South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning symbol for racial justice and human rights, died at the age of 90.

On Sunday (December 26), South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced Tutu’s death in a statement, saying, “The passing of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu is another chapter of bereavement in our nation’s farewell to a generation of outstanding South Africans who have bequeathed us a liberated South Africa.”

Ramaphosa added, “A man of extraordinary intellect, integrity and invincibility against the forces of apartheid, [Tutu] was also tender and vulnerable in his compassion for those who had suffered oppression, injustice and violence under apartheid, and oppressed and downtrodden people around the world.”

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born Oct. 7, 1931, in Klerksdorp, west of Johannesburg, and became a teacher before entering St. Peter’s Theological College in Rosettenville in 1958. He was ordained in 1961 and six years later became chaplain at the University of Fort Hare. He then moved to the tiny southern African kingdom of Lesotho and to Britain, returning home in 1975. He became bishop of Lesotho, chairman of the South African Council of Churches and, in 1985, the first Black Anglican bishop of Johannesburg. In 1986, Tutu, who was a primary voice in urging the South African government to end apartheid, was named the first Black archbishop of Cape Town. Archbishop of Cape Town. In 1984, Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent opposition to apartheid.

In 1990, after 27 years in prison, Mandela spent his first night of freedom at Tutu’s residence in Cape Town. Later, Mandela called Tutu “the people’s archbishop.” Upon becoming president in 1994, Mandela appointed Tutu to be chairman of the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which uncovered the abuses of apartheid. President Barack Obama gave Archbishop Tutu the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his global humanitarian work in 2009.

President Obama tweeted: “Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a mentor, a friend, and a moral compass for me and so many others. A universal spirit, Archbishop Tutu was grounded in the struggle for liberation and justice in his own country, but also concerned with injustice everywhere.”

Tutu campaigned internationally for human rights, especially LGBTQ rights and same-sex marriage. “I would not worship a God who is homophobic,” he said in 2013, launching a campaign for LGBTQ rights in Cape Town. “I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven. No, I would say, ‘Sorry, I would much rather go to the other place.’”

Tutu was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the late 1990s. He had been hospitalized several times since 2015. In recent years he and his wife, Leah, lived in a retirement community outside Cape Town.

Tutu died peacefully at the Oasis Frail Care Center in Cape Town, the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Trust said.

RIP Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Anti-Apartheid and humanitarian Icon Dies of Cancer at Age 90

By Maiysha Kai

(Reprinted from Black Information Network | Atlanta Daily World; Andrew Meldrum, apnews.com; and Keith Reed, theroot.com)

Ain’t I A Woman Author bell hooks Dead at 69

By Maiysha Kai

(Reprinted from Black Information Network | Atlanta Daily World; Andrew Meldrum, apnews.com; and Keith Reed, theroot.com)

Acclaimed author, activist and intellectual bell hooks, who was also a deeply influential figure in intersectional feminism, has died. According to a press release issued by her niece, Ebony Motley, printed in the Lexington Herald-Leader.

“Hook’s work has transformed their life.”

“I want my work to be about healing,” hooks said. “I am a fortunate writer because every day of my life practically I get a letter, a phone call, from someone who tells me how my work has transformed their life.”

hooks began her first book, Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism, at only 19, reported the Herald Leader. It was during this time she began using a pen name, borrowing from her great-grandmother’s name, Bell Blair Hooks, and using lowercase letters to emphasize the “substance of books, not who I am,” according to the Lexington Herald-Ledger.
ON MY MIND
THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

By Sandra Williams

What I’m Hoping for in 2023

As I’m typing these words, I’m feeling a mix of emotions. Since this column is one of the last things that I work on for the paper each month, the fact that I’m picking through what’s left of my brain for something to say right now means that I’m within an arms reach of the finish line.

On the one hand, I think the emotion that I’m feeling most of all right now is relief. Before I took the leap to start the Black Lens, I sat down with Bob Lloyd, who had been the editor and publisher of the African American Voice, which published in Spokane in the 90s. I asked Bob what was the hardest thing about publishing his paper and he said the deadlines.

I didn’t really know what Bob was talking about then, but seven years into this grand experiment called the Black Lens, I have a profound understanding of what he was saying and why he said it.

While some of the monthly deadline pressure is certainly self-inflicted, and is there because I truly recognize and honor the responsibility to the Black community that I took on when I signed up for this gig. Some of the deadline pressure is just an inherent part of this work.

I think the monthly deadline builds character, to be sure, and has taught me a good deal about what Sandy Williams is actually made of. I mean, it takes a particular kind of strength to put one’s raw emotions on the back burner in order to continue to produce a newspaper through every thing that’s happened in my life, in this country, and on this planet over the past seven years. There is tremendous value in discovering that you have that kind of strength. But, I would be lying if I didn’t say that I also feel a tremendous amount of relief at the thought of getting to know what it feels like to have my last week of the month back again, at least for a year.

I’m also, right now, feeling a good deal of sadness. I mean, I know that the Black Lens has become an important part of this community over the past seven years because of the interactions and reactions that I have consistently gotten from the people that I’ve come in contact with. I have repeatedly said that I haven’t given up hand delivering the newspaper to locations around town each month, despite how busy I’ve become and even when folks have offered to take that job off of my hands, because it’s one of the things that I love most about publishing the paper. At every stop along the way, there are smiles and greetings and lots of conversations. It’s why it takes me so long to get the papers delivered, and it feeds my soul. I’m going to miss that very much.

I also have sadness because I am aware of the significance that the Black Lens has for so many in this community. As a voice for a people that have felt ignored and overlooked and abandoned for so very long, I am aware that the absence of the paper will symbolically be much more than just not having something to make time to read each month. And to be honest I do have some concerns about what that absence could mean in the bigger scheme of things.

But in my sixty years on this planet, I have learned to trust what feels right, and focusing on the Carl Maxey Center at this moment in time feels right. So, off I go.

My hope is that when the Black Lens returns in 2023, we will have learned the lessons that we need to learn from COVID-19, both as a country and as a people, that we will discover our humanity along the way, and that our new normal will be something that I am excited to write about. My hope is that the 2021 film “Don’t Look Up” doesn’t turn out to be a documentary. (If you haven’t seen it yet, please do). And for the love of God, I hope that in 2023 I do not have to write about another Trump run for President. See you in a year!

A Note to Black Lens Subscribers

The Black Lens will be taking a 1 year break from publishing. This issue, January 2022, will be the last printed newspaper until January/February 2023. The subscription software will allow me to freeze everyone’s subscription right where it is. So, however many issues you have remaining on your subscription after the January 2022 issue, you will have the same number of issues remaining on your subscription once the paper starts back up. You don’t have to do anything. If you would prefer a refund, feel free to let me know by sending me an e-mail at sandy@blacklensnews.com. Thank you.

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.

Contact Information:

Square Peg Multimedia, 1312 N. Monroe St, #148, Spokane, WA 99201 (509) 795-1964, sandy@blacklensnews.com

Subscriptions: Delivered monthly by mail - $45/year

Submission/Advertising Deadline: 15th of the month

Website: www.blacklensnews.com

Facebook: blacklensnews

Copyright (c) 2022 All Rights Reserved

Visit Our Website: wrightwaybeautysupply.com

Register Here: https://bit.ly/3DSMG9S

Wright Way Beauty Supply: "A Store For Us"

NOW OPEN ON SUNDAYS

NOW OPEN ON SUNDAYS

Noon - 4 pm
SPOKANE HOMELESS CONNECT
JOIN US FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL
HOMELESS CONNECT
ONE COMMUNITY, ONE GOAL.

January 27, 2022 • 10AM–3PM
The Spokane Convention Center
202 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA
YOU SHOULD KNOW
(Or Things You Probably Didn't Learn In School)

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

Indigenous Moors
January 2022

When Europeans landed ashore in North America and Canada, they encountered the Micmac Nation of people. Residing in Eastern Canada and Northeast Maine, the Micmac were a small confederation within the larger Algonquian Nation. Some scholars have found the Micmac writing system to be remarkably similar to Kemetic hieroglyphs and have proposed a connection between the Moors and the indigenous people of the Americas.

Thank you Bertoni for 7 years of sharing your art and researching history, and educating our community on so many things that we didn’t know that we didn’t know. Your section has become one of the most popular parts of the Black Lens.
Goodbye 2021! I had such great hopes for you. Some of my hopes were met and others not so much. So much has happened in 2021 that even the Black Lens Newspaper can’t capture it all. But... the Old Folks in the church would say, “every year has it’s number,” the number of folks who God calls home this past year. So, before we welcome 2022, let’s pause for a moment to remember our loved ones who are no longer with us.

Hello 2022, what might you hold for us? For me you hold hope, which is no different than in past years. But this year we actually have some money that can make things more than just a “hope” but can be a real difference in our community. As your elected representative, I can tell you that the current alignment of people in key positions is amazing. I say amazing because these folks care and are wholly committed to some of the same issues, same ideas and the great possibilities that we care about.

Here are my priorities for 2022:

HOUSING - We need housing at all entry points, irrespective of someone’s economic status, but for Communities of Color what’s most important is actual home ownership. A lot of data and studies points to home ownership as a guarantor way to build generational wealth. As a part of the American Rescue Plan, I will be supporting an Ordinance to fund $2,000,000 for down payment assistance for first-time homeowners whose incomes fall below 80 percent of the average median income (AMI). For tenants, there will be $300,000 through the ARPA funds for an eviction legal defense and education program for the city.

PUBLIC SAFETY - We are committed to funding the resources that our officers need to protect us, through community engagement, enhanced training, and building trust. We also have to ask ourselves what part will we play, to educate ourselves, be supportive, but still hold them accountable? It will take all of us to see the results that our community needs.

BROADBAND - Yes, Broadband! We have spots in our urban core where families and businesses cannot get the access and speed required to be successful in this day and age. It’s not just out in the country y’all! With the likelihood of virtual conferences, remote working and remote testimony for the Legislature and Congress sticking around, we need to make sure everyone’s voices are heard and that their literal links and connection to society is properly invested in.

YOUTH INTERNSHIPS - We need to work with the Business Community and other organizations to grow and expand paid, yes paid, internships for the youth of our City. This exposure to the many types of jobs/careers will open possibilities for them and hopefully convince them to stay in Spokane after high school or pursue Higher Education that will one day benefit our community.

SMALL MINORITY OWNED BUSINESSES - No more needs to be said than investment will be the key to OUR economic growth. My commitment is more than just talk. We are making an allocation with the ARPA funding for small businesses and our nonprofits that serve our communities, especially those that have systematically been left out of the game. Now let’s not forget that nonprofits hire people too and that they must provide for their families.

EAST 5TH AVENUE INITIATIVE – Continuing the work on how we revitalize our neighborhoods leads to my work with our State Legislators to release the surplus land in East Central that is not needed for the North/South Corridor Freeway. For those who are too young to remember, housing, businesses and even a church was torn down to make room for the I-90 freeway when it was first built. That is why this is important. For the East Central neighborhood to get a chance to say what we want first instead of last and how it impacts our community. To that end we are allocating $1,000,000 for sub-area planning to increase housing along transport corridors. We want to hear from you! So when the opportunity arises please participate in the community engagement.

And last but not least, to the Black Lens that for 7 years has kept us informed from the Black Perspective (especially to the incredible Sandy Williams). You deserve a break but your voice will be missed. I’m looking forward to the return of the Black Lens in 2023!

But until then Spokane let’s keep working. Let’s keep lifting each other up, and most of all, let’s keep our eyes on the prize, because we all deserve the best city that WE can make together.

Warm wishes and cheers to a successful 2022,

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

Recieving our COVID-19 vaccine helps us protect our culture.

Be Safe.
Get Vaccinated.

Dave Madera | Spokane Tribe
Cultural Specialist, The NATIVE Project

100% VACCINATED

The Black Lens Spokane
www.blacklensnews.com
January 2022
Page 5
By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent
(reprinted from blackpressusa.com)

Nassau County Police Department’s Chief of Detectives Keeaune Hewell has beat out top candidates from around the country to land New York City’s head law enforcement job.

Chief Hewell, the first African American in her current role in Nassau County, has earned selection as the first woman Police Commissioner in the NYPD’s 176-year history.

She’s just the third African American appointed as commissioner.

Mayor-elect Eric Adams determined that the seasoned veteran and New York native would best serve the needs of the 55,000-person department that includes more than 35,000 officers.

“I want to let them know that we are absolutely focused on violent crime. Violent crime is the No. 1 priority,” Chief Hewell told the New York Post, adding she plans to “hit the ground running” when she takes over.

Chief Hewell has vowed to fully assess what’s happening in the Big Apple before deciding on a strategy to address rising shootings and other crimes.

She said more plain-clothes officers would hit the streets.

Keeaune Hewell First Woman to Lead NY Police Dept

“• They are able to be in places where they are not able to be easily recognized, and if you use a surgical approach, use well-trained officers and know what their objectives are, you can get measurable results,” Chief Hewell insisted.

A 23-year veteran, the chief has led numerous leadership positions, including hostage negotiations. In addition, she created Nassau County’s Professional Standards Bureau, which oversees internal affairs.

A member of the New York-New Jersey Joint-Terrorism Task Force, Chief Hewell grew up in housing projects in Queens where a formal press conference to announce her hire occurred on Wednesday, December 15.

“Keeaune Hewell is a proven crime-fighter with the experience and emotional intelligence to deliver both the safety New Yorkers need and the justice they deserve,” Mayor-elect Adams told reporters.

When Chief Hewell takes over as commissioner in January, she’ll have to manage a strained relationship between the department and the unions who reportedly have battled over policing tactics and other issues.

“We welcome Chief Hewell to the second-toughest policing job in America,” Patrick Lynch, the president of the city’s police union, said in a statement.

“The toughest, of course, is being an NYPD cop on the street.”

Kim Potter Found Guilty of Manslaughter in Death of 20 Year Old Daunte Wright

By Amy Forliti and Scott Bauer
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Jurors on December 23rd convicted Minneapolis police officer, Kim Potter, of two manslaughter charges in the killing of Daunte Wright. He was a Black motorist that Potter shot during a traffic stop after she said she confused her gun for her Taser.

The mostly white jury deliberated for about four days before finding the former Brooklyn Center officer guilty of first-degree and second-degree manslaughter. Potter, 49, faces about seven years in prison on the most serious count under the state’s sentencing guidelines, but prosecutors said they would seek a longer term.

Judge Regina Chu ordered Potter taken into custody and held without bail and scheduled her to be sentenced on Feb. 18.

Potter looked down without showing any visible reaction when the verdicts were read. Potter’s attorneys argued against her being held with no bail, saying she was not going to commit another crime or go anywhere. Chu rejected their arguments. “I cannot treat this case any differently than any other case,” Chu said.

Potter, who is white, shot and killed the 20-year-old Wright during an April 11 traffic stop in Brooklyn Center.

“Historically Black Colleges and Universities have a rich history in football,” Hunter wrote in the post. “I want to be part of that history, and more, I want to be part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

“Florida State has always been a beacon for me. I grew up down there, that’s where my roots are, and I never doubted that I would play for the Seminoles,” Hunter wrote in a social media post.

“I want to part of that history, and more, I want to part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

Kim Potter Found Guilty of Manslaughter in Death of 20 Year Old Daunte Wright

By Amy Forliti and Scott Bauer
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Jurors on December 23rd convicted Minneapolis police officer, Kim Potter, of two manslaughter charges in the killing of Daunte Wright. He was a Black motorist that Potter shot during a traffic stop after she said she confused her gun for her Taser.

