

THE BLACK LENSTM

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

EWU Eliminates Diversity Office

Students Say They Were Blindsided By President's Decision

By Sandra Williams

Marizza Torres, a McNair Scholar who transferred to Eastern Washington University (EWU) in 2017, and a member of the school's Multicultural Student Coalition, said she had heard a rumor in early March that the Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) was going to be eliminated, but the office and its staff played such an important role in the lives of students of color at EWU, including her own, that she was sure it was just a rumor. It turns out though that the rumor was true.

On March 6, Dr. Mary Cullinan, President of EWU, sent out a letter informing the campus, "we are reorganizing key university areas and offices to support students and faculty more effectively and to ensure strong alignment with other key areas of the university." In order to do that, Dr. Cullinan's letter said, "the Office for Diversity & Inclusion, headed by Vice President Shari Clarke, will be discontinued at the conclusion of this academic year."

The letter also explained Dr. Cullinan's plan to "decentralize" the Office for Diversity & Inclusion, to "more deeply embed its functions throughout our campuses." The staff of the ODI would be dispersed to other locations, including students affairs and human resources, but Dr. Clarke's position, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, would be eliminated. Replaced instead with a new, lower, position, Associate Vice Provost of Equity and Inclusion.



Higher Education Excellence
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According to Dr. Cullinan's letter, the new position will serve as "our Academic Affairs Chief Diversity Officer and will serve on my executive leadership team." This position, however, does not report directly to the President.

Marizza says the letter and the proposed changes caught the students off guard. "There was no communication," she said, "and it wasn't just the students that didn't know about this, faculty and staff also did not know that ODI was going to be removed. This was a surprise for a lot of people at school."

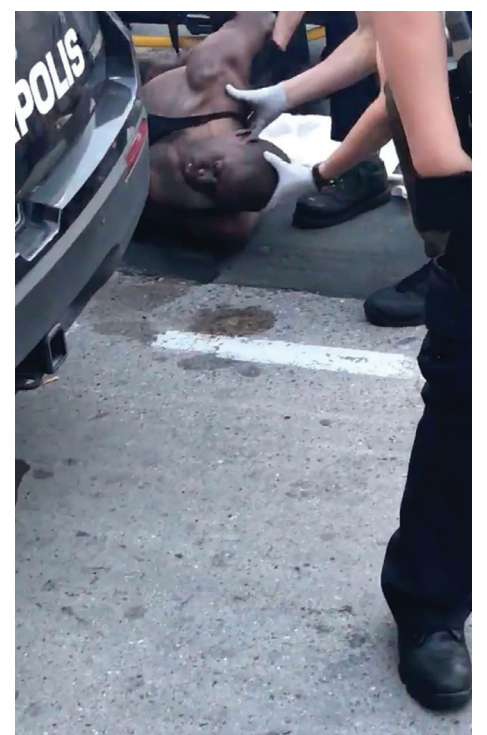
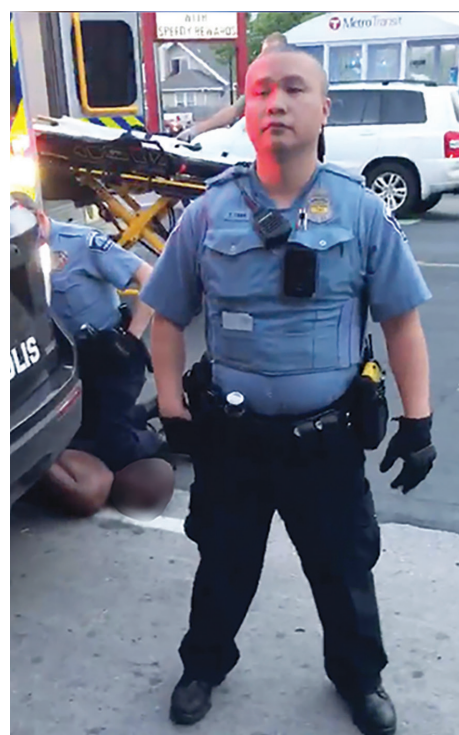
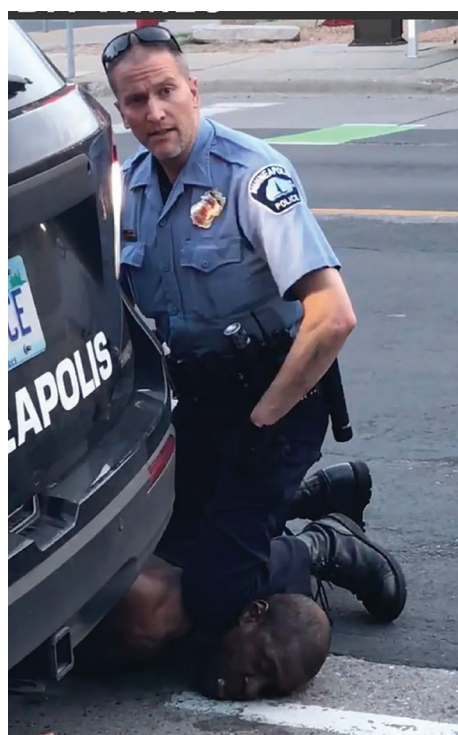
But surprise was not the only emotion that students were feeling when they heard the news. Kaisa Siipola, a senior at EWU, with a double major in Africana Studies and Communication Studies, says that she was "devastated" when they heard the news that the Office for Diversity and Inclusion would be closed. So many emotions were running through my mind, it was hard for me to process the news. I thought I was going through the five stages of grief because I was in denial that this was happening."

Sarahi Gutierrez said she was "deeply saddened that the administration would choose to close an office that holds so much importance to our campus and has been successful in improving our recruitment and retention of students." The senior, who is co-chair of M.E.Ch.A (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan), and a member of NASA (Native American Student Association), BSU (Black Student Union), and Eagle Pride, said EWU's Office for Diversity and Inclusion influenced her decision to come to the school. "I am one those students."

In the aftermath of the University's decision, Kaisa says, she is wondering how the University plans to uphold their word that they truly value Diversity and Inclusion and that it is a priority. "It's hard for me to see that the announcement about EWU being a #1 top school for diversity is still on the EWU website, when they decided to close the office that made it happen for EWU."

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George Floyd: "I Can't Breathe!"



George Floyd (43) was choked to death on May 25 by a Minneapolis Police Officer as he pleaded for his life. The four officers involved have been terminated. The FBI is investigating.



I PLEDGE TO BE COUNTED.

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#2020CENSUS #MAKEBLACKCOUNT



YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

The Dawes General Allotment Act

AMERICAN, n. – A native of America; originally applied to the aboriginals, or copper-colored races, found here by the Europeans; but now applied to the descendants of Europeans born in America.

– Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language (1828).

Through time you may have heard some fair-skinned folks making claims of Native ancestry. A pale, Scandinavian-looking man may say, "I'm such and such part Seminole", or a European-looking woman like say, Elizabeth Warren, who says "I am of Native American (Cherokee) ancestry". On her 1986 Texas Bar Application Warren listed "Native American" as her ethnicity. At Harvard Law School the University referred to her as their "first woman of color" professor.

Where have so many descendants of Europe derived their claims to Native American identity with no resemblance to Native peoples?

One of the early sources of this is The Dawes General Allotment Act. The Dawes General Allotment Act or Dawes Severalty Act of February 8, 1887 was a U.S. law under President Grover Cleveland sponsored by Sen. Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts. The act authorized the federal government to break up tribal lands by partitioning them into individual plots and distributing the land or "Indian Territory" (land either under treaty or act of Congress) to individual Natives. The aim was to assimilate natives into the "American way of life" and create "responsible farmers in the white man's image".

The Dawes Commission (1893) was formed to provide land grants of 160 acres for family heads and 80 acres for unmarried adults with the caveat that said land must be occupied for at least 25 years. Those who accepted the land became U.S. citizens and were subject to federal, state,



and local laws. The U.S. laws then took precedence over Native laws, eliminating tribal communal landholdings, and instead emphasizing severalty, or the treatment of Native Americans as individuals rather

than as members of tribes. The act was a disaster for Natives in that it weakened Native government structure, made adaptation difficult for nomadic nations, saw many Natives conned out of their acreage,

and brought a quality of life to reservations that was amongst the worst in the nation marked by wretched poverty and disproportionately high disease rates.

By 1932, the U.S. government held the rights to 138 million acres or two-thirds of the land Natives had owned fifty years earlier. The Dawes Commission allotted what they considered "surplus" land to Europeans, who in many cases had just arrived and could barely read or write English. For \$5 dollars they registered their names on the Dawes Roll and chose to identify with one of the "five civilized tribes"—The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek (Muscogee), and Seminole. These \$5 indians were now considered Native American and placed on the role of one of the five "civilized tribes". They, and the generations after them, were granted benefits that were intended for Natives.

So recognize that many Caucasian folk you see today like Senator Warren making claims of Native ancestry have in fact cut in front of Native peoples to receive government subsidies, benefits, and land grants through the acts of their ancestors who were, in most cases, nothing more than \$5 Dollar Indians.

Sources:

"Paying to Play Indian: The Dawes Rolls and the Legacy of \$5 Indians," Alysa Landry, Mar 21, 2017, indiancountrytoday.com/archive; Dawes General Allotment Act, Encyclopedia Britannica, britannica.com; okhistory.org/research/dawes; websterdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/american

For more information please review the following Youtube presentations in the following order: Dawes Rolls: History of \$5 Dollar Indians by Damion Omar Lee (2:26 min). Untold History About The \$5 Dollar Indians – Dane Calloway (13:19 min). Shameful Legacy of \$5 Indians – Nikki El Films & Theatre (12:05 min).

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COVID-19
RESPONSE

TO SUPPORT OUR ARTS COMMUNITY THROUGH CLOSURES, SAGA is taking applications on a rolling basis between now and our typical Round 2 deadline of June 1 (at 11:59pm).

SAGA has also increased the total amount of funding available this round from \$42,000 to \$67,000.

Please contact Shelly Wynecoop at shelly@spokanearts.org for assistance and details.



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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.

NAACP UPDATE:

SPOKANE

NAACP

1919-2019 CENTENNIAL

<http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com>

By Amy McColm
Chair, Education Committee

My name is Amy McColm and I am the chairperson of the Spokane NAACP Education Committee. On behalf of the Spokane NAACP, we want to extend a heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2020!

Despite a global pandemic, your hard work and dedication to learning has not gone unnoticed. WE SEE YOU, we believe in you, and we know you are bound for great things!

Our National NAACP educational goal is for every child to receive a free, high quality, equitably funded pre-K-12 education followed by diverse opportunities for accessible, affordable vocational or university education. COVID-19 has challenged that goal.

- We are now in a highly complex environment: relative scarcity, a widened set of competing needs, and budgetary constraints. We continue to examine key issues.
- How do we target funds to reach the neediest students?
 - How do we see that students in the coming years have paths to success after they graduate?
 - How do we grow great teachers from within our underserved communities?
 - How do we end zero tolerance policies and keep our kids in school?

In the wake of a global pandemic, we now have the opportunity to reimagine a new, more equitable school system. Rather than attempt to patch a damaged old system, we can invest precious dollars and talent to promote an excellent, equitable school system.

Opportunities abound if we are brave enough to set aside our biases and pre-conceived notions of how education “should” look. Together with caregivers and educational innovators, we can brainstorm creative possibilities for our new learning environments. We can use those ideas to create truly equitable policies. Our commitment to champion these policies at the state, county, and city levels will be key. All of our kids will thrive with the implementation of evidence-based educational models.

Please join us at our next Virtual NAACP General Meeting on Monday, **June 15th at 7:00pm over Zoom** for a conversation on equity in education in a post-COVID world (pre-registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvfu-hrzguG-dVAObt_7Cv8HRJnRwKpSOEG).

Our panelists will include Jerrall Haynes, President of the Spokane Public School Board of Directors, Nikki Lockwood, Spokane Public School Board Director Position 1, as well as other guests.

The Spokane NAACP is also accepting applications for the Lt. Col. Michael P. Anderson scholarship awards for the 2021/22 school year. Application instructions can be found on the Spokane NAACP website (naacpspokane.org). Application materials are due by 5:00 PM on October 16, 2020. Awards will be announced at the NAACP Fall/Winter fundraiser, exact date TBD.

The NAACP Education Committee meets at 6:00 PM on the 4th Monday of each month, currently meeting online. Our next meeting is Monday, June 22 on Zoom (pre-registration link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ-Mrc-irpj4iHNxJwSKNceVFPIWLOxGeBYQY>).

