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November 2021

www.blacklensnews.com

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Spokane's Black Community News Source

THE BLACK LENSTM

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

COLIN POWELL: A PATRIOT AND A BLACK MAN

The 'Two-ness' of the African American Experience

By Chad Williams



Colin Powell knew where he fit in American history.

The former secretary of state – who died on Oct. 18, 2021, at 84 as a result of COVID-19 complications – was

a pioneer: the first Black national security advisor in U.S. history, the first Black chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and also the first Black man to become secretary of state.

But his “American journey” – as he described it in the title of a 2003 autobiography – is more than the story of one man. His death is a moment to think about the history of Black American men and women in the military and the place of African Americans in government.

But more profoundly, it also speaks to what it means to be an American, and the tensions that Colin Powell – as a patriot and a Black man – faced throughout his life and career.

I'm a scholar of African American studies who is currently writing a book on the great civil rights intellectual W.E.B. DuBois. When I heard of Powell's passing, I was immediately reminded of what DuBois re-



April 5, 1937 - October 18, 2021

Retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former Secretary of State, Gen. Colin Powell. 2014 (Department of Defense photo by Marvin Lynchard)

ferred to as the “double-consciousness” of the African American experience.

As DuBois put it in an 1897 article and later in his classic 1903 book, “The Souls of Black Folk,” this “peculiar sensation” is

unique to African Americans: “One feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

This concept profoundly describes Colin Powell as a soldier, a career military man and a politician.

What it means to serve

On the surface, Colin Powell's life would seem to refute DuBois' formulation. He stood as someone that many people could point to as an example of how it is possible to be both Black and a full American, something DuBois viewed as an enduring tension. There is a narrative that Powell used the military to transcend race and become one of the most powerful men in the country. In that sense, he was the ultimate American success story.

But there is a danger to that narrative. Colin Powell's story was exceptional, but he was no avatar of a color-blind, post-racial America.

The U.S. Army has long been seen as a route for Black Americans, especially young Black men, out of poverty. Many chose to turn their service into a career.

By the time Powell, the Bronx-raised son of Jamaican immigrants, joined the U.S. Army, there was already a proud history of African Americans in the U.S. military – from the “Buffalo Soldiers” who served in the American West, the Caribbean and South Pacific after the U.S. Civil War to the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II.

Continued on Page 32

It's Not Goodbye, Just So Long for Now

Black Lens Going on 1 Year Hiatus from Jan 2022 - Jan 2023

The Black Lens will be going on a one year hiatus following the publication of the January 2022 issue.

Like many people, I would like to believe that I have super human powers, that I'm faster than a speeding bullet, that I can leap tall buildings in a single bound, that I don't need any sleep. But in the past several months I have learned the hard way, that I am not super human, I am simply human.

Attempting to juggle the demands of the Black Lens (which I love) and the Carl Maxey Center (which I also love) has become more than I am able to manage. So, I have made the

difficult decision to focus my time and attention in the direction that I feel it is most needed right now. That is with the Carl Maxey Center.

This has been an amazing year in so many ways. Watching something that was simply a spark of an idea not too long ago, gradually bloom into something that is real and tangible, and important, has been a joyful experience in the midst of so much darkness and pain. The Carl Maxey Center is simply too important right now to not give it my full and undivided attention. So, that's what I have decided to do.

As for the Black Lens, the paper is my baby. I birthed her, and while we have our moments each month when I am struggling to make it through yet another deadline, our bond has only grown stronger. Because of that bond I believe that she is going to be just fine. And I'm already planning our come back, so look out.

I have lots of details to work out regarding subscriptions, etc., so please be patient, I'll share more details next month as I figure them out. In the meantime, thank you for your amazing support. I couldn't have done it without you.



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HOLY NAMES
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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

If you haven't had a chance to drive by the Carl Maxey Center lately, here you go. We have windows and doors. We have electrical and plumbing. We will soon have insulation and drywall.



Super excited!



THE BLACK LENS NEWS

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

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Master of Ceremonies:
Nia Wong (KXLY Evening Anchor/
Investigative Reporter)

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2021 Spokane Human Rights Champions Awards

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YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

The Riot of Bamber Bridge (1943)

Reprinted from blackpast.org
Contributed by Euella A. Nielsen

The US Armed Forces were segregated until President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948 which desegregated all the military service branches. That segregation during World War II helped create the Riot of Bamber Bridge in Great Britain in 1943.

When US forces were sent to Britain that year Black soldiers were met with respect and often open arms by the local population. The village of Bamber Bridge, Lancashire, then home to U.S. Army Air Base 569 was one such place.



African American soldiers following a court martial in which they were found guilty of crimes during the Battle of Bamber Bridge. (Image: Mirrorpix)

The 1511th Quartermaster Truck Regiment, a logistics unit stationed at the base consisted primarily of Black soldiers. The all white 234th US Military Police Unit was stationed on the north side of the village and the two units were known to have had several skirmishes over race relations.

The soldiers of the 1511th were welcomed in local establishments, and this did not sit well with white American soldiers who brought their racist ideals with them. When white military police officers insisted that a local pub owner segregate his establishment, the owner replied he would. How-

ever, when the MPs returned the next day, they were met with “Blacks Only” signs at three village pubs, sending a clear message to the MPs that their racism was not welcome. British barmaids told white soldiers to wait their turn when they assumed they would be served before Black soldiers.

On the night of June 24, two MPs, Corporal Roy A. Windsor and PFC Ralph F. Ridgeway, entered Ye Old Hob Inn, and attempted to arrest Private Eugene Nunn of the 1511th, citing him for being improperly dressed and without a pass. The soldiers and MPs began to argue. Local townsfolk

and women from the British Auxiliary Territorial Service sided with the men of the 1511th and demanded that the MPs leave the Black soldiers alone.

Private Lynn M. Adams of the 1511th advanced on one of the MPs with a bottle, and Corporal Windsor drew his gun. Sergeant William Byrd of the 1511th was able to defuse the situation and finally persuade the MPs to leave. While they were driving away, Private Adams threw a bottle at the jeep, and the MPs drove to their base to pick up reinforcements to return to the pub to arrest the Black soldiers.

As the soldiers of the 1511th walked back to base, they were apprehended by the returning MPs. A fight broke out and MP Carson W. Bozman drew his gun and shot Private Adams in the neck.

The soldiers of the 1511th returned to their base and at midnight, armed with rifles and a machine gun truck, arrived at the MP camp in retaliation. The soldiers of the 1511th raided the MPs’ gun room and armed themselves as the two sides began shooting at each other in the darkness. By four o’clock in the morning, the violence ceased.

Private William Crossland of the 1511th was killed, and five other soldiers were wounded along with two MPs. There were two trials resulting in 27 out of 32 Black soldiers being found guilty of various charges. Most of the sentences were reduced or dismissed, however, because of the overwhelming support of the Black troops by the British public.

In June 2013, an anniversary symposium was held at the University of Central Lancashire, that included a screening of the 2009 documentary “Choc’late Soldiers from the USA” to commemorate the Bamber Bridge Riot.

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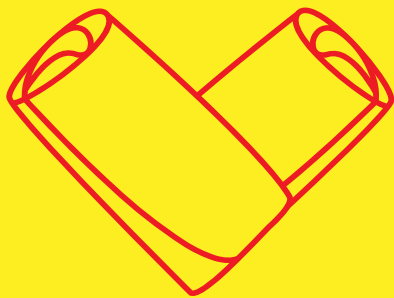
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NAACP: Uniting Our Region

NAACP

SPOKANE

http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com



Let’s Look at Blue Fragility

By Kurtis Robinson
*1st Vice President, Spokane Branch
Criminal Justice Co-Chair and
AOWSAC Political Action Chair*

First let’s start at some other general terminologies:

- **Privilege** (As explained by Wildman and Davis - 1995): Members of the privileged group gain many benefits by their affiliation with the dominant side of the power system. Privileged advantage in societal relationships benefits the holder of privilege, who may receive deference, special knowledge, or a higher comfort level to guide societal interaction. Privilege is not visible to its holder; it is merely there, a part of the world, a way of life, simply the way things are. Others have a lack, an absence, a deficiency.
- **Fragility** (in the context of this work): having a lot of trouble in even the simplest or complex conversations and/or actions centering around race, class, gender, etc. Has a general tendency to manifest behaviors, including but not excluded too defensiveness, deflection, subject matter derailing, misdirection, hostility, etc. May also express many passive/aggressive traits.
- **White Privilege:** refers to the collection of benefits that White people receive in societies where they top the racial hierarchy. Made famous by scholar and activist Peggy McIntosh in 1988, the concept includes everything from Whiteness being equated with being “normal” to Whites having more representation in the media. White privilege leads to White people being viewed as more honest and trustworthy than other groups, whether or not they have earned that trust. This form of privilege also means that White people can easily find products suitable for them—cosmetics, band-aids, hosiery for their skin tones, etc.

While some of these privileges might seem trivial, it’s important to recognize that no form of privilege comes without its counterpart: oppression. While some Americans living in poverty might bristle at the idea of innate privilege, white skin color does protect from many forms of discrimination. It’s not an impenetrable bubble, but it can be a hall pass. White privilege doesn’t mean you don’t have any hurdles, it just means you have fewer of them.

- **White Fragility:** is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a

range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. Racial stress results from an interruption in what is racially familiar.

Now let’s look at some overall recent and historical responses from our Law Enforcement Family in light of the recent legislation for accountability and reforms.

1. **Dodging accountability** e.g. police Collective Bargaining “union” and restrictions on ombudsman oversight. <https://www.aclu-wa.org/story/police-oversight-spo-kane-washington>
2. **Standard of not admitting mistakes** e.g. This year’s videos from Spokane Police Chief and Sheriff refuting facts about Spokane being the 5th most deadly force in the country. Rather than saying we want to reduce the number of police killings, these presentations attempted to refute through misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the data. We’re now the 3rd most deadly force in the country. Chief Miedl: <https://vimeo.com/543440128> and Sherrif Knezovich: Sheriff Knezovich: Stop Using “Junk Science” to bash & devalue law enforcement. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oV2X8nNeNKI>
3. **“Take care of own” practices** e.g. Spokane officer driving 65 on a 30 MPH street by Lewis and Clark High School, suspended for a year, but will receive backpay, and will be back. He will feel allegiance to the department, rather than reinforcing loyalty to the law. Spokesman Review earlier this week. <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/jul/17/shawn-vestal-the-speeding-cop-was-bad-enough-but-t/>
4. Focus on **communicating fear based public messaging** content, rather than communicating needs for clarity and trust within society (this is a regular weaved in theme across almost all spectrums).
5. A tacit **public facing and advertised resistance** (to the point of almost willful non-compliance) with past and new Washington State laws and Law Enforcement Accountability Legislation. www.franklinconnection.com/story/2021/07/24/news/chiefs-sheriffs-concerned-over-new-laws/742.html

apnews.com/article/health-police-death-of-george-floyd-laws-washington-5f2d6f4fc511db52496ffb1ba3ade382

6. Multiple public venues by Washington Police Chiefs and Sheriffs **attempting to refute and dispute any data that did not shed a favorable light on their sector or industry.** ww.bing.com/videos/search?q=washington+state+police+chiefs+and+sheriffs+on+laws&qv=washington+state+police+chiefs+and+sheriffs+on+laws&-FORM=VDRE

We began by looking at the issues of privilege and white privilege, which assigns benefits to our Caucasian family, while withholding those same benefits from the BIPOC community. We see these withheld benefits in the form of historical oppression, economic disadvantage and generational harm. Our entire social structure, including but certainly not limited to criminal justice, works to keep wealth and power in the hands of the dominate culture here in the United States.

This multi-generational framework within American society is woven into its culture and is maintained by such forces as white fragility, in contrast to the noteworthy resilience of Black and Indigenous people. The embedded racism is so normalized that many whites are unaware of its caustic presence until they are awakened by intimate knowledge of a traumatic racist event, such as Brianna Taylor, George Floyd, Manny Ellis and many, many others.

Police were formed in America as a means of maintaining the power of the status quo at the time of slavery, by extending and enforcing the power of whites over Blacks and Indigenous peoples. It is no surprise, then, that the fragility within the white world is intensely present in the structure created to perpetuate and uphold its authority.

Now take those definitions above and compare them to the behaviors cited and it is very easy to see that what we are experiencing now is the same type of behavior unleashed in this industry’s resistance to accountability. This is not only about whiteness but about the further grasping to hold on to power and control by the sector that was tasked to uphold and enforce these dominant culture themes.

We have the next iteration of white fragility hiding behind a badge and a gun. Same game, different name. Welcome to the age of Blue Fragility.

If You Are Black, Avoid Texas.

NAACP urges professional athletes across the country not to go to Texas

In response to what the NAACP views as the latest round of attacks on voting rights and reproductive care, the NAACP sent an open letter to every professional sports players’ association in the country, urging its free agents to reconsider signing contracts in Texas and moving their families to a state that is “not safe for anyone.”

Signed by NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson and NAACP Texas President Gary Bledsoe, the letter was delivered to the National Football League Players Association, Women’s National Basketball Player’s Association, National Basketball Players Association, Major League Baseball Players Association, and National Hockey League Players’ Association. The letter calls on athletes to consider not only their influential platforms as professional athletes, but as parents and role models for our children and those in their personal lives.

“As we watch an incomprehensible assault on basic human rights unfold in Texas, we are simultaneously witnessing a threat to constitutional guarantees for women, children and marginalized communities,”



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signs new voting bill into law.

wrote the authors. “Over the past few months, legislators in Texas have passed archaic policies, disguised as laws, that directly violate privacy rights and a woman’s freedom to choose, restrict access to free and fair elections for Black and brown voters, and increase the risk of contracting coronavirus.”

“If you are a woman, avoid Texas. If you are Black, avoid Texas. If you want to lower your chances of dying from coronavirus, avoid Texas.”

Texas’ abortion law, SB8, signed by Gov. Greg Abbott, is considered one of the strictest in the country, banning most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, even in cases of rape, incest and sexual abuse, and using private citizens to enforce the law. Abbott has also enacted what the NAACP considers to be extreme voting laws that severely restrict the right to vote, banning Texans from registering to vote using a post office box as their address, banning drive-thru voting, and restricting applications for

a mail-in ballot for medical reasons, and redistricting maps that appear to disenfranchise Black, brown, and Latinx voters at a time when data from the 2020 census shows that people of color have driven 95% of the Texas population growth.

“The continued attacks on people of color in the state of Texas are reprehensible,” said Gary Bledsoe, President of the Texas NAACP. “In the absence of federal action, advocates in Texas must stand together and use all of the tools at their disposal to ensure that basic human rights are delivered to the people of Texas. We must fight for our Constitution and the freedoms that it guarantees to all Americans.”

NAACP President Derrek Johnson reminded the athletes of the important role that they play. “When all else fails, we must look within and answer the call to protect the basic human rights and democratic values which are fundamental to this country” Johnson urged the athletes. “Professional athletes serve as some of our country’s greatest role models and we need them to join us to fight for democracy.”