The mostly white jury deliberated for about four days before finding the former Brooklyn Center officer guilty of first-degree and second-degree manslaughter. Potter, 49, faces about seven years in prison on the most serious count under the state’s sentencing guidelines, but prosecutors said they would seek a longer term.

Judge Regina Chu ordered Potter taken into custody and held without bail and scheduled her to be sentenced on Feb. 18.

Potter looked down without showing any visible reaction when the verdicts were read. Potter’s attorneys argued against her being held with no bail, saying she was not going to commit another crime or go anywhere. Chu rejected their arguments. “I cannot treat this case any differently than any other case,” Chu said.

Potter, who is white, shot and killed the 20-year-old Wright during an April 11 traffic stop in Brooklyn Center.

“Historically Black Colleges and Universities have a rich history in football,” Hunter wrote in the post. “I want to be part of that history, and more, I want to be part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

“Florida State has always been a beacon for me. I grew up down there, that’s where my roots are, and I never doubted that I would play for the Seminoles,” Hunter wrote in a social media post.

“I want to part of that history, and more, I want to part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

Kim Potter Found Guilty of Manslaughter in Death of 20 Year Old Daunte Wright

By Amy Forliti and Scott Bauer
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Jurors on December 23rd convicted Minneapolis police officer, Kim Potter, of two manslaughter charges in the killing of Daunte Wright. He was a Black motorist that Potter shot during a traffic stop after she said she confused her gun for her Taser.

The mostly white jury deliberated for about four days before finding the former Brooklyn Center officer guilty of first-degree and second-degree manslaughter. Potter, 49, faces about seven years in prison on the most serious count under the state’s sentencing guidelines, but prosecutors said they would seek a longer term.

Judge Regina Chu ordered Potter taken into custody and held without bail and scheduled her to be sentenced on Feb. 18.

Potter looked down without showing any visible reaction when the verdicts were read. Potter’s attorneys argued against her being held with no bail, saying she was not going to commit another crime or go anywhere. Chu rejected their arguments. “I cannot treat this case any differently than any other case,” Chu said.

Potter, who is white, shot and killed the 20-year-old Wright during an April 11 traffic stop in Brooklyn Center.

“Historically Black Colleges and Universities have a rich history in football,” Hunter wrote in the post. “I want to be part of that history, and more, I want to be part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

“Florida State has always been a beacon for me. I grew up down there, that’s where my roots are, and I never doubted that I would play for the Seminoles,” Hunter wrote in a social media post.

“I want to part of that history, and more, I want to part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

Kim Potter Found Guilty of Manslaughter in Death of 20 Year Old Daunte Wright

By Amy Forliti and Scott Bauer
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Jurors on December 23rd convicted Minneapolis police officer, Kim Potter, of two manslaughter charges in the killing of Daunte Wright. He was a Black motorist that Potter shot during a traffic stop after she said she confused her gun for her Taser.

The mostly white jury deliberated for about four days before finding the former Brooklyn Center officer guilty of first-degree and second-degree manslaughter. Potter, 49, faces about seven years in prison on the most serious count under the state’s sentencing guidelines, but prosecutors said they would seek a longer term.

Judge Regina Chu ordered Potter taken into custody and held without bail and scheduled her to be sentenced on Feb. 18.

Potter looked down without showing any visible reaction when the verdicts were read. Potter’s attorneys argued against her being held with no bail, saying she was not going to commit another crime or go anywhere. Chu rejected their arguments. “I cannot treat this case any differently than any other case,” Chu said.

Potter, who is white, shot and killed the 20-year-old Wright during an April 11 traffic stop in Brooklyn Center.

“Historically Black Colleges and Universities have a rich history in football,” Hunter wrote in the post. “I want to be part of that history, and more, I want to be part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”

“Florida State has always been a beacon for me. I grew up down there, that’s where my roots are, and I never doubted that I would play for the Seminoles,” Hunter wrote in a social media post.

“I want to part of that history, and more, I want to part of that future. I am making this decision so that I can light the way for others to follow, make it a little easier for the next player to recognize that HBCUs may be everything you want and more: an exciting college experience, a vital community and a life-changing place to play football.”
eight African American College Students Selected as Rhodes Scholars

(Source: Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, jhbe.com)

Recently, the Rhodes Trust announced the 32 American winners of Rhodes Scholarships for graduate study at Oxford University in England. Rhodes Scholarships provide all expenses for two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England and may allow funding in some instances for four years. Being named a Rhodes Scholar is considered among the highest honors that can be won by a U.S. college student. The scholarships were created in 1902 by Cecil Rhodes, an industrialist who made a vast fortune in colonial Africa. Rhodes last will provided for the establishment of the scholarship. While Rhodes critics have labeled him a white supremacist, who was an architect of apartheid, and argue that Black scholars should not be chosen, two from each of 16 districts across the United States, representing 32 colleges and universities.

This year more than 2,300 students began the application process in the United States; 826 were endorsed by 247 different colleges and universities. A total of 235 finalists were chosen representing 76 colleges and universities. Three finalists were chosen from each of 16 districts across the United States. This year, eight African Americans were chosen as Rhodes Scholars. In both 2017 and 2020, there were 10 African American Rhodes Scholars, the most in any one year.

Here are brief biographies of the eight African American Rhodes Scholars selected this year:

By Derek Major

Lee Elder: First Black Golfer to Play in Masters Tournament Passes Away

Lee Elder, the first Black golfer to play at The Masters, passed away at the age of 87 on Monday, November 29, according to the PGA Tour.

Elder, who broke the color barrier of the PGA Tour’s most notable tournament in 1975, was honored at the 2021 Masters as an honorary starter in the ceremonial first tee shot along with Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player.

In an interview with CNN in 2015, Elder called his Masters debut a “very nerve-racking experience.”

“I was shaking so badly, I didn’t know if I was even going to be able to tee up the ball,” Elder told CNN. “How I got through it I do not know, just with the help of the Almighty I got there and was able to put my ball on the tee.”

Elder broke into golf during the 1960s and 1970s and became one of the most recognizable faces in the sport. In 2009, he was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame. Elder was a native of Dallas, Texas, and the youngest of ten children. He lost both of his parents before he was 10 and was raised by his Aunt Sarah who he lived with in Texas, Kansas and Los Angeles.

“My aunt was an incredible person,” Elder wrote in Golf Digest in 2019 after being named the first Black man to win the Bob Jones Award. “She gave me love and discipline, didn’t let me get too far out of line. Her resources were limited, but she carried herself with great dignity, communicated well with people and taught me right from wrong. I was on my own after about age 16, but she got me to a point where I could care for myself.”

According to PGA.com, forty-five years after his trailblazing appearance at Augusta National, Elder was recognized by the club, which established scholarships in his name for 15 underprivileged students at HBCU Paine College. He was also named an honorary starter at the 2021 Masters, along with Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player.

In 1975, after Lee made history as the first African American to play in the Masters Tournament, he told reporters, “I don’t want to go down in history just for this, I want to be remembered, I’m remembered at all, because I was a good golfer.”
Kenya Marks ‘Jamhuri Day’ With Independence Day Speeches and Military Bands

Jambiri, the Swahili word for “republic”, is celebrated across Kenya on Dec. 14 - when the country attained its independence from the British in 1963 and became a republic in 1964. That was followed by a flurry of new nation-building activities. Some survived, others are being questioned and maybe heading for the dustbin of history.

The now-abolished Moi Day was created to celebrate the presidency of Kenya’s longest-serving head of state, President Daniel arap Moi. The same was true of Kenyatta Day, which was initially set aside to remember the Kenyans who fought for independence but quickly became a celebration of Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta.

In 1964, as the first President addressed a crowd, he was barraged by whites who asked if the 60,000 European settlers should fear Black leadership and the rebels, known by the colonists as “Mau Mau.”

“There’s no grounds at all (for fears),” he told an interviewer, “neither from those who were in the forest nor from those who were home guard have anything to fear from us at all, because all of them are brothers and sisters.”

Several whites at the event affirmed that since the transfer of power, things had gone better for them than they expected. “Oh, far better,” said a white seen in a video on Youtube. “They’ve gone infinitely better than I thought they would.”

This year’s speech by President Uhuru Kenyatta, offered a commentary on Uhuru Gardens and why the Founding Fathers chose the former site of a concentration camp to mark Independence Day.

“During the liberation war,” he began, “the Lang’ata camp was the most notorious clearing house for our liberation fighters. In fact, it is estimated that up to 10,000 of our gallant and most feared liberators were confined in this camp at some point or another. And most of them did not survive the wrath of the colonizer.

“In fact,” he continued, “using 15 ‘quack’ scientists’, the colonizers argued that devotion to the cause of Mau Mau was a mental illness. And the only way to deal with it was by creating mass detention camps where ‘shock therapy’ and torture would be administered as a cure.

“By creating this garden as a place of remembrance, our Founding Fathers wanted generations to recall the darkness of our colonial past, but not to be stuck in the pessimism that dark memories can breed.”

Uhuru Gardens, closed for almost two years, is slated to reopen to the public with a historic memorial park and the refurbishment of some dilapidated buildings and monuments.

Meanwhile, the son of Deputy President William Ruto, took to his Twitter account to attack the President for betraying his father, the Deputy President William Ruto, and for favoring another candidate as his successor in the upcoming elections despite Ruto Sr. having actively campaigned for the President in 2013 and 2017.

Ruto also mentioned Uhuru’s political re-form project - Building Bridges Initiative - which was declared unconstitutional in a ruling upheld by the Kenyan Court of Appeals.

Michelle Gavin of the Council on Foreign Relations wrote of the Appeals Court ruling: “The Kenyan judiciary’s rejection of BBI could herald important changes to the untested rules of Kenyan politics. Rather than bending the institutions of the state to their will, political leaders are finding that they must work within the bounds of the 2010 constitution.”

GLOBAL INFORMATION NETWORK creates and distributes news and feature articles on current affairs in Africa to media outlets, scholars, students and activities in the U.S. and Canada. It’s 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.

More Than 160 Migrants Drown Off Coast of Libya

More than 160 migrants drowned in two separate shipwrecks off Libya during last week, a United Nations migration official has said.

Safa Msehli, a spokeswoman for the International Organization for Migration, said on Tuesday that at least 102 migrants were reported dead after their wooden boat capsized off Libya on Friday. At least eight others were rescued and returned to shore, she said.

The second shipwreck took place on Saturday. The Libyan coastguard retrieved at least 62 bodies of migrants, Msehli said. The same day, the coastguard intercepted a third wooden boat with at least 210 migrants on board, she said.

The fatalities were the latest disasters in the Mediterranean Sea involving migrants seeking a better life in Europe. The new deaths have brought the tally in the central Mediterranean route to about 1,500 migrants drowned this year, Msehli said.

Recent months have seen a surge in crossings and attempted crossings from Libya as authorities accelerated their deadly crackdown on migrants in the capital of Tripoli.

About 31,500 migrants were intercepted and returned to Libya in 2021, compared with nearly 11,900 migrants the previous year, according to the IOM. About 980 migrants were dead or presumed dead in 2020, the UN agency said. The IOM said that 466 migrants were intercepted or rescued at sea and returned to Libya between December 12 and 18.

Libya has emerged as the dominant transit point for people fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East. The oil-rich country plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Human traffickers have benefited from the chaos in the oil-rich nation and smuggled people through the country’s lengthy border with six nations. They pack desperate people into ill-equipped rubber boats, then embark on risky voyages across the perilous Mediterranean Sea.

Those returned have been taken to detention centres rife with abuses, including forced labour, beatings, rapes and torture. The abuse often accompanies efforts to extort money from families before migrants are allowed to leave Libya on traffickers’ boats.

UN-commissioned investigators said in October that abuse and ill-treatment of migrants in Libya could amount to crimes against humanity.

By Francine Sinarini

In November Burundi hosted the first-ever women’s cycling competition in Africa. Five African countries took part, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi.

The event presented an opportunity for the women cyclists to show their ability. “I’m dreaming of continuing until I reach the world level,” said Annick Kanza, a Burundian cyclist.

The spectators did not hide their joy at the success of the Burundian cyclist.

“I am very satisfied. This stage ended here. I wish them victory,” a spectator said.

“My girls have a future and they are here. I wish them victory,” a parent said.

The first three winners of the first stage were two Kenyans and a Ugandan. A Burundian came fourth. In total, the cyclists rode 358.5 km through the country’s provinces.

The second stage was held over a distance of 57 km between Gitega and Karusi in central Burundi. The first International Women’s Cycling Tour of Burundi ended Sunday, November 28.
I find myself reflecting a lot on the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-1950s-mid-1980s. I hardly need to note the years. In the minds of most people, it is “The” Civil Rights Movement. Racial justice movements certainly came before it, but none made such nationwide impact or resulted in more immediate change.

I re-watched the ground-breaking PBS series Eyes on the Prize, which should be a requirement in the core curriculum of any American History class, from the fifth grade on. Eyes on the Prize tells the story of the mid-20th century civil rights era, from the point of view of the extraordinary, ordinary Black people who the series producers say, “launched a movement that changed the fabric of American life…” That historical Movement certainly changed laws, laws that ended legal segregation and disenfranchisement. But did it really change the fabric of American life?

I have the deepest respect and undying gratitude for the women, men and children who put their very lives on the line to throw off the yoke of legal oppression that Black people had lived under since before America was America. It’s awe inspiring to know people were grounded in such deep faith in a just and loving God, and such deep trust in the power of non-violent protest, that they could summon the strength, courage and resolve to give their bodies over to be broken for the cause. In my heart, I truly believe they bled and died for me.

The mid-century Civil Rights Movement did not truly change the fabric of America. When racism is woven into the fabric—the fabric wears like medieval chain mesh armor. It is woven into the fabric of judicial robes and police uniforms—into the suits of corporate leaders, and the clerical robes worn by so-called people of God. The threads of racism bind the textbooks in classrooms across the country.

I re-watched Eyes on the Prize because I need hope and inspiration in what is seeming-ly the never-ending struggle for human and civil rights for Black people in this country. I frequently find myself depleted of both. I sometimes question whether Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is fighting a war he can’t win because as Dr. King reminds us, “A movement is dynam-ic! It ebbs and flows, but it never ends. It is not a project, which at some point comes to an end. A movement is dynam-ic! It ebbs and flows, but it never ends. The racial and social justice marches of 2020 ushered in a new Civil Rights era. Our evolving Move-ment honors, integrates, and transcends the Civil Rights Movements that came before it. The new Movement seeks to eradicate the disease, and not just treat the symptoms of racism.

When like Habakkuk and Tevye, I ask God how long the trials of injustice and oppression must go on, God’s answer is always the same, “It will go on as long as you let it go on.” Message received. God, the Uni-verse, the Divine transcendent, the power that is greater than us, works through us to transform the world. The work of justice lives in our hearts and in our actions or it does not live at all.

In the year ahead may we hold on to hope and find strength in one another. We don’t know exactly when but justice will come, because as Dr. King reminds us, no lie can live forever.

Since the Black Lens News won’t be back for a year, I want to thank its founder, ed-it-ior, and my dear friend, Sandy Williams for the work she does and the truth she speaks. She speaks truth, to educate, to enlighten and to chal-lenge us. This truly is an extraordinary publication, and on its return, I know it will be even more dynamic. Thank you, Sister Sandy and all who have contributed over the years to this exemplary publica- tion.