NAACP Launches #We Are Done Dying Campaign

The NAACP has launched a campaign entitled **#WeAreDoneDying**, aimed at exposing the inequities embedded into the American healthcare system and the country at large. From COVID-19 to running while Black in America, the abuse faced by people of color, particularly African Americans is devastating.

The campaign is a Call-to-Action and highlights the NAACP’s policy interests and supported legislation for African Americans and people of color, a large demographic that is often left out of recovery effort conversations. The integrated and interactive content will create actionable steps for people to feel empowered by demanding action from their state’s elected officials on issues such as healthcare, education, criminal justice, economic justice, and voting rights.

“With crumbling economic infrastructure, our community members face tough choices as access to food, good jobs, and a quality education slips further away,” said Derrick Johnson, president and CEO, NAACP. “These issues are compounded by the lack

of strong leadership from the White House. In the absence of adequate guidance, Black lives are adversely affected. We will no longer stand idle as our people suffer discrimination, marginalization, and are offered as disposable for poor decisions by this Administration.”

As the incidence of COVID-19 cases and deaths rise, the Black community is experiencing the worst outcomes. With more confirmed cases and deaths than any other country, African Americans are facing the brunt of this virus. The numbers continue to rise each day while states reopen non-essential businesses with little to no evidence that the country is ready.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the deep-seated racial disparity in America embedded in all aspects of life,” said Leon W. Russell, Chairman, NAACP Board of Directors. “The NAACP Empowerment Programs’ 111 years of advocacy and fighting for the rights of Black people positions us to lead the fight for our community’s interest during this time of uncertainty.”
For information visit: naACP.org.



BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Ahmaud Arbery | Breonna Taylor



(Source: Stacy M. Brown, Senior Correspondent, blackpressusa.com)

NNPA NEWSWIRE - Twenty-five-year-old Georgia resident Ahmaud Arbery was shot and killed while jogging after a former police officer and his son chased him down because they “thought he looked like the suspect in a recent string of break-ins.” The incident took place on February 23 in Brunswick, a southeast coastal town in Glynn County that’s less than five hours from Atlanta but did not come to light until a cell phone video of the shooting was released two months later.

According to a Glynn County Police report, after seeing Arbery jogging, Gregory McMichael alerted his 34-year-old son, Travis. The two men, both white, grabbed a shotgun and a pistol and followed Arbery in

their truck, according to the report. Travis McMichael, the driver, attempted to cut Arbery off. Arbery turned and began running in the opposite direction. The men chased Arbery to a nearby intersection where they caught up to him. The armed men claimed they told Arbery to stop because they wanted to talk to him.

The police report says Travis exited the truck with the shotgun, and Arbery “violently attacked” him. They struggled over the gun and Travis McMichael fired two shots, killing Arbery.

No one was arrested until a public outcry followed the video's release. Gregory and Travis McMichael and their accomplice, William “Roddie” Bryan, who took the video, how now been charged with murder. The Justice Department is investigating.



(Source: *courier-journal.com*; *Victoria Albert, cbsnews.com*) - Louisville Metro Police officers (LMPD) entered the home of Breonna Taylor and her boyfriend Kenneth Walker just before 1 a.m. on March 13. They were executing a no-knock warrant as a part of a narcotics investigation. No narcotics were found.

Believing the police to be intruders who entered the home unannounced to rob them, Walker, a licensed gun owner, fired in self defense, according to his attorney. Taylor, a 26 year old ER technician who had worked at two area hospitals was killed by LMPD officers who returned fire, shooting Taylor, at least eight times. She died in her home.

Taylor's family has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against officers Myles Cosgrove

and Brett Hankinson, and sergeant, Jonathan Mattingly, claiming they arrived in plainclothes and unmarked cars, and entered the home without saying they were police officers.

Mattingly, Cosgrove and Hankinson were placed on administrative reassignment pending an internal investigation. Louisville Metro Police Chief Steve Conrad announced his retirement following the incident. The department also announce policy changes: "No-knock" search warrants now require approval from the police chief before they're sent to a judge, and officers will be required to wear body cameras when executing the warrants.

The FBI has also said that it will be conducting an independent investigation.

Nikole Hannah-Jones Awarded 2020 Pulitzer Prize



(Source: *Ishena Robinson, theroot.com*; *en.wikipedia.org*; Photo Source: *Grant Schaefer - The Root/G/O Media*)

Nikole Hannah-Jones was awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary. She is the investigative journalist who was the brainchild behind the groundbreaking New York Times 1619 project and author of its lead essay titled: *America wasn't a Democracy, Until America Made it One*. (Read the article here: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html>)

The 1619 Project took its name from August 1619 when a slave ship arrived off Point Comfort, Virginia, carrying more than 20 enslaved people from the African nations of Ndongo and Kongo. The project, which was initially meant to be a special issue, became a major initiative by The New York Times in August 2019 that included a special broadsheet section in the newspaper, poems, short fiction, a photo essay, live events, and a multi-episode podcast series.

The goal of the project, which coincided with the 400th anniversary of the arrivals of the Africans in Virginia, was to re-examine the legacy of slavery and correct the record, reframing the country’s history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the center of the national narrative.

Hannah-Jones was also a 2017 MacArthur Foundation “genius” winner for having "shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits," and The Root 100 honoree for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Howard University Graduate Becomes First Black Female Thunderbird Officer



(Source: *Cedric "Big Ced" Thornton, blackenterprise.com*; Photo: *afthunderbirds.com*)

According to NBC 4 Washington, one of the Thunderbirds newest members is Captain Remoshay Nelson, a Howard University graduate and its first Black female officer.

“I know a small percentage of African American officers, specifically female officers in the Air Force. So to be in a position that is visible, to show little girls that this is attainable, to let them know they can do anything they put their mind to, is an absolute honor,” Nelson told NBC 4 Washington.

Nelson spent eight years in the Air Force, serving mostly overseas. She credits her family for encouraging her and supporting her as she worked to achieve this accomplishment. The officer position Nelson holds is highly selective. She is only one of 12 with the position. Since the Thunderbirds team’s inception in 1953, only 332 officers have been on the team.

"We have one life to live, so I want to do that by giving back and showing people what is possible," Nelson said.

Teen Develops App to Help Kids Stay Connected to Incarcerated Parents



(Source: *Vikki Law, teenvogue.com*; *Dana Givens, blackenterprise.com*)

After dealing with her own challenges to talk with her father, a teenager developed an app designed to keep incarcerated parents connected to their children. Jay’Aine “Jay Jay” Patton developed an app called **Photo Patch** which is a program and mobile app that connects imprisoned parents to their children. Jay Jay was three when her father, Antoine, went to prison for gun possession. He was imprisoned hours away and her mother could only afford to take Jay Jay and her two siblings to visit twice during his seven-year incarceration.

While in prison, Antoine learned to code. After his released in 2014, he started the Photo Patch Foundation, a website where kids of imprisoned parents can write, send letters and upload photos for their incarcerated parent. Patton and his team then print, package, and mail them. Unlike prison telecommunications companies, which often charge about 50 cents for a one-page letter and an additional 50 cents per photo, Photo Patch does this all for free, allowing children and parents to stay in touch without an additional financial burden. Instead, Photo Patch raises money for printing and postage through individual donations, grants, and fundraising events.

Jay Jay created a mobile app version of the website. Since its launch, Photo Patch has gained nearly 2,000 users and has been downloaded over 10,000 times. The app has also proven to be very useful during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, with between 75-100 communications daily since the lockdown started. **Visit: photopatch.org**

COVID-19 NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Civil Rights Leaders Support Congressional Black Caucus in Protecting Black Health

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

WASHINGTON, D.C. – National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) President and CEO, Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., National Action Network (NAN) Founder Rev. Al Sharpton, Dr. Julianne Malveaux, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), National Coalition of 100 Black Women, and the Black Women's Health Imperative, are up in arms because they say too many Washington politicians are protecting insurance company profits over health care for African Americans.

Collectively, they argue that too often, insurance companies refuse to cover emergency services, and either patients are forced to pay bills they cannot afford, or hospitals are shuttering.

Congress claims to be tackling this challenge, but until the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) got involved, Congress focused only on protecting insurer profits, not people, according to the coalition.



Chavis, Sharpton, and others are throwing their support behind the CBC and they are asking that others also support them as well.

Led by Chair Karen Bass (D-Calif.), the 55-member CBC has worked almost non-stop in fighting for health equity in the African American community.

The CBC works to protect and expand voting rights, comprehensive criminal justice reform, building a more inclusive economy, and ensuring access to quality and affordable healthcare.

A primary focus of the CBC remains to target insurance companies that have disproportionately neglected the needs of African Americans while also providing below standard care.

“This outrageous situation benefits one group and one group alone: powerful insurance executives, who have managed to get off the financial hook for such bills, even as insurers shrink insurance coverage networks to wring more and more profits out of the system,” Chavis has stated.

He and the other leaders have continued to express strong opposition to any legislation that would give insurers more control over health care prices.

In their continued push for health equality, the group is working to ensure that insurance companies expand their networks and cover more emergency services. This will maintain access to care in hard-hit Black communities. “The status quo means hospitals in our communities close first,” the group noted in a statement.

“We cannot let this happen. Together, we can ensure that the old way of doing business – putting insurance company profits over people – STOPS.”

They continued: “Join us and support the CBC. Help us work to make sure Congress passes a bill that keeps us healthy and alive by allowing insurance networks to grow and cover lifesaving services.”

For more information visit: nationalactionnetwork.net/newnews/black-americans-and-healthcare.

Census Bureau Survey Finds Racial Digital Divide Impacting Online Education During Pandemic



Source: *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, jbhe.com/2020)

The U.S. Census Bureau has begun publishing a Household Pulse Survey every two weeks to gauge how Americans are coping with the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey asks questions on employment, health, education, and other issues.

For students in K-12 education as well as at colleges and universities, most instruction has moved online and this will continue for the remainder of the academic year. But as many communities have found, providing effective online instruction is easier said than done. Most K-12 educators – and many in higher education – are unfamiliar with distance education technology and systems.

Adding to the problem is that many households do not have the required technology available to access the online instruction provided by school systems. This is further complicated for families with two or more children in school. Often even if these households have the required technology, they may not have the capability

to fully educate more than one child.

The Census Bureau's latest survey found that there were more than 9.6 million African American households with children in K-12 public and private schools throughout the United States. Of these, only 61.6 percent said they had the technology to allow children to do their online schoolwork at all times. For White households, nearly 73 percent had total access to the online education offered for their children.

Almost 29 percent of Black households said that the technology in their homes was “usually” or “sometimes” available for their children to use for online education. But there were 858,173 Black households that reported that they “rarely” or “never” had a device available for their children to use for online education. This was 9 percent of all Black households with children in public or private K-12 schools.

Only 4.3 percent of White households rarely or never had devices for children to use for online education. This is half the rate for Black households.

Jay-Z And Meek Mill To Donate Masks To U.S. Correctional Facilities

(Source: newsone.com)

Jay-Z and Meek Mill are furthering their efforts to ensure measures are taken to protect incarcerated populations amid the COVID-19 pandemic. They donated 130,000 surgical masks to prisons and jails throughout the country through their nonprofit **REFORM Alliance** to ensure the safety of inmates, correctional officers and other staff members as well as health-care workers. Rikers Island in New York received 52,500 masks for its inmate facilities, including its medical center. The Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman received 5,000 masks and the Tennessee Department of Corrections was given 40,000. Over 30,000 masks were distributed among prisons in South Carolina. The two are now expanding the initiative to equip all correctional facilities in the United States with masks, the organization reported.

The effort is a collaboration between REFORM Alliance —a nonprofit the two founded along with other criminal justice advocates to address injustices surrounding probation, parole and the system at large—and Twitter and Square CEO Jack Dorsey's #startsmall initiative. A \$10 mil-



lion donation from #startsmall will fund the distribution of over 10 million masks and other personal protective equipment to prisons in every state. As part of the initiative, the REFORM Alliance will cultivate a public log so individuals can see the number of masks that have been donated to each state and the state representative responsible for distributing the masks to prisons for accountability purposes.

“COVID-19 spreads most quickly in crowded and closed environments, and our jails and prisons are at high risk for an outbreak,” read a statement on the organization's website. “This is a huge threat to public health. Right now, hardly any government officials have a plan to address this crisis. REFORM does.”

For more information visit: reformalliance.com.