For more information visit: naacp.org

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Frances Scott Elementary School

Ribbon is Cut on East Central School Named After Black Educator & Attorney



‘Me Too.’ Movement Celebrates 4-Year Anniversary With A Week Of Action



(Source: Anoa Changa, newsone.com)

Friday, Oct. 15 marked the 4 year anniversary of the hashtag #metoo going viral. Activist Tarana Burke, founder of the movement, actually began using the phrase “Me Too” in 2006 as a way for survivors of sexual assault “to connect with each other and make a declaration to the world.”

Burke is using the anniversary to re-center the focus of the organization beyond the viral nature of the moment.

Over the past four years, according to Burke, what has evolved is a broader movement space committed to supporting survivor healing and disrupting sexual violence. At times reduced to the experiences of high profile white women, ‘me too.’ builds on the orga-

nizing history of Black women committed to racial and gender equity.

In an Instagram announcement, the organization, ‘me too.’ Movement explained the idea behind celebrating over an entire week.

On the 4th Anniversary of #MeToo going viral, we’re going #BeyondTheHashtag, celebrating the many survivors, disruptors, and allies who keep the conversation about survivor justice front and center. In that spirit, we lift up the names and legacies of our movement ancestors – Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, Harriet Jacobs, among many others – who laid the foreground and remind us of our power and the possibility to create a world free of sexual violence.

While # MeToo’s 4th anniversary marks a pivotal moment, survivors have been here, leading movements and campaigns, sharing their truths and fighting for justice. #MeToo means that our collective force only continues to grow stronger as we heal, organize and act.

#MeToo Anniversary week was October 15-22. Visit: metoomvmt.org

6-Year Old Becomes Georgia’s Youngest Certified Farmer

(Source: BlackEnterprise.com; Kaila Nichols, goodmorningamerica.com)

At just 6 years old, **Kendall Rae Johnson** has claimed the title of the youngest certified farmer in the state of Georgia, as reported by Good Morning America.

To become a certified farmer, Kendall Rae started a business called “aGROWkulture”, with her mom’s help, that is registered at both the state and federal levels, and she joined a number of farming organizations, including Georgia Grown, a division of Georgia’s Department of Agriculture, as well as the Georgia Farm Bureau, GMA reported.

Kendall Rae’s mother, Ursula Johnson said, “She started out in a patio garden and the patio garden grew from a little bitty something to, by the time her fourth birthday came, we had a full-fledged garden in our backyard.” The family eventually moved, Johnson said, “and now she has a farm.”



Kendall Rae, who got her green thumb from her great-grandmother, Laura “Kate” Williams, according to he mother, now grows everything from okra, to carrots, cucumbers, squash, zucchini and strawberries. She shares her love for farming through a monthly gardening club and offers a subscription food box.

Georgia state Rep. Mandisha Thomas is one of Kendall Rae’s biggest supporters and enlisted her help to support other young farmers in the South Fulton area. Thomas’ efforts resulted in Kendall Rae helping Thomas raise some \$85,000.

Now Kendal Rae wants to raise funds for an outdoor agricultural science lab to begin composting. She is working on raising \$10,000 to make the project a reality. For more information visit agrowkulture.com.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Billionaire Robert F. Smith Helping Black Kids Become Stock Shareholders

(Source: blackenterprise.com)

In October, Robert F. Smith (Founder, Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners) and Goalsetter (the first Black female-owned saving and investing platform) announced “One Stock. One Future.” – a call to action for organizations and corporations to create the next generation of financially free Black and Latinx Americans.

Smith kicked off the initiative by gifting five shares of stock – equivalent to nearly 15,000 total shares – to each of the 2,900 students, educators and staff members at the Eagle Academies for Young Men, a network of public, all-boys schools serving young men of color in New York City and Newark, N.J.

Smith’s gift is serving as the catalyst for the creation of the larger “One Stock. One Future.” movement to turn one million Black and Latinx kids into shareholders. The goal of the initiative is to help bridge the wealth gap affecting communities of color by introducing investments and financial education as critical components to building broader and generational wealth.

“In partnership with corporations across the country, we are creating a turning point for America’s Black and Latinx kids. From today forward, they will no longer solely be consumers who make every company in America wealthy by what they spend. Through this initiative, we are creating a generation of investors and owners who can pave their way to wealth by owning a piece of the companies that make the American economy great. They, too, can learn to be participants in our flourishing economy, not just bystanders, and the companies they love can help them get there,” said Robert F. Smith.

As part of their effort to reach one million Black and Latinx youth, Smith and Goalsetter are calling on Fortune 1000 companies and CEOs to take the “One Stock. One Future.” challenge, by donating a minimum of 1,000 shares (or the cash equivalent) to be distributed to Black and Latinx kids across America. To date, leading technology, banking, and Fortune 1000 companies and executives have already committed to leading the way on this initiative by donating 1,000 shares each, including Adtalem Global Education, Citizens Financial Group, Comcast NBCUniversal, Delta Air Lines, Fiserv, HP, Lyft, Twitter, and UBS.



Goalsetter CEO, Tanya Van Court expressed her enthusiasm about the initiative. “We are both energized and humbled by the leadership of Robert F. Smith and other business and community leaders who are at the forefront of this effort to change the paradigm for the next generation of Black and Latinx kids in our country. I truly believe that together we will rewrite the course of history for all communities that have been marginalized due to their lack of access to financial education and investment tools that uniquely engage them,” Van Court said.

The One Stock One Future initiative will be powered through Goalsetter’s family investment platform, which is designed to get “every kid in America investing and on the path towards financial freedom.” Goalsetter will also provide game-based, culturally relevant, financial education, rooted in memes and gifs from popular culture for all youth who receive stock.

Corporate shares donated to the “One Stock. One Future.” program will be distributed to youth through partner organizations, such as Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., the NAACP, Black Girls Code, BUILD, Boys & Girls Club, Coded by Kids, 100 Black Men of Chicago, Inc., and others. Schools, non-profits, and other youth-focused organizations who wish to be designated to receive shares can contact the Goalsetter Foundation at OneStockOneFuture@goalsetter.co to get more information about signing up.

Find out more about this movement and how to participate at goalsetter.co/onestockonefuture.

Stacey Abrams’ Fair Fight PAC Donates \$1.34 Million to Help Thousands Pay Medical Debt

(Source Rachel Pilgrim, theroot.com)

Fair Fight Political Action Committee, which is allied with the Fair Fight organization founded by voting rights activist Stacey Abrams, donated over a million dollars to help thousands of Americans bogged down by medical debt.

The organization, founded by Abrams in 2018, donated \$1.34 million from its PAC to the non-profit RIP Medical Debt, according to the Associated Press. The donation will help relieve the debt of 108,000 people across Georgia, Alabama, Arizona, Mississippi and Louisiana who owe more than \$210 million combined.

While Fair Fight was founded to advocate for voters rights, it has now branched out to seeking expansion of Medicaid coverage. Last week, the group put out ads to pressure Georgia Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, who Abrams lost to in 2018, into making Medicaid expansion an issue Georgia lawmakers consider during their special session to redraw electoral districts next week.

In a statement Abrams said:

“I know firsthand how medical costs and a broken healthcare system put families further and further in debt. Across the Sunbelt and in the South, this problem is exacerbated in states like Georgia where failed leaders have callously refused to expand Medicaid, even during a pandemic. Working with RIP Medical Debt, Fair Fight is stepping in where others have refused to take action. For people of color, the working poor and middle-class families facing crushing costs, we hope to relieve the strain on desperate Americans and on hospitals struggling to remain open.”

The debt relief enabled by Fair Fight’s donation amounts to a total sum of \$212,781,818 allocated across five states:



- Georgia: \$123,193,570.70 million in debt relief for 68,685 individuals
- Louisiana: \$17,476,259.35 million in debt relief for 8,265 individuals
- Alabama: \$1,857,166.42 million in debt relief for 1,953 individuals
- Mississippi: \$2,350,757.12 million in debt relief for 2,058 individuals
- Arizona: \$67,904,064.13 million in debt relief for 27,282 individuals

Americans receiving relief will be notified with a letter in a yellow envelope over the coming days. This donation is the third largest gift in RIP Medical Debt’s history and the largest to be focused on the South, according to Fair Fight’s statement.

The nonprofit RIP Medical Debt, founded in 2014, has already helped eradicate \$5.3 billion in debt for more than 3 million people. AP reports that it does so by buying people’s medical debt at steep discounts often from collection agencies.

“We are not the permanent solution,” said Allison Sesso, the executive director of RIP Medical Debt, “There does need to be a larger solution around what we do about medical debt.”

For information about Stacey Abrams’ Fair Fight organization, visit: <https://fairfight.com>.

Bubba Wallace Becomes 1st Black Driver to Win NASCAR Cup Since 1963

Source: blacknews.com

Nationwide — Bubba Wallace made history on October 4 after winning at the NASCAR’s top Cup Series, making him the 1st Black driver to take home the championship since 1963.

Wallace sped to victory despite heavy rain that occurred during the YellaWood 500 at Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama. He was ahead for 5 of the 117 laps until the heavy rains caused the race to stop.

When the official announcement of the winner was made, Wallace can be seen celebrating excitedly with his 23XI Racing team, which is owned by Denny Hamlin and NBA superstar Michael Jordan.

“This is for all the kids out there that want to have an opportunity and whatever they want to achieve, and be the best at what



they want to do,” Wallace tearfully said in an interview after the race, according to The Associated Press. “You’re going to go through a lot of (BS). But you always got to stick true to your path and not let the nonsense get to you.”

Wallace is only the 2nd Black driver to win at NASCAR’s elite Cup level, next to Wendell Scott in 1963, wherein Scott wasn’t recognized as the winner for several months mainly because of the racist culture at that time. It was also only two months

ago that NASCAR finally presented a trophy to Scott’s family.

Wallace’s recent win comes after a terrible year for him last year. In June 2020, a noose was discovered in the garage stall assigned to him. It happened a week after NASCAR had banned the use of the Confederate flag at its events since Wallace actively called it out.

These events, including his historic win, all happened in his native Alabama and he was grateful for it.

“When you say it like that, it obviously brings a lot of emotion, a lot of joy to my family, fans, my friends. It’s pretty cool,” he said.

For more information about Bubba Wallace and his racing team, visit: bubbawallace.com.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Archbishop Desmond Tutu Celebrates 90th Birthday

(TriceEdneyWire.com/GIN) - Celebratory messages of love and appreciation for Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu poured in from across the world on the Nobel Peace Prize laureate's 90th birthday on Oct. 7.

A week's worth of events culminated on his birthday with the 11th Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture delivered this year by four global leaders.

They included the Dalai Lama, Tibet's highest spiritual leader; women's and children's rights activist Graça Machel; chair of The Elders and former president of Ireland Mary Robinson, and South Africa's former public protector, Thuli Madonsela. Each explored the topic "Speaking Truth to Power: No Future Without Justice" from their personal vantage points.

"It is clear," said Piyushi Kotecha, chief executive officer of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. "There can be no just future if those who believe in peace and justice do not continue to speak truth to power. The world is too often a broken place. Its very brokenness must propel us into action."

"We find ourselves at the juncture between two worlds: an old world led by unscrupulous political figures and self-serving economic interests, and one led by young activists who have social, environmental and women's rights in their sight. The courage to heal is vital," she said.

The lecture addresses were interspersed by performances by American cellist Yo-Yo



Ma and South African cellist Abel Selaocoe, who performed a rendition of the well-known hymn Ibuyile I'Africa, and by the Grammy Award-winning Soweto Gospel Choir.

Over the years the Archbishop's ground-breaking roles have been well reported: the first black secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches leading a Christian membership of more than 13 million (80% black), the first Black Bishop of Johannesburg and first Black Archbishop of Cape Town, together with his post-retirement appointments by President Mandela as chairperson of the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission and The Elders.

Less well known is the Arch's prominent global influence in volatile hotspots as he worked for peace and justice, from 1982 until more than two decades after his ostensible retirement in 1996, always seeking to instill hope in times of crisis and despair and keeping faith in the indivisibility of justice.

"I join the world in celebrating his life of service and contributions to humanity," said President Joe Biden in a message, adding that he had been "honored" to

meet and spend time with the Arch on several occasions over the years. Hollywood stars Samuel L. Jackson, Alfre Woodard and Paulette Woodard paid tribute to one of the world's most iconic prelates. "It's one thing to stand up again and again against injustice, no matter the personal danger, and to speak the difficult, painful truth not only to your oppressors, but also to your friends. But to do all that while maintaining a sense of humor and with genuine love in your heart – who can do that? Desmond Tutu."

President Cyril Ramaphosa also paid tribute to Tutu for his "role as a fighter in the cause for human rights, for equality and for social justice in the 59 years since his ordination". Later, at St George's Cathedral in Cape Town with about 150 family members and guests, a sermon was delivered by the Rev. Allan Boesak, former president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. "You have seen it all. But you have always given us hope," Boesak said. "You have always spoken to our hearts. And you are still speaking to us today through your life."

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.

Demonstrations in Sudan Continue After Twelve Confirmed Dead During Protests



Sudanese protesters lift national flags as they rally in the capital Khartoum, to denounce overnight detentions by the army of government members, on October 25, 2021 (Photo by AFP)

(By Rédaction Africanews with AFP, africanews.com)

A Sudanese protest leader says demonstrations in the country will continue until the military reverses its recent takeover and hands over the rule of the country to a civilian government.

The Spokesperson for the Sudanese professional association, Mohammed Yousef al-Mustafa insists those behind the takeover be held accountable.

"It is either the Military ruling with dictatorship and we stand against them every day no matter the killings, detentions and rapes, or they leave the political scene to the people to be responsible for themselves, manage the country the way they want and do what they believe is right."

The United Nations on Sunday urged Sudan's generals to reverse their takeover of the country, a day after thousands of people took to the streets in the largest pro-democracy protest since last week's coup.

Mohammed Yousef al-Mustafa outlined

some qualities he believes the country needs in their next leadership.

"A government that the Sudanese revolution agree on should be formed; a government that consists of skilled people who are biased towards democracy and human rights and without any elements from the military or the political parties can solve the main problems in Sudan."

South Sudan has deployed a delegation, led by presidential advisor Tut Gatluak, to Sudan to mediate between the military and the civilian leaders.

Gatluak met with Burhan and said he would meet with Abdalla Hamdok, the deposed prime minister who remained under house arrest in the capital Khartoum, as part of his mediation efforts.

Security forces shot dead three protesters during Saturday's the protest.

According to Sudan doctors committee this makes at least 12 deaths and over 280 wounded since Monday. The Sudanese police, however, say its forces did not use live ammunition against protesters.

A Different View

with 



Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council

By the time you all read this column there will be two new City Council members and two new School Board members elected. Congratulations to everyone who ran for office, and thank you for your commitment to public service. Regardless of the outcome, I look forward to working with our new electeds for the betterment of our city. As for my own campaign, I may have gone unopposed on the ballot, but a heart-felt “THANK YOU!” to all who checked the box and gave me the honor of your support!

