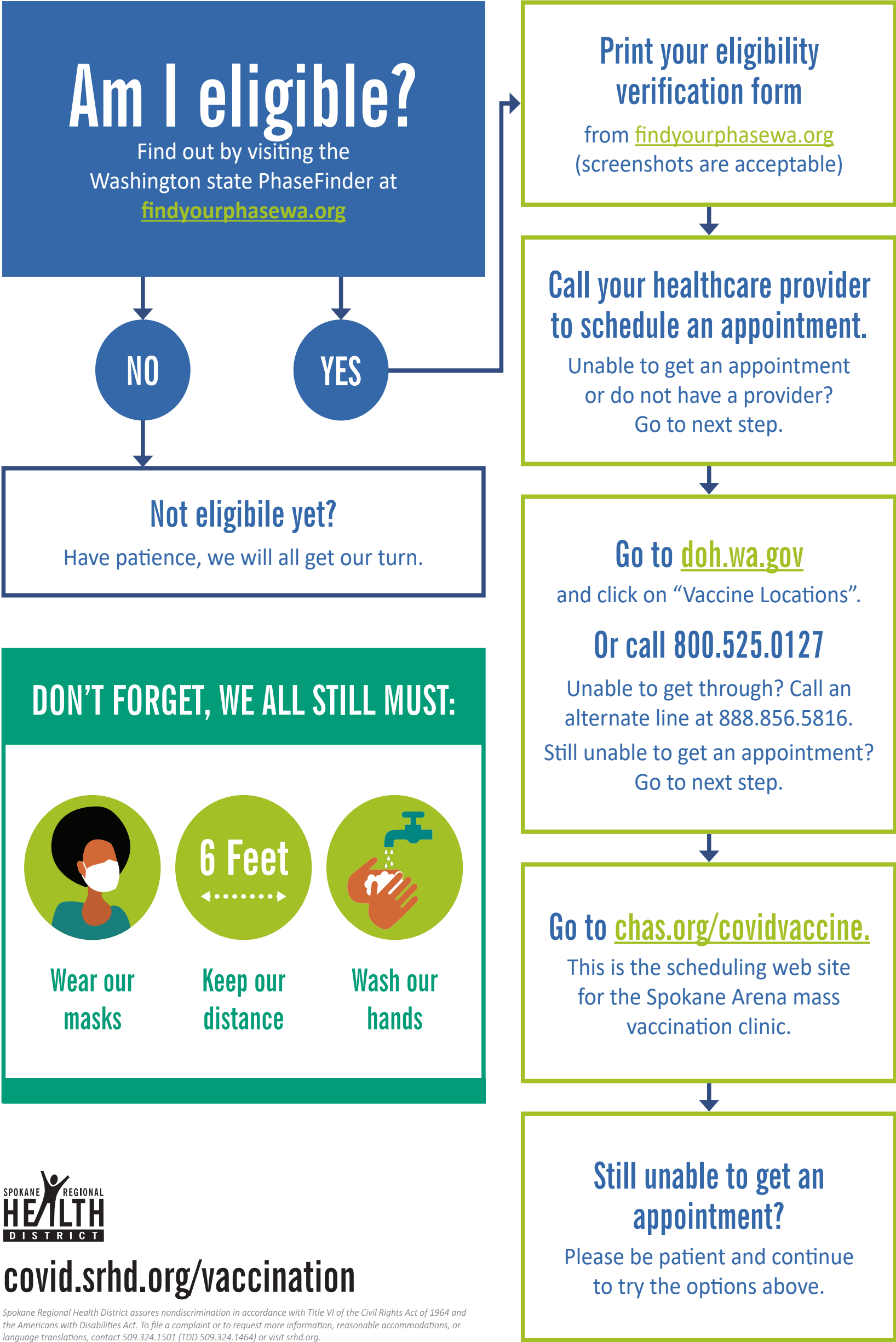
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COVID-19

VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

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OUR VOICES

No, We Won't Be 'Ladylike'

By India Sylvester

“Be polite.” “Watch your tone.” “That’s not very ladylike.” These are words of advice I’ve received over the course of my life, and I’m not interested in hearing them anymore.