Common's Non-Profit Launches Criminal Justice Reform Campaign Amid COVID-19

(Source: newsone.com; time.com)

Rapper and activist, Common's criminal justice reform organization, **Imagine Justice**, launched a campaign with dozens of advocacy and activist groups calling attention to the threat that the coronavirus pandemic poses on millions of men, women and youths who are incarcerated in the U.S.



The campaign is called **#WeMatterToo**, and it is urging authorities to immediately release people who have served the vast majority of their sentences, especially if they have existing health conditions that

put them at greater risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.

In April, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons released data that showed more than 70% of people in federal custody tested for COVID-19 were positive and outbreaks have been reported in a handful of state-run correctional systems.

For information visit: imaginejusticenow.com.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

General Evariste Ndayishimiye is New President of Barundi

(Source: [aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/20/barundi-elections](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/20/barundi-elections); [afri-canews.com/](https://www.afri-canews.com/) Photo Credit: AFP)

In an election with a voter turnout of 88 percent, Evariste Ndayishimiye (52), a retired army general, and the ruling party's candidate, won 68.72 percent of the votes in last week's presidential election. He was declared the winner and new President of Barundi by the election commission.

Ndayishimiye will take over from President Pierre Nkurunziza, who has been in power since 2005, and decided last year not to run for a fourth term.

Ndayishimiye defeated the main opposition candidate Agathon Rwasa, and five others, avoiding a runoff by securing more than 50% of the vote.

Rwasa, the main opposition leader and President of the National Council for Liberty (CNL), received 24.19 percent of the vote, according to the election commission. He has described the election results as "fanciful" and accused the government of "cheating" and "pure manipulation".

Therence Manirambona, spokesman for the opposition National Freedom Council (CNL), said the party boycotted the announcement of results as it could not "back this farce", repeating allegations of "massive fraud" during both the election and the counting process.

Burundians stood in long lines outside polling stations, which opened shortly after 6am local time on May 20. They were voting not only to elect a new president, but parliamentarians and local councillors, who in turn will appoint members of the Senate. The election will mark the first democratic transition in Barundi's 58 years of independence.

President Nkurunziza's government has repeatedly been accused of rights abuses, and Burundi has been under sanctions from its main donors (EU, Belgium, Germany) since the political crisis of 2015 that was triggered by Nkurunziza's decision to run for a controversial third term, which drew widespread international criticism. The civil unrest that resulted left at least 1,200 people dead and forced some 400,000 Burundians to flee the country.

There were few international monitors to oversee the election after the government said they would have to spend 14 days in quarantine to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The government also refused



observers from the United Nations or the African Union, accusing the latter of being too close to the opposition, and social networks were shut down at least one hour before voting began.

Despite concerns about the election process, according to African News, the international community seems ready to accommodate General Ndayishimiye, who is considered to be more conciliatory than Mr Nkurunziza. Rwasa already hinted he would not take to the streets in protest, but will appeal to the Constitutional Court. The final election results will be declared by the Constitutional Court on June 4.



Women's Groups in Ghana Push for Passage of Affirmative Action Bill

([TriceEdneyWire.com/GIN](https://www.tricedneywire.com/GIN)) – Under the banner “EachforEqual,” women’s rights groups in Ghana turned out this year on March 8, urging President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to address gender inequalities and social injustices and promote women and girls’ rights in the country.

“If we believe in the campaign theme #EachForEqual, which marks the International Women’s Day for 2020, then the time is now to accelerate efforts to promote the advancement of women and girls,” members of the rights group said.

Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin, a Ghanaian gender advocate and journalist, is among the activists backing an Affirmative Action Bill.

“The need for increased equitable female political participation in Ghana is a genuine concern to all key stakeholders dedicated to women's rights promotion,” she wrote in the Ghanaian Times. “ABANTU for Development with support from African Women's Development Fund have therefore embarked on a nationwide campaign to strengthen advocacy for the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill in Ghana.”

“Attempts to address the inequalities have been largely ignored by policymakers who must act to support women’s rights. Efforts in Ghana, including civic education, have not significantly changed the situation.”



Members of Parliament, representing a woeful 13.8%.

“It is therefore critical for all stakeholders to act decisively on the passage of an Affirmative Action Law in Ghana.”

The Golden Line Program, working in the Western and Ashanti regions to improve working conditions of women, issued the following statement: “The role of women in artisanal and small-scale mining is significant as they represent up to half a million or 50 per cent of the workforce in these mines.

However, “women commonly get the low-paid and low-skilled jobs in the mines, face severe health risks and are exposed to gender-based violence”.

Therefore, “on the occasion of International Women’s Day, Golden Line is asking for attention for the situation of women working in gold mines and living in mining communities.”

The Golden Line is a consortium comprised of groups working for equal opportunities for Ghanaian women.

GLOBAL INFORMATION NETWORK creates and distributes news and feature articles on current affairs in Africa to media outlets, scholars, students and activists in the U.S. and Canada. Our goal is to introduce important new voices on topics relevant to Americans, to increase the perspectives available to readers in North America and to bring into their view information about global issues that are overlooked or under-reported by mainstream media.

Billboard Magazine Publishes First Issue Devoted to Africa



Source: [Njera Perkins, afrotech.com](https://www.njera-perkins.com/); [okayafrica.com](https://www.okayafrica.com/); [J'na Jefferson, thegrapevine.theroot.com](https://www.jna-jefferson.com/); [Gail Mitchell, billboard.com](https://www.gail-mitchell.com/); Photo Credit: [Lakin Ogunbanwo & Seye Isikalu, Billboard](https://www.lakin-ogunbanwo.com/))

For the first time in Billboard Magazine’s history an issue has been released that is devoted to the continent of Africa. Three Nigerian music artists grace the cover of the May 23 special edition. From left to right, Davido, Mr. Eazi and Tiwa Savage.

Tiwa Savage (40), based in Lagos, became the first female winner of the “Best African Act” category at the 2018 MTV Europe Music Awards. Called the “Queen of Afrobeats,” Savage signed a landmark global recording deal with Universal Music Group and Motown Records last spring. She has a degree from Boston’s Berklee College of Music and one in business from England’s University of Kent. She has been a songwriter for Monica and Fantasia, among others and a backing vocalist for Whitney Houston, George Michael and Mary J. Blige. She plans to release her fourth studio album, Celia, later this year.

Mr. Eazi (28) performed at the 2019 Coachella Music & Arts Festival. He grew up in Lagos but is now based outside of Lon-

don, making what he calls “Banku music”, which is a twist on Afrobeats with greater influences from Ghana. He worked in mechanical engineering before becoming an artist and founding a talent incubator and label called emPawa Africa in 2018, which raised \$300,000 to help cover video costs for 100 emerging artists from 11 countries, and in 2020 will award 30 artists grants of \$10,000 each. He is preparing an upcoming EP as well as a collaboration with Major Lazer and Nicki Minaj.

Davido (27) has been in the music business for a decade. He signed to RCA Records through his own Davido Music Worldwide and Sony Music U.K. His most recent studio album, A Good Time, featured guests Chris Brown, Summer Walker, Gunna and Popcaan, and his breakout hit “Fall” spent an impressive 21 weeks on Billboard’s Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop chart, becoming the longest-charting Nigerian pop song in Billboard history.

According to Billboard, in recent years, the music industry is witnessing the rise of the first generation of truly global pop superstars from Africa. The three major-label groups, Universal, Warner and Sony, have all ramped up their investments in Africa.

A Different View

with 



It seems like a whole 'nother world since I was sworn in as Council Member Wilkerson of District 2. When I was appointed, I said that I would spend the first weeks learning my new job. I started by going on a listening tour of the 14 Neighborhood Councils of District 2 and attending various events to meet and hear every resident, introducing myself to them.

What I quickly learned is that each Neighborhood is unique yet faces the same challenges, like traffic, streets improvement, growth and development. It was a pleasant surprise to see the level of involvement in each Neighborhood Council. Some volunteers have been involved for years with extensive knowledge of how the city's processes work and other Neighborhood Councils are just learning, like me, all the ins and outs of City government. But as promised, I continue to work to amplify the voices that are not being heard.

On March 12, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee issued his Stay Home, Stay Safe order. I will tell you, there is no equalizer like a pandemic. Just like that, I wasn't the newest Council Member for there was no play book, no game plan or roadmap for what was to come. So to that end, the City Council and the Mayor had to work together with the whole region to get things done. The spirit of collaboration has been outstanding!

In the early stages of the pandemic, Mayor Woodward declared a State of Emergency and Council jumped right in to not only ratify those precautions, but to pass emergency ordinances to protect our fellow residents.

These ordinances include one that I co-sponsored that works with Avista and SNAP to match City funds for those that need help paying utilities, an ordinance that set up the Craft 3 Loan for small businesses, and another one that as I am writing that is working on a City program for rental assistance.

During these difficult times, I have heard from many of our small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses. Times have been extremely hard for them and it is hard for them to navigate what I have come to call the "Alphabet Soup of Loans." These business owners have expressed the frustration of the loan requirements being confusing and difficult, and of not hearing back as to whether or not they were qualified. That brings us to a big gap because there was no way to communicate with our businesses as the information has been changing daily.

(Please check out my.spokanecity.org/COVID19 or coronavirus.wa.gov for the most up to date info).

I am also working with our chamber of commerce, Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI), to ensure that Businesses of Color are not left behind when it comes to reopening and receiving COVID relief funds. I am working with GSI to up their game, and to be more inclusive of all businesses, not just those that are Downtown-centric or larger businesses who have the resources. One of my goals with this partnership is to have a minority business directory to come out of all this.

Just think... what Spokane would look like without the richness of our many cultures- foods, arts, music, churches, and events.

So as we have entered Phase II, let's not let our guard down as we support our local businesses by going out to shop, eat out and play.

I leave you with the words of this gospel song from Hezekiah Walker, "I need you, you need me, we are all a part of God's Family. It is His Will that every need be supplied. You are important to me, I need you to survive."

Mask up! Warmest Regards,


Spokane City Council, District 2



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Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears

Live & Let Die



I’m rarely shocked at anything these days, especially anything of a socio-political nature. I mean, after almost four years of the Trump Administration, my shock threshold is extremely high. I limit my news consumption, because this is necessary if I’m to remain in my right mind. But as depressing and infuriating as most News is, it would be irresponsible not to pay attention, so every morning I check my newsfeeds and wonder what fresh Hell the day brings.

However, two things have risen to the level of shock value lately. One is the alarmingly disproportionate rate of deaths in Black and Brown communities from COVID-19, and the other – well, the other is a Facebook post I received this week.

Please understand that I’m very particular about who I “friend” on Facebook. I have close relationships with some folks, less so with others, and I will readily admit that FB is my echo chamber. We may differ in opinion on some things, but the people I “friend” broadly share my political ideology and my core values. I rarely post these days. Mostly I’m happy to like, love, and virtually support my friends and family in all their personal joys and sorrows. I react to political posts with the appropriate emoji, but rarely comment on them.

A few days ago, I received a post from an extended family friend. She’s a Sister Black Woman who I have always liked and actually greatly admired. I’ve never met anyone who could rise above adverse circumstances over and over again, and not only survive, but thrive, the way she does.

The first post was a picture of a COVID-19 shutdown protest. Centered in the shot was a white man holding a sign that read, “ I will not be masked, tested, tracked or poisoned” This is where the shock comes in. My friend was actually supporting the protest. “This [sign] is the truth ya’ll, listen. “

In subsequent posts she goes on to support the theory that the whole virus pandemic is a conspiracy by “the elite” to shut down the world; for what reason she doesn’t say. She implores us not to be stupid and believe what the media is telling us. “STOP LOOKING AT THE NEWS. STOP BEING A ROBOT. THINGS ARE NOT AS THEY APPEAR ... This is how it goes, WEAR YOUR MASK. STAND 6-feet apart. STAND IN LINE FOR THE SHOT ... THANK YOU FOR DRINKING THE KOOLAIDE!”[sic]

For those who might not know or remember the significance of the “Koolaide,” it’s a reference to the mass murder-suicide that took place in November 1978 led by a Jim Jones, a charismatic preacher who established a Christian sect called the People’s Temple. Jones preached against racism and attracted many African Americans. He was accused of financial fraud, and physical abuse of his

members, many of whom were families with children. He eventually moved his congregation to a tract of jungle in Guyana to create a social utopia. The compound was called Jonestown. There, Jones lead almost a thousand of his followers, 304 of them children, in a mass murder-suicide by ordering them to drink grape-flavored Kool-Aid that had been laced with cyanide. Some of his followers willingly drank the Kool-Aid, while others did so at gunpoint.