©2022 Beverly Spears

Rev. Beverly Spears is an ordained American Baptist minister, teacher and preacher of Evolutionary Christianity.
Beyond Viet Nam: The Speech We Never Hear

Editors Note: I originally printed this article in the very first issue of The Black Lens. January 2015. I first heard this speech by accident when I was in my mid-twenties, long after I had graduated from college with my Masters Degree. I was angry that in all the years that I had been in school learning about Dr. King, in all the MLK Birthdays that I had celebrated, in all the I Have a Dream speeches that had been played, I had never heard these words. Words that feel even more appropriate now than ever before. So I share these words every year and in January 2022 as we look towards an unclear future, I will share them again.

When Martin Luther King Jr. is remembered and celebrated around the world in January, his famous “I have a dream” speech is the one that is recounted over and over again as his legacy and the primary representation of who he was and what he stood for: A Civil Right leader.

But when Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, he was there for a march in support of striking sanitation workers. He was not only a Civil Rights leader, he was also a champion of the poor, an advocate for economic justice, and a vocal critic of the Vietnam War and America’s foreign policy, although this is not talked about nearly as often.

On April 4, 1967, a year to the day before his assassination, Dr. King delivered what was considered a “controversial” speech against the Vietnam War and against the principle of war in general.

Speaking at Riverside Church in New York City in front of an audience of thousands, the speech, titled “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence” was condemned by many Civil Rights leaders at the time who felt that King’s anti-war stance was damaging their cause.

The speech angered many in the United States government, making King a target of FBI investigations. According to the Tavis Smiley documentary “MLK: A Call to Conscience”, 168 major newspapers denounced King the day after the speech, and an angry President Lyndon Johnson dis-invited him from the White House.

Despite the negative impact of the speech, King felt that he could no longer in good conscience remain quiet about the war and called on others to do the same. The rarely heard speech is considered by many to be one of King’s greatest, and still relevant as wars continue around the world.

Following are excerpts from Dr. King’s fifty minute speech:

I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools.

I am not antiwar for any other reasons than those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on to the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin, we must drastically begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society.

Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken, the role of policy makers, of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on to the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must understand a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin, we must drastically begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war, “This way of settling differences is not just.” This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation’s homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

To view the complete text or listen to the audio of this speech visit American Rhetoric at http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm
Local KSPS Program to Pay Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By Zana Morrow
Arts & Culture Coordinator for KSPS-TV

Courtesy of KSPS-TV

Monday, January 17th at 7:30pm PST, KSPS-TV PBS Spokane will be airing a locally-produced special “Inland Sessions: Honoring Dr. King” where regional poets and musicians from the Inland Northwest will be addressing the mission of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through original works and personal renditions which they each choose specifically to creatively honor Dr. King and share their experience of his powerful political, social, and spiritual legacies.

“We can all get more together than we can apart. And this is the way we gain power. Power is the ability to achieve purpose, power is the ability to affect change, and we need power.” - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Coming together from disparate backgrounds and generational divides, five talented independent local artists are sharing their voices, music, and words in an effort to speak to their own lived experience of Dr. King’s civil rights campaign and where we are 59 years after his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

Featured artists include:

Two singers, Yolanda Kinlow-Jones and Latrice Williams, will grace us with their presence as noted singers in our community who will each perform a favorite traditional gospel song to celebrate their own religious faith and show respect to Dr. King’s lifetime spent as a Baptist minister.

Spoken word artist, and poet Bethany Montgomery, better known as “B.Lyte” and co-founder of Power 2 The Poetry is not pulling punches and will share some of their most powerful works which aim to bring our collective anger and pain into focus to make change.

Ricky “Deekon” Jones is a local hip-hop artist who founded a non-profit to help local indigenous youth find purpose through sports and music called New Developed Nations and will be bringing along the band to perform some searing tracks that speak directly to his experiences in a way that lets us step into his shoes.

Kiantha Duncan, current president of Spokane’s NAACP Chapter, will be host­ing the pre-recorded event. As host, Kiantha plans to address the recently reported King Family wish that Martin Luther King Day be celebrated with direct action and protests toward voting rights legislation this year.

Andrea Waters King, wife of Martin Luther King III, told CNN on December 15th, 2021, “If we’re really talking about celebrating the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., voting rights was a cornerstone of his legacy.”

Dr. King also understood the power of music which bookended so many of his sermons and speeches, as a way to get everybody on the same emotional page, and respected the encouraging words of artists to help him express himself. Before Martin Luther King Jr. took the stage on August 28th, 1963 during the March on Washington, he asked his friend noted gospel singer Mahalia Jackson to perform, “I’ve Been ‘Buked, and I’ve Been Scorned”.

After Dr. King took the stage and was already speaking, Mahalia spoke up and said, “Tell them about the dream, Martin,” which lead to him putting down his previously prepared speech, and begin his famously improvised “I Have a Dream” speech which still reverberates with the simple revolutionary clarity of his passionate mission nearly 60 years later.

“In this way, we could work creatively against the despair and indifference that so often caused our nation to be immobile- lized during the cold winter and shaken profoundly in the hot summer.” - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Inland Sessions: Honoring Dr. King” will premiere on KSPS-TV PBS on Monday, January 17th at 7:30 pm PST on all KSPS-PBS Spokane/Edmonton Transla-tors across Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, Western Montana, as well as across South-Western Canada. The episode can also be watched after January 17th at kspso.org or through Passport via your KSPS Membership.

“Inland Sessions” is a locally-produced studio-concert series seeking talented area musicians, poets, and performers to submit their creative works for consideration for upcoming shows. Email zanam@ksps.org for more information.
I always start off by asking people a little bit about themselves and their background. Tell me about you as a kid. Were you always interested in religion? Were you made to go to church?

I was a nerd. I loved reading and was content to do that for hours at a time. We did not grow up particularly religious. The only thing my mom made me do was get baptized in the church. Where did that book come from? What sparked it? Why did you decide to write it?

I grew up in the Midwest and had a pretty racially and ethnically diverse friend group. It was in high school that I became a Christian through the ministry of a white evangelical youth group. So, I held these dynamics between race and religion because I was always a minority in those spaces.

That’s interesting. Tell me about that. What was it about the experience of being in a white evangelical youth group that prompted you to become Christian when it wasn’t really a part of your family?

It was friendship and a sense of community. You know, in high school you’re always trying to find your place and where you “fit.” I wasn’t in the athlete’s group. I wasn’t in the theater group. I wasn’t in the skaters group, and it was really the proactive reaching out from folks in this youth group just yelled out sort of joking, “there’s the preacher” and something clicked right then. I was like, huh, that seems like something I want to pursue. So, from that moment on I started thinking about full time ministry as a career and pastored for a year after I graduated, so there was this trajectory. I thought of doing full time work in the church in some way shape or form.

You said you knew it. What made you know that you were going to go into the seminary? Did something happen?

I was at a youth group retreat in high school as a participant. I never get to any meeting early, but for some reason I got to our next chapel meeting early. It was just me and two of my friends. I went into the pulpit and started preaching like I was pastoring. One of the guys who happened to be one of the only other people of color in that room just yelled out sort of joking, “there’s the preacher” and something clicked right then. I was like, huh, that seems like something I want to pursue. So, from that moment on I started thinking about full time ministry as a career and then I figured seminary would be a good thing to have in preparation.

Let’s talk about your books. I wanna talk about both The Color of Compromise and How to Fight Racism, but start with The Color of Compromise because I found it fascinating talking about the history of racism in the church. Where did that book come from? What sparked it? Why did you decide to write it?

It comes from a couple of factors. One, on a biographical level, I’m trying to make sense of my experience in white evangelicalism and all of the racism and othering that I had experienced. On another level, I’m trying to make sense of our national context. The idea that the Color of Compromise happened right around the 20th year anniversary of 9/11 was a little bit after that, and trying to figure out why white evangelicals supported this man (Trump) so much, and then in the moment that also the Black Lives Matter movement and trying to figure out why white Christians were so opposed to something as simple and as true as the fact that Black Lives Matter. Then, the third level was I was taking graduate courses in history at the time and I was finally being exposed to all of the stories that you don’t learn growing up in school, mainly about all of the racism that permeates every sector of our national life, including the church. I figured this is history people need to know, and my hope was that they would have the same reaction I did. Once we learned this sordid history, we would be angry enough to act. But I also knew not everybody has the opportunity to read dozens and dozens of books on history, so I said, what if we took representative examples in a historical survey and put it in one book that was accessible to the broader populace.

What was the reaction? Was it what you expected or was it different?

I was completely unprepared for the hunger for this kind of book. To be sure, there were and are detractors and you can look at the reviews on Amazon or Goodreads to see them, but by and large, even from white evangelicals, the reaction has been positive. Quite a few years have been taught and certainly had never been organized in the way that I did in the Color of Compromise. So, I was really quite flabbergasted in 2019 when the book came out to just constantly be getting calls for interviews and podcasts and booked for speaking at colleges and universities. I didn’t expect that at all. Then 2020 comes around with the racial justice uprising, historic levels of participation, which also translated into a book like mine. There were a lot of similar stories about race, hitting the New York Times best-seller list. And that was a year and a half after the book came out. We were shocked and surprised by the sober but enthusiastic response to the book.

So what about the other book? How to Fight Racism? How did you evolve into that book?

I actually thought that would be the first book I wrote. I had been so deeply embedded in racial justice work that my burden was to help catalyze and activate other people to get involved. I wanted to write a book right out of the gate that would answer that question of how do we fix the way we are. But along the way, I was learning more and more about history and I said, we’ve got to understand the depth of the problem before we can do anything about fixing it. So, The Color of Compromise sort of diagnoses the issue, and then How to Fight Racism comes along and says, here’s what we can do about it.

It’s really in response to the question I get most frequently whenever I speak, teach or write about racism. That question is “what do we do?” It’s a practical question. It’s a question that says, I agree there’s a problem and I want to be part of the solution, but I don’t know how. How to Fight Racism prioritizes the practical. Every chapter has multiple suggestions, concrete actionable suggestions on how to get involved in the struggle against racism. But the real value of the book is the framework that I call the A.R.C. of racial justice. That stands for Awareness, Relationships, and Commitment. Those three pillars are what we need to have a holistic approach to racial justice that is not only reactive to current events but sustainable over the course of time.

After I saw that was going to interview you, I pulled up the book How to Fight Racism and there were two things that stuck me. First, you started the book by saying “it’s different this time”. I was fascinated by that statement. Tell me what in your view is different this time?

It’s a controversy statement. I was just on CNN this morning and Mayors who are in mayoral races, some of them have pivoted back to talking about law and order, whereas 20 years ago, or even less, they were talking about dramatic police reform. So, it is a controversial statement because are things really different now? The reason I say it’s different this time is a couple of things. Number one, the volume of participation. People turned out in protest in greater numbers than we’ve seen in the history of this nation.
Spokane Civic Theatre to Hold Auditions for Jackie Robinson Play

After more than eighteen months without productions, beginning January 28, it is lights up at Spokane Civic Theatre with the regional premiere of the outrageously hilarious The Play That Goes Wrong. Founded in 1947, Civic’s Welcome Back season includes Neil Simon’s Plaza Suite, the classic musical Funny Girl and the organization’s thirty-second playwrights’ forum festival.

In April, Spokane Civic Theatre will present a special encore production of Resident Playwright Bryan Harnetiaux’s epic historical drama, National Pastime.

The play, now published by Playscripts Inc., New York, premiered at Civic in the Spring of 1998. It is a re-telling of the journey of Jackie Robinson and the breaking of the color line in major-league baseball on April 15, 1947 — 75 years ago this spring.

It has not been performed in Spokane since the 2003 Onyx Theatre Troupe production, which featured legendary Black player/manager Buck O’Neil as opening night guest.

Some consider the breaking of the color line in major league baseball as the dawn of the civil rights movement in this country. With the emergence of Black Lives Matter, the story is more relevant and compelling than ever, particularly in tracing how two men, Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey — one Black, one white — worked hand-in-hand to overcome the intractable racist culture that pervaded major league baseball. Ultimately, the play is as much, if not more, about racism than baseball.

The storytelling here is brutally honest, yet laced with humor and served up on a grand scale. The script requires 13 actors, six Black and seven white (9 male, 4 female). The role of Robinson is particularly demanding, portraying him from age four through forty-three.

At the helm of this production is a guest director from New York City, whose credits include Broadway (A Streetcar Named Desire directed by Emily Mann, Assistant Director), Off-Broadway, regional, and international stage and film productions.

Auditions for National Pastime will be in late January. All talent is encouraged to audition, regardless of training or experience.

For more information about auditions and the production, visit the Community tab at SpokaneCivicTheatre.com, call 509.325.2507 or email Production@SpokaneCivicTheatre.com.
Needs Assessment

Black Business Support Team consultants work with businesses to determine the specific resources they need to address identified business needs. They help connect businesses to available resources and services.

Business Plan

The consultant will work with the business owner to develop a long-term business plan that prioritizes the steps that are needed to support long-term growth and sustainability.

Follow-up

Businesses will receive a quarterly follow-up for two years to assess their progress and to determine if new needs arise as the business grows and develops.

Free one-year membership

Black Business Support Team participants will also receive a free one-year membership to the Black Business and Professional Alliance.

How Does the Black Business Support Work?

Businesses are paired with a one-on-one consultant to provide free needs assessments, strategic planning, connection to targeted resources, tailored business development opportunities, training, and technical assistance.

To participate, please call (509) 795-1886 or email carlmaxeycenter@gmail.com

BECIN Launch Announcement 2022

Equity has been at the forefront of many people’s and organizations’ minds but many struggle with what equity might look like for Spokane’s local business community. In order to offer a solution to this problem, Spokane’s Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) business associations have come together to form the Business Equity Coalition of the Inland Northwest, also known as BECIN.

The founding members of this coalition are Carl Maxey Center/Black Business and Professional Alliance, Hispanic Business and Professionals Association (HBPA), AHANA/Multi-Ethnic Business Association, Sister Sky Inc./Native Business Center, SIMBA/INBA (Spokane Independent Metro Business Alliance/Inland Northwest Business Alliance), and Community Development Initiative.

BECIN is committed to building an equitable small business ecosystem based on our values of racial equity, collaboration, and leadership. We see supporting and organizing our local business communities as an essential strategy for achieving community autonomy and the elimination of structural racism because of the long history of unjust racialized capitalism in America and in globalized colonialism more broadly. In order to eliminate racial wealth gaps and build economic power we have come together to better meet our member’s needs.

BECIN’s objectives:

- Increased resources for capacity building and technical assistance for multi-ethnic businesses (BIPOC) and other disadvantaged business groups.
- Improved equitable access to capital for startup and existing businesses.
- Increased access to equitable contracting opportunities with corporations and government.
- Building the next generation of BIPOC and other disadvantaged business leaders.

BECIN envisions a business community in the Inland Northwest where everyone has access to the business resources and support that they need. We see an Inland Northwest with a thriving business ecosystem that strengthens the community through racial equity, collaboration, and leadership. We look forward to working with the Spokane business community in the new year.

BECIN’s website is under currently construction, but will be available soon with information: BECIN.org.
Pandemic’s Heavy Toll on Children’s Mental Health

By Charlene Muhammad
California Black Media
Precinct Reporter News (blackpressusa.com)

The Covid-19 pandemic is taking a heavy toll on the health, finances, and mobility of people around the world, affecting almost everyone on the planet.

Youth, in particular, have been experiencing an uptick in mental health cases, including depression, in a trend U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy is calling an emerging crisis.

