

Columbus & Dayton

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FREE



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

5

When Our Ancestor-
Grandmothers' Hands
Guided Babies Safely
Into the World

By Suzanne Parks, MEDL

7

Celebrate Women's
History Close to
Home

By Lisa Benton, MD

26

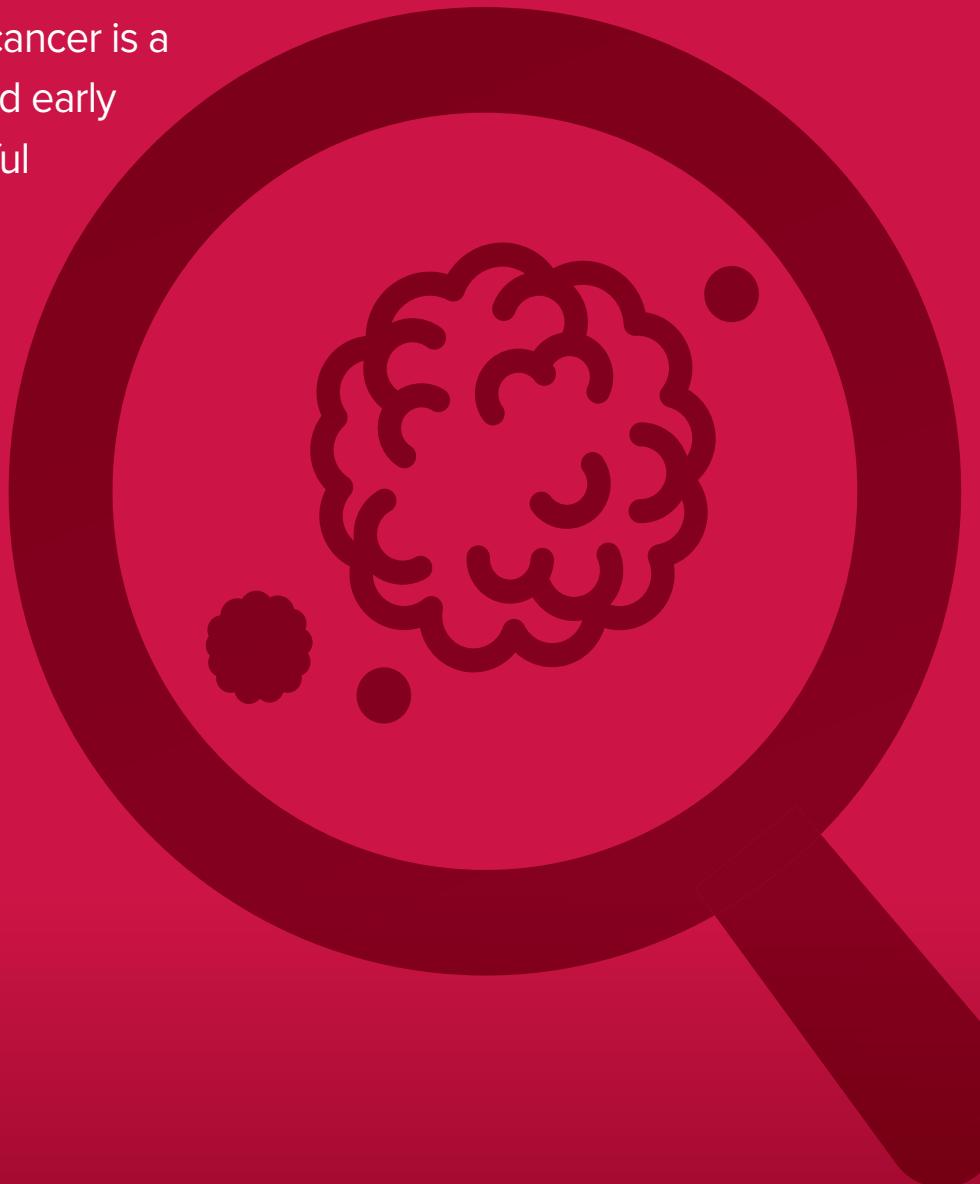
Healthcare Sheroes -
Expanding Healthcare in
Columbus and Vicinity

By Charleta B. Tavares

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Founder & Publisher
 Ray Miller

Layout & Design
 Ray Miller, III

Assistant Editor
 Ray Miller, III

Dayton Editor
 Benette Decoux

Distribution Manager
 Ronald Burke

Student Interns
 Jada Respress
 Olivia Deslandes

Lead Photographer
 Steve Harrison

Cover Photo By:
 Gabriel Ortiz

Contributing Editors

Rev. Tim Ahrens, DMin

Lisa Benton, MD

Alexander Bolton

Roderick Blount, MA

Nick DePaula

Khadijah Edwards

Billi Ewing

Dwayne Fatherree

Caitlin Johnson

Cecil Jones, MBA

Heidi de Marco

Aaron Marshall

William McCoy, MPA

Chris Megerian

Moses Don Mosley

Suzanne Parks, MEDL

Fmr. Sen. Charleta B. Tavares

PUBLISHER'S PAGE



While conducting my research to write this month's Publisher's Page, I came across one of my go-to policy development institutions with great knowledge and a justified reputation for critical analysis and finding solutions. The headline that caught my attention referenced the existence of a **Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys**. The article read as follows: *"Momentum is building to address the most severe and pervasive problems facing Black people in America, due in large part to the disproportional impact of the pandemic on Black communities and widespread racialized violence. Black boys and men, in particular, run the gauntlet of a specific brand of racism, at the sharp intersection of race and gender. The result is a longstanding pattern of poor intergenerational outcomes for them. The unique challenges facing Black boys and men require a specific set of policy responses, from the earliest days of life through adulthood."*

My attention was particularly drawn to this new 19 member Commission created in August 2020 by the Congress of the United States and signed by the President. The article proceeds with an announcement that on Monday, March 14, experts, Members of Congress, and members of the Commission will discuss the unique role of this new entity.

Many of our readers will be reminded of a similar initiative with an almost identical thrust put forth by Senator William F. Bowen of Cincinnati, Ohio. The Senator conceived, designed, and lead this initiative known as the *Governor's Commission on Socially Disadvantaged Black Males*. In his letter of submission to the Governor on April 30, 1990, Senator Bowen wrote: *"Through the work of subcommittees, the public hearing process and efforts of the Commissioners, we feel that we have begun to identify the causes underlying the problems identified, and in addition, have begun to raise the consciousness of the media, business, state government, and indeed, all concerned individuals, to the crisis facing our young African American men."*

Prior to Senator Bowen's creative and comprehensive approach designed to improve the status and life chances of young African American male citizens in our State, I, as a Member of the Ohio House of Representatives had created the Ohio Commission on Minority Health and wrote the Executive Order No. 8569, dated December 17, 1985, which structured and defined in-part the purposes of the Task Force and the ensuing Commission as follows:

Whereas, sharp disparities exist in both health and use of health services between Minority and Non-Minority Ohioans; and

Whereas, the infant mortality rate for Black and Minority Ohioans remains nearly twice that of White Ohioans; and

Whereas, there is a higher incidence rate of alcohol-related illness, heart disease, and diabetes for Blacks compared to Whites; and

Whereas, homicide is the leading cause of death for Black and Minority males aged 15 through 44; and

Whereas, Black and Minority deaths resulting from cancer are increasing four times the rate of white Ohioans; and

Whereas, data on mortality rates for the Hispanic population is inadequate.

This very salient point was made by David B. Roth, Executive Director of Cleveland Works, Inc. during one of our community forums which we held across the State of Ohio.