The point my friend was making is that, if we believe the pandemic scare and do what we have been ordered to do, we are like ignorant, trusting lambs being led to slaughter. The Kool-Aid is the hoped for COVID-19 vaccine.

She continued to post and affirm articles one of which warned that “the elite” had created “... a fake virus based on a massive multi-media FEAR-MONGERING campaign agreed by governments around the world, rush Covid-19 bills through parliaments, allowing the manipulation of death certificates, create a flawed testing system enabling you to falsify the numbers”

There were about twenty comments to my friend’s post. I knew some of them to be Black people. A surprising number were agreeing with her. However, several people challenged her, particularly noting the fact that Black people living in predominantly Black communities across the country are catching the virus and dying at twice to three times the rate of white people. Real virus. Real death. Real tragedy. More than one comment pointed out the irresponsibility, selfishness and hard-heartedness of her stand.

I didn’t comment on her post. This was not out of deference to someone I called a friend, however deluded I think her to be. I believe her attitude and statements are dangerous and irresponsible. I have friends who are health care workers. Some of them have friends and family on the front lines, reporting on the real horror of the situation, with firsthand accounts of overwhelmed and under-protected medical staff and first responders.

I didn’t comment because I was honestly shocked that she would get caught up in a conspiracy theory of this magnitude, especially given the toll COVID-19 is taking in Black and Brown communities. It’s because I found her attitude was so outrageous and out of character, that I bothered to wonder how an intelligent so-called Woman of Spirit could become an enthusiastic evangelist for the virus hoax tribe.

Conspiracy theories have existed throughout history, but the world has become much, much smaller. Communication across a world-wide network is instant and for the most part uncensored. In Donald Trump we have a President who creates and embraces conspiracy theories. Fear-mongering, scape-

goating, and demagoguery did not roll in with the Trump administration, but it has been taken to unimaginable new heights in the last four years.

Conspiracy theories can be rooted in some kernel of truth. They’re not always born out of thin air. This country’s deep pathologies have been hidden and swept under the rug for all of its existence. Secret domestic atrocities have been uncovered like the Tuskegee syphilis study in 1932, where doctors studied Black men for 40 years, allowing syphilis to progress unchecked in order to study the natural course of the disease, with the absence of treatment.

In fairness, I don’t know anyone who trusts government anymore -- the Vietnam and Iraq wars, erosion of civil rights, human rights and human dignity violations in immigration enforcement, the systematic dismantling of the EPA, and of course the Federal Governments response to the COVID-19 Pandemic being cases in point. Many of us would like to be able to trust that our government exists to ensure the highest and best for all its citizens. It’s bad government that creates our distrust and cynicism. One of the political parties has long actively lobbied against the intrusion of government into our lives. For nearly fifty years Republican lawmakers have demonized government, except when it works for them. There’s no longer any denying that our so-called democracy is really a kleptocracy: a government with corrupt leaders that use their power to exploit the people and natural resources of their own country in order to enhance their personal wealth. Yes, I understand the roots of some of my friend’s extreme distrust, but I have no sympathy for her wild conclusions when the evidence is incontrovertible.

My friend’s posts along this virus hoax theme kept coming. I told myself I should just stop reading them. But inevitably in the back-and-forth comments, God came into the conversation, and I really wanted to know what people think God’s role is in all of this.

No surprise: My friend believed God had revealed the truth of the virus conspiracy to her and was revealing it to thousands of other people.

One commenter replied, “I am choosing to use my God-given common sense over nonsense.” This person said she was wearing a mask because she didn’t want to spread a deadly virus to others. She emphasized that this was her choice. She said to all people like my friend who have chosen to proclaim their freedom and liberty from the lies and tyranny of government and health care experts, “Amen to you, but please stay away from me, and if you get too close, I choose to protect myself. Amen and Amen.”

People of Faith have throughout history justified their actions by proclaiming Divine

Revelation. Many truly believe that God is on their side in a cause. For others, it’s blasphemous justification for a political act. Countless wars have been fought and countless atrocities inflicted on innocent people in God’s Holy Name. The kidnapping and enslavement of Africans and the genocide of the indigenous people of this country are two of the most egregious such acts. God is speaking to my friend and telling her the virus is a world-wide conspiracy, but interestingly, she never says toward what end. God has given another person common sense enough to know the difference between nonsense conspiracy theories and the reality of a crisis situation. Some believe the pandemic is God culling the herd, pulling out the physically weak humans and destroying them. That’s thinly veiled racism given the disproportionate death rate for Black and Brown people. Others believe God is trying to send the human race a message, although exactly what that message is, is left to interpretation.

I think there is a Divine wakeup call in this pandemic, but it isn’t about a deep state overthrow of the world order, or a conspiracy to kill off all people of color. I think this is a call to action to end economic disparity, xenophobia, the genocide of the planet, racism and all the other “isms” we gorge on. Yes, a call to action, not a call to conspiracy theories that endanger the lives of hundreds and thousands of people in the world. To me conspiracy theorizing is an act of arrogance and selfish indulgence. It’s a copout. Blame the so-called deep state and do nothing.

There was a “last straw” FB comment exchange for me. One commenter said to the Sister who posted the virus hoax theory, that if my friend had ever lost someone to this “horrible plague” maybe she would understand the sad reality of thousands of deaths. The commenter wrote, “Yes, it is your right to feel as you do, but please don’t forget all those who have lost loved ones due to this most horrible disease.”

My friend’s response was, “...people die all the time...Fortunately I live in a place where WE ARE JUST LIVING, NOT DYING. THE BEACHES ARE OPEN, THE BARS ARE OPEN, THE RESTAURANTS ARE OPEN AND WE AIN’T SCARED. LIVE BY THE SPIRIT AND BE EMPOWERED AND INFORMED. That’s the only research you need to do. GO WITHIN AND LIVE. I am not drinking the COOL AIDE.”[sic]

Huh. Sit back, relax and let the world die. I don’t know what spirit is guiding her, but it’s not the Spirit of Love and Life, and if it’s not that Spirit, I definitely don’t believe God is on her side.

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

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A Message to the Brothas

By Robert Lloyd

What does it mean to be a brothas? Is that a term based upon skin color or ethnicity, or is it an understanding of common goals? We are in a war that is being fought on two levels. One is the immediate problem with COVID-19. The other is the systemic problems that lead to a disproportionate number of deaths among people of color and the poor.

If we are brothas we need to support each other in this war at both levels. We need to support each other in measurable ways, not just throw around cultural symbols. We need to start by asking little things of each other.

- If you are a friend, you will wear a mask because it protects you from me and me from you.
- We need to believe in and support the idea of one justice indivisible. If you don't know what I am talking about a starting point would be The 14 Principles. Google "14 Principles at 4comculture.com".
- The Spokane School District Board of Education wants to name several new school buildings. It would be nice if two of those schools were named after people of color. You can nominate someone by going to <https://www.spokaneschools.org/younameit>. I have nominated Frances Scott and Ruben Trejo. If you don't know who they are, Google "Frances Scott at 4comculture.com" and "Ruben Trejo at 4comculture.com".
- It would be good to let us know your personal level of commitment: Ally, Actor or Accomplice. If you're not familiar with the terms, Google "Ally Actor Accomplice at 4comculture.com"
- You need to have an online presence. You need to let your other brothas know what it is you stand for. One simple way to do this is to participate in online posting and messaging on Facebook.
- Let's become civic activists. Participate in local social justice organizations or engage in new methods of non-violent action that include physical, virtual and hybrid actions. Google "new forms of activism Guardian".

•We each need to develop a social justice budget. It would be nice if you would donate on a regular basis to the things that you believe in. Let me suggest that you make a donation to anybody or any group that you choose, but do it in the name of Spokane Brothas. The reason I suggest doing that is to build a power base that would be respected. I would suggest a budget that would express your volunteer time as well as your cash contributions. For example a budget of \$100 a month could also include volunteering, for example 7 hours a month at the national minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour would be about a \$50 in-kind contribution. What if you showed up to volunteer in a Brothas T-shirt?

•Send a check to the Black Lens. About \$4.00 a month buys a subscription.

•Contribute to an informational issue campaign. For example about \$16 pays for a MailChimp (<https://mailchimp.com/pricing/>) service that will send your message to a mailing list of thousands that you have built. In times of quarantine and isolation, you have to find ways other than community meetings to deliver information about your issues. You could buy a yard sign with your message or issue or candidate.

•Give \$20 to local and/or regional progressive organizations or blue political parties - to the same organization/s every month so they can feel your presence.

•Give \$10 to national progressive organizations or blue political parties - to the same organization/s every month so they can feel your presence.

If we only had 14 brothas contributing at this level it would be \$1400 per month or \$16,800 per year. Imagine what would happen if we had 100 brothas.

I have asked Sandy to publish this message in the June issue of the Black Lens. Your thoughts and comments are welcome. If I haven't heard from you by June 12, I will assume you are not interested.

Contact Bob Lloyd at [4comculture.com](https://www.4comculture.com) or on Facebook.



No Hashtags are Going to Save Us

By Renika Williams

Over the past few months in quarantine, we have been taking care of ourselves and each other by staying in. We protect our loved ones by wearing masks, washing our hands and staying 6-feet away from each other. This is supposed to keep up safe. Somehow, WE are still not safe.

I have mostly stayed away from the news, simply because Coronavirus coverage seems so daunting and omnipresent and who needs to be overloaded with death statistics and a million obscure ways to catch an infectious disease. But something new, something recent in my timeline has become more distressing for me than COVID-19 ever was--the murder of George Floyd.

George Floyd, or Big Floyd as his family so lovingly regarded him, is another in a long list of unarmed Black men killed too soon by police. In the midst of a global pandemic, Black lives are still at risk.

We have marched and we have protested and we have used technology, trying our best to hold the police accountable. But George Floyd's death says it still isn't working.

Body cameras, for example, were supposed to be the answer. The are supposed to be a technology that offers itself as an indelible, incorruptible witness. But it seems that they are not so incorruptible after all and their use may cause more harm than good to our communities.

The two large corporations that manufacture the majority of police body cameras, Axon and Wolfcon, are at opposite ends over the expansion of body camera technology--whether or not to use facial recognition. The introduction of facial recognition would allow the police to make note of your known locations and associates, and help police to identify "suspects".

This technology, according to Axon's ethics board, is "...not reliable enough to ethically justify its use."

Why is it not reliable you may ask? Because it "does not perform as well on people of col-



or compared to whites, on women compared to men, or young people compared to older people."

Basically, it only works effectively on old white men.

Axon banned all facial recognition on their devices, but smaller companies, such as Wolfcon, who want to take Axon's place in the expanding market, hope to ramp up facial recognition efforts.

I bring this up because in this current COVID-19 world, where it is even more difficult to organize than ever, and to fight back, we are potentially relying on unknown and unverified technologies to help us win our battles.

While the technology may help us in the short term, the only thing that will protect us in the long term is US. We can't wait for technology to save us. No body cams are going to save us. No hashtags are going to save us either when the technology fails.

Ultimately, it is us that will have to do the saving. It's us who will have to get up and fight back against current technology or new technology or whatever else that eventually comes along that can be used against us.

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Through their humorous and quirky way of looking at the world, these two ladies help broaden the perspectives of their listeners.

The Two Brown Ladies and a Microphone show is all about sharing and speaking from the heart to enlighten their listeners with soulful opinions, advice and support navigating day to day life.

To Matter, Also

#irunwithahmaud

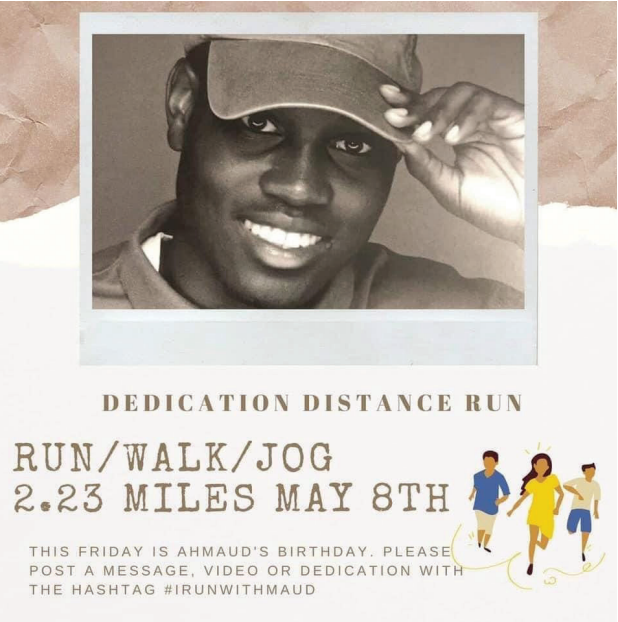
By Taurus and Dr. Oladunni Oluwoye- Richardson

Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year old Black man, was shot to death while jogging in a neighborhood outside of Brunswick, GA. Mr. Arbery was jogging on February 23rd, 2020 and while jogging decided to stop at a home construction site, take a look around and then proceed with his run. He was stalked and pursued by two white men in a pickup truck.