On Dec. 7, Murthy released a 42-page health advisory drawing the country’s attention to the “urgent” need to help youth facing mental health problems. He said one in three students in the U.S. say they experience sustained periods of sadness and hopelessness. That number represents a 40% increase from 2009 to 2019. The pandemic has made those conditions worse.

“The future wellbeing of our country depends on how we support and invest in the next generation,” said Murthy. “Especially in this moment, as we work to protect the health of Americans in the face of a new variant, we also need to focus on how we can emerge stronger on the other side. This advisory shows us how we can all work together to step up for our children during this dual crisis.”

Recently, a panel of experts tackled the issue during a news briefing organized by Ethnic Media Services titled “The Pandemic’s Heavy Toll on Teen Mental Health.”

Michelle Cabrera, Executive Director of the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), spotlighted the health needs of minority youth. She explained that all over the nation — and in California — youth are suffering from a mental health crisis, leading to increasing numbers of suicide and high levels of anxiety in schools.

“The numbers of children and youth in acute mental health crises shot up two and sometimes three-fold. We have had children as young as eight-years-old who have been hospitalized due to suicidal ideation,” stated Cabrera.

Behavioral health experts say transitioning students back to in-person learning results in higher rates of children and youth experiencing mental health crises, she said.

According to Cabrera, existing programs lack support for youth in Black and Native populations, and records show that major disparities are also present among professionals within the behavioral health field.

“For example, the access to services and programs that may be used in White communities to combat mental health problems are not made available in Black communities,” she said.

Cabrera mentioned that there is also a career crisis in behavioral health, and that by 2022, these benefits will be put in place to help abate the employment crisis in California and all over the nation.

“The pandemic has also changed the statistics about drug and substance abuse in America,” Cabrera continued. “Data has shown an increase in alcohol and opioid consumption in young people, who are also experiencing a lot more overdoses because of their consumption of fentanyl in the drugs that are used,” she said.

Youth also struggle with returning to school physically, bullying, and a lack of programs to address their mental health issues.

Dr. Latonya Wood is the director of clinical training at Pepperdine University in Malibu. She delved specifically into the data about Black children who are suffering from mental health-related issues. She explained that depression is being expressed and understood differently among Blacks. For example, young, Black males interpret their emotions and mental conditions differently. They may not act in ways that are typically associated with depression, such as sadness or melancholy. Black youth typically translate these emotions into aggression and more physical reactions.

In addition, the pandemic has amplified some of the disconnections in the Black community, said Dr. Wood. She explained that there has not been consistent help in public health organizations that serve Black communities.

“Seldomly, there is relatability to the Black community. So African American are going to be lacking resources because they don’t know how to reach them,” she said.

Wood said historically Black people have not had a reason to fully trust mental health providers. A recent survey asked a group of Black youth about mental health care during COVID. It found that Black youth do not feel like mental healthcare providers care for them, that they only want money, and they do not understand the lived experiences, according to Dr. Wood.

“I think that really reflects the lack of culturally informed and trauma-informed care and really understanding the experiences of Black youth in some ways were traumatic during COVID,” said Dr. Wood.

More Black people are seeking Black providers, but they number just short of about 4% of the psychologists in America, according to a 2020 Workforce Study, completed by the American Psychological Association, she continued.

As a result, Black people suffer usually long wait times to even be seen by a therapist or to receive care. Wood stressed that finding the right care for people dealing with mental disorders in the Black community is very important.

Solutions for these issues were suggested at the level of community-based care provided at places where people congregate like school, church, and the barbershop, among others. Those spaces can serve as supportive places venues where mental health care or interventions can be accessible.

“The youth need support systems in place in order to help guard against the extreme negatives that come with poor mental health,” said Wood.

The post Pandemic’s Heavy Toll on Children’s Mental Health appeared first on Precinct Reporter News Group News.

Photo: Shutterstock

Connect With Health Insurance
GET COVERED. STAY COVERED.

Qualified Health Plan
OPEN ENROLLMENT
November 1 - January 15

Contact Better Health Together today for a one-on-one appointment. You can get help with enrollment or renewal, ask questions about coverage, and switch plans. Enroll by December 15, 2021 for coverage that begins January 2022!

(509) 381-5573
1209 W. 1st Ave - Spokane, WA 99201

Our services are always free!
KNOCK OUT THE FLU WITH ONE SHOT

It’s more important than ever to get vaccinated against the flu. The flu vaccine can keep you from getting the flu and spreading it to others. This is critical during the COVID-19 pandemic to help keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Department of Health recommends a flu vaccine for everyone aged six-months and older every year, including pregnant and nursing women.

Most insurance plans, including CHIP and Medicaid, cover the cost of flu vaccine for children and adults.

Children aged 18 and under can get a flu vaccine and other recommended vaccines at no cost.

CONTACT US TODAY!

Our free and confidential services can help connect your family to health insurance coverage, point you toward free vaccine clinics, and much more.

📞 (509) 340-9008
💌 healthykids@betterhealthtogether.org
🌐 www.BetterHealthTogether/HealthyKids
🐦 @BetterHealthTogether
Kerra Bower has been providing home childcare services since September 2013 when she opened an at-home facility in the Spokane area. But a needs-based study on Black children in early preschool programs prompted her to take another route: education rooted in teaching children about their history. In addition to Little Scholars, a child development facility that centers children of color in a safe, educational space, Bowers is now looking to open Raze, a cultural center that connects Black children to their history.

“A lot of the responses that I’ve gotten have about been if there was a 50-year plan to end racism, that is where it starts,” Bower said. “You start with the kids, you start by teaching that, no, we are not all the same. We are beautifully different and this is how our differences have shaped this place that we are in. And I think that is (something) we have to be very intentional about.”

Bower opened her very first child care center in 2009, where her basement was converted to a child care center. After giving birth to her son, she recognized her desire to help her children through pre-K as she “recommitted to her family.” She served in Spokane’s West Central area where her passions for abused and disadvantaged children came alive.

“I just started seeing this need, you know?” Bower said. “There were times I was the only person, outside of the child’s mother, that was on the child emergency contact list for behavioral issues. I was eight, nine months pregnant and had my whole childcare center with me getting one of my students, that was at school, from underneath the principal’s desk.”

After that situation, Bower knew that if the child had someone in their lives who could empathize with their emotional episodes or understand their life at home, approaches to their behavior didn’t have to escalate.

“It took somebody understanding his trauma and I knew what he was going through,” Bower said. “I had invested enough in that family to understand what needed to be done in that moment to calm him down, get him in a safe space. So that’s where I started.”

By 2013, Bower had given birth to her daughter. Her growing family required as much space as they could get in their home. The at-home children’s facility was relocated to a storefront, but still close to the West Central neighborhood.

“That community is just so incredibly important to me, so I was making sure that we’d be able to meet the needs there,” she said. “But then I wanted to marry the two concepts of coming from a place to understand the importance of cultural exposure and understanding your history and being rooted in who and what you come from.”

The late English politician Winston Churchill is popular for the phrase, “History is written by victors,” which, in the case of America can rob younger children at an early age of understanding their history from a balanced point of view of both the oppressor and oppressed. This can lead to a tug-of-war between what children are just supposed to know at what age of understanding their history in schools and their lived realities.

But, with the help of local educators, Bower looks to implement a curriculum that dives into the relationship between Black people and Americans on the local and national levels. She hopes to bring books about Spokane, such as Dwayne Mack’s ‘Black Spokane’ and Jerrelle Williams’ ‘African Americans in Spokane’ to the early childhood centers.

“We need to know how (Black people) have shaped this city,” Bower said. “People always say, ‘Oh no Black people live here.’ but there’s a whole book written just about Black people in Spokane and the amazing things we’ve done. Black people need to be at this program... this is a program built for us. However, it is not enough for us to just sit around the table and talk about how great we are. There needs to be a common conversation that’s being had all over Spokane, no matter what or how the home life is like.”

Student treatment is also another concern which led to Bower putting together an inclusive day care. A study done by the U.S. Department of Education examined the relationship between Black children and discipline. Inequalities in education start early for Black children, who make up just 18% of preschool enrollment, yet make up 48% of the disciplinary actions in preschool. On a local level, Spokane Public School’s data on kindergarten readiness troubled Bower.

“The district released their 2020 Kindergarten Readiness Rates and Black students were graduating or were entering kindergartens at 40% of kindergarten readiness,” Bower said. “If you look at the requirements for a kindergartner, I mean, its as basic as recognizing one letter in your name, knowing what a police station is or even a police officer. I mean, they’re basic things that only 40% of our entering students know. So I have this idea that I wanted to bring a preschool development center to Spokane.”

Outside of the numbers, Bower understands the importance of safe, educational spaces for students of color. She recalled the brutal discrimination her son faced while in school and the school administration’s attitudes toward her.

“My son was brutally assaulted... I was not notified until the end of the day after I had left the school,” Bower recounted. “There’s so much we went through (during) this whole process. We wanted to pull both of our children out. I tried to give (Freeman’s administration) time to figure it out. I offered to write a curriculum. I’d offered to contact the police department who provide bullying training and support — all of that was denied.”

Years later, as she worked to develop Raze, Bower won a fiscal feasibility grant and realized that everything was coming together. Talks of the physical space began to rev up. Parents were excited to enroll their children by fall 2022 and Bower began talking with local educators, such as Dr. Scott Finnie, director of Eastern Washington University’s Africana Studies.

“I did focus groups. We did surveys,” She said. “I spoke to, what I call, the Black church circuit. I got a resounding yes.”

With community opinions trickling in from diverse points of view, small tweaks were made to the plans for the early child care center. Recognizing the need for extended hours of care for parents without traditional white-collar 9 to 5 jobs, Bower decided to expand the care center from closing at 6:30 p.m. to closing at 11:30 p.m.

But this is just one of the ways Little Scholars and Raze will be able to benefit the community. Whether it be lowering the costs of child care for those in need of financial assistance through a black-tie event, or forging bonds with organizations like the Big Brother, Big Sister mentorship program, Bower is ready to take on the task of revving Spokane’s next generation of scholars to impact the city for years to come.

“I always wanted to know if Spokane was ready for a Black-focused center,” Bower said. “It’s a project and a program that is teaching, hopefully laying the foundation for people to really start understanding not just what it means to be a Black person in America currently, but what a Black person in Black history has done for this country that we are all a part of and love.”

Raze is a Black American focused early learning, development center and before and after school program, Little Scholars and Raze are now open for business.

To learn more about Little Scholars and Raze visit Raze Spokane’s website.
Parents Raise the Alarm About Violence in Schools

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

A new poll revealed that parents continue to express “legitimate concerns” about violence in schools, increased bullying, and a lack of mental health resources.

Alarmingly, the poll released by the National Parents Union found that 59 percent of parents are very or extremely concerned about how schools are teaching race and diversity.

“Many Black parents are worried that schools are being harsher on students of color compared to white students,” researchers noted in the poll.

The National Parents Union counts as a network of parent organizations and grassroots activists committed to improving the quality of life for children and families in the United States.

Conducted from November 19 to November 23, the survey included 1,233 parents who also count as registered voters.

Researchers found that 84 percent of parents are concerned about how schools address the threat of violence, and 59 percent identified increased bullying or violence in school as a significant issue.

About 52 percent said student mental health after coping with the pandemic is a significant issue, as well.

“Parents have very legitimate concerns about violence in schools, increased bullying, and a lack of mental health resources,” Keri Rodrigues, co-founder, and President of the National Parents Union, said in a statement.

“Now, it is incumbent on schools to do something about these issues, especially given the federal funds available. It’s not rocket science. Rather than repainting a football field, first, make sure that there are enough counselors to help students cope with mental health issues,” Rodrigues asserted.

The poll also asked the parents who responded that they were concerned about the threat of violence, which worries them the most.

The top three most pressing concerns remain:
- 44 percent: schools not having enough counselors, psychologists, or social workers to work with students
- 42 percent: schools not having resources to keep weapons out of schools
- 39 percent: schools not having school resource officers or police accessible on campus

59 percent of parents are extremely or very concerned about how schools are teaching about race and diversity;

Among Black parents, 69 percent share this sentiment, which drops slightly to 67 percent among Hispanic parents.

Of the overall number of parents who are at least somewhat concerned (79 percent):
- 48 percent say what concerns them the most is schools not teaching accurate information about the issue of race.
- 42 percent are most concerned about schools pushing a progressive agenda onto students
- 56 percent of GOP parents who are concerned say this is their top concern
- 32 percent are most concerned that schools aren’t focused on the issue enough
- 46 percent of Black parents who are concerned say this is their top concern
- 78 percent of parents are concerned about how schools are handling disciplinary issues

Nearly half (46 percent) of Black parents who said they are concerned about how schools are handling disciplinary issues are worried that schools are harsher on students of color compared to white students.

38 percent of parents trust Democrats to do a better job of handling education; 33 percent trust Republicans; 14 percent trust both equally; 11 percent trust neither.

Among parents who identify as Independents, 28 percent trust Republicans and 20 percent trust Democrats.

“These findings underscore the importance of the very thing we have been imploring school leaders across the country to do – listen to the parents in your community,” Rodrigues stated.

“It also reinforces the need for those running for office to take the concerns of parents very seriously or risk losing elections.”

For information about the National Parents Union poll visit: https://nationalparentsunion.org/2021/12/13/parents-raise-the-alarm-about-violence-in-schools

(Photos: Shutterstock)
As-Salam-u-Alaikum (“Peace be unto you”) is an Arabic greeting between Muslims and it is responded with “wa-Alaikumu-salam wa-Rahmat-ullah.” (“May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.”)

I was born Dora, however I prefer Du-aa-Rahemaah. My name means supplication of prayer and mercy that connects me to everything in this universe.

My journey to Islam began in October 2014, and I have been a resident of Spokane since September of 2016.

I’d like to thank Sandy and the Black Lens News for giving me this opportunity to have DeenCentric in the paper. DeenCentric started back in April of 2021 at the beginning of Ramadan with the hope of introducing ourselves to the community. With the hope that you would enjoy reading and meeting the African American Muslims in the Spokane community.

And I like to thank my husband and soulmate Jermaine Williams for believing in me and pushing me to follow my dreams.

We will continue to introduce you to more of our community members and share our faith, beliefs, and journey with you, when the Black Lens resumes again.

Wishing peace and prosperity.

By Duaa-Rahemaah Williams

A Column from Spokane’s Black Muslim Community
January

The Black Lens celebrated its 6th anniversary in January, although due to COVID-19, we were not able to hold a celebration. The cover stories were a celebration of the victory of Rev. Raphael Warnock of Atlanta’s Ebenezer Baptist Church, as the first Black U.S. senator elected from the state of Georgia, and coverage of the domestic terrorist attack that happened at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, as thousands of Trump supporters stormed and occupied the capital building in an effort to stop congress from certifying the election that would make Joe Biden President. We introduced the new leadership of the Spokane NAACP; spotlighted an update of the Carl Maxey Center and their partnership with Comcast, and introduced the Lilac City Legends, Spokane’s new ABA basketball team.

February

February featured the inauguration of Joe Biden as President and Kamala Harris as Vice President of the United States, and the amazing Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, who recited “The Hill We Climb” as a part of the ceremony. We shared an article from Sherri Noble Jones, which included her picture as a young girl on the steps of Grant Elementary, and a photo of her brother, Ivan Corley, who became the principal of Grant Elementary. The article was titled, “We’ve Come This Far By Faith.” We shared an article that discussed the origins of Black History Month; featured workshops and concerts hosted by Imagine Jazz; and introduced Freedom Project East, a local non-profit organization that addresses the systemic causes and impacts of mass incarceration.