"If we bring everyone into the triangle of health, education, and employment, I assure you these problems, like drugs, crime, and alienation, which are really symptoms, would sink to manageable proportions. There would be no special groups, like Black males, needing the attention of special commissions and requiring the testimony of "expert witnesses, who only repeat the obvious. In the end, then, it is not a question of what to do, but when are we going to do it."

And finally, as we give our all to structuring an initiative designed to bring the intellectual, financial, organizational, individual, and experiential capital to the task of achieving some degree of equality; let us be ever mindful of how we will, in fact, control our excesses and improve the quality of our lives. Only through that level of highly disciplined behavior can we **rise together and follow an Actionable Blueprint for Reducing Poverty In Franklin County and throughout our state and the nation. The time is now to aggressively attack these critical issues. Let us come together and work hand-in-hand with the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and Rise Together.**

With Appreciation and Respect,

Ray Miller
 Founder & Publisher

In This Issue

Angela Davis speaking at a street rally in 1974.



9

Marian Wright Edelman: A True Sage and Justice Warrior

By: Rev. Tim Ahrens, DMin

22

Senate Gears Up For Confirmation of First Black Woman to Supreme Court

By: Alexander Bolton

36

Sherrilyn Ifill to Step Down at NAACP Legal Defense Fund

- 5 When Our Ancestor-Grandmothers' Hands Guided Babies Safely Into the World
- 6 Black Futures: Her Time Is Now
- 7 Celebrate Women's History Close to Home
- 8 Zora Neale Hurston: A Sister's Sister
- 9 Marian Wright Edelman: A True Sage and Justice Warrior

- 10 Four Women of Character, Compassion and Consequence You May Not Know
- 14 Dr. Jamye Coleman Williams: Educator and Social Reform Activist
- 17 Yvonka Hall: Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
- 18 Legislative Update
- 20 Cover Story

- 22 Senate Gears Up for Confirmation of First Black Woman to Supreme Court
- 23 Most Black Americans Still Experience Economic Insecurity
- 24 Health Care Firms Investing in Black Startups
- 25 Exits By Black and Hispanic Teachers Pose Threat to Covid-Era Education
- 26 Healthcare Sheroes - Expanding Health in Columbus and Vicinity
- 27 Book Bags & E-Readers Fighting to Grow: Black Farmers Continue to Fight Discrimination
- 30 Kuumba Connections - Quilts by Contemporary African American Artists
- 31 Biden Seeks 'Reset' on Pandemic and His Presidency
- 32 A Reborn HBCU in Detroit is Opening a Black-Owned Footwear Factory
- 33 Central State Chorus Shares Message of Hope at Dayton Correctional Institution
- 34 Reports of Africans Stopped from Escaping Ukraine
- 35 Williamson Era Draws to a Close for Hale Black Cultural Center
- 36 Office on Aging Begins New Outreach for Senior Residents
- 36 Sherrilyn Ifill to Step Down After Nearly a Decade at NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- 38 Community Events

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WHEN OUR ANCESTOR-GRANDMOTHERS' HANDS GUIDED BABIES SAFELY INTO THE WORLD



By Suzanne Parks, MEDL

"During the summer of 1794, an enslaved woman named Kate petitioned George Washington with an unusual request. She wished to become a paid midwife to "serve the negro women on [his] estate." Washington received word of this appeal from one of his overseers, an enslaved man named Will who was also Kate's husband, while he was home during his second term as president of the United States." George Washington's Midwives, The economics of childbirth under slavery. By Sara Collini

Once upon a time, there was a group of our enslaved female ancestors who today would be recognized as health-science professionals. These medical practitioners provided medical treatment to the enslaved and sometimes to members of the planter class.

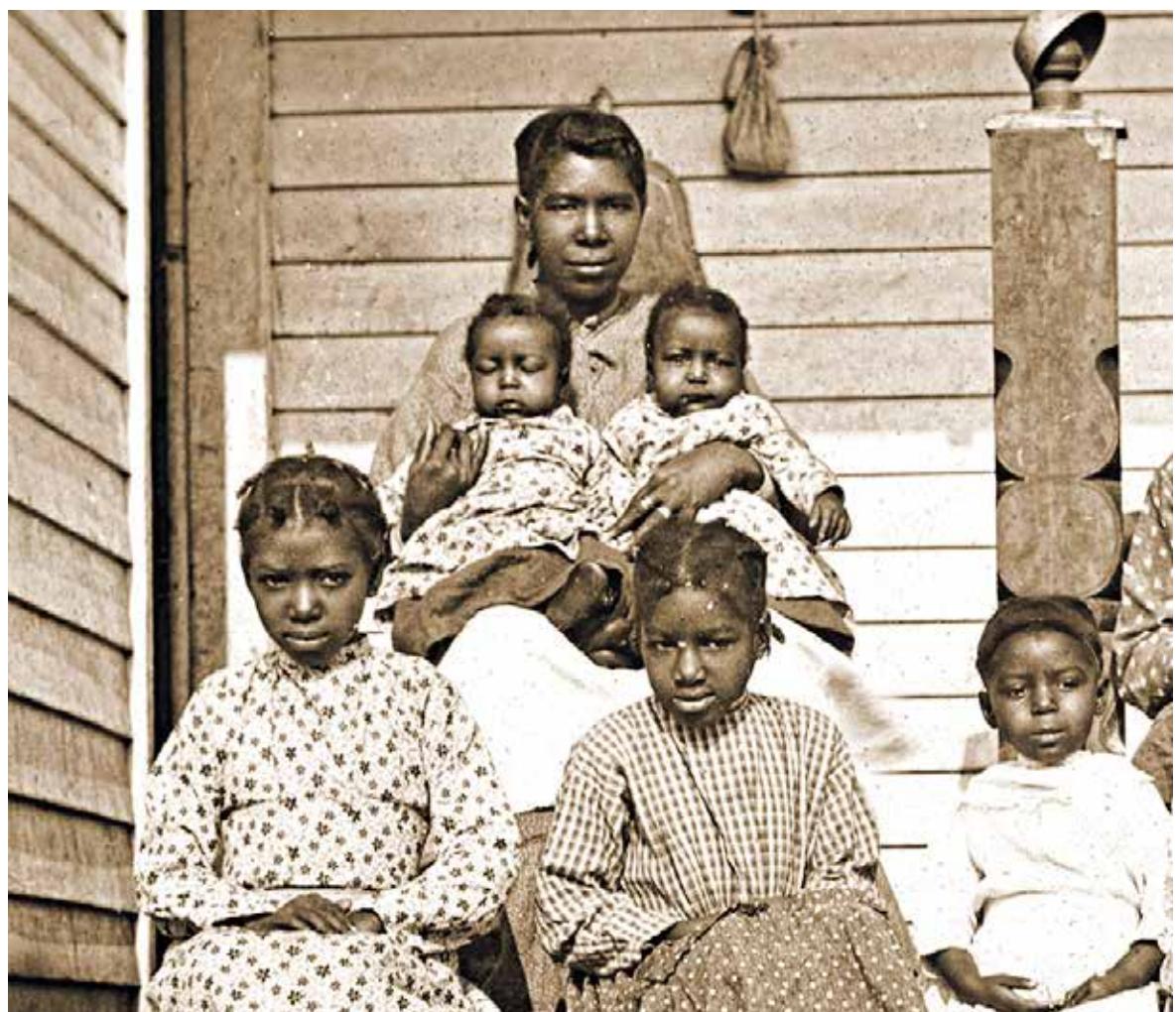
The women, who were called "granny midwives" were herbalists who knew how to forage the forests and woodlands in search of roots, plants, and flowers with healing properties. They were apothecaries because they knew how to formulate medicines from that which they foraged and dispense to the sick.