While, we, the public, were informed about the death of Ahmaud, yet another senseless killing, and I really do mean senseless, the family of Ahmaud Arbery had to live through his death twice. The first time privately and the second time in the public eye, putting on a brave face, for justice, for awareness, and for unity.

We are living in a world that has caused a lot of mistrust and trauma among people of color because of these senseless killings of Black men and women that keep happening.

Amaud Arbery was harassed, assaulted and gunned down by two white men (the McMichaels) in broad daylight,



while out jogging in a South Georgia neighborhood. Their reasoning was that Ahmaud “fit the description of recent burglaries in the Satilla Shore neighborhood.” That reason is not good enough. There is no reason good enough to explain why this young man’s life was stolen from him.

We have come to know this as racial profiling. Many Black people know what it feels like. It happens while going into a store to shop or when you notice someone clutching their bag, or when you realize that security is following you. We have become accustomed to being told not to wear hoodies so that we are not viewed as threatening and now jogging in the street.

What Ahmaud’s death has told us is that the color of our skin is a threat. The times have not changed that much in that it is possible for white people to kill us in the street, capture it on video and no arrest will be made.

These occurrences most often depict us as the aggressor, as in the case of Ahmaud, and people believe it. “It’s hard when you can’t really believe what authority tells you, you know?” said Wanda Cooper, the mother of Mr. Arbery.

In my opinion, some people make the justification that in these cases what makes the person an aggressor is because the individual did not immediately comply, or they moved too quickly, or they stood up for their rights, or they looked suspicious (which is code for they are Black). It was only when leaked video of the incidence surfaced and spread like wild fire across social media and picked up news coverage that the McMichaels were finally arrested.

Footage from phone video displayed that the McMichaels were the aggressors and Mr. Arbery was jogging, then confronted and blocked in by a large truck in the middle of street. Moments later you can hear the shotgun fired. Mr. Arbery had not committed any crime and there was no reason for these men to believe they had the right to stop him with weapons or to use deadly force in furtherance of their unlawful attempted stop him. This is murder.

On Thursday May 7, more than two months after the shooting, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation announced that Travis and Gregory McMichael had been taken into custody and charged with aggravated assault and murder.



Bob Coleman, the County Commissioner at large, released a statement, “That’s what should have happened a long time ago before the sun went down. They killed a person in the bright sunlight.”

In solidarity and to pay tribute to Ahmaud Arbery’s love for jogging, people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds ran 2.23 miles posting “#irunwithahmaud” on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram on May 8th 2020, which would have marked Ahmaud’s 26th birthday. A bunch of us gathered at Friendship Park here in Spokane and ran 2.23 miles in honor of Mr. Ahmaud Arbery.

“I Can't Breathe”



A Poem by Bethany 'B.Lyte' Montgomery

He can't breathe
She can't breathe
They can't breathe
WE CAN'T BREATHE

Breath

Something that seems so effortless
Something done through our subconscious
Something done until the day we die
Something that keeps us alive

Life

Life is breath
Feel the air fill up in your chest
Now close your eyes
And imagine laying on the ground
Hands behind your back
And someone's knee
Not just anyone
The police
Pinned against your neck

Yeah that's a reality check
Don't give a damn about any forged check
The reality is that to them

Your life don't matter
If you're Black
A truth that is sad
A truth that we shouldn't have

We are mad
We are furious
They keep killing us
We keep filming it
The tension keeps building up
When is enough
Actually going to be enough

How much more blood
How much longer
Will they drag us through the mud
Seems as though society has grown numb
To the inhumanity our people
Have received from this country since day 1

If only they could really feel our pain
If only they could really know our rage

We are sick of dropping names
We are sick of digging graves
We are sick of all the injustices
We are sick of us being treated like nothing

Let us add George Floyd
To the very long list
And again let us never forget
What Dr. King said,

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”

We shed our tears
We bury our kids
They keep committing sin
When will it end

Momma
Will it ever end

Change don't happen overnight
But we should all know wrong from right
We all sure know black from white
And well if you're Black
Then you're in for a fight

We fight for our lives
We fight for our rights
We fight for our justice
We fight for our sisters and brothers
We fight for one another

You can knock us down
We will always get back up
And if you kill us

We'll make sure that you feel us
And we ain't never giving up
Because we got us
And we got love
And as always

WE SHALL OVERCOME

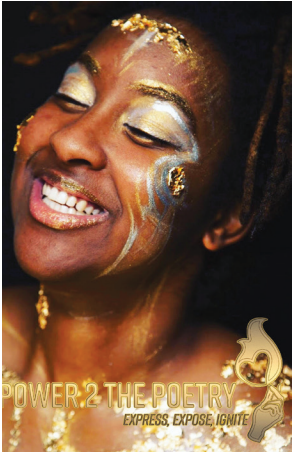
Power 2 The Poetry

Rest In Peace to all those deceased due to the brutality of the police

A poem dedicated to George Floyd.

Power 2 The Poetry
power2thepoetry.com
@power2thepoetry

More poems at power2thepoetry.com



Open Doors Celebrates Our 2020 Graduates

By Terrance Nixon
Open Doors Program Manager

Open Doors is a program designed to offer young adults, ages 16-21, who do not yet have a diploma or high school equivalency (HSE), an educational option other than dropping out of high school.

Open Doors is a program where students can work toward their high school diploma or prepare for, and take, the HSE.

In addition, students will receive case management support and have access to the Workforce Opportunity and Innova-

tion Act (WIOA) programs available at the Next Generation Zone. These workplace readiness and preparation programs include a 21st Century Work Skills Academy, industry tours, job shadows, college tours and internships.

Open Doors staff work hard to show the relevancy between education and entering the work force. They help students see future possibilities, learn what is necessary to get there and start taking steps towards attaining their goals. This is possible because of the hard work of both our students and staff.

The greatest thing these young adults often find at the Next Generation Zone is hope. This is particularly important in what I feel may be the most defining moment of this generation.

To honor the incredibly hard work and accomplishments of our graduating students, we have distributed yard signs and posted graduation lists in various new media outlets.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not won and our graduating seniors across Spokane are proof of that.

Next Generation Zone graduates, don't allow what has been lost to this virus to define you. Strive to be defined by how you respond. The world is yours now and we can't wait to see what you make of it.

From the entire Next Generation Zone team and our partners, congratulations to each of you.

Operated in partnership with the Next Generation Zone, Open Doors is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

HSE Earners (from July 1st through today) 2019-2020!



No Photo Available For:
Adam, RJ
Anselmo Marnach, Jordan
Barskey, Gabriel
Black, Robin
Bleam, Noah
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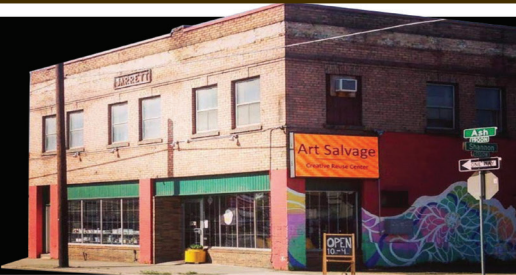
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By James Smith

Hello Black Lens Subscribers and Readers,

My name is James L. Smith. Like yours, my family is trying to adjust to the Covid19 pandemic, and like your family, we have some questions that we would like to have some answers to, in these uncertain times.

I have collaborated with Patricia Hosner, MSW, LICSW, CMHS, who agreed to participate in a short Question and Answer session.

Here are the Questions:

1. Being able to hang out with my family and friends helps my mental health. What do I do now that I can't see them?

During this time of social distancing, to help us stay healthy, we can still socialize with our family and friends. One of the best ways is to use platforms such as FaceTime, House Party, Zoom, or Facebook Portal. While these don't replace the benefits of physical proximity, it does help us to feel connected in some way to our loved ones and dissipate feeling isolated. Checking in regularly by phone or texting is still an option for people to try and keep close with one another.

I am having a hard time silencing the doomsday fears. Any suggestions?

I often encourage my clients to take small breaks from any form of media that could contribute to the anxiety about the Covid 19 pandemic or any other fears. This not only includes traditional news outlets but also social media platforms that often have unfounded stories and the personal opinions of others. I also recommend relaxation skills such as guided meditation or autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR). Both of these techniques can help to calm down the automatic thoughts in our mind and activate our parasympathetic nervous system.

For someone who has difficulties in shutting their mind down, schedule 15-20 minutes in the day to think about whatever is making you anxious. When the 15-20 minutes is over, go back to what you need to do for the day. When we purposefully give our anxious thoughts attention for a set amount of time, we can feel more in control of our thoughts and emotions.

3. What's the best way to support a stressed loved one who has the Covid19 virus?

Depending on the severity of the case and whether they have been hospitalized, the best way to support someone is to follow doctors' recommendations. Also, just asking them what they need can be helpful. They may need help with things such as getting groceries, cleaning the house, and even some financial assistance while they are recovering from COVID. Just knowing someone is there for

them to meet their needs can help reduce the stress of what they're going through.

4. Finally, Patricia, some anxiety is already part of our lives, will you talk about the increased levels we are experiencing now and what we can do about it?

There is a lot going on right now in our community. Validation during this time of what we're feeling is important. We don't want to minimize how this pandemic has affected our everyday lives. My personal go to has always been, and especially now, listening to music. Turning off the tv or social media and turning on music while cooking, cleaning, or just relaxing will help distract those thoughts.

Some form of physical exercise is also great for getting out of our minds. With the nicer weather, getting out for a walk while appropriately social distancing is an option too. Even just sitting in your front or back yard for some fresh air can be helpful. I also find that my spirituality helps me through difficult times. Whatever this looks like for a person, now is the time to embrace your belief system to help guide you through this time.

Our desired outcome is to provide you with some useful information that hopefully will help you cope.

We want to thank Sandy and the Black Lens for this opportunity!

James

Disclaimer: Content is for informational purposes only and is not meant to serve as medical advice or replace consultation with your physician or mental health professional.



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The Pros and Cons of COVID-19 Testing

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Late last month, the American Medical Association issued the following statement: “No therapies have yet to conclusively show effectiveness against COVID-19”.

According to information on the CDC website, “Two kinds of tests are available for COVID-19: viral tests and antibody tests. A viral test tells you if you have a current infection. An antibody test tells you if you had a previous infection.

Antibodies are produced by a person's immune system, and these antibodies are critical for control and clearance of the virus. An antibody test may not be able to show if you have a current infection, because it can take 1-3 weeks after infection to make antibodies. We do not know yet if having antibodies to the virus can protect someone from getting infected with the virus again, or how long that protection might last.

With so much still unknown about immunity to COVID-19 and a dozens and dozens of antibody tests that have not been rigorously validated, experts worry that widespread antibody screening may give those who test positive a false sense of security.

The whole idea of antibody testing goes back to around the time of the influenza pandemic in 1918. Medical experts at the time thought that you could take serum (or plasma) from people who have had the infectious disease and have recovered. You then take their antibodies and inject them into someone who is having a severe case, or rapidly deteriorating, and protect them. Sounds reasonable.

With other diseases, the presence of antibodies often means you have acquired immunity against re-infection, for at least some period of time, but that is not known yet in the case of COVID-19. That means that a positive antibody test doesn't guarantee immunity. It has not been proven that the antibodies that are being produced are in fact neutralizing antibodies. It's possible that an antibody may bind to a part of the virus that the virus doesn't need to infect our cells. In order to be neutralizing, an antibody must prevent the virus from infecting our cells.

Just recently, the FDA cracked down on the nearly 200 commercial antibody tests that have hit the market, citing that some test kits are fraudulent and show inaccurate results. An accurate antibody test would help the scientists and researchers gather the data on who has gotten the virus, including those who've showed no symptoms of being sick. It could even help develop a treatment to fight



the virus. But experts warn that they have not been able to determine if someone is immune once they've had it. We now know from all of this that a positive antibody test may not necessarily mean you're safe from ever getting the virus again.