As our trees change colors and we approach the season of Thanksgiving, I am thankful that my family and friends are well and safe. I’m thankful that my grandkids are back to in-person learning — but truth be told, I sometimes miss the craziness when they were learning at home. (Sidenote: Both my alma maters of Libby Jr High and LC High were added to the Historic Registry!)

Yet, I know it’s not a rosy time for everyone. Families just trying to make it, who are worrying about how to keep a roof over their heads, and the plight of many in our LGBTQ+ community, youth, and so many of our brothers and sisters who are trying to make it on the streets. In the Black Church there is a sayin’, “No matter how bad you think you got it, there is always somebody wishing they were in your shoes.”

I’d like to now update you on the happenings of City Hall and highlight developments affecting communities of color. To serve as a voice of the forgotten on City Council is one of the reasons I threw my hat into the race in the first place, and drove my decision to run to retain my seat.

First, I’m sponsoring a resolution, as Finance Chair, that forms an ad hoc Equity Subcommittee on the City Council’s Finance and Administration Committee. The purpose of the Equity Subcommittee is to identify and disrupt racial and socioeconomic inequities in City services, programs, and decision-making processes, by working with stakeholders to ensure someone’s race, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, and disability status does not predict or limit one’s success in life.

Second, I supported the implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan. The plan was started in 2019 by our all-volunteer Sustainability Action Committee, led by Kara Odegard from the Council Office, to ensure an equitable transition to a greener local economy.

The Action Plan provides a guide to reach the requirements set by the State in 2019, including the Clean Energy Transformation Act (2019) that requires 100% renewable energy supply by 2045. The Action Plan also envisions a more resilient Spokane that is better equipped to handle increasingly severe weather events caused by climate change, including hazardous wildfire smoke and rolling blackouts.

Third, the first federal dollars (\$41 million) from the American Rescue Plan have been received, and I look forward to working with our newly elected Council Members to ensure that those dollars are spent wisely. City Council set out general guidelines for the goals and proposed processes for distribution of the over \$80 million in ARPA funds by Council Resolution 2021-0045. This proposes some initial criteria both generally and specifically for the individual phases called for in that resolution: Replenishment, Reach out, Resiliency and Relief. Funding decisions will be guided by the criteria below, understanding that many proposals will be funded that only meet some of the stated criteria.

GENERAL ARPA CRITERIA ACROSS ALL PHASES:

1. One-time money;
2. Supports equity-based criteria on income and the protected classes in SMC 18.01.030
3. Advances economic opportunity for lower income individuals, community-based entities and businesses;
4. Supports environmentally sustainable practices;
5. Catalyzes positive social and economic change;
6. Supports multi-cultural vibrancy;
7. Leverages partnership and other funding sources;
8. Meets historically unmet needs that have no other sources of funding
9. Accelerates broadly-shared economic growth, especially among existing locally owned businesses

So please visit <https://my.spokanecity.org/news/releases/2021/07/22/council-seeks-community-input-on-american-rescue-plan-funds> on the City’s webpage to participate in the Thought Exchange tool and give us your ideas on where we should invest. You can also send one-pager proposals to our ARPA Coordinator, Mackenzie Lloyd, at arp@spokanecity.org.

Fourth, Council passed Ordinance C-36082 amending the City’s Homeless Response Policy. Now why

the Administration didn’t connect the dots of needing more, not less, night by night shelters, I can’t say. All in all we want a region-wide approach so Spokaneites get the help they need now. Council President Beggs stated that regional leaders have been working on a regional approach for years with no successes currently.

Basically this ordinance says high-barrier beds may be added to the shelter network funded by the City but they may not supplant or eliminate low-barrier beds unless there is no demonstrated further demand. Each calendar quarter, the City shall present to Council and publish on the City’s website a written report using Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or other reliable data to estimate the average number of homeless individuals who were unsheltered.

PEOPLE, this is what we have been asking for! Without current data, how can we assess the situation? In the past, the Point in Time Count (a snapshot census of people experiencing certain categories of homelessness in the Spokane community on one night) was used, but once a year is not enough to deal with a very fluid crisis.

Fifth and finally, I’m excited that the city has finally, and I mean FINALLY, hired a Civil Rights Director. Jerrall Haynes, our current Spokane School Board President, will do a terrific job, and I send him my warmest of congratulations!

So as we enter Fall and approach the holidays, so continues the cycle of life. And so continues my work on Council. I will continue to seek out partnerships and build common ground, rely on voices and perspectives like your own, and engage with community leaders across the City to promote policies that work for all. I will continue to advance the East 5th Ave initiative, promote affordable housing and home ownership, and work to evolve our public safety system. Together, we can truly make a difference in Spokane. Keep hope alive, it’s all some of us have!

Warm wishes and cheers to a fruitful Fall,



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

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Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears



Appreciation. Appropriation. Emulation.

If in no other way, African Americans and Native Americans will always be bound together in a shared legacy of pain and atrocity. That is the tragic truth, but it is a fraction of the history of Black and Indigenous relationships in American history. My own ancestral story is just one example of historical ties between Indigenous people and people of African descent in this land.

Scattered throughout the eastern United States, particularly in the Southeast, there have been some 200 or more communities classified by social scientists as “tri-racial isolates.” These tri-racial communities comprise people of mixed European, African, and Native American descent.

I was born into one of these Tri-racial communities in northeastern North Carolina. Some family members on my father’s side might readily be taken as Native American. Others are indistinguishable from whites. Everyone has degrees of African ancestry in combination with European and Native American descent.

Tri-racial communities in the eastern United States historically held themselves apart from both Blacks and whites in isolated rural enclaves. Living in these enclaves protected them to some degree from the worst of white supremacy in the South, but there were other reasons.

It is important to note that people in these enclaves, up until my father’s generation, rarely married far outside of the community. If they did, it was to people who had a similar racial mix. This went on for generations. It sustained the tri-racial bloodline. The shadow side of tri-racial communities is the white dominant caste system they emulated. They perpetuated this system based on skin color. It was important to “keep the color right.” They often perceived themselves as superior to darker-skinned or still enslaved Black people. Marrying outside one’s color was frowned upon.

My paternal family has for over two hundred years lived on the ancestral lands of the Meherrin People; lands the Meherrin have called home for at least twelve hundred years. My paternal ancestors were European colonizers, freed slaves and Native Americans from the Tuscarora and Meherrin Nation. They were referred to as freed people of color.

Meherrins refer to themselves as Kaw-wet’s’a:ka, meaning “People of the Water.”

Closely related to the Tuscarora and Notoway, they were members of the Iroquois nation, part of the Haudenosaunee, having been taken under the protection of the Iroquois Confederacy in the 1800s. The Meherrins have a rich and well documented history. They lived in several towns, along the present-day North Carolina-Virginia border, finally settling in what was called Meherrin Town. Meherrin Town now encompasses the towns of Winton and Ahoskie, North Carolina. My father was born and grew up in Winton, North Carolina. This is where members of my paternal family have lived for hundreds of years.

In the 1970s, some of the younger generation of my extended paternal family began to publicly claim their Indigenous heritage. When the Meherrin people were recognized by the state of North Carolina as an “Official State Tribe” in 1986, enrollment was opened to those who still lived on or near the ancestral lands and their direct descendants. Some of my aunts and uncles and many of my cousins enrolled in the Meherrin Nation, and several are deeply involved in tribal life. My father would have been a shoo-in, and my brother, sister and I were eligible for enrollment as well.

But my father absolutely would not seek enrollment, not because he wasn’t proud of his ancestry. He was quite proud, but his family had for over two hundred years culturally identified as African American. Unlike many other tri-racial communities on the eastern seaboard, my paternal ancestors embraced their Black identity, despite their predominant European and Native American features.

Tri-racial folks who remained in the South were considered to be Black, no matter what. The “one drop rule” applied. If you had even one drop of African blood in you, no matter how white you looked, you were classified as a Negro. For generations those who wanted to pass as white severed all family ties and started new lives somewhere in the North. My father had always been a Black man. He had not lived the life of an indigenous person, and therefore he didn’t think he had the right to claim that identity. I agreed with him.

Like my father, and for his same reason, I did not seek enrollment in the Meherrin Nation. My extended paternal cultural identity, and most definitely my maternal family’s, has always been African American. It would be disingenuous of me to identify as Indigenous. To do so would mean appropriating an identity with a culture for which I have no lived experience. Even though rooted in truth, I have no right to say I’m a Native American. As a Black person in America, I can certainly identify with a history of brutality and oppression, but I cannot begin to identify with the reality, whether it be the richness or the intergenerational trauma of being an Indigenous person in America, past and present.

I deeply appreciate my Native American ancestry. I deeply appreciate my African Ancestry, but I’m appalled that some of my ancestors were also colonizers responsible for the wholesale slaughter of Indigenous People, some of them also my ancestors. It’s also true that my European ancestors were masters of plantations. My light skin tone is not just because my father had light skin. The color of his skin and my skin tone is because for hundreds of years, white masters kidnapped and raped my enslaved African foremothers on both paternal and maternal sides of my family.

I can’t appreciate my European ancestry in light of this, but I do recognize it, and I must find a way of integrating it. It is, after all a significant part of my ancestral story. I’m sure there are other hidden truths about my mixed European ancestry. Love finds its way into the most unlikely situations. I will always identify culturally as a Black American, while deeply appreciating my Indigenous roots, and learning to integrate the harder truths of my tri-racial identity.

What is the demarcation line between appreciation and appropriation? How do we know when we’ve crossed the line? It’s complex but I’ve come to this view: It’s a matter of motive, consciousness, respect, context, and relationship. Appreciation is when someone seeks to understand and learn about another culture in an effort to broaden their perspective and connect with others, cross-culturally. Appropriation, on the other hand, is taking aspects of a culture that is not your own and using it for your own personal interest.

Appropriation runs on a spectrum from innocent unawareness, to discriminatory disregard, to malicious intent. For instance, on one end of the spectrum might be appropriating some aspects of Native American Spirituality as my own. On the other end is a sports franchise refusing for years to apologize and change the name of a football team called the Washington Redskins. That name is a full-on racial slur against Native Americans. It’s akin to calling a Black person the N-word.

Of course, race, color, and caste, are human constructs. These things are certainly not of God. I think God cries at our relentless determination to set ourselves apart from one another by caste and skin color. We are all ultimately One in the Spirit. There are those truly enlightened people able to live that truth. Like many, I ebb and flow in consciousness, but the reality is most of us have a very hard time grounding ourselves in the integrated web of love that binds us all together in the universe. In America, Indigenous and Black people carry intergenerational trauma that can seem impossible to integrate into our present lives. It can be beyond difficult to be loving and inclusive. And yet that’s what Spirit calls us to be.

I recently came across a beautifully written expression of feeling from a person with roots in another tri-racial community, not geographically related to my own. The late Dr. N. Brent Kennedy, himself a proud Melungeon, saw in the faces of his living relatives a panorama of all of those who have gone before.

Mr. Kennedy wrote: “When I watch my own summer skin turn with lightning speed, too reddish-brown for a blue-eyed Scotsman, and struggle to tame the steel-like waves in my graying Black hair, I smile at the living traces of unknown Mediterranean, African, and Native American ancestors whose ancient precious lives still express themselves in my countenance ... And in my mind’s eye, I can see those ancestors smiling back, wondering why it took the children of their children’s children so long to rediscover the truth.”

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



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Pushing for a Philanthropic Shift

New Statewide Black-led Philanthropy Seeks to Build Generational Prosperity

The Black Future Co-op Fund is Washington state’s first cooperative philanthropy created by and for Black people to build Black generational wealth, health, and well-being.

Inspired by the uprising for racial justice, four social change leaders — Andrea Caupain Sanderson, Angela Jones, Michelle Merriweather, and T’wina Nobles — joined together to launch the Black Future Co-op Fund in June 2020. These four Black female co-founders aspire to create a new model of philanthropy anchored in the beauty, soulfulness, and strength of Blackness.

Through the Black Future Co-op Fund, they seek to connect Black communities for collective power, promote a truthful Black narrative, and uplift Black-led solutions that foster Black generational prosperity.

In this article, they share their vision for the Fund, what they are proud of, and what they are looking forward to in the coming year.

Q: Why did you launch the Black Future Co-op Fund?

Andrea: We knew that Black-led organizations in our state have worked hard for decades with minimal support. And, that organizations were being called on to step up even more, with the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice uprisings after the killing of George Floyd, but without adequate resources. It became increasingly clear that if we want philanthropy to work for Black people, we need to build our own model of philanthropy.

Michelle: It was time to do things differently. Everyone was talking about how we need to get back to normal, but normal, the status quo, has never worked for us. The Black Future Co-op Fund is creating a new normal: a paradigm shift that puts us first — our creativity, our genius, our hopes, our needs, our joy.

Angela: It was a moment to lean in. I thought to myself, ‘If I want things to change for our people, I have to be part of pushing for that change.’

T’wina: Our commitment is being good ancestors. We stepped up to this work not to own it and make it ours, but to be a vessel for the community. Through the Black Future Co-op Fund, we have an opportunity to really leave our community better than we found it.

Q: You talk about being good ancestors. What does that mean and look like?

Angela: When we were first talking about launching the Fund, I was staring at a world map on my wall and I was so mad and sick of what keeps happening to our people, and I wanted to be done. And then, the other Angela said, ‘You can’t be

done, because if you’re done then what’s the ripple effect of your inaction.’ I felt like my ancestors spoke to me and said, ‘You can rest, but you can’t quit.’ Because every decision — whether I act or don’t act — will have an effect 100 years from now. So, I keep going because I want to be a good ancestor.

Michelle: We are standing on the legacy of our ancestors, who were tremendous warriors. Folks don’t have to remember our names but I hope that the work we do makes it so our children, our children’s children, and so on don’t have to live in a racist society and don’t have to worry about all these things. Hopefully their journeys are a little bit easier because of the Black Future Co-op Fund. Being a good ancestor is paying it forward.

Andrea: We are expanding the foundation created by those who came before us. Our ancestors endured so much more than we can imagine, and we owe it to them to continue to better our world for their and our future descendants, so that their sacrifices were not made in vain.

T’wina: We have an opportunity to think about our legacy right now. The things that people will talk about — what we did or did not do — we have control over those things. Being good ancestors is showing up as our best selves now and standing up for our community, ‘We deserve better, we deserve reparations.’ So when we’re gone, future generations will know we were courageous and confident.

Q: How does the Black Future Co-op Fund work to further Black liberation and prosperity?

T’wina: I think of liberation and prosperity as connected to trusting communities. The way we did the ‘We See You’ grants is an example. We asked community members for ideas of organizations to fund. And, we gave grants with no strings attached, showing we trust these organi-

zations to keep doing what they are doing — and may they be free and prosperous and thrive in that.

Andrea: This is about helping our people and organizations across the state be self-determined, to own our own story, to reframe the narratives about us.

Angela: We’re thinking about how to provide not only the resources but also the tools to be successful and to remove the barriers. We’re pushing for a philanthropic shift.

Michelle: We’re building community. We’re creating a vehicle where we can lean on each other, support each other, share information, and figure it out together. There is freedom in knowing that and in doing it together. And, as part of being good ancestors, we’re building a vehicle to create freedom for future generations.