May

The cover of the May issue featured the conviction of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin who was found guilty of murdering George Floyd. The video of Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd’s neck for nine minutes while Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down on the street calling out “I can’t breathe” prompted a racial justice reckoning that spread across the entire globe. Despite Chauvin’s guilty verdict, we also highlighted four other Black individuals who were killed by police before and after the Chauvin verdict. We featured a new column from Spokane’s first Black woman attorney, who was also a longtime educator. We showcased a community fair hosted by the Martin Luther King Center; an East Central Community, that happened in Riverfront Park despite the impact of COVID-19. We introduced the new leadership of the Spokane NAACP; spotlighted an update of the Carl Maxey Center and their partnership with Comcast, and introduced the Lilac City Legends, Spokane’s new ABA basketball team.

June

A Grant to the Carl Maxey Center from the Samuel & Jane Joseph Family Fund at the Innovia Foundation supported two teen journalists in June who researched and wrote the cover articles. We also introduced the Spokesman Review’s new Racial Equity reporter who was Funded through the Community Journalism and Civic Engagement Fund at the Innovia Foundation. The position is a one-of-a-kind partnership between the Spokesman Review and the Black Lens. We announced that Juneteenth will become an official Washington state holiday in 2022 after Gov. Inlee’s signature. We introduced the new ABA basketball team, the Lilac City Legends, and their partnership with Comcast, and highlighted an update of the Carl Maxey Center.

September

In September, the Black Lens featured the 58th Anniversary of the March on WA, and highlighted a devastating flood in Haiti. We celebrated Sheridan Elementary School’s name change to Frances L. Scott Elementary School, in honor of Spokane’s first Black woman attorney, who was also a longtime educator. We showcased a community fair hosted by the Martin Luther King Center; an East Central Community Celebration sponsored by the Spokane Eastside Reunion Association, and the twenty-seventh year of Unity in the Community, that happened in Riverfront Park despite the impact of COVID-19. We featured a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic, hosted by Freedom Project East, and shared an article on the impact of COVID-19 on our children’s education.

October

The cover of the September issue featured a cover story on the visit to Spokane by a delegation of dignitaries from Kenya to discuss equity strategies. We also covered the outrage over treatment of Haitians at the US/Mexico border. October is the Black Lens election issue. We covered city council and school board races, and included questions and answers from local candidates. We featured articles on redistricting, gentrification, the widening racial wealth gap due to COVID-19, and an explanation of Critical Race Theory. We mourned the loss of Barack Obama. We also featured a photo display of my birthday present to myself, a tandem skydiving adventure with my daughter. You have to see the pictures.
March
In the March issue, which is our Women’s History Month edition, I was excited to feature a story about my mom, Wilhelmina Williams and the historical marker that was unveiled in Columbia, South Carolina to commemorate the Columbia Hospital’s unit for Black patients and nursing students. My mom was one of those Black nurses. We celebrated T’wina Nobles, CEO and President of the Tacoma Urban League, who became Washington’s first Black State Senator in ten years; mourned the loss of Cicely Tyson at age 96; spotlighted a grant that the MLK Center received from Inland Imaging; and featured an article by two young adults who shared what they gained from attending an anti-oppression and mass incarceration workshop carried out by the Freedom Project.

July
In July, the Black Lens honored Dorothy Webster, a lifelong member of the NAACP and a pillar in Spokane’s Black community, who passed away on June 15. The July issue also featured one of my most popular editor’s columns of the year, “A Juneteenth Fairytale.” People are still asking who you think princess was. Smile. We featured the Martin Luther King Center’s new Teen Tech Center; celebrated Roberta Wilburn who was named Interim Chief Diversity Officer at Whitworth University; introduced Malik Roberson, the New Ferris HS Football Coach and the first Black head football coach in the Greater Spokane League’s history; announced the release of Bill Cosby from prison; and through picture celebrations a weekend of Juneteenth activities in the East Central neighborhood.

November
In November we mourned the loss of Colin Powell, who died on Oct. 18, 2021 at the age of 84, as a result of COVID-19 complications. Powell was the first Black national security advisor in U.S. history; the first Black chairman of the joint chiefs of staff; and the first Black man to become secretary of state. In November, the Black Lens also announced that the paper will be going on hiatus after the January 2022 issue and will be back in 2023. We celebrated the ribbon cutting of Frances L. N. Scott Elementary School and the 90th birthday of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. We honored our Black Veterans in Spokane and introduced the Kootenai County Idaho branch of the NAACP (yes there is one) that was recognized in 2019 and hosted its first Freedom Fund Banquet in September 2021.

April
April raised awareness about the restrictive voter laws signed into law by Georgia’s Governor and efforts to overturn the laws. Members of Spokane’s Black Muslim community shared an article that explained the holiday of Ramadan. In state news, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee named Karen A. Johnson as Director of the newly created state Office of Equity. We featured an important article written by Karen Boone about Black Women and Sexual Assault, an article by the Spokane NAACP on Environmental Justice, and an article that introduced Raze, a new Black focused Early Learning program in Spokane that will address the Pre-School to Prison Pipeline. We offered COVID-19 resources; information about Bitcoins; and mourned the passing of the civil rights leader, Vernon Jordan.

August
The August issue featured The National Urban League’s 2021 State of Black America® report, “The New Normal: Di- verse, Equitable & Inclusive,” which was released on July 15 and we celebrated Zai-lav Avant-Garde, the first African American Scripps National Spelling Bee Champion, who is also a basketball prodigy. We celebrated the opening of the Chas Dental Clinic in the East Central neighborhood; featured an article from the National Alliance on Mental Health called “The Effects of Racial Trauma on Mental Health”; featured an article discussing how to protect Black skin from cancer; and spotlighted two COVID-19 vaccination clinics, one at the Black Lives Matter Mural in downtown Spokane and the other for African Immigrants at Riverside State Park.

December
The cover of the December issue featured the verdict in the trial of the three men who murdered Ahmaud Arbery. After two years, on November 24, the jury found the three men guilty of the shooting death of Arbery. We celebrated the inauguration of Betsy Wilkerson who retained her seat on the Spokane City Council and NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins who will become the first Black woman to board the international space station. We announced a new COVID-19 variant discovered in South Africa; introduced Raze, a new Black focused Early Learning programs in Spokane that will address the Pre-School to Prison Pipeline. We offered COVID-19 resources; information about Bitcoins, and mourned the passing of Civil Rights leader, Vernon Jordan.
What Do I Do IF...COVID Decision Guide
Reprinted from BlackDoctor.org

1. When Should I Get Tested
   - The most obvious time to get tested for COVID-19 is when you have noticeable symptoms.
   - The Symptoms of COVID are:
     (note that many resemble conditions such as seasonal allergies, the common cold and the flu...that’s one reason we strongly suggest getting the flu shot immediately)
     A cough
     Sore throat
     Minor congestion
     Low-grade fever
     Headache
     Fatigue
   - Loss of taste or smell (mainly associated with the Delta variant)
     – If you were exposed to someone who has COVID-19, you should get tested whether or not you have symptoms yourself. This test should be done 5 days after exposure.
     – CDC definition of exposure or close contact is being within 6 feet (2 meters) for a total of 15 minutes or more, over a 24-hour period.
   - Get tested between three and five days after traveling internationally regardless of your symptoms.

2. When is Someone With COVID Contagious?
   – A person with COVID-19 is considered infectious starting two days before they develop symptoms, or two days before the date of their positive test if they do not have symptoms.
   - The original variants had an incubation period of four to five days but with omicron it’s two to three days.

3. What Are The Different Tests
   - Currently, there are two types of diagnostic tests:
     Molecular (RT-PCR) tests that detect the virus’s genetic material. These require testing by a laboratory service. They often require 1-3 days to get results.
     Antigen tests that detect specific proteins on the surface of the virus. These are the “home tests” that provide results immediately. While not as accurate as the PCR for initial diagnosis, they have a very useful place in our COVID arsenal.
   - Samples are typically collected with a nasal or throat swab, or saliva collected by spitting into a tube. Results available in 15 minutes.
   - Most accurate if you have symptoms of COVID...sometimes the test can read negative at first but becomes positive as the exposure progresses...so feel free to retest as that’s why the kit contains two tests. Please get a PCR test to confirm the results.

Antibody tests are also available for some special purposes. They look for antibodies that are made by the immune system in response to a threat, such as a specific virus. Antibodies can take several days or weeks to develop after you have an infection and may stay in your blood for several weeks after recovery.

4. Quarantine and Isolation: What Do I Need To Know?
   – What Is the difference between the two?
     Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.
     Isolation separates infected and sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
   - How do I separate myself from others whether I am quarantining or isolating?
     Health officials recommend a “sick room” or area for those who are infected and a separate bathroom, if possible, the CDC says.
     You should also wear a mask if you have to be around other people. Avoid sharing items (like cups and towels). Avoid public transportation and generally avoid contact with other people.
     Monitor yourself for symptoms. You will likely get specific instructions from your doctor’s office about what to watch for, which might include things like taking your temperature every day.

5. What should you do if you test positive?
   - Everyone, regardless of vaccination status:
     Isolate by staying home for 5 days.
     Assume that you’re infected and can spread the virus to others: it takes time for symptoms and tests to emerge as positive...you still can spread the virus to others before you feel ill or test positive.
     If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house.
     Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
   - The BCAC respects the CDC’s guidance but take a more cautious approach regarding continual mask wearing when around other people.
   - If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.
     Don’t forget to tell your close contacts that you tested positive and they may have been exposed.

6. What To Do If Symptoms Develop?
   - COVID symptoms can appear anywhere from two to 14 days after someone is exposed to the virus.
     Anyone with symptoms should get tested for COVID immediately and contact their healthcare provider.
   - You should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms that the symptoms are not due to COVID-19.
   - If you’re having severe symptoms:
     Call your doctor’s office and get their advice because:
     There are of course other things like the flu that are out there that can mimic COVID symptoms.
     They may recommend that you receive Monoclonal Antibodies.
     If you’re having mild or lingering symptoms and your at home test was negative:
     Retest in three to five days...that’s why most of these kits actually come with two tests. Please get a PCR test to confirm the results.

7. When Should You Call a Doctor?
   - When you have tested positive and have symptoms:
     The CDC urges those who have or may have COVID-19 to watch for emergency warning signs and seek medical care immediately if they experience symptoms including:
     Trouble breathing
     Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
     New confusion
     Inability to wake or stay awake
     Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

8. What Do I Do If My Child Under 5 Is Exposed To A COVID Positive Person
   – They do not need to see the doctor if there are no COVID symptoms. Your child should quarantine at home for 14 days and watch for symptoms.
   – They do need to get a COVID-19 test
     – If needed, the CDC says that you can shorten your child’s quarantine to 10 days as long as your child shows no symptoms, or to 7 days if your child has a negative COVID-19 test on or after day 5.

9. What About Monoclonal Antibodies?
   - Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-produced molecules that act as substitute antibodies that can restore, enhance or mimic the immune system’s attack on cells
   - For COVID, Monoclonal Antibody treatment is available to individuals with serious disease but they must be administered within five days of when you first started developing symptoms.

Qualifications:
- Test positive for COVID-19 (PCR or antigen test)
- AND
- Have had mild/moderate symptoms for 7 days or less (must still be symptomatic)
- AND
- Age ≥ 65 years OR
- Age 12 years and older weighing at least 40 kg
   - Have at least one of the following:
     - Overweight as defined by BMI > 25 kg/m2, or if age 12-17, have BMI ≥ 85th percentile for their age and gender based on CDC growth charts
     - Pregnancy
     - Chronic kidney disease
     - Cardiovascular disease (including congenital heart disease, hypertension)
     - Diabetes
     - Down syndrome
     - Dementia
     - Liver disease
     - Current or former smoker
     - Current or history of substance abuse
     - Immunosuppressive disease or immunosuppressive treatment
     - History of stroke or cerebrovascular disease
     - Chronic lung disease
     - Sickle cell disease
     - Neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., cerebral palsy)
     - Having a medical-related technological dependence (e.g., tracheostomy, gastrostomy)
- Post-exposure preventive monoclonal antibodies are available to those who have been exposed consistently with the CDC’s close contact criteria

AND who are:
- High risk for developing severe COVID-19 AND
- Not fully vaccinated OR vaccinated but immunocompromised
- AND
- 12 years of age or older (and at least 88 pounds)

For more information visit: blackdoctor.org.
Chef Bryant Terry’s “Black Food” Stories, Art, and Recipes from Across the African Diaspora

Black Food has early roots in my desire to uplift Black women. When I was growing up, I saw the women in my family as they were: majestic, graceful, and generous. Respected and cherished by loved ones and our Memphis community, they gathered us in welcoming spaces full of chatter and laughter. They fed us delicious meals of tender okra and purple hull peas, low-and-slow-cooked collard greens, creamy potato salad, meltingly tender cabbage sautéed in bacon fat, velvety braised Great Northern beans, and hand-churned ice cream. It didn’t occur to me then that my grandmother, who always had a pot simmering on the stove. And, in a continuation of my family’s tradition, I launch a new publishing imprint, 4 Color Books, that will continue to shine a light on BIPOC voices. It creates space for everyone in between and all who will come after. And as we combine our many unique voices into one, it empowers us all: a global community.

As with my previous books, Vegetable Kingdom and Afro-Vegan, recipes are the throughline of Black Food. I asked brilliant colleagues to offer dishes that embody their approach to cooking and draw on history and memory while looking forward. They came up with a wide range of recipes, representing the depth and breadth of Black food and the people who make it. There are starters and mains, drinks and desserts, including Yocelyn Delk Adams’s sticky-sweet Cinnamon Roll Pound Cake.

And though I’ve made my reputation as a vegan food advocate—and there are plenty of vegan dishes in the book—a healthy share of these recipes showcase animal proteins. I made sure, also, to include food representative of the diaspora: across Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas. Nicole A. Taylor’s Cocoa-Orange Catfish honors Black farmers in West Africa and Brazil. Kia Damon’s creamy Sweet Potato Grits are an ode to her grandmother, who always had a pot simmering on the stove. And, in a continuation of the book’s mission, you’ll also find below recipes from the perspectives of essayists, poets, thinkers, and community leaders. I want readers of the book to engage with their various odes to the Black experience, from an examination of Africa’s far-reaching culinary influence to a reflection on the deep connection between spirituality and land. And while this book would not have been possible without the support of San Francisco’s Museum of the African Diaspora, its true origins remain with the women in my family. This book is dedicated to them. — Bryant Terry

Bryant Terry is an NAACP Image Award winner and a James Beard Award-winning chef and educator and the author of Afro-Vegan and Vegetable Kingdom. He is renowned for his activism and efforts to create a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system. Reprinted from Bon Appétit (bonappetit.com).

More than a collection of recipes, Black Food, which is inspired by Toni Morrison’s seminal classic The Black Book, samples from the perspectives of essayists, poets, thinkers, and community leaders. I want readers of the book to engage with their various odes to the Black experience, from an examination of Africa’s far-reaching culinary influence to a reflection on the deep connection between spirituality and land. And while this book would not have been possible without the support of San Francisco’s Museum of the African Diaspora, its true origins remain with the women in my family. This book is dedicated to them. — Bryant Terry

Bryant Terry is an NAACP Image Award winner and a James Beard Award-winning chef and educator and the author of Afro-Vegan and Vegetable Kingdom. He is renowned for his activism and efforts to create a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system. Reprinted from Bon Appétit (bonappetit.com).
By Sandra Williams

I studied the history of the Pacific Northwest when I went to school in Spokane. It was required learning. But in my classes, we were never taught about Vanport, Oregon. I had never heard of it. Carolyn Hinton was twelve years old when the flood in Vanport destroyed her home and her way of life, as she new it. She agreed to share her story with the Black Lens. This is an excerpt from that interview.