Swab testing, despite being the “gold standard” for COVID-19 testing has its own drawbacks. The sample needs to be collected carefully from the correct area. It's estimated that errors can occur about eight to ten per cent of the time, which contributes to false negatives. Labs also need specialized equipment and skilled staff. Lab officials say the amount of virus in the upper respiratory tract seems to peak in the first week of symptoms and could fall too low to be detected later.

Another thing about the swab test. It doesn't end with just getting tested. Let me remind you that knowing if you are infected with the virus starts a whole series of questions for you and your healthcare team. If you are positive, de-

cisions have to be made (sometimes, this can be without your agreement). Do you need to be hospitalized and separated from other patients? If you can go home, how should you isolate yourself?

Many people are anxious to get tested so that they can get back to their normal lives. Just know that there is a strong possibility, based the way this virus is spreading, that you might come up with a positive result! You should be prepared for the results; no matter what they conclude.

According to the COVID Tracking Project, only about 8.4 million Americans, or 2.5% of the total U.S. population, were tested for COVID-19 as of May 9. This reflects, to a large degree, the strain the demand for testing has placed on manufacturers and labs. Some diagnostic test suppliers have deliberately stopped testing for certain diseases, for example, to enable them to allocate more resources to manufacturing and supplying COVID-19 tests.

COVID-19 has forced us all to have to consider things that we never imagined. But it is for our benefit that we get good information to inform our decisions.

One last work about the “reopening of the country”. My friend, Rev. John E. King, Jr., told me that there are three types of people: one-third can't wait to get back out there; another third of the people are waiting to see what happens to the first third before going back out; and the last third are those who don't care what happens to to the first or second third, they ain't going back out there! Which third are you?

We need to know that testing is not the be all, end all, that we think they are. Some scientists believe that tests for the coronavirus are only about 70 percent accurate. A false negative is problematic because it tells the patient they don't have the virus.

Remember, I'm not a doctor. I just sound like one. Take good care of yourself and live the best life possible! The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. I do not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a replacement form of treatment for physical, mental or medical problems by your doctor either directly or indirectly.

Glenn Ellis, is a Harvard Medical School Research Bioethics Fellow and author of Which Doctor?, and Information is the Best Medicine. Ellis is an active media contributor on Health Equity and Medical Ethics. For more good health information visit: www.glennellis.com



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Washington State Department of Health

Ice Cube, Charlamagne, Diddy: "Let's Hold The Black Vote Hostage Until There's A Black Agenda We're Satisfied With"

Written by Ann Brown

*Reprinted from The Moguldom Nation
moguldom.com: Photos: Evan Agosti-
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On May 24, Ice Cube tweeted, “Hold the Black vote hostage until one of ’em comes with A Black Agenda that we’re satisfied with. It’s not our job to fix the country’s mess until we fix our mess...”

The hip-hop icon's tweet falls in line with a sentiment Sean "Diddy" Combs recently shared during an interview with Naomi Campbell when he called for Black people to hold off giving Joe Biden and the Democrats support until the Black community's issues and needs are addressed.

“We want to know very clearly. Just like Trump made it clear that he wanted to build a wall, Biden needs to make it clear that he’s gonna change the lives and quality of life of Black and Brown people,” Diddy said. “Or else he can’t get the vote. I will hold the vote hostage if I have to.”

In the interview on Campbell's web series, "No Filter with Naomi," Diddy declared the "Black vote ain't free." More people seem to be following this belief especially after the presumptive presidential Democrat's interview on The Breakfast Club with Charlamagne Tha God.

Nina Turner, national co-chair of the Bernie Sanders 2020 presidential campaign, tweeted, “The @DNC must stop playing games with our votes. And to my Beloved Black Community: Now is the time! We owe it to our ancestors, ourselves and to our future to seize this moment for the uplift of our people. This assignment is forever!#Iaintblack”

During the interview, Biden seemingly questioned Charlamagne's — and any other undecided Black voter's — Blackness by saying Black people who don't vote for him “ain't Black.”

Biden later backtracked and expressed remorse for acting so “cavalier,” insist-



ing that he's "never, never, ever taken the African-American community for granted," Hot News Hip Hop reported.

Shortly after Diddy's declaration, Biden released his plan for Black America called, "Lift Every Voice."

Now, after The Breakfast Club interview, the Biden campaign reposted highlights from the plan on Instagram.

According to the post, “The Biden Plan for Black America” will close the wealth and income gap by investing in African-American workers, businesses, and communities, TheGrio reported. The post also stressed that a Biden administration would push for health equity and address racial inequity.

“I shouldn’t have been such a wise guy. I shouldn’t have been so cavalier...I have

never, ever taken the African-American community for granted,” Biden said, according to journalist Yamiche Alcindor. “No one should have to vote for any party based on their race, background, religion, or any demographic information.”

While the sentiment of Diddy, Charlemagne, and now Ice Cube seems to be gaining momentum, other Black voters say now is not the time to put the election on the line.

Holding the Black vote hostage is irresponsible and puts the Black community in danger, wrote Christina M. Greer, an associate professor at Fordham University and the author of “Black Ethnicities: Race, Immigration, and the Pursuit of the American Dream.” Greer co-hosts the podcast FAQ-NYC, and is the political editor at The Grio.

While Greer said she agrees with Diddy that Biden and the Democrats cannot take the Black vote for granted, she feels holding the Black vote hostage “would be detrimental to not only the Black community but the nation (and world) for generations to come.”

Keeping Republicans in the White House has only resulted in policies that do not benefit the Black community, according to Greer.

“As we know, Black women make pennies on the dollar compared to their white counterparts. While this president and his Republican sycophants are eroding the economic security of millions of people by breaking up unions, failing to pay people of color an equal living wage, defunding educational systems, bankrupting families in unequal hospital systems, and destroying the social safety net, we cannot make a false equivalent argument about the two parties,” she wrote.

She added: “How do you plan to hold the vote hostage when the Republican party is already doing everything in its power to prevent Black people from voting in free and fair elections? Just look at the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race where rampant voter disenfranchisement was so widespread even Republicans couldn’t believe what they were seeing.”

Greer does call for the Democratic Party to be more responsive to the specific needs of Black people.

According to Greer, four more years of Trump will result in even deadlier health effects for Black communities, dissolving unions that brought Black people into the middle class, and defunding stable government institutions such as the post office and other agencies that employ mostly Black workers.

Some on Twitter agreed with Greer, who pointed out that Diddy has a privilege many other Black people don't have.

One person tweeted this about holding the Black vote hostage: “You can afford to, we working class folks cannot.”

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EWU Eliminates Office for Diversity & Inclusion - Continued From Page 1

Scott Finnie, Program Director and Senior Faculty in the Africana Studies Program at EWU admits that, like the students on campus, he was also caught off guard by the President's decision.

"Because of Dr. Clarke's professionalism and approachableness to students, her pattern of establishing a real connection with the community, and in light of her track record being so effectively successful up until today, the decision caught all of us off guard," he said. As a result, our first question was, who can we talk to about why this happened."

Dr. Finnie says he didn't agree with the decision, but he and the other ethnic studies directors have been able to sit and talk with the administration and have had some "very open discussions." In fairness to Dr. Cullinan and her staff, he says, he doesn't believe they were "aware that so much ground was going to be lost" by their decision, because in their minds they were "going to re-establish the diversity pursuit and commitment with a stronger emphasis on the classroom atmosphere, for the sake of the student."

That argument, however, doesn't carry much weight with the students who the President says her decision was supposed to benefit. They question why there was a need to create something new, when ODI was already "doing a wonderful job representing underrepresented students on campus," Marixza wondered.

Dr. Shari Clarke stepped into the role of Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion in August of 2017. She became the only person of color at that level at EWU and was touted, at the time, as "an excellent addition to Eastern's leadership team," by President Cullinan. She added, "In all her roles, she has focused on creating diverse and inclusive learning communities and has worked collaboratively to advance diversity initiatives and expand opportunities for all students."

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Vice President position, as well as the Multi-Cultural Center located in the Student Union Building, were all the result of a hard fought battle, according to a student letter that was drafted by the Multicultural Coalition of

EWU and sent to Dr. Cullinan in opposition of her decision.

"We the Multicultural Coalition of Eastern Washington University, and our allies among faculty, staff, administration, and the community, fought to establish the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, the Vice President of Diversity position, and a Multicultural Center in the face of administrative resistance and outright opposition. Since then, we have worked tirelessly to demonstrate the positive impact these additions bring to Eastern Washington University."

During the two and a half years that Dr. Clarke has been heading up the ODI, the positive impacts on the EWU campus have been too numerous to fit in these pages. For starters, under the guidance of Clarke and her staff, EWU received national recognition for Higher Education Excellence in Diversity, during both the 2018 & 2019 academic years.

A snapshot of other notable accomplishments include: developing a campus-wide Diversity Strategic Plan; convening a Diversity Advisory Council comprised of faculty, community members, staff & students; convening a Diversity Retention Committee to address retention & graduation rates of underrepresented students and authoring a 6 Point Plan for Diversity Retention with specific strategies specifically designed to increase retention; implementing the EWU Institute for Diversity Education, and designing & facilitating monthly Diversity Essentials Training.

In addition, the ODI designed the annual D&I Awards Ceremony to celebrate the achievements of the EWU community; designed the Multicultural Unity Reception (2017 & 2018) with over 300 people attended, including colleagues from Whitworth & Gonzaga Universities; implemented the SHE Leadership Academy, which served to empower underrepresented young women from local & regional schools; and hosted the Black Greek-letter organization forum at the request of students who petitioned for the formation of Black Greek sororities & fraternities on the EWU campus.

One of the most significant impacts in terms of the effect it will have in the future was working

with HR on the addition of a diversity question on the hiring application, which asks the applicant to address how he/she/they will contribute to the diversity at EWU.

For students, however, the positive impact of Dr. Clarke and ODI is more personal. "The Office of Diversity and Inclusion provided me the guidance and the platform to find my voice," Kaisa Siipola shared. "The office embodied a sense of community for students to have their voices heard and it provided a sense of autonomy." She added, "Dr. Shari Clarke was a role model for students of color, to show them that an educated, African American woman can hold a leadership role and be as hardworking and dedicated to serving the students as any other faculty member on that campus."

Sarahi Gutierrez echoed a similar sentiment. "ODI has done so much for our campus and I have seen a culture shift happening with students of color. They feel their voices are being heard. The Office of Diversity & Inclusion brings forth acceptance. They encourage us and support us to continue attending EWU by trying to find us resources. I personally rely on the resources offered by the office and its directors, and I worry that once the office is eliminated, they will be burdened with more tasks and it might not be as successful as it was."

Marixza Torres believes the Office of Diversity & Inclusion brought a unique value to the EWU campus. "ODI was meant to be a measure of accountability, to see how the institution was working for its underrepresented students." Her concern is that with ODI no longer on campus, there will be nobody to fill that role. Nobody to make sure the university is actually doing the things it says it is doing for students of color and other underrepresented students.

Marixza's doubts and concerns are shared by other students as well. Some believe that ODI and Dr. Clarke's position were eliminated because of budget cuts, but they don't know for sure and don't feel they are getting answers, or that their input is being valued.

Dr. Finnie believes that one of the impacts that will result from the administration's decision is "an enormous vacuum." He also feels that an unexpected impact will be "an increased level

of suspicion and mistrust from everybody, especially students and faculty." That observation appears to be accurate and it looks like the suspicion and mistrust will also be present off campus as well.

Kurtis Robinson, President of the Spokane Branch of the NAACP, upon hearing about EWU's decision to close the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, described it as "ridiculously disturbing." Adding, "I'm very concerned. An organization that should be one of the greatest champions for diversity and inclusion has made the decision to eliminate a position that is continuing the momentum of undoing the racial disparities that exist. What this shows us is that this is not something that is a priority for higher education and it is now taking a back seat."

EWU's Multicultural Coalition wants to raise awareness about what is happening on the campus and to urge Dr. Cullinan to re-think her decision. The ability of the Multicultural Coalition to organize against the office closing however has been hampered by the coronavirus.

"The pandemic has affected a lot of people, so we understand that this has been put on the back burner, but we want to let Dr. Cullinan know that this will impact students in the future, after the pandemic ends, and these actions will have a lasting impact on the students who study at Eastern," Marixza shared.

Sarahi added, "students have fought to produce an office of Diversity and Inclusion and hire a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for more than 17 years, and it has only been active for 3 years. In those short 3 years, the staff has done so much for our community. Their event programming, creating new resources, updating diverse training, and communicating with students, has helped us feel more at home. We, the students, would appreciate letters of solidarity and support to keep our Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion and the Office for Diversity and Inclusion on the EWU campus."