Q: What are you most proud of in the first year of the Black Future Co-op Fund?

Michelle: Seeing our vision for the Black Future Co-op Fund come to life, and seeing our community of supporters come together has been inspiring.

T’wina: I’m proud of how we’ve been giving while we’re learning. We haven’t been stopped by not knowing everything. What we know is traditional philanthropy isn’t working. What we know is we need to get money to our community because they have the solutions. We are confidently building the plane while flying it.

Angela: We’re successfully modeling a new approach to philanthropy. We are four Black women from four very different backgrounds. We’ve shown Black is not one thing, it’s a myriad of things. I’m proud of how we’ve come together and walked together to find agreement because the work of the Black Future Co-op Fund is bigger than us. In the end, it’s about our community.

Andrea: That we’ve been unapologetic about demanding resources for our Black community, that we raised over half of our goal, as many didn’t think we would make it to this point. That we were able to resource 40 incredible Black-led organizations doing much needed work across our communities.

Q: What is the Black Well-being study and why is it important?

Andrea: The Black Well-being study is FUBU, data for us, by us. It is an illustration of how we are taking command of telling our own story, shifting the narratives about who we are and our vision. It is an important tool that can be used quantitatively and qualitatively in community, among institutions and by policymakers to make movement on behalf of our people.

Angela: I’m excited about it for a few reasons. 1) We are adamant about wanting to hear the voices of our people, and this is one mechanism to do that. 2) This is going to be a tool for us — not only helping us understand the challenges, but also the opportunities. And, 3) It’s going to help people make better decisions with equitable outcomes.

Q: What does the promise of 2022 bring for the Fund and for Black people across Washington?

T’wina: The path to raising our initial \$25M and getting more of that money out in the community.

Angela: Continuing to build the ecosystem that connects our people to each other and supports collective action for radical change.

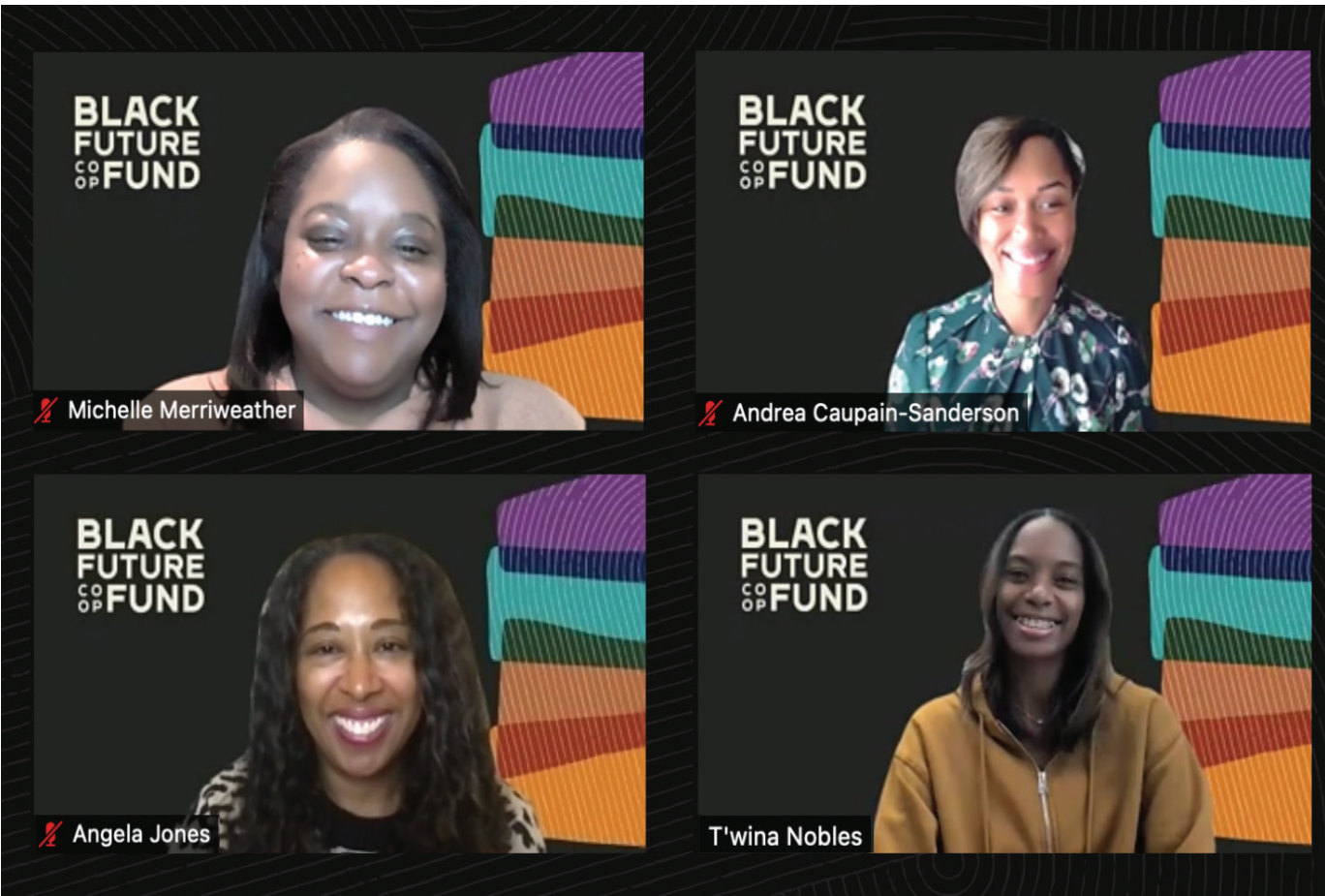
Andrea: The promise that more resources are coming, that Black people’s needs will not be left behind, and that society at large will continue to rally for the liberation of Black people, not just in this window, but from now on and well into the future.

Michelle: A year closer to liberation.

Q: How can folks be part of the Black Future Co-op Fund?

All: This fund does not just belong to the four of us — this is a cooperative fund. We want every Black person across the state to feel a part of it. We invite each Black Washingtonian to decide what role they want to play. It is truly cooperative and will take all of us to maintain it, to raise the money, to decide where the money should be invested, to create change. The Black Future Co-op Fund belongs to all of us!

To learn more about the Black Future Co-op Fund go to: <https://www.blackfuture-wa.org>



Michelle Merriweather, president and CEO of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; Andrea Caupain Sanderson, CEO of Byrd Barr Place; Angela Jones, J.D., Washington State Initiative director at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and T’wina Nobles, state senator and president and CEO of the Tacoma Urban League founded the Black Future Co-op Fund, our state’s first philanthropy created by and for Black Washingtonians to ignite generational wealth, health, and well-being.

SHARE YOUR IDEAS!

BLACK WELL-BEING:

Moving Toward Solutions Together

<https://bit.ly/BWB-survey-2021>

Participate in the Black Well-being Survey created by and for the Black community. Your answers will help us shape the future of Black well-being in Washington state.

Take the survey by Nov. 24 to:

- Support collective organizing among Black communities across the state.
- Direct resources to invest strategically in Black prosperity, health, and well-being.
- Inform policy change to fix structural injustices and advance equitable opportunities for Black Washingtonians.

Every participant has the chance to enter to win weekly drawings for a \$100 gift card to a Black-owned business of your choice!



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TO BELIEVE.”

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A COVID-19 Q&A With Dr. Marcus Christopher Griffith

(Reprinted from the American Medical Association: ama-assn.org)

By Sara Berg, MS
Senior News Writer

Over 77% of the adult population in the U.S. has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While this progress is great news and offers a glimmer of hope for ending the pandemic, vaccination coverage remains uneven across the country.

And with the highly transmissible Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 continues to sicken over 100,000 Americans weekly, killing more than 2,000. The overwhelming majority of who get very sick or die from COVID-19 in the U.S. are not fully vaccinated despite the widespread, no-cost availability of three safe and highly effective vaccines. It will take everyone—from physicians, families and friends to churches—to fight this battle against COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

For Marcus Christopher Griffith, MD, that effort began about two years ago with the Southeast Permanente Medical Group's flu campaign to address the long-standing vaccine hesitancy in communities of color.

Dr. Griffith is a psychiatrist and obesity medicine physician in Atlanta with the Southeast Permanente Medical Group, which is an AMA Health System Program member and an integral part of integrated health system Kaiser Permanente. Dr. Griffith is also a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry for Morehouse School of Medicine.

While Dr. Griffith's work initially began around educating these communities about the flu shot, it naturally transitioned into the COVID-19 vaccination. He speaks with patients from historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups—such as Black, Hispanic and Native American populations—about vaccine hesitancy.

AMA: What inspired you to get involved in speaking up about vaccine hesitancy?

Dr. Griffith: I've always had an interest in health disparities, and in my training as a psychiatrist. I began my work there 30 years ago—during my residency training—in recognizing there were differences in treatment, differences in diagnosis based on one's skin color, one's economic background.

I unfortunately lost a very dear friend to complications of obesity—we know that obesity disproportionately affects communities of color—and I ended up writing a children's book about that and helping to be a piece of fighting the epidemic of childhood obesity.

My friend's name was Joe Drake. He played for the San Francisco 49ers and Detroit Lions. If you look Joe up, you'll see that he's the heaviest player to die from complications of obesity in the NFL. When he died, he weighed over 500 pounds, so my wife and I wrote a children's book called *The Tale of Two Athletes*, and have traveled around helping to combat childhood obesity.

When you look at those patients who are put on ventilators and have premature death, the majority of those people have obesity. When you think about obesity, it's African Americans, the Latino population. So, it becomes the perfect storm of health conditions along with social determinants of health care that have put minority, underserved populations behind the barrel.

AMA: What kind of inequities in care have we seen throughout the pandemic?

Dr. Griffith: The greatest one is that minority populations are more commonly the front-line workers, transit, in stores and so forth, and using public transportation, living in multigenerational housing and families. And even greater is the lack of access to health care, either being uninsured or underinsured. Those are components of one's person in being predisposed to have greater complications of health...

If you don't have the resources, you don't have the luxury of what we're doing right now—I have the luxury



I had some hesitancy in the very beginning. I had some of those realistic concerns that they had regarding how quickly the vaccine became available—until I had to do rounds at one of our hospitals and I saw what was happening. At that point, I said, "I don't want this. I don't need this. Don't bring me back in here until I'm vaccinated."

~Marcus Christopher Griffith, MD

of being at home, using my laptop, working in a safe space and not missing a paycheck. And so, when we think about our minority, underserved populations, they don't have access to that opportunity. They're in the midst of it.

AMA: When you are tackling vaccine hesitancy, is this occurring when you're speaking with patients in your office or is this more of reaching them where they are?

Dr. Griffith: It's every single contact. ... So, using each patient encounter to talk about what's happening in their life—if they're vaccinated, if they're not vaccinated.

But, also, using my experiences in relationships with patients, who I've been seeing and building on that trust to let them know—Hey, this is a real condition. You see lots of information, disinformation, misinformation. Do you trust me? Do you trust your doctor? Do you trust your nurse? I have not led you astray for the past 10 years, 20 years. I'm not going to lead you astray on this. So, building on your relationship with your patient.

AMA: Are these patients sharing some of the reasons for their vaccine hesitancy with you?

Dr. Griffith: One of the most troubling ones I had was a patient who I encountered just two days ago. She's a schoolteacher. She has a BMI of 70. She weighs 500 pounds. So, if she was to have COVID, she might not make it to the hospital in time because she'd deteriorate quickly. She's really a ventilator candidate.

What was very disturbing to me—during this interview, I asked about her vaccination status. ... And she said, "No." And I then wanted to find out why.

Her explanation was this: That she's never gotten sick before. She's never come down with the flu. She never had the chicken pox. And she believes that she is immune and won't get COVID. And then she said, in fact, "I've been intentionally trying to catch it. Going around people who have tested positive so I can perhaps get this, get it naturally, and develop a natural immunity."

I paused, and I said, "Please, that is not the way to go about doing this. It is unsafe. It's dangerous. That you have diabetes, you have severe obesity, you're at the greatest potential to have complications." I said, "This is sort of like ... a person who's in the water and it's shark-infested, and other people are being attacked by the sharks, but you haven't [been]. It's only a matter of time before the shark gets you, and you don't want to be a victim." And then I use those conversations to talk about this vaccine.

AMA: Is the key using real-life examples and storytelling to reach those patients?

Dr. Griffith: Yes, and your relationship with them. That you're trusted by them in childhood immunizations, in treatment of their cancer, in treatment of their depression. That we want to help you with this as well. And this is no different than those other conditions.

AMA: How many people have changed their opinions on the COVID-19 vaccine after speaking with you?

Dr. Griffith: I think half of them, after conversations, did. And it's being real. It's sharing my experience, seeing patients in the office and it was also sharing with them my initial hesitancy.

I had some hesitancy in the very beginning. I had some of those realistic concerns that they had regarding how quickly the vaccine became available—until I had to do rounds at one of our hospitals and I saw what was happening. At that point, I said, "I don't want this. I don't need this. Don't bring me back in here until I'm vaccinated."

So, it's sharing with people that this COVID illness is unlike anything we've seen. If you have a health condition and get it, it will make it 10 times worse. If you get it and survive, you will have potentially long-standing consequences. It causes everything you can imagine. It can cause nerve problems, heart problems, lung problems, profound depression, anxiety, memory loss. It's something you don't want to get.

The best treatment is to not get it: to get vaccinated, to wash your hands, to physically distance, to use science, use the laws of nature. The laws of nature help to guide us, and the laws of nature often are unforgiving when you don't follow her rules. Follow those rules and you'll have the best chance of being healthy.

AMA: Does it help improve messaging for patients to get this vital information from someone who looks like them, so a Black physician like yourself?

Dr. Griffith: Yes. When it's someone who looks like you, who lives where you live, goes to the same places as you—the same barbershop, the same church—it does help with that. As opposed to messaging coming down from above to say that you have to do this, you need to do this. So when it's coming from people you know and trust, you can receive the information better.

AMA: How do we establish trust in health care, including the COVID-19 vaccine, with patients who are Black or are from other historically marginalized populations?

Dr. Griffith: It's partnering with other organizations. Whether it's churches, synagogues, mosques, community groups ... it has to be that whole community that reaches others.

What I've tried to do in all my patient appointments is to make them ambassadors. To say, if there's someone who you love who's not vaccinated, please share your story with them. There've been times when I've had a patient who's been vaccinated and she shared that her sister is unvaccinated, and I've invited her to join our next video appointment so we could talk together.

It's just using whatever tools and opportunities that I have to talk to someone to let them know that I hear your concerns but let me tell you what the correct information is.

AMA: What else should physicians know about addressing vaccine hesitancy?

Dr. Griffith: It's very hard as a doctor when you're treating patients who are very ill and then you potentially could bring this disease home and give it to your child who's not of age to be vaccinated. So it's hard emotionally to accept that.

But we have to try to do all we can to encourage our docs to be open-minded and not be judgmental about those who don't get vaccinated, and then try to use your relationship with them to get them vaccinated.