Why is it that when women speak up or passionately state their position on a topic they are asked to “tone it down”? When I consider the women who have made their mark on history, I cringe to think about how the outcomes may have been different had they watched their tone.

For example, the great poet Maya Angelou became mute for almost five years as a child, but when she found and used her voice, I learned that I am a “Phenomenal Woman.”

What if Rosa Parks had been “polite” and given up her seat on the bus? We may have delayed the start of one of the biggest events during the Civil Rights Movement, the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Being “ladylike” meant something different to Indira Gandhi, the first woman to serve as India’s Prime Minister. She said, “To be liberated, a woman must feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man but in the context of her own capacity and her personality.”

Madeleine Albright didn’t watch her tone when she became the first woman to serve as Secretary of State. In an interview later in her career she said, “It took me quite a



long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.”

Thankfully, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wasn’t concerned with being polite as a leader of the women’s rights movement in the U.S. during the mid to late 1800s.

I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize Kamala Harris, the first woman to serve as Vice President of the United States. Attention tone police: take a seat. A role such as this is far too important to be held by someone unwilling

to speak her mind with the passion and emotion necessary to make an impact.

These are only a few examples of women who have refused to follow the advice, or in some cases the directive, from people attempting to dictate how they should speak and behave. Without these women and countless others, would there be a Women’s History Month? What would we have to celebrate? What major accomplishments would have been made by polite, “ladylike” women who watched their tone?

These courageous women have made it possible for me to write this piece without fear or concern of reproach. I won’t, we won’t, be silent. I have been, we have been, liberated. And I am, we are, phenomenal women.

I leave you with a piece of advice that I practice: Don’t be afraid to be your authentic self, to speak with conviction, or to stand up for what you believe is right.

In the words of the late John Lewis, “Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.” After all, these women have proven that it doesn’t get any more ladylike than that.

India Sylvester is the Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion at Lumen Technologies. Lumen is an enterprise technology platform that enables companies to capitalize on emerging applications and power the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR). (lumen.com)

When the Political is Personal & Painful: Surviving a Toxic Four Years

By Dr. Shari Clarke



We’ve seen the country’s ugly truth revealed. The mask has been removed, not the mask that is worn to protect you from Covid-19, but the entire face mask that has provided cover to hide racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and other exclusionary acts. It’s the mask when removed that revealed a Pandora’s box of hurt.

I am befuddled by the intense dislike secretly harbored against people who are different from each other. I cringe to acknowledge this sad reality. I want desperately to believe that all Americans have moved beyond the centuries of hate and discrimination. However, reality proves otherwise.

Racism has always been around in the atmosphere I inhabit but not directly impacting multiple aspects of my life daily, so intensely causing fear, apprehension, and dread.

The past four years have been challenging. I felt the pressures of dark cloying leadership that looks at me and people who look like me with disdain. I witnessed this evil manifested in the attempts to suppress our votes. I am aware of a documented history that would prohibit me from residing in his luxury apartment complex or entry into his buildings and definitely not to grace his lobby with my chocolate brown skin. We’re not allowed there-it’s a skin color thing you know.

This leadership that emboldened white supremacist groups, coveted ownership of every space, held strong to the domination of whiteness, amplified the malevolent voices of the Proud Boys, Boogaloo Bois, and complimented people with really good DNA ,who by the way only reside in Minnesota, magnified all forms of hate. He was driven to characterize diversity as unwanted, unnecessary, unacceptable-some form of otherness.

The cleverly written executive orders to ban training on diversity, critical race theory and white privilege, because this type of training would make many uncomfortable and labeled America (unfairly) as a racist country, according to a self-proclaimed wealthy white privileged man.