(Contact information for the EWU President and Board of Trustees are on the next page.)

If we are not actively engaged structurally and interpersonally in standing against something that has the historic momentum that the issues of oppression and racism have here in America and in Eastern Washington, then, we are by default perpetuating it.

-Kurtis Robinson





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The Black Lens Has Questions for Eastern Washington University?

Who Made the Decision to Close the ODI?

Black Lens Questions to President Cullinan?

- 1) What was the process that was used to arrive at the decision to close the Office for Diversity and Inclusion and eliminate the position of Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion?
- 2) Who was involved in that decision making process? Students? Staff? Faculty? Board of Trustees? The President's Leadership Team? Who ultimately made the final decision?
- 3) What was the racial/ethnic make-up of the individuals involved in the decision making process?
- 4) Was the campus community given the opportunity to offer any feedback about the decision before it was finalized and implemented?
- 5) It appears that all staff positions associated with the Office for Diversity and Inclusion have been retained and relocated to other locations on campus, except for the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. Is this correct? If so, why is this the only position that has been eliminated?
- 6) Why was the primary diversity position on the EWU campus shifted from a Vice President position that reports directly to the President to an Associate Vice Provost position that will report to a Provost? This appears to be a lower level position. Is that correct? What was the reasoning behind this?
- 7) The University's Diversity Strategic Plan references a Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion with a direct reporting line to the President. (see below). Has the strategic plan been revised or altered? If so, what was the process used to determine the change?

"In March 2016, President Cullinan appointed a diversity and inclusion task force. As a result of their research, it was decided that an executive level vice president for diversity and inclusion would be hired with a direct reporting line to the president."

8) Does EWU's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force still exist? If so, who are the members?

9) Was the Office for Diversity and Inclusion eliminated to save money?

10) EWU Prides itself as a racially diverse campus. What is the demographic breakdown of students on the EWU campus?

Dr. Cullinan's Response:

The decision to create a high-level position to be embedded in Academic Affairs came from many comments and urgent requests from students, staff, and faculty about the great need to improve the cultural competency in classroom and labs. Individual students and student groups such as ASEWU, BSU leaders, and the students working with the Pride Center have been calling for extensive faculty training. Many faculty also have said they need support and training to ensure they understand the issues students face and how they can best respond.

The larger campus and external community does not provide input when positions are eliminated. The Board of Trustees was consulted and voiced support.

Extensive campus input as well as community input will be essential to the AVP search going forward.

The current ethnic diversity at EWU, according to number for the current academic year, stands at 34 percent.

President and Leadership Team



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Dr. Mary Cullinan
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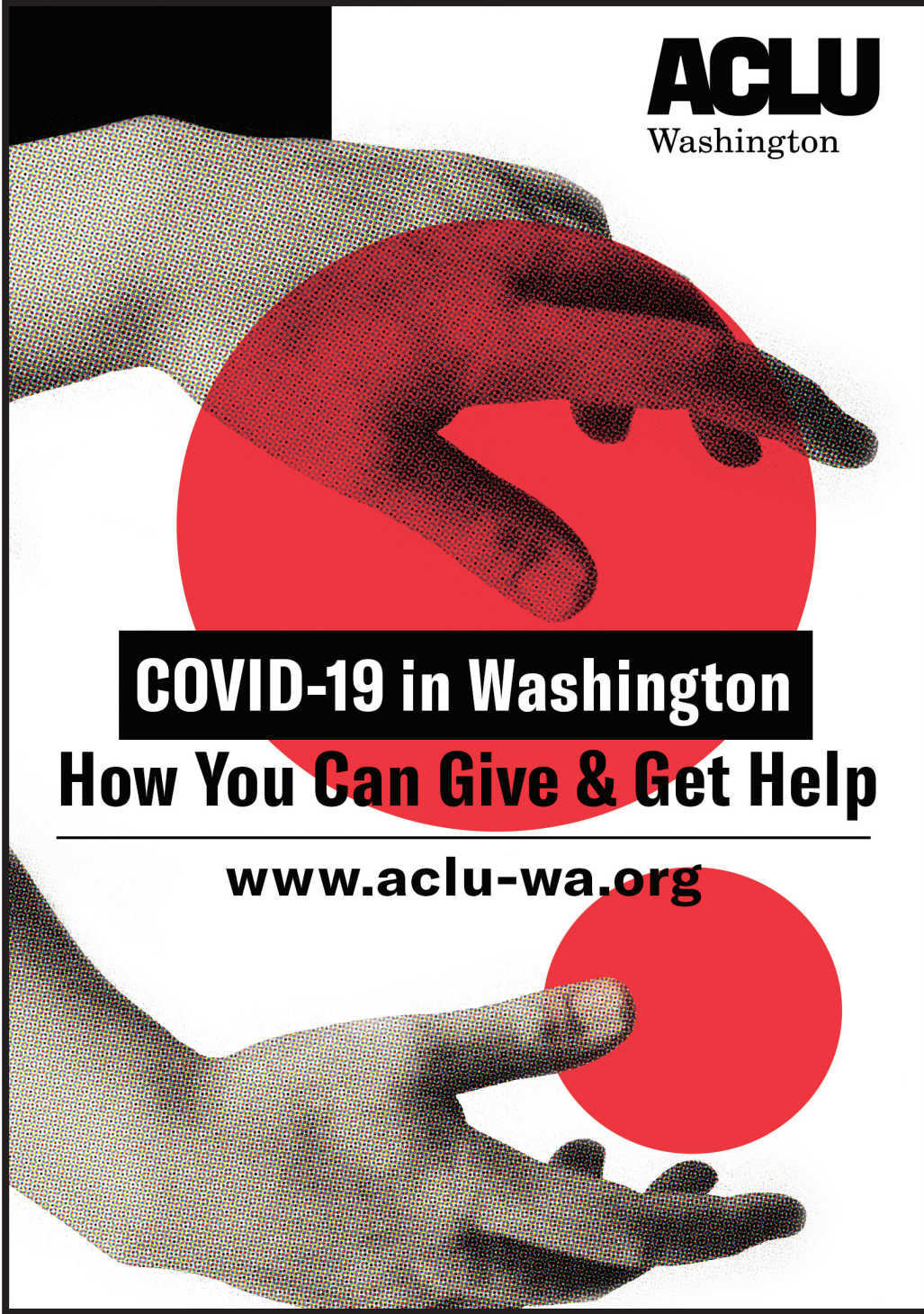


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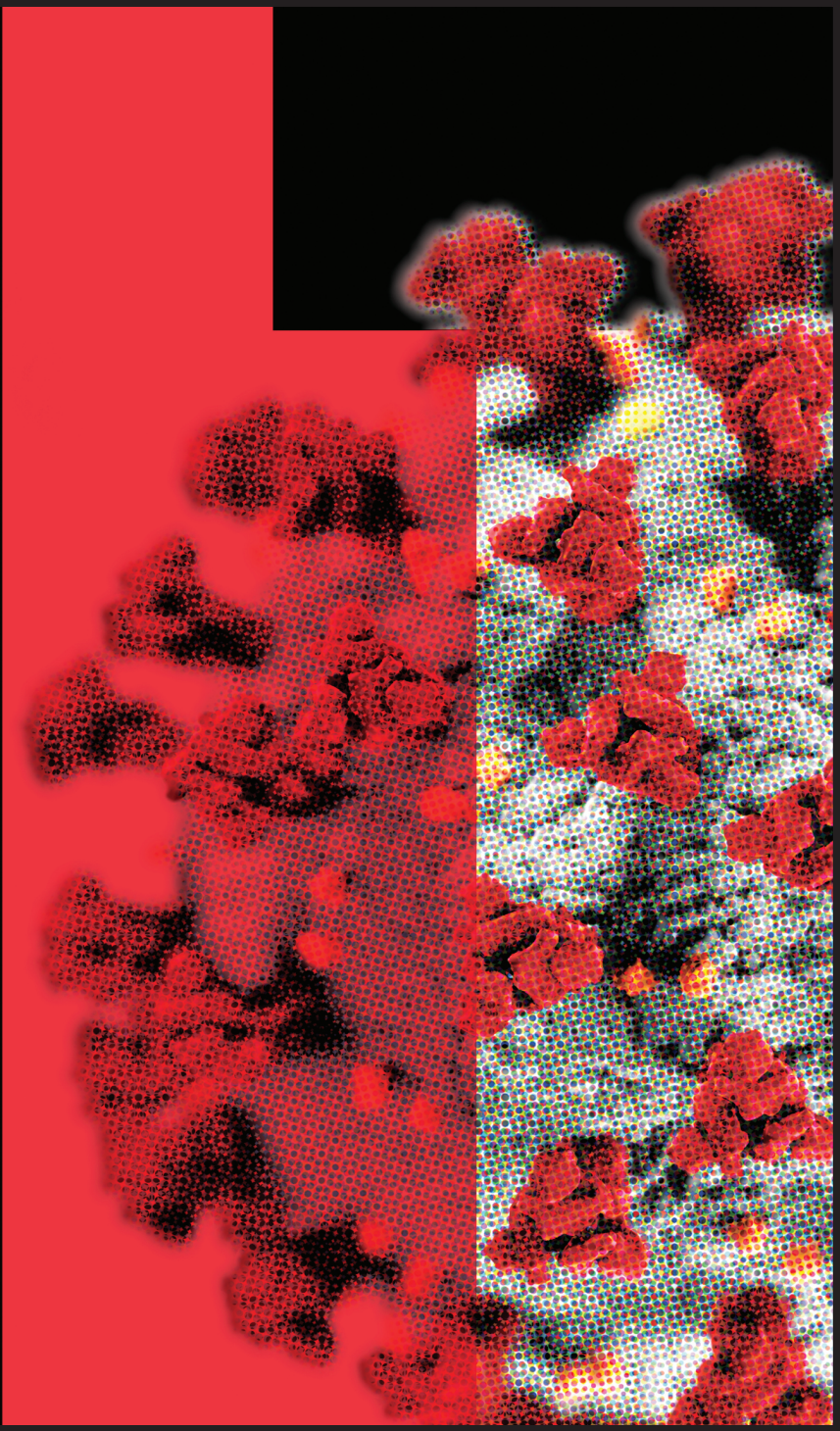
Why was the African American Vice President eliminated?



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OUR VOICES

COVID-19 and America - The Fire This Time

By Dr. Wilmer J. Leon, III

(TriceEdneyWire.com)

Time catches up with kingdoms and crushes them, gets its teeth into doctrines and rends them; time reveals the foundations on which any kingdom rests, and eats at those foundations, and it destroys doctrines by proving them to be untrue.

- James Baldwin “Down At The Cross”, 1963

The foundation of “America” and its “greatness” was built upon some interesting principles or precepts; “manifest destiny”, “American exceptionalism”, “White man’s burden” and “American internationalism” to name a few. They have become the foundation and rationalization for a belief system. The basic tenet of that belief system is that the development and expansion of American empire was inevitable, if not divine. Former President Reagan called America, “the shining city upon a hill”. Undergirding this is the cooptation of Christianity and the sickness known as “white supremacy”.

As children, Americans are indoctrinated into the mythology of America. We pledge allegiance to “...one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Baldwin dispelled that myth “...the country is celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon.” Jack “Jackie” Roosevelt Robinson told us long before “Kap” took a knee, “I cannot stand and sing the anthem. I cannot salute the flag; I know that I am a black man in a white world.”

Former Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) told us that “The United States is safer and more prosperous in a more democratic world and should take the lead in advancing this cause.” The problem with his logic is that you can neither foster nor promote democracy by causing innocent people to suffer through sanctioning their countries or through the barrel of a gun.

America can’t bring democracy to Venezuela by supporting coups to overthrow democratically elected presidents, Chavez’ and Maduro. America cannot bring democracy to Boliva, Brazil and Honduras by supporting undemocratic right-wing governments that repress, threaten and jail their socialist opponents. This is not democracy, this is hypocrisy.

America cannot advance democracy around the world when it weaponizes the cause of the current global pandemic, COVID-19. How can a country that weaponizes a global pandemic be seen as a “shining city upon a hill”? It is immoral if not criminal for the U.S. to increase sanctions through its “maximum pressure campaigns” against Venezuela, Iran, Cuba and Palestine. America’s maximum pressure is negatively impacting the flow of food, PPE, medicine and other supplies into these countries, making it exponentially more difficult for their governments to fight the pandemic.