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A Hidden Tragedy of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Orphaned Black Children

A new study led by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that 140,000 children have lost their principal caregivers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of every four deaths from the virus has resulted in a child losing their principal caregiver.

From April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, data suggest that more than 140,000 children under age 18 in the United States lost a parent, custodial grandparent, or grandparent caregiver who provided the child's home and basic needs. Overall, the study shows that approximately 1 out of 500 children in the United States has experienced COVID-19-associated orphanhood or death of a grandparent caregiver.

As in many adverse health outcomes, there is a significant racial disparity. Some 65 percent of the children who have been orphaned come from nonwhite ethnic or racial groups, yet these groups make up just 39 percent of the U.S. population.

One of every 310 Black children experienced orphanhood or death of caregivers compared to one of 753 White children. Thus, Black children were 2.4 times as likely as White children to be orphaned from the pandemic.

"Children facing orphanhood as a result of COVID is a hidden, global pandemic that has sadly not spared the United States," said Susan Hillis, CDC researcher and lead author of the study. "All of us – especially our children – will feel the serious immediate and long-term impact of this problem for generations to come.



65 percent of the children who have been orphaned come from nonwhite ethnic or racial groups, yet these groups make up just 39 percent of the U.S. population.

Addressing the loss that these children have experienced – and continue to experience – must be one of our top priorities, and it must be woven into all aspects of our emergency response, both now and in the post-pandemic future."

The full study, "COVID-19-Associated Orphanhood and Caregiver Death in the United States," was published on the website of the Journal of Pediatrics. It may be downloaded by visiting: <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2021/10/06/peds.2021-053760.full.pdf>

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A COVID Diary: My Black Family’s Struggle With Vaccine Hesitancy

By Espie Randolph III

Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times, latimes.com/opinion

Tuesday, Aug. 3: After going weeks without speaking to each other because I yelled at my mom about not getting vaccinated, she finally calls me from her home in Texas. The news: She has just tested positive for COVID-19.

Thursday, Aug. 5: I call my mom and we fight until I have persuaded her to call her doctor. I advise her to outline all of her symptoms in detail and to take his advice, even the antibody infusion, the COVID treatment given emergency-use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in November. The fact that the treatment is so new makes her nervous.

When your mom gets COVID, time rightfully takes center stage. Suddenly there’s time to think. Time to consider. Time to understand that there is no time. Or that the last time you did (fill in the blank) with her might have been the very last time ever.

Friday, Aug. 6: More bad news. I find out from my sister that four family members in Texas, including my 79-year-old grandmother, are unvaccinated and have all contracted the virus. I am distraught.

I wish I could find a way to get vaccine-hesitant Black people to believe that COVID vaccines are not a Tuskegee experiment, the infamous study in which the United States Public Health Service knowingly kept syphilis diagnoses and treatments from its hundreds of Black sub-



Photo: Svetlana Bykova / Shutterstock

jects for decades. My unvaccinated family members have all brought it up as a reason they don’t want the shot. Yes, the Tuskegee experiment was a race-driven atrocity that America has yet to properly reckon with. But this is not that.

Tuesday, Aug. 10: My mother’s concern for her own mother’s deteriorating health grows. I am increasingly worried about my own mother’s health, which has also taken a turn for the worse. In this moment, we are able to connect. My grandmother begins breathing too shallowly and is taken to the hospital.

Racial distrust in America runs so deep that people in my family thought it was logical to risk getting a deadly virus rather than trust a physician’s recommendation to get a vaccine. Old wounds remain unhealed. A cycle that is unending.

Wednesday, Aug. 11: My grandmother has had a stroke.

James Baldwin, the Black American essayist, would trace this racial distrust back to America’s “original sin” — the early settlers, who came armed with a plague of their own, and the creation of the concept

of “Brownness,” “Blackness” and “otherness.” The distrust is rooted in being made to feel different. It is valid. And getting acknowledgement of, and healing from, this past trauma is the good fight that we need to keep fighting. But we must separate that battle from a fear of proven science.

Thursday, Aug. 12: My grandmother’s kidneys are failing. This is one COVID side effect among a host of other symptoms she’s experiencing. My heart hurts.

I’m not judging the vaccine hesitant. I was one of them for many months. But I did get the jab. Why? Because white people began to colonize it. No matter how widely the vaccines were distributed in communities of color, it seemed to me there were always some white people showing up and waiting in other people’s lines to get their hands on it.

Saturday, Aug. 14: I watch a news clip online where a Black female doctor outlines all the COVID-19 side effects that patients with severe cases should expect to leave the hospital with. My grandmother is currently experiencing all of them. Someone in the comments section of the video calls it “fake news.” I want to scream.

While deciding to get the shot, I weighed the potential for side effects and it became a no-brainer. I’ll take a fever and some chills any day over the COVID side effects my grandmother has been experiencing.

Sunday, Aug 15: My grandmother feels better and is no longer contagious. She decides she wants to come home rather than remain at the hospital.

Continued on Page 26

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Talk to family & friends about safety expectations.

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Take things outside.

Meet outside if possible. If you do meet inside, mask up, hold smaller gatherings, and increase ventilation by opening windows and using fans.



Get your COVID & Flu shots — encourage others to do the same.

Encourage others while listening to and respecting their concerns. Share your own experience using “I” statements. For example, “I was concerned too, but after talking to my doctor, I decided to get vaccinated.”

If you’re sick after an event, test & tell.

If you develop any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of a gathering, get tested and let people who were near you know right away.

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Black Veterans Celebrate Veterans Day Acknowledge More Needs to be Done

By Amber D. Dodd

As America celebrates Veterans Day on Thursday Nov. 11, Black veterans around the Spokane area are seeking out strategies to improve the services meant to assist veteran’s needs.

Reverend Donnie Stone, 72, hails from the era where veterans were treated harshly after their return from the Vietnam War. A 1968 Gallup Poll showed 50 percent of Americans disapproved of the war at the time American soldiers evacuated. During his service, Stone earned the Bronze Star Medal, an award that reflects a service member’s “heroic or meritorious achievement or service in a combat zone.” It is the fourth-highest ranking award a service member can receive in armed conflict.

“There may be hundreds of people, Black male or female veterans in Spokane, but how many of them have received the highest awards in the military and nobody knows it? I have a problem with that.” Stone said. “Give honor where honor is due. Give respect where respect is due.”

Along with the recognition of service members, helping veterans soon became Stone’s ministry after he realized the discrepancies veterans face when advocating for the assistance they seek out. Stone’s wife, Jamie, pushed him to apply for veteran benefits and assistance to help pay for medicine and other needs that derived from his tour in Vietnam. Years later, Stone has had multiple critical surgeries and his post-op and daily medicine paid for through veteran’s assistance and benefits. He also purchased a new home.

“There’s too many minority veterans that are not getting the help they need because of our society,” said Stone about the lack of clarity and communication between veterans and assistance agencies. “There’s a lot of Black veterans that are on these streets. I have a friend that has over \$100,000 worth of doctor bills because he won’t go to the VA. I can’t fathom that. There’s so many tweaks and laws that have changed. Then, a lot of us people don’t know it’s changed because nobody is telling us.”

Terry Frazier is another Black veteran fighting for the same benefits Stone is striving for. A Hohenwald, Tennessee native, Frazier joined the Air Force and worked

several jobs related to hazardous customs and other war service departments. He described his veteran income status as “100 percent disability” and recognized some trepidations related to the veteran experience.

Frazier argued that many of the social issues citizens face deepen in the veteran experience. For example, PTSD is something one can experience regardless of their veteran status. Since PTSD manifests differently for everyone, Frazier believes racialized trauma incidents may deepen the issue. This worsens for those who already suffer from traumatic experiences prior to their service.

“We have to be very cautious and careful with (PTSD in veterans),” Frazier said. “PTSD is (one of) those social issues that were here before you entered this world and will be hereafter.”

This scrutiny deepens at the race level. Stone also recognized the racial divide in treatment. Some of the soldiers Stone served with are testing positive for Agent Orange, a chemical herbicide that causes liver problems, skin disease and other immune system dysfunction due to the exposure of dioxins. Many of the men evaluated for complications related to Agent Orange were white.

“They’re diagnosed with it, we served together and they’re caucasian, so what happened? Caucasians get Agent Orange and Blacks don’t?” Stone said. “I slept in the same fox holes, drank the same water, we were around each other every day and now I want to step up and be reevaluated for Agent Orange. Now the urge is to wonder how many people are out there (in need of assistance).”

Frazier and Stone both criticized the time necessary to process certain documents or payments in order for veterans to receive the benefits they’re seeking. Frazier, nearing 70, feels that the process to receive benefits can be life long. Even when veteran’s requests are met, it could be too late. Veterans could be suffering from issues that lead to hospice care or mental health episodes. Wait times to receive benefits can vary case-by-case.

“I’ve been retired for 28 years and I’ve been fighting and struggling with the gov-

ernment to get the benefits I was promised when I went in” Frazier said. “That makes a big difference when the promises we were given and served under when I raised my right hand, aren’t met. I shouldn’t have to fight or struggle for them years later.”

Another critical social problem plaguing veterans is the nationwide housing crisis. For example, the National Law Income Housing Coalition states that, in 2020, \$30.46 is the minimum wage needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment in the state of Washington. Minimum wage stands at just \$13.25. Veterans often have trouble finding jobs without assistance from the Veteran Affairs office, which may not be accessible to veterans in particular areas. Frazier recalled his own issues with rent.

Rent raises directly impact veterans who retired on fixed incomes or use their pensions from places of employment. In 2019, Frazier realized signing a new lease meant paying an extra \$200 administration fee. He wanted to opt-in for the month to month lease agreement, but that would increase the rent he was paying by \$200, totaling a \$1,200 up-charge. Frazier mentioned that veterans could benefit from a rent-controlled system agreement both with the Veterans Affair offices and the rental agencies managing the properties.

“If I as a veteran live in this apartment complex for 14 years and now they’re raising the rent (for) veterans like myself that live here for \$1200 a month more, there should be an advisory (board that) veterans that can look into that immediately or search for new housing to prevent veterans (from) being forced out of housing into the street or moved into more appropriate housing.”

He continued: “It’s an issue that needs to be raised to a level, somewhere, that’s going to the mayor’s office or federal offices,” Frazier said. “Someone needs to get on this right away so we know these companies, building and housing they’re not working against the federal government and kicking these people out of the street.”

In light of celebrating Veterans Day, Frazier believes veterans should be acknowledged long before the one-day observance. For Spokane specifically, Fairchild Air Force Base in Airway Heights should col-

laborate with local organizations to honor veterans around the Spokane area.

“All veterans as well as those (who are just citizens) need to be involved with understanding what veterans are doing through,” Frazier said. “(Whatever) veterans go through, it’s like a prelude to what’s going to happen to the rest of the world. One of the things that has to happen is there needs to be more social programs and civil justices.”

Stone advised that community organizations look to celebrate veterans outside of federal and national recognition.

“Let’s ask each church which veterans (they) have,” Stone said. “Every church in the city of Spokane, minority based, has got (to have) male and female ex-military in there.”

In addition to community forces teaming up, Stone wants more veterans recognized than just those who were in combat. He mentioned that veterans are all of those who served “military wise”, broadening the scope from soldier to nurses, cooks and other military service roles.

But, at the core of his Veterans Day demands, Stone wants to alleviate his fellow service members of the post-war strife that harms them. He feels that the wellbeing of veterans should be a top priority for all involved. Benefits remain at the top of his advocacy concerns.

“Veterans should have those benefits signed up for,” He said. “They should not go through a struggle, they should not die in the process of trying to get the benefits they (were) promised.”

Amber D. Dodd’s work as the Carl Maxey Racial and Social Inequity reporter for Eastern Washington and North Idaho primarily appears in both The Spokesman-Review and The Black Lens newspapers, and is funded in part by the Michael Conley Charitable Fund, the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund, the Innovia Foundation and other local donors from across our community.

Black Veteran Association
Donnie Stone is working to bring a chapter of the Black Veteran Association to Spokane to address issues raised in this article. He will have more information in the next month or so. If you are interested, reach out to him by e-mail at preacherstone1@hotmail.com.



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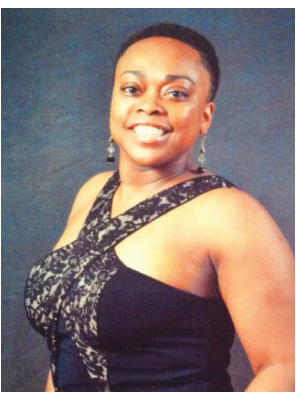
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The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported in part by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. NWFHA is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations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

VETERANS DAY 2021



Elmer Anderson
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Keyonia Anderson
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 12



Chester Andrews
US Air Force
Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Darrel Andrews
US Air Force
Airman First Class
Years of Service: 4



Amos Atkinson
US Army
Sergeant (E-5)
Years of Service: 22



Joseph Baptiste
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Bob Bartlett
US Army
Specialist (E-4)
Years of Service: 1970 - 1974



Teneasa Tyler Brehmeyer
US Air Force
Senior Airman
Years of Service: 1994 - 1998



William Caldwell
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Sly Chatman
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 1975 - 1998



Rickey Davis
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Sylvester Davis
US Army
Sergeant (E-5)
Years of Service: 1963-66, 1967-73



Craig Dorsey
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Mark Duncan
US Air Force
Airman First Class
Years of Service: 3-1/2



Lee Lee Everett
US Army Reserve
Staff Sergeant (E-6)
Years of Service: 1976-1985



Yolanda Everett
US Navy
Petty Officer 3rd Class (E-4)
Years of Service: 1984-1993



James Fisher
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Curtis Hampton
US Air Force
Senior Airman (E-4)
Years of Service: 1974-1978



Terry W. Frazier
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 21



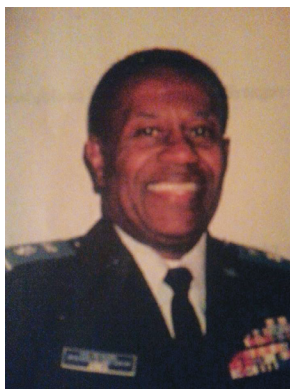
Carl Gunn
US Army
Staff Sergeant (E-5)
Years of Service: 1969-1973



Carl Jenkins
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Ronald Joyner
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



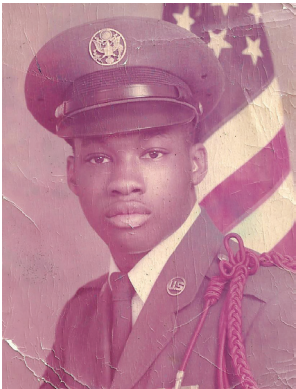
Bernard Jones
USAF, Civil Air Patrol
Tech Sgt, Lt. Colonel
Years of Service: 23 + 20



Thomas Johnson
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Michael Kay
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Jonathan Mack
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 1970 - 1990



Robert Milton
US Navy
Seaman (E-3)
Years of Service: 1963 - 1968



Mark Neufville
US Marine Corps
Sergeant (E-5)
Years of Service: 1980-1994



Ruth Nichols
American Red Cross
U.S. Womens Army
Corps WACS



David Parker
US Air Force
Senior Master Sergeant (E-8)
Years of Service: 1962 - 1989