They were knowledgeable in the pre-natal care of the expectant woman throughout the pregnancy. Moreover, they were the guardians of the reproductive rights of women who were forced to become breeders. Due to their skills, they were able to undermine the will of greedy members of the planter class who wanted to control the pregnancy timetable. By doing so, they ultimately worked stealthily for the welfare of the expectant mother, including terminating unwanted pregnancies, if necessary.

They coached the women through labor and delivery. When called upon during difficult deliveries, they performed feats of great skill and courage if the delivery was problematic. Theirs were the hands that first caught the newborn babies when they made their entry into the world. They cleaned their new charges, weighed them, and ensured that they were able to thrive before they presented the newborn to its mother's breast for nourishment.

The plantation midwife did not receive formal training at a university or college. They probably did not utilize How-To books that they could refer to when necessary.

If you understand the economics of childbirth under slavery then it is easy to appreciate why the granny midwife was highly valued by the planter class. A woman who was a healer, reproductive health specialist, apothecary, and who was considered chattel must have yielded a huge profit for the owners of those free labor camps. If the babies they delivered thrived, then there were more hands to labor



Black woman and her children in 1898.

without pay. If the enslaved remained healthy and were treated when sick, then the longer they could toil in the plantation house or in the fields before they became just worn out and died.

Before midwives themselves became frail and passed on, they instructed the next generation of women all that they knew, just as someone before them had taught them healing and midwifery. The role of the midwife and the practice of Black midwifery continued with each successive generation first in those free labor camps during slavery times and in the rural South as late as the 1960s.

Today there is a racial health disparity in the safe delivery of babies. According to Linda Vellarosa, writer for the New Your Times, more Black newborns are likely to die than white babies. Ironically, that gap is greater now than it was in 1859, 15 years before the end of slavery.

During the late 19th century, midwifery performed by the enslaved and the newly freed became a pariah. White doctors viewed them as unhygienic and failed to comprehend that uneducated does not mean untrained. They took over the trade in urban areas. Hospital births became more the norm.

However, in the impoverished rural South, where hospitals were not readily accessible due to racial apartheid laws (Jim Crow) or distance, the grannie midwife remained in great demand even though a bit of a countrified stigma was attached to the

profession. Anyone who was delivered by a granny midwife carried that shame.

By January 1918, state legislation in 31 states mandated Certified Professional Midwife licensing with 10 other additional states having pending laws, the granny midwife who was once valued when she was enslaved, operated without a license. Although some continued to practice in the rural South, they gradually went into extinction.

In 1952, the Georgia Department of Health, recognizing that granny midwives were an indispensable force to be reckoned with and in spite of regulations, filmed a documentary designed to instruct the remaining practitioners. The documentary was not without a dose of white supremacy. In the documentary, the white producers departed from being instructional and made a demeaning mocking example of one of the midwives who had lost a baby. The scene showed the grannie midwives listening to the dress down with pained expressions of humiliation on their faces.

Gail Dixon-White's great-grandmother, Viola Hutchins Wiley was a midwife in Early County, Blakely, Georgia. She practiced the medical art of midwifery for several decades in the 20th century. She was tall, slender, and known for her fashion sense. A sharp dresser on any given day, she had the reputation for "dressing to the nines." So, everyone affectionately called her Ms. Nine.

Continued on Page 6



Continued from Page 5

Ms. Nine, who delivered both Black and White babies was also known for never losing a baby that she had helped deliver. Ms. Nine's story has been shared down through the family, but some parts are missing, like whether or not she was a direct descendent of an enslaved midwife who passed down the art.

The family kept Ms. Nine's medical bag, long after her passing. But it got lost during

a move from Georgia to Columbus. Luckily the family still has the scale Ms. Nine used to weigh the newborns. Dixon-White is now in possession of this artifact, now a precious family heirloom.

Called to deliver a child any time of the day or night, there was a sense of foreboding the midwives carried with them along with their medical bags. Rural Georgian whites were rattlesnake mean during her years as a

midwife, which extended from the 1930s to the early 1950s. One never knew what could set off a disgruntled white person that would ignite acts of racial terrorism performed by White people against the Black residents.

White-Dixon's mother, Charlene White, who Ms. Nine delivered, used to fear the middle of the night knock on the door signaling that it was time for her grandmother to make haste and come. Whether she felt trepidation in her heart or not, Ms. Nine would retrieve her medical bag, hop into the back of a horse-drawn buggy, driven by a black or white person needing her services, and go into the dirt country road night to perform her duty.

Today, many of us have come to appreciate the importance and contribution of the midwife who birthed a nation for centuries before the ushering in of the modern-day midwife. Black women are proudly reclaiming that heritage, choosing to become midwives or doulas.

White-Dixon plans to journey back to Blakely, Georgia to go through the public records. She is eager to learn more about her great-grandmother, starting with finding out how many babies she safely brought into this world. My guess is the number is in the thousands.

Suzanne Parks is a contributing writer for the news journal.

BLACK FUTURES: HER TIME IS NOW



By Billi Ewing

My mother often recounts the story of the first time my great-grandmother held me after I was born... "Oh my goodness, look at her, she's looking me square in the eyes, she's been here before! She's a little woman, take her!" Shocked and put off at first, my mom later realized that Mama Dillard, as we fondly called her, was simply trying to let her know that I was special, unique and beyond my years. Only a few days old, she saw something in me that my mother hadn't seen...just yet. From that day to this day, I've proudly carried and lived up to the nickname of "Woman." If I could bottle all the love and wisdom I gained from sitting at her feet for the first 16 yrs of my life, I would give it away to young girls for free because it's priceless.

As we sit at the cusp of possibly seeing the first black woman seated on the US Supreme Court through Kentanji Brown Jackson's nomination, only months after witnessing Amanda Gorman, the first Nat'l Youth Poet Laureate deliver a stirring call to action, standing alongside our first African American FLOTUS Michelle Obama, I feel as if their grandmothers might've uttered similar



sentiments about them. Each and every one of the amazing women trailblazers of our rich history were all once little girls with a praying Grandmother...

Little girls like 11yr old Aeriel Yeldell from Dayton, OH, a gifted child who's been reading, writing, and drawing since the age of 4, was chosen as the announcer of her KG Graduation ceremonies, currently creates

works of art on paper and with clay and aspires to be a Disney animator, a Creative Arts YouTuber and own an animal rescue shelter. Little girls like her passionate, creative, and fearless younger sister, Khloe Petty, a 6yr old who's been a self-taught dancer since the age of 2, who somehow continues to smile, dance and dream after losing her father to COVID last year. Khloe, who was Debbie Allen for her school's Black History Program, hopes to become a gymnastics teacher and build homes for the homeless when she grows up.

All of this awesomeness comes as no surprise to Grandmother Jackie Vincent, who's told them they are beautiful black girls who can do and be anything they desire from day one. Praying over them, taking them to church & Vacation Bible School, buying art supplies, attending school events and standing in the gap for her daughter, April Clemons, when needed, are just a handful of ways she nurtures and encourages their gifts.

Greatness has no timelines, boundaries or age limits. As you journey through Women's HERstory Month this year, think about how you can embody the spirit of these grandmothers, pouring into your natural or "adopted" daughters and granddaughters so we can continue this legacy for GenHERations to come!

CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CLOSE TO HOME



By Lisa Benton, MD

When I think of my ‘sheros’, female heroes, I consider the women who blazed trails without fanfare and accolades so that I could be where I am today. Although we can celebrate the sisters, mothers, aunts, and daughters of color who publicly blazed trails, open doors, and changed the face of nations, policies, and history in the world, I am just as grateful for the women who directly touched and guided my life.

For example, I give thanks for my grandmother and great, great grandmother. My great, great grandmother was a freed slave in South Carolina who made her way from a plantation back to Africa to settle in the emerging nation of Liberia. Fast forward several generations to my grandmother who made the decision to come all the way back from Liberia to Virginia to go to school and college to become a teacher.

If you know anything of history of the 1930's 40's and 50's, you can only imagine how challenging a time it was for any woman of color who chose and needed to work outside of the home in an occupation other than a maid, servant or nanny. There were thousands of other Black women that deserve our homage beside the names of the women history knows.

Just as we all know the names Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Rosa Parks, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Coretta Scott King, and Betty Shabazz, I know my grandmothers, Danielette Gardiner, Willie Dean Bradwell, and their mothers. I encourage everyone to learn the stories of their grandmothers, great grandmothers, and great, great grandmothers to be able to celebrate not just a richer and deeper Women's History Month, but one of their greatest Women's History Month ever.

I am grateful to have been raised by my mother Vera Danielette. She was a dedicated teacher and educator and as a mother did her best to make sure me and my siblings did not feel we could not accomplish anything we set our minds to. As children of teachers, we knew the value of a good education.

But we also learned the importance of being well-rounded from the perspective that there was a person of color doing what we wanted to do, so if we worked hard and prepared ourselves, you may still face racism and discrimination, but you would be equipped to fight for your place at the table.

Also, the women of my family taught us the importance of passing on what we achieved so the next generation of women could go a little further and win a little more.

For example, I love dancing and I think I fell in love with ballet when I saw the movie The



Dr. Benton and her grandmother.

Red Shoes by Hans Christian Andersen as a child.

But what was even more magical and liberating for me was seeing Judith Jamison dance with Alvin Ailey. It was a revelation to me that all shades of black and brown could dance gracefully like angels.

My awareness of the beauty of black dancers just got deeper and richer because of the powerful women of color in my life educated me that before Judith, Alvin Ailey, and the Dance Theater of Harlem, and since Josephine Baker, throughout history sisters were doing it all in dance and theater.

My Aunt Cleta and grandmother made sure we saw them when they came through Newark, New Jersey or on special trips into New York City. Enjoying dance in all forms was available and open to us as black children.

Enter my mom, Vera. She made sure her daughters were enrolled in ballet and tap dance classes. It didn't matter that the dance school in and around the neighborhood we grew up in were 98% white. We were right in there taking classes with all the other girls. As a bonus, my Aunt Bonnie made sure I knew about Dorothy Dandridge, Pearl Bailey, and Katherine Dunham. You probably know Dorothy Dandridge and Pearl Bailey from the movies Carmen Jones and Porgy and Bess, but you need to dig a little deep to learn about Katherine Dunham, the first Black woman to have an internationally recognized dance company.

She was next level. Beyond dancing, she earned a doctoral degree in anthropology, opened the world to a new appreciation of the African and Caribbean dance forms and

was also activist. It was wonderful that my aunt made sure I knew that whatever dreams I had, even though it would take some extra work, they could happen in color.

My Aunt Bonnie also made sure we knew about the Little Rock Nine. I am grateful for her gift to me of the book about Daisy Gatson Bates when I was almost her age so that I would learn that even in your youth you could have a big voice in any movement and still be inspired to change the world.

Now as we celebrate a whole new generation of internationally known Black ballerinas, such as Misty Copeland, Michaela DePrince, Ingrid Silva and dancers of local renown such as Linda Milbourne of New Life Dance Academy, Katina Jennings of Selah Dance Ministries, Kim Denizard, of Artists of America, and many others that continue to carry the torch and light the way for the next generations. We learn the large and small victories they had.

For example, for years ballerinas of color had to wear shoes, leggings and tights that weren't our skin tones. Just as my mother and grandmother had to suffer weird make-up and lipstick shades and mix their own, the dances had to use foundations, powders, and paints to color their shoes and tights when we were asked to wear “flesh tone” dance gear.

Finally, manufacturers have realized a need to stock dance shoes and clothing to be able to accommodate dancers of all shapes, sizes, and colors. But we still usually must pay a little extra for “custom” items. Having to still spend extra money for something that shouldn't cost more should continue to motivate the next generation of dancers across the Diaspora to keep striving, raising their voices, and advocating for change until it becomes our new normal rather than the exception.

I will never forget how I was at a National Medical Association meeting years ago and was talking to several women physicians, residents, and medical students. Yes, we were all women of color!

As we shared about the hospitals we trained in, I mentioned my hospital and one of the doctors proceeded to share about the first black woman surgeon from that institution. I had to interrupt and let her know it was me. It was with pride I could share about my experience of being their first Black female surgeon graduate. In that moment I could “exhale” with pride, but in that same breath I remembered that now was not the time to rest but rather to uplift and inspire these aspiring surgeons of color to continue to climb even higher on their ladders of success.

Lisa D. Benton, MD, MPH (The Doctor is In) breastsurgeonlb@gmail.com, Twitter:@DctrLisa (415) 746-0627

ZORA NEALE HURSTON, A SISTER'S SISTER



By Cecil Jones, MBA

Spiritual... Creative...
Intelligent... Surviving...
Leading... Supporting...
Following...
Forgiving...

and we could go on and on describing our Black Women. We salute you!

When Black Women and Men could not legally vote in many sections of the United States, our Black Women marched with other women in the early 1900s. Of course, as a result of those marches and other protests, other people did get the right to vote at that time, but not Black Women, not Black Men. We have seen this scene play out before, unfortunately. There were promises but no action, no follow-up. There was no obtaining the right to vote, at that time for Black Women or Black Men.

This era followed the era in which it was formally decreed that Black Women and Black Men (or children) had NO rights that others needed to respect (Dred Scott, U.S. Supreme Court, 1857). This was followed by a 'separate but equal' ruling – should it have been called 'separate and unequal'? (Plessy vs. Ferguson, U.S. Supreme Court, 1896).

This was the environment in which Zora Neale Hurston was born in 1891 in Mississippi. Her parents were indeed slaves until they were freed.

Ms. Hurston was bold and creative and intelligent. She wrote and published books and stories telling the story of Black Women at a time when a popular job for Black Women was caring for middle-class and upper-class families. That care began after entering the care receivers' homes via the back door of the house (they were not allowed to walk in via the front door). Nora Hurston told the story. She interviewed former slaves and told their story of mistreatment. She interviewed Cudjoe Lewis, the last known slave to be brought illegally to the United States in 1860. Some of her work was published after Ms. Hurston died in 1960.

I salute Zora Hurston and see her as a 'Sister's Sister'. Her writing told the truth of the mistreatment of Black Women, Black Men and Black Children at a time when Blacks were being lynched for just talking about these things in a public forum. One of her books, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a fictional story, was about a Black Woman in the South in the 1930s. At that time, Black Women were not a group that was written about. They received little respect or attention.

Much of Zora Hurston's work became popular after her death. She died in a 'Welfare Home'. Alice Walker was the Pulitzer Prize winner (first African American female to receive this honor) for the book *The Color Purple*. She found out where Hurston was buried (in an unmarked grave) and bought a headstone for Ms. Hurston's grave/resting place.

Ms. Hurston was part of that magical Harlem Renaissance when she lived in New York. She collaborated with Langston Hughes there and developed the play *Mule Bone*.