Where were you born?

I was born in Arkansas in a place called Fordyce, a small town in south-central Arkansas. I’m an only child.

What was it like for you growing up?

In Arkansas, I remember we lived on a farm. I remember it very well. It was fun actually. I didn’t have to do much work, just a little bit. We moved away when I was eight and came to Portland. During those days, I just played with my cousins most of the time and went to a one room schoolhouse.

What do you remember about Vanport?

When we arrived in Portland, I remember we got off the train at the train station downtown and went out to Vanport. We went into the apartment and it seemed like there were a lot of people staying there at the time. My uncle and his daughter and my cousin were staying there and another man was staying there. We only had 2 bedrooms, but they worked different shifts, so they used the beds at different times to sleep. They kind of rotated around the clock. While one was working, the others could be sleeping.

What do you remember about Vanport?

I call it my Disneyland because I had so much fun there. I remember the schools. The schools were not segregated. The housing was segregated. There was a certain part where the Black people lived and a certain area where the white people lived. As far as other things being segregated, it was not.

Continued on Page 25

The History of Vanport Oregon (1942-1948)

By Sandra Williams

Vanport, Oregon was the largest WWII federal housing project in the United States, and as such, attracted national attention to the region. At its peak, Vanport was home to over 42,000 residents, making it the second largest population center in the state.

For many long-time Portland residents, Vanport was known as the “Negro Project” despite the fact that African Americans were no more than 25% of residents at any given time.

Meant to be temporary, Vanport was shipbuilding magnate Henry Kaiser’s answer to a lack of housing in the early days of World War II, when he was recruiting men and women from across the United States to work in his Portland-area shipyards. Fearful that workers would leave the area due to a lack of housing, Kaiser purchased 648 acres of land outside of the Portland city limits to build a wartime housing complex.

Portland had long had a reputation as “the most prejudiced [city] in the west.” In the years before the war, only 2,000 Blacks lived in the city, due in part to Oregon’s state constitution, which had once prohibited Blacks from residing in the state, and to the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, which in the 1920s had up to 35,000 members.

But because Kaiser did not limit his workforce to white men only, Vanport was open to all, creating at the time the most racially diverse city in Oregon. Construction began on the housing complex in August 1942 and before Christmas of that year the first families were moving into apartments.

Local officials enforced de facto segregation in housing, with Blacks “unofficially” segregated into the least desirable units. However, the Vanport schools were integrated, as were childcare and recreational facilities. African Americans were able to form several groups that helped them protect and expand their rights. Moreover, Vanport was one of only two housing projects in the Portland area that accepted any Blacks.

When the war was over and the shipyard jobs ended, Vanport residents began an exodus out of the city. Approximately 5,000 African Americans continued to live in Vanport, with another 5,000 crowded into Northeast Portland. They made Oregon their home, despite calls by civic leaders for them to leave.

Many Black residents of Portland believe that local officials kept Vanport open because they did not want more African Americans to move inside city limits.

On Memorial Day in 1948, the Columbia River roared downstream, fifteen feet above the flood plain, and undermined a railroad embankment that had served as a dike, starting a flood that would destroy Vanport, leave 15 dead and its residents homeless.

Despite its short life span, Vanport helped create several “firsts” for Oregon and the Portland area. The first black teachers and policemen in the state were hired in Vanport during the war years. The Vanport Interracial Council worked to establish a Portland office of the Urban League. Vanport College was the precursor to Portland State University where many veterans used the GI Bill to get a new start on life.

In the end, Vanport became part of the story of civil rights and African Americans in the West.
An Eye Witness Account of the Vanport Oregon Flood

Continued From Page 24

Except for church. The church was segregated. They didn’t have any real churches but they used the community centers for churches.

Tell me about the schools. The schools were segregated where you came from. What was it like going to an integrated school for the first time?

It was a very interesting experience. I didn’t know what to expect but it was easy. I didn’t have any problems personally with being in the class with white people. I was in the fourth grade and my teacher was a nice teacher. Nobody bothered me and there were several other Black children in the class. It was predominately white.

Did you have white friends?

At school. Not after school. I didn’t see any of them because we all went different ways. But I had white friends at school.

What do you remember about the flood? Did you have any notice at all that anything was going to happen?

For days they had talked about it, but they were saying don’t be alarmed. The dike is safe. It’s not going to break. That morning of the flood, people had driven around and put notices on everybody’s door that it was okay. It was a Sunday, it was a holiday, Memorial Day. People drove around and said the units were floating and they were crashing into each other and making a horrible sound.

So, you stood with your mom on the embankment?

I stood back down and my dad had stayed behind to help a neighbor get his car. Men were out pushing those cars, trying to get them up the hill. It was pandemonium.

I stood there and watched. Some of the units were floating and they were crashing into each other and making a horrible sound.

What happened the next day?

The next day, the Red Cross helped us a lot. We had food lines. I remember my mother signing up for different places to go to stay. We didn’t really have anywhere to stay right then until maybe about two days later a friend of my parents offered us a place in his house. He had a place over on the other side of the town, so he let us stay there for a couple of days. Then we got a place living on Swan Island. It was a shipyard in Portland during the war and they had army barracks. So, the three of us stayed in a one room barrack and we went to the cafeteria that they had set up for our food.

How long were you there?

All summer. I’d say from June until probably the latter part of August. I remember when I started school, we had gotten another place. We moved to a housing project called University Homes. We stayed there, seems like forever. I didn’t like it there. I didn’t have any friends like I had in Vanport. They were all scattered. We lived in North Portland, in the projects, until about 1950.

Tell me about Albina.

After the flood, I liked coming to Portland because a lot of my friends, their families had found places over in what they called the Albina area. It was a redlined. We weren’t allowed to have a house in certain areas, but they let us live in Albina. Most of the Black people bought homes or rented homes in the Albina area.

First we rented a house and then we bought a house a couple years after that. I guess it was four bedrooms. One of them was downstairs. It was three bedrooms upstairs. I had the best room in the house.

As an adult you moved away from Portland. How did you end up back in Portland?

My husband’s last duty station was in Norfolk Virginia and we really hadn’t planned to come back when we retired, but my mom, in the meantime, got sick and passed away. My dad ran a little grocery store (in Albina) and my husband promised him when he retired we would come back and help him. When time came to retire, neither one of us were really ready to come back, but we did because he made the promise that we would, so we did. We came back in 1970.

I saw so many changes there because the Emmanuel hospital bought a lot of the property and it displaced a lot of Black people. People were moving out and moving away, but so many changes in that area, the Albina area.

Is Albina still there?

It’s still called that. But it’s not the same. Not even close. The freeway goes through Albina. The coliseum. The sports arena. Everything goes through there.

Did you go back to your home in Vanport?

We went back around July or August. It was pretty much dried up by then. Our building didn’t move off the foundation like some did. We lived on the lower floor. There was dried mud on the floor. The piano had come unglued. That Sunday, we had a roast for dinner. It was a beef roast. It was still on the table when we left, but when we came back, do you know that the pan the roast was in was sitting on top of the door. It had floated up there and got stuck. It was still sitting up on top of the door.

What was that like to go back in your place?

It was sad. You look at whatever you have. We didn’t have much anyway, but you look through the things that you did have and that you wish you could have kept. Nothing was salvageable. That bicycle was my most important thing. I found it, but I never was able to get it fixed right.
Get Mentally Fit in 2022

Get Rock-Hard Resolve
Got goals? Make a plan — small, achievable steps make it easier to keep going.

Make Gains for Your Brain
Learning keeps your brain in shape. Try a new activity like a sport, dancing, or mental puzzles.

Practice the Pause
Whether it’s seconds to calm down before you react in frustration or a day to rest, pay attention to your mind and body to take the time you need.

Slim Down Your Obligations
Drop a few events if you’re feeling overwhelmed or if you’re uncomfortable with the level of risk involved.
Prison Time Shortens Life Spans for Black Americans, But Not Whites

By Jason Henderson
Reprinted from BlackDoctor.org

A stint behind bars can significantly shorten the life expectancy of Black Americans, but not their white counterparts, new research has found.

Black Americans who have spent time in jail or prison are 65% more likely to die prematurely, even if it’s been years since their incarceration, according to an analysis of data from a decades-long federal study. However, jail time did not appear to have any meaningful impact on the long-term health of white former inmates, researchers recently reported in the journal JAMA Network Open.

“How does prison affect long-term health?”

The way prisons are run can have something to do with this increased rate of death, Bryan Sykes, an assistant professor of criminology, law, and society at the University of California-Irvine says. Inmates in poor health also can expect to receive poor medical care, Sykes adds.

Prisons “tend to be highly unequipped — the medical personnel and medical expertise, even just medical supplies — to deal with immediate health concerns while incarcerated,” Sykes shares. “For some inmates, they have to wait consider- able lengths of time before they can even see a medical professional because sometimes the medical professional comes once a week.”

The struggles Blacks face after getting released from jail

Bovell-Ammon suspects that the stress Black convicts face upon their release from confinement probably has even more to do with their long-term health than their treatment behind bars. Black people re-entering society after serving their time also must deal with disruptions in their social networks, educational opportunities and ability to access programs, like low-income housing and food stamps, Bovell-Ammon adds. Further, Black people are less likely to have enough money on hand or enough connections to successfully pick themselves up and become productive members of society, compared with white people, he notes.

“If you or your family have some sort of cushion of wealth to fall back on or a family or social network where there is access to opportunity, there’s just much more opportunity to bounce back from a setback like incarceration,” Bovell-Ammon says.

PUBLIC SAFETY

How to overcome the long-term health effects

Criminal justice reform is needed to protect non-violent of- fenders against these long-term health effects, according to Bovell-Ammon and Sykes. Bovell-Ammon agrees that these findings should prompt the public and policymakers to think more critically about public safety and what it means.

“If our policies to address crime and to try and promote safety are actually reducing the health and safety of some individuals, are there ways to address crime that don’t disproportionately cause undue harm to various communities, particularly communities that are already marginalized?” Bovell-Ammon asks.

How to help a loved one

People reentering communities after incarceration tend to be sicker than the general population and may face barriers to accessing health care and other supports.

Empathize with them. This will allow you to be prepared if your loved one doesn’t respond or act the way they did prior to their incarceration. In addition, your loved one will feel loved and respected.

Help them achieve their goal. Your loved one may under- standably experience a culture shock after being released from jail. You can help them through this by helping them reach their goals. For example, you can help them go over their finances, house hunt or even help them build their resume.

Get them involved. If your loved one has family, friends and a community, they are less likely to end up in jail again. You can try getting them involved in community events.

Develop new hobbies and habits with them. Introducing them to new hobbies and habits will not only keep them away from the old habits that landed them in jail, it will also give you time to bond with them.

Make sure they are taking care of themselves. Your loved one may go through social isolation or depression after being released. You can avoid this by regularly checking up on them and asking them questions. Make sure your loved one is: Getting enough sleep; Going grocery shopping and cooking meals; Drinking enough water; Taking care of their hygiene and health; Practicing self-care

Consider therapy. Your loved one may have experienced some sort of abuse or trauma while in jail and their body may have adjusted to living in an environment of fear and vio- lence. Therapy will be able to help them work through this.
Democrat Stacey Abrams announced on December 1 that she’s running for governor of Georgia in 2022, setting the stage for a possible rematch against the current governor, Republican Brian Kemp, who narrowly beat Abrams in 2018.

Her entrance into the contest keeps the political spotlight on Georgia, which has become one of the most competitive and closely watched states in the nation. Abrams, a former Democratic leader in the Georgia House who has emerged as a vocal voting rights advocate on the national stage, rose to prominence in the 2018 race, representing, for some, a possible future of the Democratic Party.

Abrams ultimately lost that election to Kemp by a margin of just 1.4 percentage points — the closest Georgia gubernatorial race in decades, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Abrams refused to concede that election, citing what she called voter suppression on behalf of Kemp, who was then overseeing the election as secretary of state. Kemp denied her accusations.

After her loss, Abrams founded the Fair Fight Action voting rights organization, and lead the effort to flip Georgia blue in the 2020 election. Despite her national profile, Abrams focused on Georgia in a video announcing her candidacy.

“I’m running for Governor because opportunity in our state shouldn’t be determined by zip code, background or access to power,” Abrams wrote on Twitter.

The book, Stacey’s Extraordinary Words, which hit the bookstores in late December, is based on Abrams childhood experience of participating in spelling bees during elementary school. The picture book is an inspirational tale of determination in which a young Stacey learns that win or lose . . . her words are powerful, and sometimes perseverance is the most important word of all.

For information about Stacey Abrams candidacy for Georgia Governor, visit: https://staceyabrams.com.
A new study published in September found the opioid overdose death rate among Black people is rising faster than the rate of white people.

At previous points in the ongoing opioid crisis, Black people experienced lower death rates than white people. A 2020 study even found that the rate of opioid overdose deaths in Black people was steady from 1999 through 2012, before it started increasing in 2013, which is when the white death rate began to level.

“It points out the fact that we have to do something different, a more intensive intervention in the African-American community,” Dr. Edwin Chapman, an internal medicine and addiction medicine specialist serving the Black community in Washington, D.C., told NPR.

The high profile drug-related deaths of Michael K. Williams and DMX are bringing attention to the issue and creating conversation around drug addiction in the Black community. Especially in the Black community, opioid overdose deaths are no longer prescription or heroin, but fentanyl.

Dr. Nzinga Harrison, co-founder and chief medical officer of Eleanor Health, recently told New York Amsterdam News that racism is stopping Black people who are seeking treatment. On top of difficulty in getting treatment, Black people stop treatments “up to five times more prematurely than whites,” AmNews reported.

In the September 2021 study, the authors wrote that “an antiracist public health approach that explicitly examines the role of racism is urgently needed in research, public health, and policy approaches to address the crisis of opioid-related harms.”

Dr. Andrew Kolodny, the medical director for opioid policy research at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management, told NPR that the US needs to keep better data on opioid addiction: not just deaths and hospitalizations, but gender, age, community type, and incidence rates.

“We need data we can act on. And that’s not here,” Kolodny said to NPR.

While studies showed opioid overdose death rates were rising in Black communities prior to the pandemic, they have only continued to surge over the last 18 months. Health experts have said the pandemic created the perfect storm for those struggling with addiction: isolation, negative mental health impacts, and further barriers to treatment (fewer in-person appointments, telehealth, financial stress).

The campaign Stop Opioid Silence offers a platform for people in recovery, along with their loved ones, to share their stories and help end the stigma that prevents people from seeking treatment. In 2020, overdose deaths reached 93,000 during the pandemic, a record high.

“COVID-19 has exacerbated preexisting stressors, social isolation, and economic deprivation disproportionately in Black communities, possibly contributing to increased substance use,” authors wrote in a January 2021 study. “The preexisting racial disparities in accessing substance use treatment may also be heightened by COVID-19-related shifts in treatment availability.”