We have lived with the representation of the modern-day slave owner as he and his minions separated families at the border, locked children in cages, instituted a travel ban on Muslims, boldly pronounced African countries as shitholes, and treated women as inferior beings who you can just grab by the ... relegating women to objects, whose bodies you could invade simply because-well you can.

The dark clouds from the past four years are just beginning to lift to free us from the rage of evil that has dominated unrelenting years of racist misery. Let me be clear, every action he made was to disenfranchise multicultural people and of course to diminish President Obama (it didn’t work)!

The sinisteress is leaving after unparalleled tragic losses from a pandemic in which he failed to provide leadership, divided a country based on race, political affiliation, and the haves and have nots, taunted people with disabilities, alienated our allies, and talked a loud tough boisterous game devoid of substance.

The ominous four years of his leadership are over, for now, the remnants of experiencing exclusion, evil, and pure racism are slowly seeping out of my being, cleansing every pore from the wrath of hate.

My promise to you within my small sphere is to use my voice and words to help bring us together. To focus on the big picture-the heart of humanity, the greater good in us all. My vision is laser-focused on being a positive force, enhancing multiple voices & views that reflect our great nation and the beauty of diversity!

Dr. Shari Clarke is a nationally award winning diversity educator and highly sought after speaker located in Spokane. Her blog "Diverse Reflections and Such" can be found at <https://www.diversityetc.com/blog>. For information about SJC Cultural Consulting call (509) 319- 5234 or email: sjc.culturalconsultant@gmail.com.

The Narrative of this Moment

The narrative of this moment must NOT be re-written.

NOTHING is owed to this president, his family, the Republican Party, Republican voters, or the white Evangelical leaders or followers who took all of their possessions- their honor- their integrity- their humanity- their biblical witness- their souls- and formed a graven image of whiteness, and worshipped it, in order to have a god they could control.

NOTHING

Peace is not owed to them.
Grace is not owed to them.
Forgiveness is not owed to them.

For their hearts are hardened and wickedness resides therein.

Their ONLY HOPE is confession and repentance.
And they are not so moved.

~Traci Blackmon



Rev. Traci Blackmon is the Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries for The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO. January 13, 2021(Facebook)

OUR VOICES

Tuvalu as a Metaphor for Black America



The Invisible Woman
By Sharon Kyle, JD
BlackCommentator.com
bc Editorial Board

By Sharon Kyle, JD

(blackcommentator.com) In trying to explain systemic racism, I'd like to use a metaphor. Sometimes I compare racism to having a significant carbon footprint. The population of the United States is just 5% of the world's population, yet we contribute disproportionately to the carbon footprint that is causing global warming and the loss of the polar ice caps – resulting in rising sea levels. The rising sea levels devastate many populations across the globe – populations whose lifestyles and industries contribute almost nothing to global warming - particularly small islands. Take Tuvalu – a tiny country in Oceania made up of nine tiny islands.

The people of Tuvalu are losing access to significant portions of their livable land mass, due largely to the actions of people in the western world, especially the United States. Judging from the media attention this story gets, the U.S. perspective is that the country of Tuvalu is inconsequential. Even though our consumer lifestyle and fossil fuel use is a major contributing factor to the hardships faced by Tuvalu, most people in the Western world are oblivious to the plight of the people living on these shrinking islands.

People in Tuvalu often walk through ankle-deep water to get anywhere on the islands, sometimes stepping on cement blocks to get some relief from the water. They may soon be forced to evacuate. Their living conditions represent an example of the harms caused by one group but



felt by another and all the while, the powerful group can remain oblivious.

For people who believe that harm is only caused when there is intent to do harm, this metaphor helps to make clear that one need not be aware in order to harm. But the other side of the coin is that once one is aware, a moral imperative arises.

But here's the kicker: Our leaders are fully aware of what is going on with Tuvalu. They've known for years that if the developed nations reduce their carbon output, the people of Tuvalu could continue to inhabit their island nation. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference, the prime minister of Tuvalu said, "Let's do it for Tuvalu. For if we save Tuvalu we save the world."