Reference: Norwood, Arlisha. Zora Hurston. National Women's History Museum. National Women's History Museum, 2017

Have you discovered a new goal for yourself during the pandemic? Go for it!

*Are you looking for a technology networking group to help you get smarter? What new technology or process have you learned this month? Need advice on how to look for that technology position? Are you considering technology education (courses, certificates or degrees) and need information? Do you have a business, process, project management, personnel or technology question? Please let me know. admin@accelerationservices.net
Cecil Jones MBA, ABD, PMP, CCP, SCPM, FLM, Lean Professional, 614-726-1925.*

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN: A TRUE SAGE AND JUSTICE WARRIOR



By Rev. Tim Ahrens, DMin

I am just finishing my book, "The Genius of Justice." Following conversations with 53 Geniuses of Justice in our times, I am ready to share their wisdom with others. Some of the geniuses are sages. A sage is a wise or holy figure. A sage possesses insight or understanding beyond that of ordinary people. In myths and legends, sages serve as guardians of special knowledge, helpers or advisers to heroes, and examples of wisdom, virtue, and goodness. In the Biblical faith traditions, sages guide us forward to deeper understandings of how to live in this world. Through the ages the sages of faith have taken the proclamations of prophets and made them real. In the teachings of the sages, prophecy becomes practical. Remonstrations on faith are turned into demonstrations of faith. Through this, the sages achieve something extraordinary. While the Biblical prophets are often driven close to despair by the challenge of speaking God's word to inattentive and often intransigent followers of God, the sages translate distant visions and tough messages into daily programs. What they lack in drama they achieve in action.

Dr. Marian Wright Edelman is a true sage and justice warrior. Now 82, Dr. Edelman was born and raised in Bennettsville, South Carolina. Her father, Rev. Arthur Jerome Wright, was a Baptist minister who died of a heart attack when Marian was 14. After High School, Marian left Bennettsville for Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. She flourished, and a result, studied overseas at the Sorbonne University, the University of Geneva in Switzerland and in the Soviet Union.

Once back in Atlanta in 1959 at complete her senior year returned to Spelman, she became involved in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1960 she was arrested along with 77 other students during a sit-in at a segregated Atlanta restaurant. She graduated from Spelman as valedictorian. She went on to study law and at Yale Law School where she was a John Hay Whitney Fellow, and earned a Bachelor of Laws in 1963.

In 1964, Marian became the first African American woman admitted to The Mississippi Bar. She began practicing law with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund's Mississippi office, working on racial justice issues connected with the civil rights movement and representing activists during the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. She also helped establish the Head Start program in Mississippi.

Dr. Edelman moved to Washington, D.C. in 1968 where she continued her work and contributed to the organizing of the Poor People's Campaign of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. She founded the Washington



Research Project, a public interest law firm, and also became interested in issues related to childhood development and children. In 1971, Edelman was elected the first Black woman on the Yale board of trustees.

In 1973, she founded the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) as a voice for poor children, children of color, and children with disabilities. The organization has served as an advocacy and research center for children's issues, documenting the problems and possible solutions to children in need. She also became involved in several school desegregation cases and served on the board of the Child Development Group of Mississippi, which represented one of the largest Head Start programs in the country.

As leader and principal spokesperson for the CDF, Dr. Edelman worked to persuade United States Congress to overhaul foster care, support adoption, improve child care and protect children who are disabled, homeless, abused or neglected. As she expresses it, "If you don't like the way the world is, you have an obligation to change it. Just do it one step at a time."

She continues to advocate for youth pregnancy prevention, child-care funding, prenatal care, greater parental responsibility in teaching values and curtailing what she sees as children's exposure to the barrage of violent images transmitted by mass media. All of Dr. Edelman's books highlight the importance of children's rights.

In her 1987 book titled, Families in Peril: An Agenda for Social Change, Marian stated, "As adults, we are responsible for meeting the needs of children. It is our moral obligation. We brought about their births and their lives, and they cannot fend for themselves." Edelman serves on the board of the New York City-based Robin Hood Foundation,

a charitable organization dedicated to the elimination of poverty.

Marian Wright Edelman received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000 and has been granted many honorary doctorates and other awards. She has published more than ten books and has appeared in so many others.

Dr. Marian Wright Edelman is one of the most distinguished and accomplished social justice warriors in American history. She has done this by seeing needs and meeting them since she was a little girl growing up in Bennettsville, SC.

She says her life was blessed from the beginning. She came to know Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dr. Benjamin Mays as a young woman. Dr. Howard Zinn taught her history and Charles Merrill, Jr. also influenced her life.

She said, "I was born at the intersection of 'the greats' – great role models, great teachers, great preachers, great leaders. They were servant leaders who raised us up to be servant leaders, too. I feel like I have been the most privileged person in the world."

She continued, "In the Wright home, we had books before we had a second pair of shoes. We were taught, if you see a need, meet it. If you see someone who needs your help, help them. If something needs to be done, just do it. And most of all, leave the world better than you found it." A good example of seeing and meeting a need was the need in Bennettsville for a home for the aged. There wasn't one, so with Rev. Riddick, the Wright family opened a home for the aged – which is now called the Wright Home for the Aged.

She continued, "Once something is started that makes a difference, Carry it on. Jesus is really clear – You do what you can when you can where you can. Faith is about practicing faith and helping others. What you do is all that matters. It really is simple."

On children, she said, "never give up on any child. You don't have the right to give up on a child. And never leave any child behind. Open your church doors and meet the needs of the children around you."

In the presence of Dr. Marian Wright Edelman, you become fired-up to do the Wright thing. And the Wright Thing is always the Right Thing. During March and the celebration of great women, let us give thanks to God for Marian Wright Edelman – a true sage and social justice warrior.

Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens is the Senior Minister of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in downtown Columbus. A church known for its witness to social justice since its birth as an abolitionist congregation in 1852. Rev. Ahrens is the fifth consecutive senior minister from Yale Divinity School and is a lifelong member of the United Church of Christ.

4 WOMEN OF CHARACTER, COMPASSION, AND CONSEQUENCE YOU MAY NOT KNOW



By William McCoy, MPA

March 2022 is “*Women’s History Month*.” Rather than focus on a well-known historical figure, this article focuses on four lesser-known women of character, compassion, and consequence: Mattie (Wilson) Bious, Evelyn (Duke) Thomas, Marika (McCoy) Burton, and Jayne (McCoy) Price.

First, Mattie (Wilson) Bious was born in Mississippi during the early 20th Century and lived through the Great Depression. She dedicated almost 70 years of her life to Christian service. “Mother Bious” was a fervent believer, who helped lead hundreds of people to God. She, along with her husband (James Duke), were pillars in Apostolic Faith Church (Grand Rapids, MI) and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

Mattie Bious was raised by self-employed, entrepreneurial parents and was described by the chairman of a college economics department as, “One of the smartest business people (he) ever met.” In the 1940’s, Ms. Bious moved to East Chicago (IN) and opened a restaurant that catered to WWII factory workers. She later sold the restaurant, relocated to Grand Rapids (MI), and acquired and rented numerous multi-unit apartment buildings. Ms. Bious also owned and operated several used clothing and appliance stores during the 1960’s and 1970’s.

She did not stop there. Mattie Bious built four very successful multi-level marketing sales organizations, specializing in health food products, premium cookware, and jewelry—after the age of 70. Mattie Bious once said, “We was big-shots.”