To read the study “Disparities in Opioid Overdose Death Trends by Race/Ethnicity, 2018–2019, From the HEALing Communities Study” visit: https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306431.
Continued From Page 12

The second reason I say it’s different this time is because of the composition of those crowds was different. In the Civil Rights Movement, it was mostly comprised of Black people, and a few allies from other races and ethnicities sprinkled in there. This time we had marches with tens of thousands of people that were predominately white and other people. So it wasn’t just Black people getting involved in the struggle. Another reason I say it’s different this time is because while we haven’t made nearly all of the gains that we want to see, there have been some significant changes. What I always point to is the state of Missis- sippi, where I used to live and where I got my PhD, had the confederate emblem on its state flag for one hundred and twenty-six years. That never changed throughout all the movements, all of the pressure, until 2020 when the racial justice uprisings were occurring. So, some change has been made. But mostly the reason it’s different this time is because 2020 catalyzed a group of people who weren’t very involved in ra- cial justice before but can’t be not involved now. It changed them. And they can help change our country.

The second thing was one of your chap- ters talked about race and the image of God? It bothers me when I go into a Black church and there’s a great big picture of Jesus as a blue-eyed, blonde, white guy in the front of the church. So talk to me about that. How do you ex- plain race and the image of God?

Christianity in the United States has always been coded as white and this is where the accusation of “the white man’s religion” comes from. That’s well founded in many ways. What I think implies is there’s some- thing about Blackness that needs to be re- deemed, that needs to be saved, that needs to be whitened. But when you go back to the Bible, all the way back in the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bi- ble, God says that human beings are made in the image and likeness of the creator. Which means we all have inherent digni- ty and worth, and our skin color is a part of that. Not something that has to be fixed. We understand the dignity of people on an individual basis, but being made in the im- age of God also means that we are worthy of dignity on a collective basis as well. So, different people groups, different ethnici- ties, different tribes and nations each have dignity and don’t have to be europanised or whitened in order to be worthy of love and respect in the image of God. There’s a saying that Sunday mornings are the most segregated time in this coun- try. They were actually talking about the 50s and 60s, but I would argue that it’s still the case now. It feels like the church sort of has that separation embedded in it. How do you see that?

The observation that 11am is the most segregated hour in America is powerful because it is emblematic of the hypocrisy of many Christians who are racist or who hold racists ideas when they are supposed to be loving like their Savior. But I actu- ally don’t think that’s the biggest problem we have. One hour, one day of the week. The bigger problem is not what happens on Sunday, but what happens Monday through Saturday. I’m much more concerned about the hours of 8am - 3pm, school hours, be- ing the most segregated hours in America. I’m personally more concerned about weekends and holidays in our neighborhoods where we live being some of the most segregat- ed spaces in America. Which means we all have inherent digni- ty on a collective basis as well. So, not something that has to be fixed. Which means we all have inherent digni- ty in the in the image of the creator. The second thing was one of your chap- ters talked about race and the image of God? It bothers me when I go into a Black church and there’s a great big picture of Jesus as a blue-eyed, blonde, white guy in the front of the church. So talk to me about that. How do you ex- plain race and the image of God?

I read in your bio that you’re the pres- ident of The Witness, which is a Black Christian collective. What is that?

Yes, that is an attempt to build our own ta- bles. When we first began we were called the Reformed African American Network and what we were trying to do, what I was trying to do, is make space at existing ta- bles, institutional tables, in white reformed and evangelical circles. To basically raise our voice and to make the case that Black people was an issue that we would hope that they would. So maybe ul- timately it’s not a problem with just what happens on one occasion once a week, but in our ongoing social networks. It is a massively complicated and convolut- ed set of issues to address the disconnect between younger generations and the his- toric Black Church tradition. So, let me just focus on one area. History. We need to teach history. The reason why I think teaching history, and in particular the history of the Black Church, is important is that it gives us a more accurate conception of what the Black church has and hasn’t been and what it could be now. So, for instance, we tend to have this frozen in time, stuck in amber, frozen in time where we’re like the Civil Rights movement, with Martin Luther King, Jr. and a few others as figureheads. We have the impression that every Black church was involved in the struggle. But the reality was only a minority, a small mi- nority, of Black churches were actively in- volved in the Civil Rights Movement, par- ticularly in the South where it could mean your church could get burned or bombed, or you could get fired. So, it was never the case that the “Black Church at large” was always on board with it. As a matter of fact, we had incredibly contentious argu- ments between folks like King and Joseph H. Jackson, the President of the National Baptist Convention. So much so that they broke off in the early 60s and formed the Progressive National Baptist Convention. So it’s never been every Black church is one reason we need to study history. The second reason is we need to know how the church has changed over time. It used to be the case that Black churches and de- nominations were the only places that we were able to build our own tables. They were the only real institutional forums that we had to enact our struggles. Partly due to the activism of previous generations, we achieve have what we have now. Whether it’s writing or corporations or universities or whatever, we have more access and so the role of the Black Church in the Black community itself has changed. Are we still looking for the church to be involved mainly on an institutional basis. So, it’s the name of the church or the name of the de- nomination, and often then we do count it as activism and participation. Or do we recog- nize that the Bible says the church is God’s people, and are we looking for the people to go and do God’s work? That may not fall under an institutional banner, but they are nonetheless handing out water or saying prayers at the beginning of the march or us- ing their homes and their churches as sites of organizing or being elected to the offic- es of the local group. Now, I’m not saying more should be done and I think more should be done, but all I’m saying is the way the church interacts with a social movement changes over time and we should not be surprised to see that the way the church interacts now and the way it interacted 50 years ago is different.

You’re speaking this evening. What do you want folks to get out of your presen- tation? What is your goal?

I hope folks walk away with a sense of their own agency. We tend to think that activism, however you define it, is for someone else. It’s for the special few. And what I hope people begin to understand is that fighting for racial justice is for all of us and it’s go- ing to take all of us to see real change and progress. And by equipping you with these practical tools, I hope to make it a little bit easier for you to see yourself as a member of that struggle.

Is there anything that you wanna say that I didn’t ask?

There is a young readers edition of How to Fight Racism coming out in January 2022, so if you wanna read this with a young per- son in your life, it’s geared towards children ages 8 to 12 and it would be a phenomenal way to get them started early in the journey toward racial justice.

For more information about Jemar Tis- by and his books visit: jemartisby.com. For information about The Witness vis- it: thewitnessinc.com.

www.blacklensnews.com
What (Really) Happens When You Call the Tobacco Quitline?

If you’re ready to quit
If you’re ready to quit using tobacco products such as cigarettes, vapes, or chew, you might be curious about what that process looks like. You might even have questions about setting a quit day and avoiding temptations and cravings after the fact.

All these questions are normal!
The good news is that The Washington State Quitline has been helping people for the last 20 years. However, many people are hesitant to call the Quitline. Some people see the 1-800 number and worry they’ll get a cold and impersonal conversation with an operator. Others might worry about the kind of information they’ll have to share or the type of conversation they’ll have. They may wonder if it will be awkward or whether the Quitline person will understand their situation. Whatever the reason, we want to help eliminate some of that stress and give you insight into what actually happens, because we know choosing to quit tobacco is a big deal.

Let’s be clear – anyone can call, text or visit the website
If you are uninsured or underinsured (insurance plan with no tobacco counseling services), you are likely eligible for at least 5 counseling calls and two weeks of nicotine replacement therapy, such as gum and patch. Whatever your insurance status, anyone can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, text READY to 200-400, or visit Quitline.com.

So, what happens when I call?
When you call the Quitline, the first thing you’ll do is talk to an enrollment agent. You’ll be asked for information like your age and gender. You’ll also be asked about your current tobacco use and the type of devices you use (cigarettes, vape pens, etc.), and your willingness to set a quit date. This part of the call is used for statistical reasons only, so you don’t need to worry about personal information like your name being released.

Okay, then what?
Next, you’ll talk to a Quit Coach. Your Quit Coach will ask you about your motivation to quit, talk about potential triggers for tobacco use, discuss ways to manage cravings, and help determine your strengths as you come up with a plan to avoid smoking, vaping or chewing. They can also help address potential obstacles, like living with people who use tobacco products or facing social pressure. The goal is to discuss questions or concerns you might have and help you create a quit plan.

Will I need to set a quit date?
When talking with your Quit Coach, you’ll have a chance to set a quit date. This is the day you’ll stop using tobacco products and start working towards a tobacco-free lifestyle. You Quit Coach will help you set a day that works for you. It’s ok if you decide not to set a quit date. Quitting is never easy and can require multiple attempts, so don’t feel ashamed or worried if it doesn’t happen on your first go-around. Your Quit Coach understands and will re-address your motivation to quit, talk about how a tobacco-free lifestyle can benefit you, and address other concerns you might have about quitting. Either way your Quit Coach will schedule another session with you to maintain momentum and offer support as you work towards your goal.

Take it one step at a time:
Everyone’s quitting journey is different. If you’ve tried to quit before and haven’t quit for good, that’s ok! It takes an average of 7 quit attempts to quit for good. Every attempt gets you closer to that goal. Remember, Quit Coaches are available 24/7 at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
We created an online form to collect data on incidents of hate and bias, which happen often to people who are: LGBTQ+, of various religious affiliations, people of color, people with disabilities, and any other targeted communities.

To report an incident visit ReportHateBias.org. These reports are not connected to law enforcement; if you are a victim of a hate crime and need the police to respond, call 911.
Black Future Co-op Fund is Excited to Announce Three Full-time Positions

Director of Partner Engagement & Investment will be primarily responsible for developing and stewarding relationships with organizations and individuals and raising significant funds that further the mission and resource the work of the Black Future Co-op Fund.

Director of Community Engagement & Learning will lead the Fund’s endeavors to develop and maintain relationships with organizations and individuals throughout all 39 counties of Washington state building a powerful network of Black people and groups and uplifting their visions of Black liberation.

Administrative Associate will provide day-to-day organizational and operational support for the Black Future Co-op Fund, including managing our office systems, keeping us on task, representing us, and setting the tone for everyone who interacts with us.

First consideration for these positions will be given to applications received by January 21, 2022.

Visit the website to learn more and apply: blackfuturewa.org/join-our-team

BFCF provides an equitable and competitive salary along with a comprehensive benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, long-term disability, generous and flexible paid time off, employee assistance program, and support for ongoing professional development.


Join a collaborative, fun, mission-driven team
Work with a diverse client population
Opportunities to learn & lead at every level
37.5 hour work week
Clinical hours for licensure & Supervision
Student Loan Repayment
Free subscription to Headspace
Full benefits: medical, dental, sick leave, vacation & holiday time, 403(b) + match, employee assistance program

Make a Difference.
for sexual assault/abuse survivors, crime victims, foster children, & refugees
Stage of America
Community Services
Spokane, WA | lcsnw.org/careers

Classes Starting Every Few Weeks

HCT Offers FREE hands-on construction training that can help you obtain a living wage construction career.

Six weeks Mon-Fri 9am-3pm

You will get certification in:

- OSHA 10
- Forklift
- Flagging
- First Aid/CPR/AED
- Ages 17+ (must have or be working on GED or HS diploma)
- Justice system involvement does NOT disqualify

Call or email Georgina Mitchell for any questions at 509-319-4143 gmitchell@nwagc.org

Headstarttoconstruction.org
Join Our Team

Volunteers of America is a family where everyone truly cares and works hard.

To us and to those we serve, all of our staff are heroes and we'd love for you to join our ranks!

We're hiring!

Better Health Together believes bringing together a range of perspectives strengthens our team and community.

Our diverse team shares a common thread that we are passionate about community and ensuring everyone can achieve better health. Join our team of tenacious problem solvers, and let’s get to work!

We are recruiting for several open positions:

- Chief Equity & Strategy Officer
- Senior Program Manager – Equity
- Program Manager – Equity Team
- Accounts Payable Clerk
- Parent Mentor – Healthy Kids Together

Check out our Careers page for more opportunities!

Benefits include:

- 100% employer-paid health, dental, and vision insurance
- Retirement plan with 6% employer contribution
- 6 weeks paid time off
- Flexible work environment

Learn more and apply! www.BetterHealthTogether.org/Careers

SPOKANE FORKLIFT

Skilled Technicians

Spokane Forklift and Construction Equipment is a fast-growing, small business based in the Inland Northwest. We specialize in Forklift repairs, sales, & rentals but we work on all heavy equipment, telehandlers, box trucks, semis, etc.

We are currently seeking additional skilled technicians in the Spokane & surrounding areas. Candidates with an aptitude in technical trades & background in field service or heavy machinery are preferred.

If interested, please email your resume to ryan@spokaneforklift.com or drop off at 4907 E Trent Ave. Spokane, WA 99212.

Executive Director

BlackPast.org (https://www.blackpast.org/) is the largest online resource for information on the history of People of African ancestry around the world. BlackPast is a non-profit organization that provides information to the public. Its nearly 8,000 posts drew six million visitors from around the world in 2020.

Job Description

As Executive Director (ED) of BlackPast you will lead the organization’s strategic planning and manage its day-to-day operations; lead, coach, develop and train an evolving BlackPast team, including hiring staff and consultants as needed with special emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion; supervise the work of BlackPast volunteers; seek partnerships that further the mission of BlackPast and take primary responsibility for fundraising; responsible for managing the finances of BlackPast and overseeing contracts for maintenance of our online presence; enhance the organization’s public image through engagement with the community, including publication of an annual report, and promoting the organization through the news media, and other community institutions and individuals.

Qualifications

- A passion for preserving and sharing African American and global black history to a worldwide audience.
- Past success working with a board of directors.
- Unwavering commitment to quality programs as well as past success in setting and achieving strategic objectives and managing a budget.
- An understanding of marketing, public relations, and fundraising with the ability to engage a wide range of stakeholders and cultures.
- Overall knowledge of social media platforms and general knowledge of the Internet.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Multidisciplinary project skills.
- Ability to work effectively in collaboration with diverse groups of people.
- A charismatic leader willing to be action-oriented, entrepreneurial, adaptable, and innovative.

Work Location

Residence in the Seattle metropolitan area is preferable but not required.

Salary

Starting annual salary $80,000.

To apply

To be considered for this position, please submit a cover letter and resume to BlackPast Board President Jerry Large at jerry@blackpast.org.

Volunteers of America

Health Coverage · Retirement · Flexible Schedule · Paid Vacation

For more information please visit http://www.voaspokane.org/jobs

Executive Director

BlackPast.org (https://www.blackpast.org/) is the largest online resource for information on the history of People of African ancestry around the world. BlackPast is a non-profit organization that provides information to the public. Its nearly 8,000 posts drew six million visitors from around the world in 2020.

Job Description

As Executive Director (ED) of BlackPast you will lead the organization’s strategic planning and manage its day-to-day operations; lead, coach, develop and train an evolving BlackPast team, including hiring staff and consultants as needed with special emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion; supervise the work of BlackPast volunteers; seek partnerships that further the mission of BlackPast and take primary responsibility for fundraising; responsible for managing the finances of BlackPast and overseeing contracts for maintenance of our online presence; enhance the organization’s public image through engagement with the community, including publication of an annual report, and promoting the organization through the news media, and other community institutions and individuals.

Qualifications

- A passion for preserving and sharing African American and global black history to a worldwide audience.
- Past success working with a board of directors.
- Unwavering commitment to quality programs as well as past success in setting and achieving strategic objectives and managing a budget.
- An understanding of marketing, public relations, and fundraising with the ability to engage a wide range of stakeholders and cultures.
- Overall knowledge of social media platforms and general knowledge of the Internet.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Multidisciplinary project skills.
- Ability to work effectively in collaboration with diverse groups of people.
- A charismatic leader willing to be action-oriented, entrepreneurial, adaptable, and innovative.