As U.S. allies in Latin America are struggling to fight the novel coronavirus with limited financial and human



resources, the U.S. is pressuring them to expel Cuban doctors. At the “request” of Donald Trump, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has removed more than 8,000 Cuban doctors and other health professionals from Brazil. Ecuadoran President Lenin Moreno has sent 400 doctors back to Cuba. Bolivia has sent 700 doctors back to Cuba after the US forced the resignation of socialist President Evo Morales in November. The health agreement between Cuba and El Salvador has also been cancelled at Trump’s “request”.

Even though the US did not introduce the COVID-19 contagion into these countries, weaponizing it for political purposes to bring about regime change is the same as germ warfare and should be considered a crime against humanity.

America claims to be sanctioning these countries and others in the name of freedom, democracy and the American way. The families being destroyed by COVID-19 because the U.S. is applying it’s “maximum pressure campaign” on their governments for their “liberty” must, as Dr. King said, “... see Americans as strange liberators.”

The science to date tells us that this pandemic was detected in China in late 2019. Chinese health authorities warned the WHO of the pandemic on January 7, 2020. It hit Europe before the CDC confirmed the first case in the US on January 20, 2020. The Trump administration ignored the warnings. Trump largely disbanded the Global Health Security and Biodefense unit in the NSC in May 2018. This made it more difficult for the US to mount a coherent response. Trump can’t get out of his own way to solve this problem and Republicans in Congress are afraid to challenge him. Party allegiance “trumps” loyalty to the American people. All Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) can focus on is approving the next wave of conservative judges. Meanwhile, COVID-19 is exposing that the political system is broken.

Americans have been told that its health care system is the best in the world. People come from all over the world to avail themselves of its wonders and cures. That’s only true, if one can afford them. COVID-19 has exposed the fact that most Americans, even with health insurance, will be saddled with serious medical bills. According to Business Insider, “the total average charge per COVID-19 patient requiring an inpatient stay (6 days) is \$73,300 and the total average estimated allowed amount per commercially insured patient is \$38,221.”

There are 27 million Americans without insurance. Yet, democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden said he would veto a “Medicare For All” bill if it crossed his desk as president. COVID-19 is exposing that our political process is broken.

The CDC cannot produce a trustworthy COVID-19 testing kit, so the US government cannot test enough Americans to clearly understand the size of the problem. South Korea has identified 29 Korean manufacturers and exporters specializing in COVID-19 diagnostic devices and developed a robust testing regime. Cases in South Korea are dropping. The US cannot manufacture sufficient quantities of PPE since American companies have off-shored their manufacturing to China and Trump will not command the private sector to manufacture PPE through the Defense Production Act. The US government no longer keeps an ample supply of PPE on hand since Americans have bought into the bad idea of “less government” and the private sector does not want to compete with a well-stocked government in times like this. COVID-19 is exposing that this manufacturing system is broken.

Tyson Foods executives have said that the closure of food-processing plants due to COVID-19 is “breaking” the supply chain. American farmers are plowing under crops. Dairy farmers are dumping thousands of gallons of milk and millions of animals will be depopulated because of the closure of meat processing facilities. Jobless claims increased by 4.4 million, 26 million Americans have lost their jobs to COVID-19 and food banks are going empty. And you call this exceptional?

The U.S. can launch the \$13 Billion USS Gerald Ford aircraft carrier with a \$400K toilet problem but can’t get meat, milk and eggs to market in the midst of starving Americans, a crashing economy and a pandemic. COVID-19 has pulled the covers off of the entire charade called American exceptionalism.

Baldwin told us, time catches up with kingdoms and empires and crushes them. You better check your clocks and watches. God sent Noah the rainbow sign, no more water, COVID-19 this time.

Dr. Wilmer Leon is the Producer/ Host of the nationally broadcast talk radio program “Inside the Issues” on SiriusXM Satellite radio channel 126. Go to www.wilmerleon.com or email: wjl3us@yahoo.com. [www.twitter.com/drwlleon](https://twitter.com/drwlleon) and Dr. Leon’s Prescription at Facebook.com © 2020 InfoWave Communications, LLC



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OUR VOICES

Why Green Buildings Are A Civil Rights Issue

By Jacqui Patterson and Mandy Lee
NAACP

Voting rights. Segregation. Criminal justice reform. For more than a century, the civil rights movement has taken on the inequities that divide and disfigure American society. Now the green building sector has joined the fronts of struggle for access and equity.

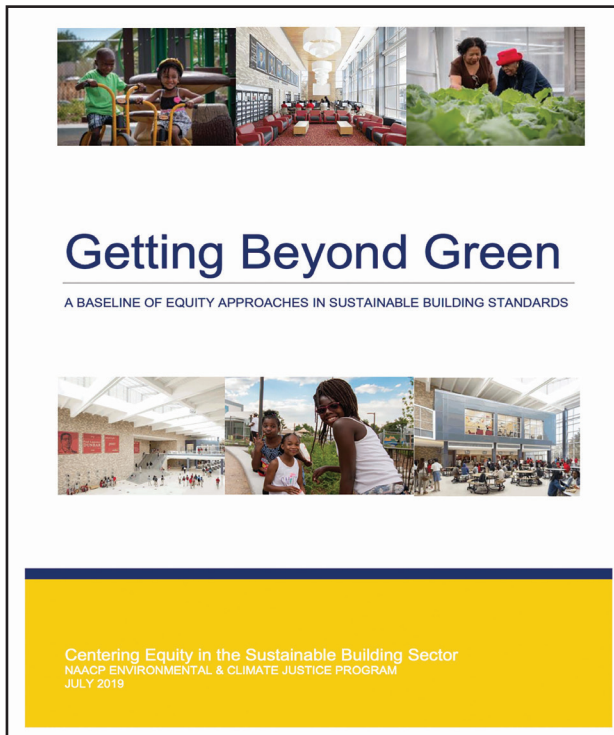
Why?

The green building sector is transforming the places in which we live, work, and gather. Sustainable buildings, defined by certification programs like LEED, promote the health and wellbeing of building occupants while minimizing climate change and pollution. For some people.

This wave of better building practices has yet to fully reach the people suffering the most from buildings that are unsafe, unhealthy, unaffordable, and unsustainable. African Americans and other people of color disproportionately feel the burden of unsustainable buildings: energy insecurity in their homes, health problems like asthma from poor indoor air quality, and damage from worsening disasters fueled by climate change. These are enduring legacies of discriminatory practices, disinvestment, and barriers to building wealth over the generations.

What's worse, the sustainable building sector is an insider's club with a serious diversity problem. Whether it's as policy makers, advocates, architects, contractors, or even in the construction workforce, the most impacted communities are underrepresented in the design and construction of sustainable buildings. For example, according to the National Organization of Minority Architects, less than two percent of registered architects are African Americans, and less than 0.4% are African American women. Green building is a huge growth industry, but communities of color are not yet positioned to fully benefit from it.

When we decided to establish our new headquarters as a living building and began to explore what it takes to do so, we saw the problem firsthand at meetings of green building organizations. We were struck by just how homogenous some of those spaces were in terms of race, with a significant dearth of people of color engaged in these discussions. We juxtaposed this against what we knew to be true: Communities of color and low-income communities are more likely to be in sick buildings, whether it's mold, lead, asbestos, or radon. We are more likely to be in



the least energy-efficient buildings, and that is reflected in the fact that we pay the highest proportion of our income for electricity. And we are more likely to be in the least disaster-resilient buildings, with homes in floodplains or without reinforcement.

That's why the NAACP recently launched the Centering Equity in the Sustainable Building Sector (CESBS) Initiative, pushing forward civil rights in this critical (if unexpected) new sphere. The NAACP will define and articulate an agenda for an equitable green building sector, using its Baltimore headquarters as a living laboratory for this concept. Through this effort, the NAACP will develop a replicable model for centering equity in all aspects of sustainable, healthy, safe, and regenerative buildings.

So, what would an equitable green building sector look like? It would advance community-wide transition, not just a few green buildings in isolation. Sustainability would be seen as a basic necessity – not a luxury item — in any building project. Low-income communities, communities of color, and women would be at the heart of a better building industry, supported by more inclusive education and professional development pathways. Sus-

tainability investments would prioritize the most impacted communities. And underrepresented communities would be deeply engaged in planning and design, because “shaping the environment is best done by the people who live in it,” according to Professor Dale Glenwood Green of Morgan State University.

Some communities and organizations are getting it right and helping us imagine what is possible. For example, the Mental Health Center of Denver, Colorado planned to build a new, green campus in the predominantly African American and low-income Northeast Park Hill community. The Center sought input from neighbors to shape the design and function of the four-acre property. As a result, the Dahlia Campus for Health and Well-Being now offers a comprehensive array of services in addition to mental health care: a preschool that is inclusive of students regardless of ability; a pediatric dental clinic; an urban farm, teaching kitchen, and farmers' market; and a variety of indoor and outdoor community spaces. The campus' sustainability and equity approaches were verified through LEED Gold certification and a tool called the SEED Evaluator.

Another model is the Green Communities Criteria (GCC) program, a framework and certification developed by Enterprise Community Partners to bring the benefits of sustainable construction practices to low-income families and affordable housing. While this program is still in development, it has already produced 127,000 certified affordable homes through \$3.9 billion in investment. Thanks to the leadership of standards like GCC, a total of 32 states have incentivized green building certification programs for affordable housing developments receiving support from the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.

Fundamentally, sustainability without equity will merely sustain inequity. The civil rights movement has a critical role to play in creating a sustainable building sector that is both green and just – for the benefit of our families, our communities, the economy, and the planet.

This op-ed is adapted from two reports released from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Centering Equity in the Sustainable Building Sector (CESBS) Initiative. Patterson is the Senior Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program; Lee is the program manager for the CESBS Initiative at the NAACP. For more information visit: <https://www.naacp.org/climate-justice-resources/centering-equity-sustainable-building-sector>.

Celebrating Bro. Malcolm X, A Warrior and Master Teacher

By A. Peter Bailey

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - A former United States president has been quoted as saying “Knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And a people who want to govern themselves must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.” No one whom I have ever met more clearly understood the realness of that observation than Brother Malcolm X, who himself once noted “Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today....”

That's why I believe that the best way to celebrate Brother Malcolm's 95th birthday on May 19, 2020 is to honor his role as a superb deliverer of knowledge. This is demonstrated in remarks that he delivered to 37 young Black folks from Mississippi who, in December 1964, was sent to visit him in Harlem by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

After greeting them warmly he said, “...the topics we are going to discuss in an informal way is Africa and the African revolution and its effect on the Afro-American. I take the time to mention this because I am one who believes that what happens on the African continent has a direct bearing on what happens to you and me in this country.”



This was probably the first time that those young Black folks had ever heard from a strong Pan-Africanist. He told them “....We of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) realize that the only time the Black man in this country is given any kind of recognition or even listened to is when America is afraid of outside pressure or when she's afraid of her image abroad. So we saw that it was necessary to expand the problem and struggle of the Black

man in this country until it went above and beyond the jurisdiction of the United States.”

Brother Malcolm told them about his May 1964 trip to Africa where he had audiences ranging from one and a half to 3 hours with Presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Sekou Toure of Guinea and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Also Prime Minister Milton Obote of Uganda. Those kind of connections, he told them, are important because they would provide pressure on the United States government to do something about the terrorism going on in Mississippi. “I point this out to you to let you know that when you are in Mississippi you are not alone...”

That was a caring, visionary, determined warrior and master teacher providing knowledge to those young Black people that's why we salute and honor him on his birthday.

A. Peter Bailey is a Journalist, Author, and Lecturer. He was a founding member of The Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), and was editor of the OAAU newsletter, Blacklash. Bailey is the author of several books, including Witnessing Brother Malcolm X, and is co-author of Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey. He has also contributed articles to numerous publications including Essence, Black Enterprise, Jet Magazine, and the New York Times.

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Saturday, June 27 10 - 11am

We are excited to update you on what we have been doing this year, on the progress of our remodel and on all the things that we have planned. We would love to hear from you!

For Zoom Link e-mail carlmaxeycenter@gmail.com or call 509-795-1886

Spokane Chapter of The Links, Inc

20 WHITE ROSE 20 BRUNCH

POSTPONED

The brunch will be rescheduled at a later date when the COVID-19 restrictions on large gathering has been lifted.



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Technical support and assistance may include:

- Navigational and technical assistance with contracts and applications
- Translating and distributing information
- Mentorship, education and/or training
- Planning for recovery and re-opening and support of their workforce

These services are available through August 31, 2020.

Contact:

Ben Cabildo at (509) 999-5365
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