HONORING OUR LOCAL VETERANS



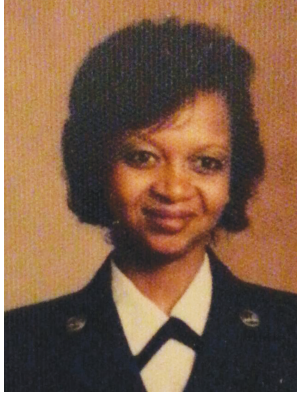
Floyd N. Rhodes III
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Larry Roseman
US Air Force
Senior Airman (E-4)
Years of Service: 4



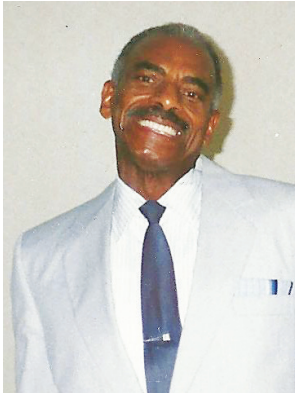
Kitara Shaules
US Army
Sergeant
Years of Service: 1997-2003



Cheyunteen Stanley-Bryant
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 30



Donnie P. Stone
US Army
Sergeant (E-5)
Years of Service: 1968-1971



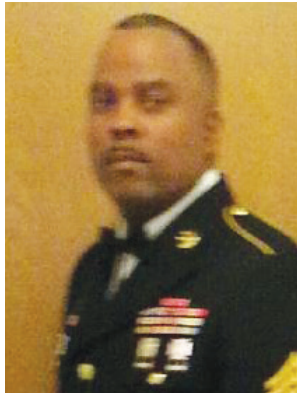
Aurthur C. Trent
US Army Air Corps
Sergeant
Battle of Normandy & D Day



James Troutt
US Air Force
Senior Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 27



Myra Trent
US Coast Guard
Private 1st Class (E-3)
Years of Service: 1979 - 1980



Marvin Tucker
US Army
Sergeant First Class
Years of Service: 20



Faith A. Washington
US Air Force
Sergeant (E-4)
Years of Service: 1975-1979



Percy Happy Watkins
US Air Force
Airman 2nd Class
Years of Service: 1961 - 1965



Benjamin Wheeler
US Air Force
Sergeant (E-4)
Years of Service: 1982-1992



Marvin White
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant (E-6)
Years of Service: 1971 - 1991



Charles Williams
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 1978 - 2000



Robert C. Williamson Jr.
US Air Force
MSgt - Sec Police Spec
Years of Service: 1972-1992

Need Information

Marsha Dodd – AF
Robert Robinson – Army
Alexander Thompson – AF
Milton Carson – AF

This is an incomplete list of our local Veterans. The Black Lens is working to develop a comprehensive list of members of Spokane’s Black community who have served in the military. If you know of someone who has been missed, if you have additional information, or if I have made a mistake and you have the correct information, please let me know. Thank You.

HONORING THOSE WHO PAVED THE WAY



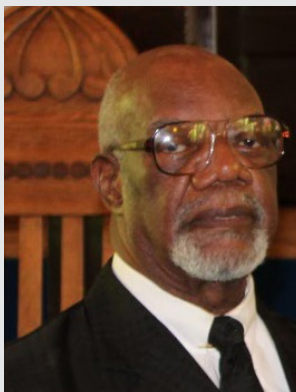
Gardner Anderson
US Army
Corporal
Years of Service: 1950 - 1952



Roth Ashby
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 20



Paul Bigsby
US Air Force
1st Lieutenant (O-2)
Years of Service: 1952-1963



Manuel Brown
US Air Force
Master Sergeant
Years of Service: 24



Charles Fleming
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant



Douglas F. Jones
US Air Force
Tech Sergeant
Years of Service: 1951 - 1971



Vance Kelley
US Air Force
Master Sergeant (E-7)
Years of Service: 1960 - 1980



Alex Lee
US Army
Sergeant (E-5)
Years of Service: 7



Cornelius Nolan
US Army
Private
Years of Service: 1955-57



Eugene Singleton
USAF, Civil Air Patrol
Tech Sergeant, Chaplain
Years of Service: 20 + 20



Thomas Williams
US Army
Command Sgt Major (E-9)
Years of Service: 1948-78 + 20yrs



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- Winona H., Seattle, WA

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It’s just a little flavored water vapor. Or is it?

New app helps parents learn how to talk to teens about vaping

As young people have returned to classrooms, the pressure to vape with friends also returns. With in-person student interaction increasing, youth may have more access and exposure to e-cigarettes.

Though youth e-cigarette use has decreased during the pandemic, 3.6 million youth still vape. While the number of African American youth who use some tobacco products, such as cigarettes and cigarillos, has steadily decreased over the last 10 years, the use of vapor products has increased.

There are many dangers associated with vaping. Vapes contain harmful chemicals like nicotine, cancer-causing chemicals, and heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead that can harm adolescent brain development, which continues to develop until about age 25.

African American youth are three times more likely to use a vapor product than any other type of tobacco product. Young people who vape nicotine may be more likely to smoke cigarettes and vape THC.

It is well documented that African Americans are one of the groups most targeted and impacted by tobacco companies and their products. Parents, teachers, and other adults can help young people make healthy decisions. By keeping yourself informed, you can know what to say when the topic comes up.

The earlier and more often you speak with young people about vapor products, the more likely they are to listen.

Live Vape Free is a new program for adults that offers practical advice that can help you talk with teens in your life about vaping.

It’s a self-guided program with videos, downloadable materials, and 1-on-1 support. Its structured approach is based on 35 years of physical, psychological, and behavioral health science.

Live Vape Free provides:

- Tools to help empower constructive conversations about the risks associated with vaping
- Instructive videos as well as how-to articles and background information
- A guide to help teens build a quit plan. It will cover how to get started, strategies for managing urges, and staying quit
- Insights from individuals who are facing similar challenges
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Sign up and start your self-guided learning at doh.wa.gov/livevapefree



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Remnant of one of the oldest Black churches in US unveiled in VA

By Adelle M. Banks

(RNS - religionnews.com) — Archaeologists believe they have discovered the foundation of the original building of the First Baptist Church in Williamsburg, Virginia, one of the nation's oldest Black churches.

The announcement, shared first with descendants of First Baptist Church members, was officially made on Thursday (Oct. 7) by Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, which runs the well-known outdoor living museum and historic district in Williamsburg.

"The early history of our congregation, beginning with enslaved and free Blacks gathering outdoors in secret in 1776, has always been a part of who we are as a community," said the Rev. Reginald F. Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church, in a statement.

"To see it unearthed — to see the actual bricks of that original foundation and the outline of the place our ancestors worshipped — brings that history to life and makes that piece of our identity tangible."

The discovery of the first permanent structure of the church — which is set to celebrate its 245th anniversary on the weekend of Oct. 9-10 — comes after a year of excavation at the site.

Archaeologists located a 16 X 20-foot brick foundation atop a layer of soil that has been dated to the early 1800s. It sits beside brick paving under which was found an 1817 coin.

Tax records have indicated that the congregation was worshipping on the site by 1818 in a building called the Baptist Meeting House, which was likely the congregation's first permanent home.

Jack Gary, Colonial Williamsburg's director of archaeology, said he considers these finds to be just the start of continuing research.

"We always hoped this is what we'd find," he said in a statement. "Now we can move forward to better understand the footprint of the building. Is it the only structure on the site? What else was around it? What did it look like? How was it being used?"

During their search, which started in September 2020, archaeologists also have found evidence of at least 25 human burials at the location.



Continued on Page 29



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PASTOR & FIRST LADY
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Black Men Executed in 1951 Rape Granted Posthumous Pardons

By Denise Lavoie

(Reprinted from AP News, apnews.com)

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam granted posthumous pardons Tuesday to seven Black men who were executed in 1951 for the rape of a white woman, in a case that attracted pleas for mercy from around the world and in recent years has been denounced as an example of racial disparity in the use of the death penalty.

Northam announced the pardons after meeting with about a dozen descendants of the men and their advocates. Cries and sobs could be heard from some of the descendants after Northam’s announcement.

The “Martinsville Seven,” as the men became known, were all convicted of raping 32-year-old Ruby Stroud Floyd, a white woman who had gone to a predominantly black neighborhood in Martinsville, Virginia, on Jan. 8, 1949, to collect money for clothes she had sold.

Four of the men were executed in Virginia’s electric chair on Feb. 2, 1951. Three days later, the remaining three were also electrocuted. All of them were tried by all-white juries. It was the largest group of people executed for a single-victim crime in Virginia’s history.

At the time, rape was a capital offense. But Northam said Tuesday that the death penalty for rape was applied almost exclusively to Black people. From 1908 — when Virginia began using the electric chair — to 1951, state records show that all 45 people executed for rape were Black, he said. The pardons do not address the guilt or innocence of the men, but Northam said the pardons are an acknowledgment that they did not receive due process and received a “racially-biased death sentence not similarly applied to white defendants.”

“These men were executed because they were Black, and that’s not right,” Northam said.

“Their punishment did not fit the crime. They should not have been executed,” he added.

All seven men were convicted and sentenced to death within eight days. Northam said some of the defendants were impaired at the



Rose Grayson, niece of Francis DeSales Grayson, top, comforts James Grayson, son of Francis DeSales Grayson, left, and Rudy McCollum, great nephew of Francis DeSales Grayson, one of the Martinsville Seven. (Bob Brown/Richmond Times-Dispatch via AP)

At the time, rape was a capital offense. But Northam said Tuesday that the death penalty for rape was applied almost exclusively to Black people. From 1908 — when Virginia began using the electric chair — to 1951, state records show that all 45 people executed for rape were Black.

time of their arrests or unable to read confessions they signed. He said none of the men had attorneys present while they were interrogated.

Before their executions, protesters picketed at the White House, and the governor’s office received letters from around the world asking for mercy.

James Walter Grayson is the son of Francis DeSales Grayson, who was one of the seven. He sobbed loudly when Northam told the family members he would grant the pardons after meeting with them Tuesday. “Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord,” he said, as he wept while being embraced by two other descendants of the men.

Grayson said he was 4 years old when his father was executed.

“It means so much to me,” he said of the pardon. “I remember the very day the police

came to the door. He kissed us and they took him away,” he told The Associated Press in an interview after the announcement.

Rudolph McCollum Jr., a former Richmond mayor who is the great-nephew of Francis DeSales Grayson and the nephew of another one of the executed men, Booker T. Millner, told Northam the executions represent “a wound that continues to mar Virginia’s history and the efforts to move beyond its dubious past.” He wept when Northam announced he would pardon the men.

In December, advocates and descendants of the men asked Northam to issue posthumous pardons. Their petition does not argue that the men were innocent, but says their trials were unfair and the punishment was extreme and unjust.

“The Martinsville Seven were not given adequate due process ‘simply for being black,’ they were sentenced to death for a crime

that a white person would not have been executed for ‘simply for being black,’ and they were killed, by the Commonwealth, ‘simply for being black,’ ” the advocates wrote in their letter to Northam.

The seven men, most in their late teens or early 20s, were: Grayson, Millner, Frank Hairston Jr.; Howard Lee Hairston; James Luther Hairston; Joe Henry Hampton; and John Clabon Taylor.

Eric W. Rise, an associate professor at the University of Delaware who wrote a 1995 book on the case: “The Martinsville Seven: Race, Rape, and Capital Punishment,” said Floyd told police she was raped by a large group of Black men and testified at all six trials. Two of the men were tried together.

All seven men signed statements admitting they were present during the attack, but they had no access to their parents or attorneys at the time, Rise said.

“The validity of the confessions were one of the things their defense attorneys brought up at the trials,” Rise said.

Four of the men testified in their own defense. Rise said two men said they had consensual sex with her, one man denied any involvement, and another man said he was so intoxicated he could not remember what happened.

Northam has now granted a total of 604 pardons since taking office in 2018, more than the previous nine governors combined, his administration announced Tuesday.

“This is about righting wrongs,” Northam said. “We all deserve a criminal justice system that is fair, equal, and gets it right — no matter who you are or what you look like,” he said.

In March, Northam, a Democrat, signed legislation passed by the Democrat-controlled legislature abolishing the state’s death penalty. It was a dramatic shift for Virginia, a state that had the second-highest number of executions in the U.S. The case of the Martinsville Seven was cited during the legislative debate as an example of the disproportionate use of the death penalty against people of color.



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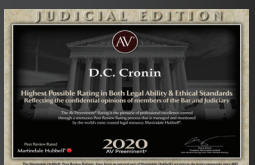
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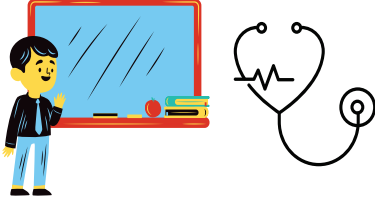
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- like to talk to their neighbors and community about what issues are impacting them
- enjoy coming up with thoughtful ideas that help their community and neighbors
- have the time to attend the monthly meeting

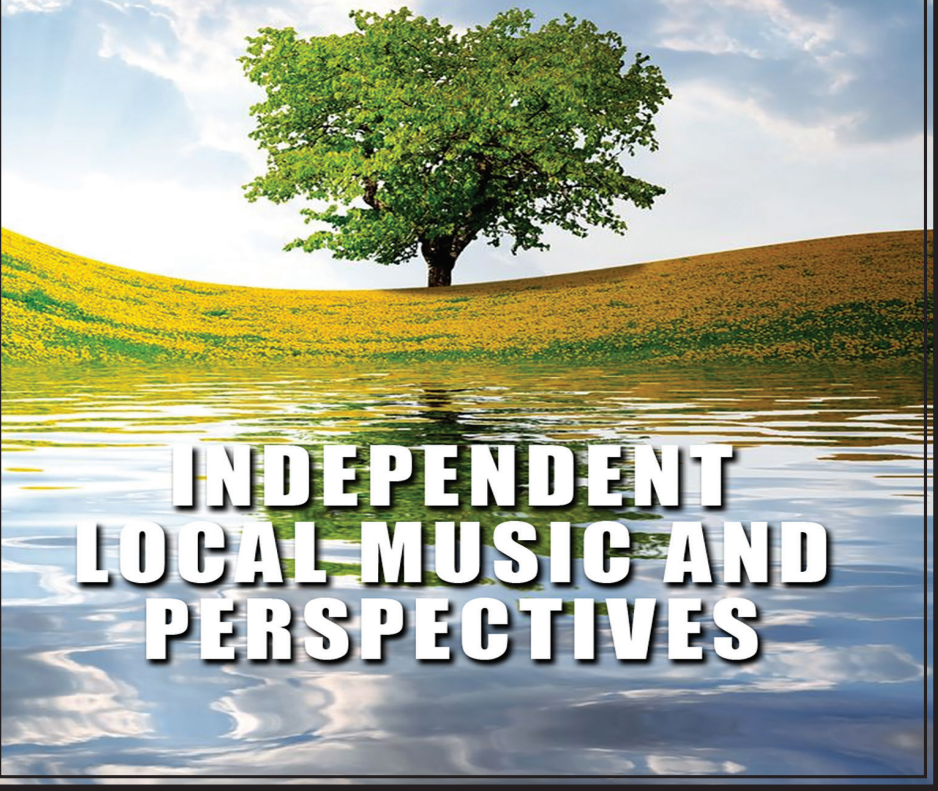


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INDEPENDENT LOCAL MUSIC AND PERSPECTIVES

Deen Centric

A Column from Spokane's Black Muslim Community

By Bro Jermaine Williams

Living life as a Muslim in Spokane has been quite an experience. Not a terrible experience but an experience nonetheless.