Work Location

Residence in the Seattle metropolitan area is preferable but not required.

Salary

Starting annual salary $80,000.

To apply

To be considered for this position, please submit a cover letter and resume to BlackPast Board President Jerry Large at jerry@blackpast.org.
EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Think you can’t make a career change?

When you join Washington Trust, you are joining an organization that cares about providing the best for our community and our employees. We are always looking for team members for a wide variety of positions who specialize in:

• Customer service
• Information technology
• Business and finance
• Communication and training

Benefits include:

• Entry level positions starting at $15.00/hr
• 401(k) match, medical, dental, and vision
• Paid holidays and vacation
• Tuition reimbursement

Visit watrust.com/careers, or email me to find out what career opportunity is right for you.

I made the change, so can you!

Ta’Shara Kunkel
Talent Acquisition  •  tkunkel@watrust.com

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT

Are you looking for competitive pay, and amazing benefits? Apply for one our open roles today!

NOW HIRING:

• Electrical-Mechanical Technicians
• Parts Sales Representatives
• Receptionist
• Controls Engineer
• Design Engineer
• Inventory Specialist

View job details at pearsonpkg.com.
Interested? Send your resume to HumanResources@pearsonpkg.com

WrightWay Beauty Supply is looking for an enthusiastic sales associate to work in the only Black veteran owned beauty supply store in Spokane. We provide specialized hair products, braiding and weaving hair, wigs and a variety of other accessories necessary for ethnic hair care.

Our sales associate will be responsible for assisting customers throughout the buying process. Duties include greeting customers when they enter the store, helping customers find specific products, educating customers on product usage, checking customers out on the POS system, restocking items, and front facing products.

Required: reliable transportation, weekend availability, and a positive attitude. This position has competitive pay and flexible hours.

Contact Wright Way Beauty Supply at (509) 703-7772.

The Carl Maxey Center will be hiring in January/February 2022

Part time, Full time and paid intern positions

Please visit the CMC website or our Facebook page in mid-January for updates.

carlmaxeycenter.org

To advertise your employment opportunities in the Black Lens call 509-795-1964 or e-mail sandy@blacklensnews.com
Freedom Dreams Deferred
The State of the Black Liberation Movement

By Jamala Rogers
A View From the Battlefield (blackcommentator.com)

I have found this year to be one of extreme distress for the Black Liberation Movement. There were many warning bells going off that apparently were only heard by the freedom dreamers. What we see is an unrecognized movement around us. How did we get here? Who have we become? How do we get on track?

Robin Kelley talks about the Black radical imagination in his seminal contribution to our struggle, Freedom Dreams. Kelley examines the “emancipatory vision” of generations who push our movements in new and radical directions. The vision has been not just been put at bay as Kelley suggests. I believe the accumulation of ancestral knowledge and contemporary lessons that begs for our rigorous study and appreciation has been tramplled on by those seeking gratuitous fame on the backs of the Black working class.

Our movements have seen an awakening on many levels that must be summed up, discussed and put into new transformative strategies for the next period. I believe the answers to the above questions can be found in the renewed commitment to building a strong and viable Black Left.

Black folks have gone through some traumatizing shit since the Ferguson Uprising in 2014. On top of the Dr. Joy DeGruy’s Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome and Stasi Gwinwright’s Persistent Traumatic Stress Syndrome, we had to endure the intensification of white supremacy under the Trump regime. For those who thought that the national movement was over on the horrific murder of Mike Brown would make it the last Black body to perish at the hands of white cops or vigilantes, they were sadly mistaken. In 2020 we saw an intensification of the aggorizing murder of George Floyd on prime-time television. The incident propelled millions into street protests around the world.

The icing on the cake of oppression was a deadly pandemic which aggressively sought out the most vulnerable populations. COVID-19 devastated Black communities, exploiting the conditions of poverty and health disparities worsened under racialized capitalism.

People of African descent across generations and diverse backgrounds watched the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, knowing full well that had Black protesters stormed the building, it would’ve been a blood bath. Any protesters who survived would be facing more than just felony obstruction laws.

Not surprisingly, urban areas across the country experienced record-breaking homicides rates. No surprise either that our self-medication in response to these conditions resulted in a siege of drug-related deaths. The cheap and powerful fentanyl is ravaging our communities and taking no prisoners.

This is our reality in America. And where is the Black Liberation Movement during this overwhelming and relentless barrage of assaults against the masses of our people? Gaping for political life and relevance, I have never seen so much venom as I have in the last year by those touting Black Lives Matter. Beat downs, calls outs, cancel culture, legal actions, character assassinations and cyber-bullying have been incessant. It’s the proverbial circular firing squad.

We all have witnessed or been victims of some form of public shaming or complete reputation annihilation. I know organizers suffering from insomnia, anxiety attacks, depression and a host of other issues affecting their overall health. Their ability to fully participate in their self-transformation and movement-building have been severely impaired.

With all this time, energy and resources being weaponized against one another, our enemies are gloating but our people are suffering. The call for restorative justice amongst ourselves has been muted. The Black lives in our own organizations don’t seem to matter.

The Black Liberation Movement has been infected by the most negative attributes of the nonprofit industrial complex, like individualism, opportunism and careerism. We’ve made building our personal brands more a priority than building strong organizations.

We’ve been hit by the flood of money washing over our movement and creating a swamp of political stagnation. It’s important to spend some time talking about money because it has played such a divisive role in our organizations and in our movement.

One Struggle KC released a statement back in the summer to explain how the group was grappling with how a section of the Black-led collective took organizational funds to start something new without group consensus. It is unclear whether One Struggle can survive a hit like this so early in their development but they are not alone as other movement groups attempt to address crippling internal issues around resources and personalities.

On a bigger stage, Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation garnered national attention as they took in $90 million dollars over the last year. Parrisse Cannors, the only founder of Black Lives Matter to be connected with BLMGNF, was publicly raked over the coals for her use of BLM funds to allegedly enrich her personal lifestyle. Co-founders Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi, who have distance themselves from the Foundation, are recipients of harsh criticisms because they continue to accept speaking engagements in the name of Black Lives Matter.

BLM Chapters lined up to condemn the BLMGNF and its BLM founders for their cloak of secrecy and for their breach of principles. The #BLM101/plus outlined their concerns in a statement to the movement. Families of victims murdered by police also lined up to accuse them of profiteering off the deaths of their loved ones. Samaria Rice, the mother of Tamir Rice and Lisa Simpson, the mother of Richard Risher, issued a joint statement that broadened the net of condemnation past the foundation and its founders to include Black attorneys Ben Crump, Lee Merritt as well as Tamika Mallory and Shaun King.

Meanwhile, in Ferguson, activists who helped propel a hashtag into a movement are still bitter that people like DeRay Mckesson parachuted into the media vortex, then launched his political career. Others became the darlings of the cable news network. The people who were doing the work in the St. Louis region before the murder of Mike Brown are still doing the work, probably a bit more jaded. They’re also wondering where their share of the wealth is that they helped to create.

Shortly after the beat down by the Left and the Right, Cullors resigned as the Foundation’s Executive Director. There was an attempt — although short-lived — to add credible leaders in our movement in an effort to set up the infrastructure necessary for effective operations and accountability. Makani Themba and Mondia Bandele, two sistahs for whom I have the utmost respect, issued a statement that they were backing off as senior executives because they were refused the access and opportunity needed to seriously perform their duties.

Their joint statement ends by saying “we are a strong and resilient movement, and that the ecosystem of organizations fighting for Black liberation is as strong as ever.” If all of these public statements swirling around over money and fingers wagging over political pimpling are any indication of how our movement will respond, I am in deep trouble. We don’t need to stay in place and wallow, we need to organize ourselves out of this swamp we’re currently in.

Our movement has experienced waves of new and younger activists often socialized by the toxics of internalized oppression and coming of age into a world that has been unable to school them on movement behavior and expectations so that they are of service to the revolution.

The fact is that organizations and movements experience growing pains. The speed at which Black Lives Matter grew had all to do with the material conditions of our people and the incredible power of social media. Many contributed to that velocity, creating a new consciousness in this country about police violence and generating reformation. But both of these forces have reached the limits of their effectiveness as a means for collection or distribution. We had no trusted entity to take on that prominent level of stewardship. This a matter of governance, not divvying up money between those with the most access.

Opportunists profiting off the movement is not new. These latest accusations of movement misappropriation goes far beyond the BLMGNF. There is a legion of blood-sucking characters who are cashing in on anything Black-led and Black-dead. We must hold them accountable as effectively and efficiently as we can while not losing sight of why we are fighting and who the beneficiaries of our righteous struggles are.

For the freedom dreamers, it’s time to dive deep into the Black radical imagination. The answers are there. We must respect the values and organizing principles that bind us while we do this important transformative work. It’s time to redirect our fragmented energy into nurturing healthy relationships and bolstering networks united around a shared revolutionary vision for a more just and democratice society. A strategically focused and unapologetic Black Left will get us there.

Jamala Rogers is a BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member and Columnist. Rogers is founder and Chair Emeritus of the Organization for Black Struggle in St. Louis. She is an organizer, trainer and speaker. She is the author of The Best of the Way I See It – A Chronicle of Struggle. Other writings by Ms. Rogers can be found on her blog jamalarogers.com.
By Marc H. Morial

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - “After decades of struggle and a year of our leaders choosing the Jim Crow filibuster over our voting rights, our time is now. On this day of action, I call on Congress and the White House to eliminate the filibuster and pass voting rights to protect millions of Black and Brown voters. The arc of the moral universe is long. Join me on January 17 to demand that it bends toward justice.” – Martin Luther King III

More than five and a half decades ago, Martin Luther King Jr., led 2,000 marchers to the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama, where they knelt and prayed for the freedom of civil rights leaders who had been detained the previous year. This MLK Day, his children will lead marchers to the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge in Washington, D.C., to culminate a weekend of action in defense of democracy.

Throughout MLK Day weekend, marches will take place around the nation on bridges, not only to recall the 1965 Selma march but also to contrast lawmakers’ inaction on voting rights with their success in enacting a $1 trillion infrastructure package for roads, airports, seaports, and bridges.

If Congress can deliver for bridges, it can deliver for voting rights. If Congress can pass federal voting rights legislation, in including the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and ensure the Jim Crow filibuster doesn’t stand in the way. Dr. King’s legacy reminds us that our right to vote was not easily won and it must be vigorously defended. It is a right that is foundational to our democracy. Last year, we saw what happens when we make voting more accessible for all, and we were inspired. Those unpatriotic members of state legislatures who would seek to undermine voting rights saw it too, and it scared them. State lawmakers have introduced and enacted hundreds of antidemocratic voter suppression and election subversion bills since the 2020 election. These anti-democracy bills — introduced in direct response to Black and Brown voters showing up in record numbers — close polling centers, purge voter rolls, eliminate early voting, and gerrymander Black and Brown voters into predominantly white districts.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court’s July decision in Bivens v. DNC further gutted the Voting Rights Act, one of Dr. King’s signature achievements. Federal voting rights legislation will help overturn these Jim Crow-era state bills and put key protections back in place.

The Freedom to Vote Act expands opportunities to vote, thwarts voter suppression, lifts partisan gerrymandering, prevents election sabotage, and promotes election security. The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would restore a requirement in the Voting Rights Act that jurisdictions with recent histories of discrimination secure federal “preclearance” before altering their voting laws, and will enhance the ability of the U.S. Department of Justice and other stakeholders to challenge discriminatory voting laws.

President Biden and members of Congress can no longer stand by and allow American democracy to crumble. They must set a new national standard for voting and restore the Voting Rights Act up to its full strength, even if that means reforming or eliminating the filibuster. Standing on the shoulders of Dr. King, Coretta Scott King, Whitney M. Young and many others, we must hold them accountable for doing so.

The MLK Day mobilizations will begin in Arizona on January 15, Dr. King’s birthday, where the King Family and local groups will rally supporters across Phoenix, in alignment with the Arizona Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee. On January 17, the family and hundreds of others will cross the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and join the annual D.C. Peace Walk: Change Happens with Good Hope and a Dream.

For more information about the weekend of mobilizations, visit www.deliverforvotingrights.com.

By James Clingman

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - For fifty years Black people in the United States have celebrated the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Established by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday celebrated by millions throughout the world’s African community.

Kwanzaa brings a cultural message which speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.

How about Self-Determination? Kuumba, the gift of creativity, speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. Our obvious support and celebration of this occasion suggests our commitment, not only to the principles of the Nguzo Saba, but also to their fruition. Thus, we ask you: What Kwanzaa success will you celebrate this year? What have you done during the year that qualifies as a celebratory event during Kwanzaa?

Have you achieved Unity, Umoja, among Black folks in your locale? Are you unifying the point that you love one another more and support one another more? Have you proven that you have unified around some pertinent issue or cause? If so, then let the celebration begin. If not, let the lamentation begin.
“THE CROWD GOES WILD!”
—The New York Times

JERSEY BOYS
THE STORY OF FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS

BEST MUSICAL!
Tony Award® & Grammy Award Winner

FEBRUARY 11-13
FIRST INTERSTATE CENTER FOR THE ARTS
BROADWAYSPOKANE.COM

BEST of BROADWAY
BY WESTCOAST ENTERTAINMENT
JANUARY EVENTS

JANUARY 8
POWER TO THE PEOPLE
2022 Black Legislative Summit
Join a workshop to learn how the Black community can best navigate the Washington State legislative process with a liberated spirit that builds our collective power. Legislative Guest: Representative Jamila Taylor, 30th Legislative District, Chair of the Washington State Black Member Caucus
10:00am – 1:00pm
Zoom Registration: bit.ly/BlackAdvocacySummit
Facilitated by Emijah Smith, Community Queen and Founder of Colorful Communities LLC; Senait Brown, Anti-Racist Organizer and Policy Director at SurgeNW

JANUARY 17
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.

JANUARY 17
INLAND SESSIONS: HONORING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
Sponsored by KSBS Televisi- sion. Regional poets and musicians from the Inland Northwest will be addressing the mission of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through original works and personal renditions which they each choose specifically to honor Dr. King.
Premieres on KSBS-TV/PBS
7:30pm
(On all KSBS-PBS Spokane/Edmonton Translators across Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, Western Montana, as well as across South-Western Canada. The episode can also be watched after January 17th at ksbs.org or through Passport via your KSBS Membership)

JANUARY 24
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/ VAd506QHIV

LGBTQ+ Seniors of the Inland Northwest invites all LGBTQ+ seniors to join us at our weekly Zoom meeting
Fridays at 4 p.m.

“Senior” is roughly 50+.
If interested in this socialization opportunity, please send an email to Nancy Avery at NancyTAvery@comcast.net requesting to be added to the email list for the Zoom link.
Find us on FB at https://www.facebook.com/SpokaneLGBTSeniors

BLACK BUSINESS EXPO
SPECIAL EVENT
ONLINE MOVIE SCREENING
SCAVENGER HUNT

GET ONE FREE
Or Chicken Dinner
Buy One Catfish

THE SOUL LOUNGE BAR & GRILL
2401 E Sprague Ave
Spokane, WA 99202-3934
(509) 443-3852

Find us on FB at https://www.facebook.com/spokanelgbtseniors

LEADERSHIP SPOKANE GALA
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2022 • 6PM
NORTHERN QUEST RESORT & CASINO
Register at www.LeadershipSpokane.org
Proof of vaccination or negative test required for attendance.
Let STA take care of your winter driving.

Sign up and get text or email updates on winter conditions at SpokaneTransit.com/STALinked.