Tuvalu is a canary in the coal mine. It is a warning that the fate of Tuvalu will be our fate, if we don't change. I like this metaphor, because I think it helps us to see that systemic racism causes harm whether you are aware of it

or not - and, if left unaddressed, this cancer will impact everyone, not just the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) populations.

The people of the United States hold no animus for the people of Tuvalu but that doesn't matter - our carbon footprint (the size of which is driven by our culture, politics, industries, policies, and institutions) has disproportionately contributed to factors that cause global warming and make life in Tuvalu almost unbearable.

Likewise, many white people in the United States will tell you that they harbor no ill will toward people of color. Yet, our white dominated power structures/institutions behave in ways that produce harm. In every measure of human well-being, Black and Brown people in the U.S. (as a group) fare poorly compared to whites in the United States.

Of course, there are exceptions. When people point out Oprah Winfrey or Barack Obama to counter my assertion, I remind them that with any group, there have always been a few Black and Brown individuals whose lives are somehow exceptional. That was even true during slavery.

The bottom line is that economic inequality and limited opportunity is the by-product of interlocking systems. This is just as true today as it has been for much of this country's history. Empirical data bears it out.

Sharon Kyle, JD is a BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member and Columnist. She is a former president of the Guild Law School and is the publisher and co-founder of the LA Progressive. For years before immersing herself in the law and social justice, Ms. Kyle was a member of several space flight teams at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory where she managed resources for projects like Magellan, Genesis, and Mars Pathfinder. Sharon sits on several boards including the Board of Directors of the ACLU. She is a contributing writer to Black Politics Today. For more information visit: <https://www.laprogressive.com> or e-mail <https://www.laprogressive.com>.

Promote the General Welfare

By Dr. E. Faye Williams

(TriceEdneyWire.com) – Two points loom significant as I begin my thoughts for this week. First, my NCBW predecessor, Dr. C. Delores Tucker would often remark that: From birth, when we receive our birth certificates, until death and our survivors receive our death certificates, we have an on-going relationship with government. For those living under the U.S. Constitution, this observation is unquestionable - even to state and local governments. Doubters need only reflect on public schools, our annual interaction with the IRS, recurring license renewals, and, hopefully, rare contact with law enforcement and other public safety officials.

The second consideration are the goals stated in the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." Central is the self-imposed obligation to promote the general welfare.

I have family in Houston, TX, and recent events in Texas give me cause to question the commitment of some state and local officials to the general welfare. I understand that 'The Preamble' doesn't guarantee each citizen nirvana, but, as a student and teacher, I have learned that the oaths of office for governing officials require a direct pledge to reduce/remove threats to the collective safety of citizens and to improve quality of life.



The antithesis of this is Texas Republican Tim Boyd, now the former mayor of Colorado City. As reported by The Grio, in a Facebook post on February 16th, he disparagingly labeled his citizens as "lazy" and told them to "get off your ass and take care of your own family!" He added (with the misspellings), "No one owes you are your family anything; nor is it the local government's responsibility to support you during trying times like this! The City and County, along with power providers or any other service owes you NOTHING! I'm sick and tired of people looking for a damn handout! Sink or swim it's your choice! Only the strong will survive."

Boyd's indifferent attitude is mirrored by Texas Republican Governor, Greg Abbott, who attempted to shift the blame for the abject mismanagement of the Texas Elec-

tric Grid to Wind and Solar power sources and a nebulous, theoretical "Green New Deal." Instead of "real" corrective action, even with knowledge of the impact of a similar catastrophe in February 2011, government and industry leaders chose profit over people. Just in case you forgot, Lisa Marie Presley and Michael Jackson were newlyweds (in 1994) which is the last time a Democrat won statewide office in Texas. So, the "blame" falls squarely in the laps of elected Republicans.