My Favorite Mattie Bious Quote: “*It’s bad when you don’t know, and don’t know you don’t know.*”

Second, Evelyn (Duke) Thomas was born into a strict, religious family. Ms. Thomas has been a devout Christian all her life, leading many to Christ. “Sister Thomas” is a renowned “prayer warrior” with an extensive network of prayer partners, who is often called on by clergy, lay persons, and just plain folks to pray for them in time of need. Her motto: “Jesus on the mainline. Tell him what you want.”

After high school, Evelyn Thomas married and had four children— all of whom attended college with three earning graduate degrees, as did all her grandchildren. Ms. Thomas spent a significant part of her adult life working at a high school for troubled teens. She was a beloved teacher, counselor, and confidant that some former students still call “Mom.”

Later, Ms. Thomas (and her husband) bought, renovated, and rented safe, sanitary housing to many families—building a lucrative real estate business in the process.

My Favorite Evelyn Thomas Quote: “*If you haven’t run into the Devil, you may be going in the same direction.*”

Third, Marika (McCoy) Burton was born into a devout, Christian family. Marika (Rico) Burton’s singing ability became apparent



(Top L) Mattie (Wilson) Bious, Evelyn (Duke) Thomas, Marika (McCoy) Burton and Jayne (McCoy) Price

at an early age. By age 12, she became a proficient pianist and began winning local talent shows. By age 14, she was crowned “Miss Black Teenage Grand Rapids” and placed second in the “Miss Black Teenage Michigan Pageant.”

Ms. Burton graduated from high school as class president, honor society member, and the recipient of numerous honors and awards. After high school, she married and had a daughter, who is now a medical doctor.

Rico Burton opened an upscale boutique, The Burton Collection, which catered to the “stately woman.” Ms. Burton later sold the business and enrolled in college, completing a bachelor’s degree in communication. She attended graduate school, where she earned a master’s degree in counseling.

In addition, Rico Burton has appeared in over 300 radio and television ads, industrial films, and theatrical productions. She also hosted a popular radio show, called Consider This.

For more than a decade, Ms. Burton has served as a college professor, teaching communication. She authored numerous publications, including How to Get along with Others without Hiring a Hitman. Rico Burton is a sought-after after public speaker, who has shared her knowledge with tens of thousands of conference-goers, workshop attendees, and students.

My Favorite Rico Burton Quote: “*You take you wherever you go. So, be the best you that you can be.*”

Fourth, Jayne (McCoy) Price was raised in a tight-knit Christian family and grew up attending Bethel Pentecostal Church (Grand Rapids, MI), which spawned talented singers—such as gospel and secular music award winners Marvin Sapp, Byron Cage, the DeBarge family, and others.

Ms. Price married after high school and raised three daughters— including a doctor of doctor

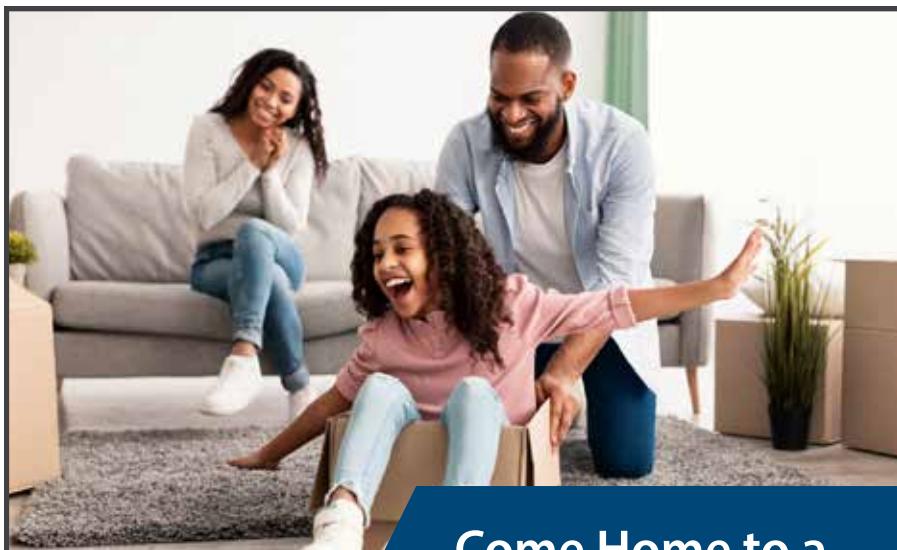
of physical therapy and two entertainment industry executives—all of whom share her religious conviction. She is now the proud grandmother of one.

While raising her children, Ms. Price worked her way through college, obtaining a BS degree in criminal justice and a MA degree in communication. She parlayed her education into a career in corrections and criminal justice that spanned more than 30 years. Ms. Price rose through the ranks from a prison corrections officer, counselor, and probation officer to an appointment on the Michigan Parole Board by then-Governor Rick Snyder, where she ultimately served as chairperson. She, subsequently, joined the Arizona Supreme Court, as its operations and research manager.

My Favorite Jayne Price Quote: “*Always do things with excellence.*”

In conclusion, Women’s History Month is a time to celebrate the lives and achievements of the famous, not-so-famous, and everyday people that have made a difference our individual and collective lives. For me, this an opportunity to share some information to lift up four women of character, compassion, and consequence: Mattie Bious, Evelyn Thomas, Marika Burton, and Jayne Price in the 2022 Women’s History Month edition of this news journal. As Proverbs 31:30 (Holy Bible) says, “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.”

William McCoy is the proud grandson, son, and brother of the four women highlighted in this article. He is founder of and principal consultant with The McCoy Company—a personal services consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, training, and economic development. You can reach Mr. McCoy at (614) 785-8497 or via e-mail at wmccoy2@themccoycompany.com. Or, visit his website <https://wmccoy29.wixsite.com/mysite>.



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A graphic for Franklin County Board of Commissioners. It features a blue background with a white circle containing a megaphone. The text "We Are HIRING!" is written in yellow and white. The Franklin County Board of Commissioners logo is in the top left corner, and the text "Franklin County Employees Help Central Ohio Thrive" is in the center. Below the graphic, there is a photo of three people: Erica C. Crawley, John O'Grady, and Kevin L. Boyce.

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DR. JAMYE COLEMAN WILLIAMS - EDUCATOR, HISTORIC A.M.E. CHURCH LEADER AND SOCIAL REFORM ACTIVIST



By Rodney Blount, Jr., MA

Women's History month is annually observed in March and commemorates the manifold contributions of women historically and in contemporary society. The origins of the month can be traced back to International Women's Day in 1911. In 1978, the Sonoma, California school district spearheaded a local Women's history week. In 1979, a women's history conference was held over 15 days at Sarah Lawrence College. After conference participants found out about the success of the Sonoma County's Women's History Week, they committed to establishing similar programs in their local schools, organizations, and communities. President Jimmy Carter issued a presidential proclamation declaring the week of March 8, 1980, Women's History week. Since 1987, the U.S. Congress has designated March as Women's history month. We are all surrounded by strong women, whom should be celebrated every day. From Queen Hatshepsut and Queen Nzinga to Fannie Lou Hamer and Kamala Harris, our world was and is shaped by courageous women who fought and continue to fight for women and human rights. Jamye Coleman Williams was a strong woman who was a trailblazer. Her scholarship, dedication, and commitment to positive change has impacted an immeasurable number of lives.

Dr. Jamye Coleman Williams was born on December 15, 1918, in Louisville, Kentucky, the daughter of Jamye Harris Coleman and Frederick Douglass Coleman, Sr. and the sister of Frederick Douglass Coleman, Jr. Her father was a faithful AME preacher and Williams' mother, a gifted woman who wrote poetry and music, was her lifelong inspiration. Her brother, Dr. Frederick Douglass Coleman, Jr., was one of the earliest African American surgeons in the U.S. Army, an A.M.E. minister, a graduate of Fisk University who earned his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in 1944 and his D. D. from Monrovia College (Liberia) in 1955. Williams received her primary and secondary education in Kentucky.