Din “deen” (way of life) Centric (central/customary).

I was privileged to embrace Islam by becoming Muslim in 1997 when Islam was still foreign to many in America. TWENTY-FOUR YEARS later, post 9/11, Twin Towers, Sadaam Hussein, Usama bin-Laden, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc... I’m in the beautiful Lilac City where Islam still seems foreign.

In TWENTY-FOUR YEARS I’ve prayed, interacted, conversed with hundreds of Muslims from each end of the globe (the majority of them identifying as Beautifully Black African Americans). Now, I live in Spokane with one (yes ONE) Islamic Center (that happens to be in the Valley). The Imam seems sincere. Jumah (Friday) service is always enriching and still Spokane WA is the first major city in The United States where African American Muslims are not the majority.

The beauty of perseverance is you don’t fold during trying times. I still represent Islam humbly yet proudly any and everywhere I go. Islam has been my saving grace, therefore I am unapologetic in my thoughts, words and deeds surrounding The Din of Islam.

I also love the fact that I AM NOT THE ONLY ONE. There are many beautifully Black African American Muslims I rock with. Some of which appeared in BLNEWS April 2021 issue. Some who have been writing in BLNEWS each month since then.

Many of you know me as Director of Freedom Project East, but those closest know Islam is my first love. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was an advocate, activist and abolitionist. A sincere warrior does Not strive to conquer others they strive to conquer themselves. I’ve been a resident of Spokane since May 2020. Good bad ugly indifferent, I adore The Lilac City and like turkeys on the South Hill, you may as well slow down when you see us because we’re here to stay and we’re not budging. At least Muslims wave.

There’s more where this came from... As-salamu ‘alaykum.

My Black Family’s Struggle With COVID Vaccine Hesitancy

Continued From Page 17

My mother’s symptoms are waning and she’s feeling better. I’m overjoyed. If we can get them both out of the woods and then get them vaccinated, maybe this whole nightmare will be over. I feel hope.

Black vaccination hesitancy has valid roots in our healthcare system. But if that distrust creates so much fear that we die when we don’t have to, our Black lives won’t matter much at all.

Tuesday, Aug. 17: Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas tests positive for COVID. I can’t delight in the irony because he’s complicit in so many unnecessary deaths.

I find out that my sister has jumped in her car and driven the five hours from Dallas to my mom’s small town to see our mom. When she arrives, she finds that my mother has returned to her teaching job after testing negative.

When she gets home from work, my mom FaceTimes my father, my brother and my nephew so they can talk to my grandmother. My sister calls in an order for Italian food.

Amid the chatter and fuss, quietly, peacefully my grandmother passes away.

Do your research. Avoid misinformation. Consult your physician. Make your appointment. Get your shot. Don’t take any more time.

Friday, Aug. 27: My grandmother was laid to rest. Rest in peace, Grandmama.

Any one of our Black lives can end in a matter of days. Don’t waste time. Go now. We’ll fight the good fight later. Together. Alive.

Espie Randolph III is a screenwriter and actor from Odessa, Texas. He is studying directing at New York Film Academy in Burbank. espierandolph.com



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Black Chef’s New Line of Soul Food Starter Kits Available Nationwide

(blacknews.com) Claude Booker, is CEO and founder of Booker’s Soul Food Starters which are now available in over 1,000 grocery stores across the country. His business providing Southern side dishes for buffets was decimated as a direct result of the pandemic, and most buffets remain closed.

Booker pivoted his business during the pandemic and went from ideation to grocery store shelves with Booker’s Soul Food Starters in nine months. He did not shy away from his commitments to building a supply chain filled with domestic Black-owned businesses. The partnership with other Black businesses encourages more opportunities for those businesses and allows them to employ other Black Americans.

“When the pandemic hit in 2020, I lost 90% of my hot food and steam table business during the shutdown,” said Claude. “We pivoted and created pantry-ready seasonings for soul food during the pandemic because more people were eating at home. We went from creation to 1,000 stores in the midst of a pandemic.”

Booker’s Soul Food Starters enables any home cook to create the traditional flavors of collard greens, mac and cheese, peach cobbler, and more by adding their own fresh ingredients to the starter. The products are now sold online and in over 1,000 locations nationwide, including at Meijer, Stop & Shop, KeHE, Cost Plus World Market, VW Roses, and Sam’s Club. According to author Brooke Stephens’ book, Talking Dollars and Making Sense: A Wealth Building Guide for African-American, the lifespan of a dollar in the Asian community is 28 days, in the Jewish community the lifespan of a dollar is 19 days, and shockingly, the lifespan in the Black community is approximately 6 hours. Booker’s investment in the Black community is intentionally addressing this challenge.

“Pivoting in the pandemic was a valuable lesson in perseverance in entrepreneurship and



community. My hope is that other Black entrepreneurs will consider other avenues when one becomes blocked. It’s important for our community to continue to invest in itself and support Black business owners as we strive to close the wealth gap that has existed for too long in this country,” Booker said.

Booker says that he well understands the importance of keeping money in the Black community. Black Americans spend over \$1.4 trillion every year. Even though Black buying power is strong, the lack of community access to Black-owned businesses continues to contribute to the wealth gap.

According to Brookings, the pandemic left Black households more vulnerable: “Although Black-owned businesses only represent a minority of all businesses, they are disproportionately likely to operate in sectors most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns.” Santa Cruz economist, Robert Fairlie, found that more than 2 out of 5 black small businesses and self-employed workers have been forced to shutter during the pandemic — well over twice the rate of white businesses. Claude Booker’s business was no different.

To learn more about his product line and/or to make a purchase, visit SoulFoodStarters.com

Spokane Black Business Directory



- ▶ Search.
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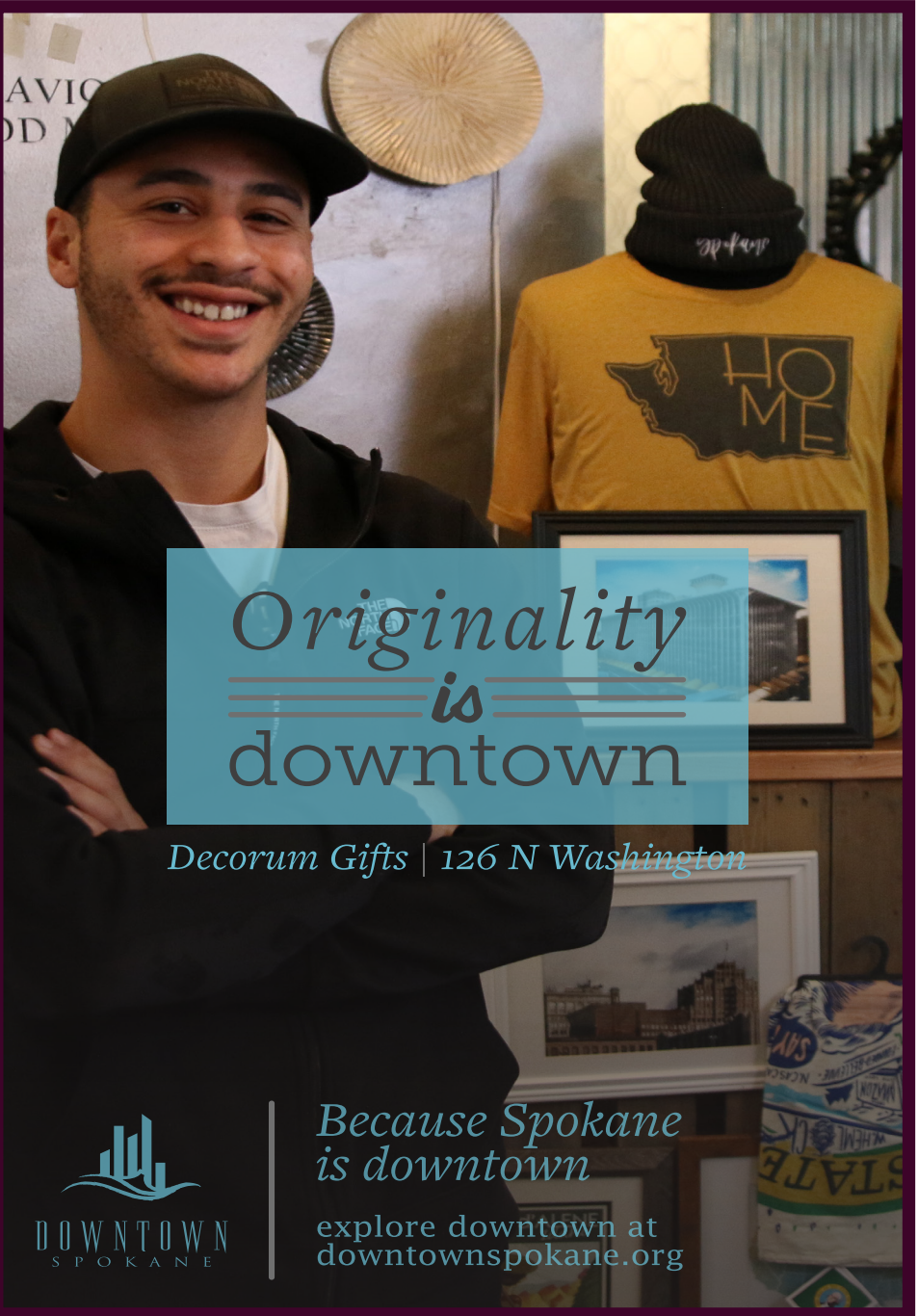
Welcome to:
BlackSpokane.com

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

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

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

To add your business call 509-795-1886.



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Remnant of one of the Oldest Black churches in US

Continued From Page 24



What remained of the church’s original structure had been covered up by the foundation of a brick church built in 1856 after the first structure was felled by a tornado. Later, it was paved over in the construction of a parking lot. Negotiations between the church and Colonial Williamsburg have brought the church’s history into the open in the last five years.

First Baptist relocated to Scotland Street in 1956. The excavation work at the former site near Nassau and Francis streets will continue as archaeologists seek to learn more about the first permanent structure, pinpoint burial sites and learn more about the spiritual practices of the early worshippers.

The church was started in 1776 by enslaved and free Blacks, defying laws forbidding African Americans to congregate. They started in a brush arbor — a clearing in the woods surrounded by posts and covered with branches — where they met secretly to pray and sing on a Williamsburg plantation. They relocated to a rural area outside Williamsburg before moving to the site where the recent discoveries were made.

Colonial Williamsburg acquired the land on South Nassau Street in 1956 from what became known as First Baptist Church. The foundation razed the building and paid for the construction and land costs for the congregation’s current building, which opened the next year.



“Colonial Williamsburg is committed to telling a more complete and inclusive story of the men and women who lived, worked and worshipped here during our country’s formative years,” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, in a statement.

Photos courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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Black Future Co-op Fund Seeks Black Washingtonians to Shape State’s Future Through New Survey

SEATTLE — The Black Future Co-op Fund, in collaboration with Byrd Barr Place, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, and the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs, today launched a statewide survey to gather the diversity of Black perspectives for an upcoming report, “Black Well-being: Moving Toward Solutions Together.” The report aims to support collective organizing across Washington; direct resources to invest in Black prosperity, health, and well-being; and inform policy change to fix structural injustices and advance equitable opportunities.

The first iteration of the report, Creating an Equitable Future in Washington State: Black Well-being and Beyond, was published in 2015 by Byrd Barr Place, in collaboration with the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs and the African American Leadership Forum-Seattle.

Survey Link:
<https://bit.ly/BWB-survey-2021>

The online survey is available in Amharic, Arabic, Dari, English, French, Garifuna, Haitian Creole, Oromo, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, and Tigrinya.

Those who complete the survey can opt into a raffle to potentially win a \$100 gift card to Black-owned business of their choice in Washington state.

It was important for us to continue this work because so much has changed

in recent years. The compounding crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession, generations of deeply embedded racist policies, and free-flowing rhetoric have accelerated the urgency for structural change,” said Andrea Caupain Sanderson, co-founder of the Black Future Co-op Fund. “The goals of the report are directly aligned with the Black Future Co-op Fund’s vision: a Washington state where all Black people are liberated, prosperous, and self-determined to fully live our lives.”

The survey follows a series of conversations with Black leaders across the state who are working for change in economic security, education, health, civic engagement, and the legal system. The survey is intended to reach Black Washingtonians across income, language, age, gender, religion, and sexuality and solicit input about what’s important for advancing Black well-being.

In early 2022, the survey findings and community-informed recommendations will be shared at a community event co-hosted by Black-led organizations.

“I remember when the first study in 2015 was an idea. We are still using the data from that report, so the timing for this is perfect,” shares Kevin Dawson, corporate sales director at SAP Concur and board member at Byrd Barr Place. “I’m excited to see what we learn and figure out how we can change what’s wrong in our systems.”



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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/waparkssurvey>

If you would like to participate, please take the survey, and then share the link with your friends, family, and network in Washington state. If you have questions, contact George Griffin, G3 & Associates, at G3inc@comcast.net.

Eviction Legal Clinic

The Carl Maxey Center in partnership with the Volunteer Lawyers Program and The Way to Justice will be hosting an Eviction Legal Clinic.

Free of charge.

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Colin Powell & “Two-ness”

Continued From Page 1

Powell was part of that military history. He joined in 1958, a decade after desegregation of the Armed Forces in 1948. But the military was – and still is – an institution characterized by structural racism. That was true when Powell joined the Army, and it is true today. As such, Powell would have had to wrestle with his blackness and what it meant in the military: What did it mean to serve a country that doesn’t serve you?

As a military man during the Vietnam War, Powell also stood apart from many Black political leaders who condemned U.S. action in Southeast Asia. While Muhammad Ali was asking why he should “put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people” at a time when “so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights,” Powell was making his way up the military ranks.

It helps explain why despite Powell’s undoubted achievements, his legacy as a Black leader is complicated. His identity – being of Jamaican heritage – posed questions about what it means to be an African American. His life in the military prompted some to ask why he would serve a country that has historically been hostile to nonwhite people in the U.S. and around the world. The veteran activist and singer Harry Belafonte likened Powell in 2002 to a “house slave” in one particularly contentious remark questioning his loyalty to the U.S. system.

Powell acknowledged the realities of racism in the U.S., while at the same time believed it should never serve as an obstacle nor cause Black people to question their American-ness. In a May 14, 1994 commencement speech at Howard University, Powell told graduates to take pride in their Black heritage, but to use it as “a foundation stone we can build on, and not a place to withdraw into.”