From a practical position, it seems foolish to think that the national Republican Party would demonstrate any more compassion and concern for people than its subsidiaries at the state level. The advent of the Biden/Harris administration has provided disclosure of the level of mismanagement of the COVID pandemic by "that former guy (#45)." It was no surprise to learn that, prior to January 20, 2021, there was no viable plan for the acquisition, distribution, and administration of the COVID vaccine. Although understood, there was no plan to overcome 'Vaccine Aversion' in communities of color. Moreover, deficiencies were obscured with institutional misrepresentations – LIES!!

Sweet words and personal freedoms mean little to the dead! Rather than listening to their words, we must judge the actions and conduct of those who would lead. If they fail to zealously act in our behalf in times of crisis, we must remove them in times of elections.

Dr. E. Faye Williams is President of the National Congress of Black Women and host of "Wake Up and Stay Woke" on WPFW-89.3 FM.

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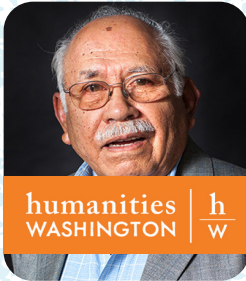
February
17
Kevin Young
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March
03
Anu Taranath
6:30pm



March
10
Tracy K. Smith
5:00pm



April
14
Carlos Gil
6:30pm



April
27
Angie Thomas
5:30pm



May
12
Luis Rodriguez
6:30pm



June
02
Hilton Als
5:00pm



June
09
Omari Amili
6:30pm

Learn more at scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter

Events are open to the public and available via
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I, Too

By Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

MARCH EVENTS

MARCH 10

FUSE DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

Dust Tracks on a Road by Zora Neale Hurston (memoir)

First published in 1942 at the height of her popularity, *Dust Tracks on a Road* is Zora Neale Hurston's candid, funny, bold, and poignant autobiography, an imaginative and exuberant account of her rise from childhood poverty in the rural South to a prominent place among the leading artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance.

6:30pm-8pm

Virtual Discussion

Visit the Fuse Book Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fusediversity>

MARCH 3

DIVERSITY DIALOGUES

Anu Tararath

"Tangled: Why Your Hair Matters to Society" Hagan Center Speaker Series. Conversations about race and equity.

10:30 a.m. on Facebook Live

6:30 p.m. on YouTube

Events are open to the public and available via livestream on YouTube at [scc.spokane.edu/live](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scc.spokane.edu/live). For more information visit [scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter](https://www.scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter)

MARCH 10

DIVERSITY DIALOGUES

Tracy K. Smith

2017 U.S. Poet Laureate. Author of "Wade in the Water", winner of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. Hagan Center Speaker Series. Conversations about race and equity.

10:30 a.m. on Facebook Live

5 p.m. on YouTube

Events are open to the public and available via livestream on YouTube at [scc.spokane.edu/live](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scc.spokane.edu/live). For more information visit [scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter](https://www.scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter)

MARCH 11

BIPOC AFFINITY SPACE

A virtual People of Color specific space for the BIPOC Spokane community to gather, breathe and heal.

5:30-7pm

Virtual Discussion

If you would like to attend or want more information contact: exceleratesuccess@unitedway-spokane.org.

MARCH 15

NAACP GENERAL MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. For more information please check social media at [facebook.com/spokane.naACP](https://www.facebook.com/spokane.naACP) or contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit [naacpspokane.org](https://www.naacpspokane.org).

MARCH 25

BIPOC AFFINITY SPACE

A virtual People of Color specific space for the BIPOC Spokane community to gather, breathe and heal.

5:30-7pm

Virtual Discussion

If you would like to attend or want more information contact: exceleratesuccess@unitedway-spokane.org.

MARCH 25

INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING

The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) March Special meeting will be held to discuss the next steps and planning in the development of a Center for Independent Living (CIL) for the Spokane Region. CIL's provide five core services and more for the disability community and adhere to the Independent Living Philosophy; People with disabilities who work for self-determination, equal opportunities, and self-respect. We invite disability advocates, partners, and community leaders to engage in this process.