Dr. Jamye Williams matriculated to her beloved Wilberforce University and earned her B.A. with honors in English from Wilberforce University in 1938. Wilberforce was founded in 1856 by the A.M.E. Church and is the oldest, private African American college in the country¹. She served on its Board of Trustees for many years and was among its foremost fundraisers. In 1939, she received an M.A. in English from Fisk University. She taught at Wilberforce for 14 years. While at Wilberforce, she met and married Dr. McDonald Williams in 1943. Over the next two decades she served as an English teacher at Edward Waters College, Shorter College, Morris Brown College.

In 1959, the Williams's both earned doctorates from Ohio State University. In the Fall of 1959, they joined the faculty of Tennessee



State University where she became a professor of communications, and her husband became a professor of English and head of the honors program. Dr. Jamye Williams took over as the head of the Communications department in 1973, serving until her retirement in 1987. Her former students have included media mogul Oprah Winfrey, opera great Leontyne Price, Howard University Professor Dr. Greg Carr, Tennessee State University Tigerbelles Olympic track star Wilma Rudolph, eight future A.M.E. bishops, three future college presidents and two future seminary presidents.

Dr. Williams was a devoted member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. At the age of 21, Williams attended her first A.M.E. general conference, at a time when the only delegates were preachers. She became a delegate to the A.M.E. general conference, which meets every four years, in 1964 and remained a delegate until her passing. She also was a delegate to the biennial Connectional Lay Organization since 1969. "The lay organization is really the heart and center of the church and is the cutting edge of change," Dr. Williams said. "While we respect our preachers and bishops as our administrative leaders, it is our financial resources and our service to the church that moves it. We are the wind beneath its wings, because without it there would be no church."

From 1976 to 1984, she was an alternate member of the A.M.E. Church's Judicial Council, serving as president of the 13th District Lay Organization from 1977 until 1985. At the 1984 General Conference, Williams was named editor of The AME Church Review, the oldest African American literary journal. Through this position, Williams became the first woman to hold a general office in the A.M.E. Church. She held that post for eight years. Williams also has paved the way for others in the A.M.E., helping Vashti McKenzie win election as the first female A.M.E. bishop.

Drs. Jamye and Mack Williams were among the earliest and most stalwart supporters of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, founded in 1991. In 1992, they established the Williams Designated Fund to benefit Wilberforce University and Payne Theological Seminary. The Williams' served on the boards of each of these revered HBCUs and endowed their support. Payments from this

fund are issued to these schools annually. Drs. Williams' helped establish The Tricentennial Fund with CFMT in 1996, with grants from the Fund "designed to address pressing needs in the future". In 2002, The Foundation honored the couple with its annual Joe Kraft Humanitarian Award. Dr. Jamye Williams also formerly served on the CFMT's board of directors.

During her forty-five years in Nashville, Williams was active in her community, serving on several interdenominational organizations, community groups and civic committees. In the 1960s and 1970s, Williams and her husband were both heavily involved in Nashville's civil rights movement, as well as the NAACP, a lifetime commitment. She worked as a member of the NAACP's Executive Committee and in 1999 received the organization's Presidential Award. She also served on the Metropolitan Nashville Human Relations Commission, Metropolitan Historical Commission, the National Conference for Community and Justice and on the board of the National Council of Churches. She was also a member of the National Council of Negro Women, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (inducted into Beta chapter in 1936), and a 50 plus year platinum of the Links, Inc.

Dr. Jayme Coleman Williams passed away on January 19, 2022, at the age of 103. She was preceded in death by her husband of over 75 years, Dr. McDonald Williams. She is survived by one daughter, one grandson, and two great-granddaughters. Atwood Institute Director Dr. Crystal A. deGregory said it best when she stated, "Dr. Williams represents the very best of teaching and the vest best of Historically Black College and University (HBCU) culture. As a master teacher, her career of distinction demonstrates mastery of both curriculum and instruction—distinguished by instruction of the head, hands and heart." Dr. Williams was the epitome of a servant leader and her belief in paying it forward will benefit young men and women for years to come.

Footnotes

'I remember seeing her when I was an Admissions Counselor at Wilberforce University. She was highly revered by all who knew her or knew of her.'

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Rodney Blount is an Educator and Historian. He received two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Ball State University and a Masters of Arts degree from The Ohio State University. His work has been featured in several publications. Rodney is a native of Columbus, Ohio and is a member of several organizations.

AND STILL THEY RISE...A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN



By Moses Don Mosley

There have been many videos on YouTube, MTV, and other sources that have shown men of a variety of ages and races who, in controlled experiments, experienced a simulation of menstrual pains that women endure every month throughout their lives. The simulated pain would last only a matter of minutes but, to a man, each would scream out; some would fall to their knees, and others would express disbelief that women endured that level of pain regularly. Even more shocking to most of them, their thresholds usually occurred when the simulator was set to a level only slightly higher than the lowest level. Most women would also testify that the menstrual pains pale in comparison to childbirth. One once described the pain of childbirth was like "defecating a football." Most men have a difficult time imagining a football being caught by one hand so the thought of one exiting an orifice is definitely otherworldly. Yet women, throughout antiquity, have endured these natural life giving pains as well as other physical, emotional, and mental pains inflicted upon them by men and societies and cultures created and ruled by men. The following essay will explore some of the many strong, intelligent, unyielding, resilient, and creative women the world has known. Despite the many obstacles and challenges placed in their paths, the few listed below are but a mere sampling of the sisters who have gone before and who provide the shoulders upon which others now stand. **And Still They Rise.**

"Gaia is the ancestral mother—sometimes parthenogenic—of all life." - From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Discovered in Ethiopia in 1974, a multinational team of archaeologists, geologists, and paleoanthropologists found the skeletal remains of Lucy (*Australopithecus afarensis*) who it was determined to be a female hominin who walked upright and dated back to 3.2 million years. This is significant because the term hominin refers to extinct members of the human lineage. Lucy is the first human fossil and being found in Ethiopia, Africa, it can be speculated with a great deal of certainty that she was Black. To date, no earlier hominin has been found to supplant Lucy's age of 3.2 million years. It can be assumed that all human beings on earth are direct descendants of Lucy, a Black Woman from Ethiopia. She may not be the ancestral mother of all life, but apparently is the ancestral mother of human life.

And Still They Rise

Elizabeth Key Grinstead (Greenstead) (1630 – January 20, 1665) was one of the first black people of the Thirteen Colonies to sue for freedom from slavery and win.



Elizabeth Key won her freedom and that of her infant son John Grinstead on July 21, 1656, in the colony of Virginia. Key based her suit on the fact that her father was an Englishman who had acknowledged her and arranged her baptism as a Christian in the American branch of the Church of England. He was a wealthy planter who had tried to protect her by establishing a guardianship for her when she was young, before his death. Based on these factors, her attorney and common-law husband, William Grinstead, argued successfully that she should be freed. The lawsuit was one of the earliest "freedom suits" by an African-descended person in the English colonies. In response to Key's suit and other challenges, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a law in 1662 establishing that the social status of children born in the colony ("bond" or "free") would follow the social status of their respective mothers. Virginia and other colonies incorporated a principle known as *partus sequitur ventrem* which ensured that all children born to enslaved women, regardless of paternity would be born into slavery unless explicitly freed. Some historians believe the law was based mostly in the economic demands of a colony that was short on labor; the law enabled slaveholders to control the children of women slaves as laborers. But it also freed the white fathers from acknowledging the children as theirs, providing financial support, or emancipating them. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) This law was an early beginning to the creation of single black mothers. Marriage among the enslaved was forbidden and oftentimes, enslaved men were sold for profit thereby leaving the enslaved women with the children. Today, politicians, especially the Republicans, often scapegoat single Black mothers for political gain without acknowledging their slaveholder ancestral participation in the creation of the so-called scourge of society, Welfare mothers.