And then there are his political affiliations. He was Ronald Reagan’s national security advisor and George H. W. Bush’s chairman of the joint chiefs of staff at a time when the domestic policies of both presidents were devastating Black America, through mass incarceration of Black men and women and

economic policies that stripped services in lower-income areas.

That was before one of the most consequential and controversial moments in Powell’s political life. In February 2003, Powell argued before the United Nations Security Council for military action against Iraq – a speech that erroneously claimed that Saddam Hussein had stockpiled weapons of mass destruction. He hadn’t, and the war that Powell helped steer the U.S. into scars his legacy.

A complicated existence

Powell’s two-ness, to use the DuBois phrase, manifested later in his decision in 2008 to endorse Barack Obama as presidential candidate over his fellow Republican and military man, John McCain.

In Obama, Powell saw “a transformational figure” in America and on the world stage. In endorsing Obama, Powell chose the historic significance of the U.S. having its first Black president over loyalty and service to his friend and political party.

His drift from Republicanism furthered after Donald Trump seized the reins of the party. He became increasingly vocal in opposing Trump, who saw Powell – as did many of Trump’s supporters – as something of a traitor.

That view ignores the history.

Powell was a patriot who embodied DuBois’ “two warring ideals in one dark body.” For Powell to have reached the heights he did required dogged strength and perhaps far greater effort to hold it together than his white predecessors.

In America, being Black and a patriot is – as DuBois hinted at more an a century ago, and as Powell’s life attests to – a very complicated, even painful, affair.

Chad Williams is a Samuel J. and Augusta Spector Professor of History and African and African American Studies at Brandeis University. This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article here: <https://theconversation.com/as-a-patriot-and-black-man-colin-powell-embodied-the-two-ness-of-the-african-american-experience-170168>.



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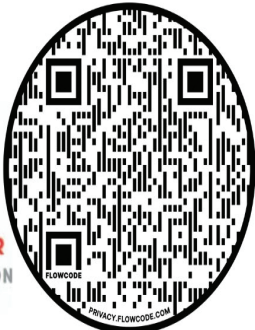
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Photo credit: Innovia Foundation Photo Contest Winner - Caroline Schibel, Hope Meadows in Deer Park.



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OUR VOICES

The Peculiarly Silent Pandemic of Gun Violence in the Black Community

By Fatimah Loren Dreier

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - In his recent book, *A Peculiar Indifference: The Neglected Toll of Violence on Black America*, Elliot Currie highlights the disproportionate impact community violence has on the African American community. Shockingly, according to Currie, from the years 2000-2018 over 162,000 African Americans died violent deaths. Of that total, 139,000 were Black men – with 85% of those killed, dying by gun violence.

This stark reality is underscored by an analysis of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) 2019 gun mortality data, which found that young Black males ages 15 to 34 are the most disproportionately impacted. Despite making up just two percent of the population, they accounted for 37 percent of all gun homicides in 2019—a rate of firearm homicide that is 20 times higher than white males of the same age group.

Elliot’s selection of the term “peculiar indifference” is apropos -- it was first coined in 1899 by scholar and activist W.E.B. DuBois in his groundbreaking book, *The Philadelphia Negro*—considered by some to be the first sociological study in America. DuBois argued: “The most difficult social problem in the matter of Negro health is the peculiar attitude of the nation toward the well-being of the race. There have, for instance, been few other cases in the history of civilized people where human suffering has been viewed with such peculiar indifference.”

If DuBois were alive today—when more Black Americans are dying from violence in the streets of this country than in its foreign wars—he might offer a searing assertion that America has largely normalized the pandemic of Black death.

Sadly, it took the COVID-19 pandemic, and its disproportionate impact on Black and Brown Americans, to unveil another, more insidious epidemic—the crisis of gun violence—which has for too long been ignored while taking a brutal toll on our communities.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, gun violence has soared in our communities—in some places to record highs in the past year, when our nation saw over 21,570 homicides and experienced the largest annual jump in homicides in the nation’s history.



In Chicago alone, thirty thousand people have been shot over the past decade, and the city has already surpassed 500 murders this year and is on pace to reach the highest number of homicides in a single year since the end of the crack era in 1996, when nearly 800 were murdered.

In Baltimore, there have been over 200 murders a year since 1979, and over 300 annually since 2015. In Philadelphia this year, homicides have already passed the 400 mark.

Furthermore, just like soldiers returning from war zones, those who live in communities with high levels of violence often face untreated PTSD and related issues due to the intergenerational trauma inflicted by a nation that has for too long ignored their plight.

This is utterly unacceptable.

The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (the HAVI) has been working for over a decade to create a network of hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) and a professional workforce of violence intervention specialists, who intervene with violently injured patients to help them get back on their feet and prevent reinjury and retaliation. This is an evidence-informed practice that is operational in cities like Baltimore, Oakland, New York, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

It’s a complementary strategy supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans—and by many in law enforcement as well as those calling for police reforms— because it has been proven to work, despite inconsistent and inadequate funding over the years. We know that if implemented effectively and properly funded as part of an overall community violence intervention ecosystem, adequately, these programs have the power to dramatically reduce the epidemic of gun violence.

It’s an idea positioned to receive \$5 Billion from the federal government over the next 8 years—the type of support that can create transformative change for our peacekeepers—if Congress passes the Build Back Better Act. This legislation is critically important to our communities because it not only expands opportunities and provides jobs and support for the least of these, but also funds peace through billions of dollars for violence intervention programs like HVIPs.

It is essential to recognize that as a society, we must address the root causes of violence—specifically, the systemic neglect and racism that has created conditions that lead to violence in our communities. But while we work toward this long-term goal, we need to first stop the bleeding before repairing the wound.

We must ring the alarm and form a chorus of voices crying out that thousands of Black and Brown people murdered every year is not acceptable, and it is past time we treat it like the public health pandemic it is.

Fatimah Loren Dreier is executive director of the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (TheHAVI.org), follow her on Twitter @fatimah_loren and The HAVI @TheHAVI

The HAVI is a national organization working to build a network of hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs), which provide services for victims of violent crime while they are recovering from their injuries to reduce the likelihood that they commit gun violence or are victimized in the future. Currently, the HAVI works in over 85 cities across the country to develop and implement HVIPs, which are crucial resources in addressing the gun violence crisis that is disrupting health ecosystems in communities nationwide. Learn more about our work at THEHAVI.ORG.

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OUR VOICES

Halloween Unmasks Our Troubled History with Race

By Rev. Irene Monroe

(Blackcommentator.com) - Halloween is one of America’s favorite yearly activities. Unfortunately, Halloween can be America’s scariest, too-especially for those of us seen as costumes you wear rather than the human beings that we are.

Asian Americans, Native Americans, blacks, Muslim women in burqas, hijabs, and Muslim men in turbans with beards, are frequent targets of race-themed costumes. Whites donning blackface was a commonly accepted misbehavior that dates back long before it was disclosed in 2019 that the present Virginia governor, Ralph Northam, once went in blackface as Michael Jackson in the 1980s.

With anti-immigration sentiment toward Mexicans evident with the mass shooting in El Paso, there will be some Halloween revelers mocking this racial group. However, those not intended to mock or mimic yet dress up in Mexican serape and hat or the “Little Mexican Amigo Toddler Costume” sold on Amazon will also hit racial landmines.

We are a country that doesn’t want to confront race. Halloween, an activity that’s masked with tricks and treats and playful mischief, ironically unmasks the face of America’s troubled history with race.

It’s hard not to make the connection with contemporary topics, themes, and people trending in news and culture to Halloween costumes worn that year. For example, a year after Trayvon Martin’s murder, a rash of Trayvon Martin Halloween costumes appeared with white people wearing hoodies, carrying Skittles, and sporting gunshot wounds. That same year, in 2013, Julianne Hough, a judge on ABC’s “Dancing with the Stars,” wore blackface as her favorite character Crazy Eyes in the Netflix hit “Orange Is the New Black” for Halloween. Award-winning Nigerian American actress Uzo Aduba portrays the character Crazy Eyes.

In 2019, we saw Halloween decorations of lynching across the country. In Chesapeake, Virginia, a figure was found wrapped in black trash bags hanging from a tree. In Brooklyn, a Halloween decoration displayed children hanging from nooses. Sadly, the display was across the street from an elementary school. Here in Andover that year, just a 30-minute drive from my home in Cambridge, a McDonald’s apologized for a Halloween decoration displaying a person hanging from a tree by the neck. Even with the best intentions, Halloween hangings depicting the act of lynching ought not to bring joy nor laughter -- whether intended to cause harm or not.



Our present-day fight is to pass legislation to make the act of lynching a federal hate crime in this century. The horrific act of lynching is a form of domestic terrorism and social control.

For example, Emmett Till, the 14-year-old African American male teen lynched in the Mississippi Delta in the summer of 1955, became this nation’s iconic image of the cowardly acts of white supremacist terrorism. In 2018 the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, informally known as the National Lynching Memorial, opened to commemorate the thousands of recorded black bodies lynched in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In this racial climate of a resurgence of white nationalism and political polariza-

tion, it was not hard to connect former President Trump’s comments about lynching to some of the lynching-themed Halloween decorations that popped up across the country during his tenure. Trump’s use of the racial trope essentializes and erases the particular history and context of black struggle in America. But Trump is gone. And, the lynching of people of color goes back hundreds of years.

Some feel Halloween no longer brings joy and laughter in a “woke” culture where the tyranny of political correctness and identity politics police behavior. However, if you feel you’re rocking your Halloween outfit instead of mocking an ethnic group or cultural practice, please keep these thoughts in mind: wearing the traditional clothing of another culture is not a costume. Donning blackface is not a mask. Dressing as a homeless person isn’t funny. Adopting someone else’s dialect for the evening is not cool. Purchasing the “Disguise Women’s Dragon Geisha Costume” from Amazon is not okay.

Halloween is a Celtic festival. People lit bonfires and wore costumes to ward off ghosts. We can do the same without dredging up the ghosts of America’s racism.

The Reverend Monroe is an ordained minister and , motivational speaker. Her website is irenemonroe.com.

The Need to Protect and Promote our Economic & Political Independence

By A. Peter Bailey

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - In an August 1992 column, I noted the need for Black folks to focus more on achieving economic and political independence.

In regards to politics, I wrote: “One of the best things I have read recently is that one-quarter of Black people who were asked their political affiliation described themselves as Independents.... Declaring ourselves politically independent is an important first step. The next one is to organize a political party that looks to further our interests and those of other groups with whom we have formed mutually beneficial relationships. There is nothing sacred about a two-party system.”

In dealing with economics, I included a quote given to Lerone Bennett, Jr. in a 1976 interview with legendary businessman, Earl B. Dickerson.

Mr. Dickerson stated that “As more and more Blacks move into the middle-class, they have a responsibility to the black community. If Blacks go into the white community to get knowledge and then stay there, they are only pushing further away from the possibilities of Blacks ever becoming economically sufficient. I call upon these young Black men and women to get the experience, to get the foundation, and, before they are too old, to move into the black community to help Blacks achieve economic

equality. The economic insufficiency of the Black community can never be improved to any substantial extent merely by employing a few middle-class Blacks...

We’ve got to improve the purchasing power of the total community....”

Twenty-nine years after that column, we as a people have yet to achieve the kind of economic and political independence that will enable us to better promote and protect our vital interests in this country.

Economically, we still give the overwhelming majority of our dollars to members of other racial, ethnic or religious groups, despite being exploited by all of them.

Politically, the overwhelming majority of us still believe that the only way to do that is to be either a Democrat or a Republican despite the fact that both parties, through the years, have exploited us.

The billion dollar question is when will we begin to more effectively promote and protect our economic and political interests?



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NOVEMBER 10
EVICTON LEGAL CLINIC
The Carl Maxey Center in partnership with the Volunteer Lawyers Program and The Way to Justice will be hosting an Eviction Legal Clinic. Free of charge.
6 - 8pm
The Way to Justice
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With attorneys who specialize in bankruptcy, family and eviction law. For more information call (509) 324 0144

NOVEMBER 10
FUSE DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB
Medical Apartheid by Harriet A. Washington
The first full history of Black America's shocking mistreatment as unwilling and unwitting experimental subjects at the hands of the medical establishment. National Book Critics Circle Award Winner.
6:30pm-8pm (Virtual Discussion)
Visit the Fuse Book Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fusediversity>

NOVEMBER 12
RIBBON CUTTING - LIBERTY PARK LIBRARY
Join us to celebrate the completion of this renovation project funded by the 2018 Library bond issue. Remarks from local leaders, ribbon cutting, library tours.
10am
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The event will be held outside, weather permitting. Masks required when inside the building.

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Workshop - 3-6pm
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NAACP GENERAL MEETING
Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. Meetings are currently online.
For more information please check social media or contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit: naacpspokane.org.

NOVEMBER 19
WE GON' BE ALRIGHT
A Space for Black Healing
Facilitator Kiantha Duncan, Co-facilitator Alethea Dumas.
This is not a space for allies.
5:30-7:30pm
Virtual Discussion
To register visit: <http://ow.ly/V8de50GaQTW>

NOVEMBER 25
2021 THANKSGIVING SERVICE
Sponsored by the Spokane Ministerial Fellowship
10am
Martin Luther King Center
500 S Stone St
Spokane, WA 99202
Light TO GO meal will be served following service

Opens at the Magic Lantern on November 2

TESSA THOMPSON

RUTH NEGGA

PASSING

A FILM BY REBECCA HALL

NOTHING IS BLACK AND WHITE

IN SELECT THEATERS OCTOBER AND ON NETFLIX NOVEMBER 10

Check the website for times: magiclanternonmain.com

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

WINNER 5 TONY AWARDS

THE MOST AWARDED PLAY OF THE SEASON

A

CHRISTMAS

CAROL

STARRING

BRADLEY WHITFORD

KATE BURTON ALEX NEWELL

ADAPTED BY

JACK THORNE

PRODUCTION ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY

MATTHEW WARCHUS

SET AND COSTUMES BY ROB HOWELL

LIGHTING DESIGN HUGH VANSTONE

SOUND DESIGN SIMON BAKER

COMPOSER/ ORCHESTRATOR/ARRANGER CHRISTOPHER NIGHTINGALE

MOVEMENT BY LIZZI GEE

DIRECTED BY THOMAS CARUSO

DIRECT FROM BROADWAY

NOVEMBER 12-13, 2021

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BEST of BROADWAY

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Justice & Equity:

Challenging Hate

and Inspiring Hope

Join us for Gonzaga's Sixth International Conference on Hate Studies, Nov 4-6, 2021 held virtually this year.

Join us for presentations, workshops and discussions from local, national, and international experts and organizations, including regional Human Rights groups, the Western States Center, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles, the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon's Collaboratory Against Hate, and the University of Copenhagen, among others.

Registration is open at

www.gonzaga.edu/icohs



FARE POLICY SURVEY

Give your feedback on STA's proposed new fare policy!

Do you want more discount options?

Do you want to pay as you go and save money?

How important is a cash fare option on the bus?



Your opinion is welcome and valued at STA!

SpokaneTransit.com/FareSurvey