3-5pm

Via zoom

To join the meeting visit: <https://dshs-telehealth.zoom.us/j/82975004592?pwd=M-0d6TXhqbWRMd2dBcHE0NnBXdGZlUT09> Meeting ID: 829 7500 4592 Password: 932295 or Dial: 253.215.8782

Public comment is from 4:10 – 4:40 PM and there will be ASL interpreting and closed captioning provided. For additional accommodations requests, please contact WASILC staff at ramsejt@dshs.ea.gov

VIRTUAL GROUP

A Cup of Culture

Saturdays at 12:30pm



To join the Facebook Group: [facebook.com/groups/racial-reconciliationwithdrwilburn](https://www.facebook.com/groups/racial-reconciliationwithdrwilburn)



RENT THE MAGIC LANTERN THEATER FOR \$99!

This Magic Latern is currently allowed to host private screenings for a single household of up to 6 people. If you're looking for something safe to do outside of the house, make it Movie Night! Concessions will be fully open, including beer and wine! Please supply your own DVDs or Blu-Ray discs. You can also bring in lunch or dinner from one of the fantastic neighboring restaurants. Email MagicLanternEvents@gmail.com to schedule your private screening.

Send information about upcoming community events to sandy@blacklensnews.com or call 509-795-1964 with information.

Beyond Words: Doing Justice

Fig Tree to Hold Virtual Breakfast and Luncheon Benefits on March 5 and 10

The Fig Tree Benefits with speakers addressing the 2021 theme, “Beyond Words: Doing Justice” are happening on Zoom Friday, March 5, and Wednesday, March 10.

The Lunch-Time Zoom gathering opens at 11:30 a.m., with opportunity to gather in conversation groups with hosts who invite them or with random groups. The approximately 40-minute program begins at noon, followed by returning to groups to donate and converse before a closing, announcing progress toward the goal. Speakers for the Lunch-Time Benefit are Holocaust survivor Carla Peperzak, Dishman Hills director Jeff Lambert, Tenants Union-Spokane director Terri Anderson, and NAACP Spokane first vice president Kurtis Robinson.

The Breakfast-Time Zoom gathering begins at 7:30 a.m., also with gathering in groups before the 40-minute program begins at 8 a.m., followed by group time to donate and converse before a common closing, announcing the amount donated. The Breakfast-Time Benefit speakers are League of Women Voters member Susan Hales, holistic healing doctor Toby Hallowitz, NAACP Spokane president Kiantha Duncan and KPBX host Verne Windham.

Nathan Slabaugh, who has done benefit videos in the past, is preparing a video with sharing from Episcopal Bishop Gretchen Rehberg, Calvary Soup Kitchen founder Peggy Troutt, Whitworth history professor Dale Soden, Gonzaga's Hate Studies Institute director Kristine Hoover, AHANA-MEBA founder Ben Cabildo and Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White. The videos and recordings of the speakers will be posted on YouTube through thefigtree.org after the benefit events to share The Fig Tree story.

Those interested in attending may sign up at event@thefigtree.org or at www.thefigtree.org. Guests may donate by check, text THEFIGTREE to 44321, or give online at Give Lively (Stripe), thefigtree.org/donate.html (PayPal) or on Facebook.

For more information, call 535-1813 or email event@thefigtree.org. RSVP to receive zoom link.

CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ARTISTS

APPLY NOW APPLICATIONS CLOSE 3.7.21 [TERRAINSPOKANE.COM](https://terrainspokane.com)

RIDE THE BUS?

Tell us what you think about proposed changes to bus routes in 2022

Changes will affect routes in Spokane, Airway Heights, Spokane Valley, Millwood and Liberty Lake.

See maps and take the survey at **SpokaneTransit.com/input**

SHARE YOUR OPINION



Spokane Transit