Although Elizabeth Key was an exception, enslaved Black women often did not fare nearly as well or at all. They were often unwilling participants in as some

have titled it, "a white man's sexual playground." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9_3pAAKWZg) Their babies and young children were often sold; they were forced to nurse and care for the slaveholder's children; were often sold as the slaveholder assessed their breeding potential versus profits; and still expected to work as much as the enslaved men. **And Still They Rise.**

Amanda Gorman and the poem she recited, "The Hill We Climb" at President Biden's inauguration will long be remembered as will the young and talented poetess. She stood on the shoulders of Phillis Wheatley, the first African American and first woman to publish a book of poetry in 1773. Born into slavery, orphaned at seven and raised by John Wheatley and his wife, Phillis was given good health care and education. She was literate by 9, was familiar with Latin and Greek, and wrote her first poem around the age of 14. She was a "rock star" of her time, being invited to meet George Washington and Ben Franklin. She achieved international fame and notoriety yet died in poverty. John Wheatley and his wife died but freed Phillis in his will. Long suffering from poor health, she died at age of 31.

Maria W. Stewart (1803 – December 17, 1879) was a free-born African American who became a teacher, journalist, lecturer, abolitionist, and women's rights activist. The first known American woman to speak to a mixed audience of men and women, white and black, she was also the first African-American woman to make public lectures, as well as to lecture about women's rights and make a public anti-slavery speech. She advocated for abolition, black autonomy, feminism for all women, and developed a lifelong affinity for religious work. It is important to remember, that although Maria was outspoken, slavery and inherent injustice was still the game. When her husband James Stewart died and included her in his trust,

Continued on Page 16



the executors of his estate deprived Maria of any inheritance. However, James had served in the War of 1812 and eventually a law was passed allowing veterans' widows their husbands' pensions. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) There have been many who have stood on the shoulders of Maria Stewart, such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Angela Davis, Ida B. Wells, to name a few. **And Still They Rise**

The Black Women's Club Movement

The Jim Crow era began after the Civil War and did not end until the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Some may argue that it did not end and in recent years, has been reinvigorated. Throughout this period, women were consistently subjected to dehumanizing abuse, rape, and lynching. As the courts and the Constitution refused to enforce "equal protection under the law" or "Separate but equal," the Black Women's Club Movement took it upon itself to work for equality, social justice and change not only for men, but all women. They were grass root organizations primarily composed of middle class women, some professionals, some married, some single, all one generation removed from slavery, and focused on change. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, began advocating for women's rights in the 1890's and formed the Women's Era Club with the goal of providing opportunities for self-improvement and calling out the violence and oppression Black Americans were experiencing. They also published Women's Era newspaper, the first to be published by Black women. In 1895, she and her daughter, Florida Ruffin Ridley, organized the First National Conference of Colored Women of America which provided the opportunity to network and seek solutions to common problems. This conference led to the establishment of the National Federation of Afro American Women, a coalition of 85 organizations dedicated to promoting the rights of all Black Americans by "concentrating the dormant energies of women of the Afro American race into one broad band of sisterhood."

In 1892 in Washington D.C., another women's group founded by Mary Church Terrell, Mary Jane Patterson, and Anna Julia Cooper formed the Colored Women's League which was a coalition of 113 local Black women's organizations. In 1896, the Colored Women's League and the National Federation of Afro American Women merged to become the National Association of Colored Women. Mary Church Terrell was the first president and the motto was "Lifting as We Climb." The focus was self-improvement as well as improving the lives of all Black Americans. By 1916, there were over 100,000 members and over 300 newly registered clubs within the organization. They expanded the scope of their work to include raising war bonds for the war effort, kindergarten and elder care, provided social services, and continuing to call out lynching and discrimination. They believed that building community also involved art and literature groups which they promoted. With the blossoming Great Depression of the 1930's, interest in self-improvement waned and energy was redirected to change through political action as promoted by larger organizations like the NAACP and the National Urban League. Mary McLeod Bethune led a breakaway group focused on large scale change through political action, called the National Council of Negro Women. Under President Roosevelt, she later headed the Division of Negro Affairs as the first Black woman to lead a federal agency and helped to establish the United Nations. **And Still They Rise.**

As President Biden owes his nomination to the presidency to the women of South Carolina and James Clyburn, he has recently announced, as promised, the nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson as the first Black Woman Supreme Court nominee. Homage must be given to two women on whose shoulders she will stand: Pauli Murray and Constance Baker Motley. "Murray produced a seven-hundred-and-forty-six-page book, "States' Laws on Race and Color," that exposed both the extent and the insanity

of American segregation. The A.C.L.U. distributed copies to law libraries, black colleges, and human-rights organizations. Thurgood Marshall, who kept stacks of it around the N.A.A.C.P. offices, called it "the bible" of Brown v. Board of Education. In this way, to Murray's immense gratification, the book ultimately helped render itself obsolete." (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/the-many-lives-of-pauli-murray>)

"One of twelve children and the daughter of immigrants, Constance Baker Motley rose to become the first Black woman to ever argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court as well as the first Black woman to serve in the New York State Senate and the first woman to be Manhattan borough president." (<https://www.naacpldf.org/naacp-publications/lfd-blog/six-women-behind-brown-v-board-education/>)

From her beginning as the Mother of all human beings on earth, the Black Woman has always been a central figure in the direction and outcome of American history. As noted above, her presence has been felt in the streets, in the courtroom, and in the fields effecting change. Just as a month is too short to acknowledge the accomplishments of Black Americans to the American fabric, a month is likewise too short to fully recognize and praise women for all they do and the many things they do about which men have no idea. As men, the best we can do is stop blaming them for the sins of the world and to acknowledge and embrace their strength, knowledge, heart, and wisdom and hold on tight! **As Still They Rise -**

Moses Don Mosley is a retired carpentry teacher from the Columbus City School System. In retirement, he spends his time growing, cooking, sharing good food, wine, music, and stories with family and friends. As a carpenter, much of his time is spent as a purveyor of antiques and object d'art from the past, for fun and profit through restoring, refinishing, and re-selling pieces

YVONKA HALL: NORTHEAST OHIO BLACK HEALTH COALITION



By Caitlin Johnson

As a Black woman who has lived her entire life in Cleveland, Yvonka Hall knows good health depends on more than personal habits, but on where people live, their jobs, their housing, their education, and their family situations. It's hard for people to be healthy when they're exposed to toxic pollution, can't afford good food, are paid poverty wages, or endure trauma.

Trauma has permeated Hall's life, but she made purpose from her pain. As a 6-year-old, she and her younger brothers witnessed their father murder their mother. When she was 19, her 15-year-old brother Antoine was murdered. The following year while on the phone with Hall, her best friend Tracey was murdered by her estranged husband.

"I knew I had to use my life to help," she said. "That became my promise."

Today, she's keeping that promise as the founder and executive director of the Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition (NEOBHC), a social justice organization that's part advocacy, part direct service and part research institute. Before she formed NEOBHC, Hall served as Cleveland's Director of Minority Health, but said she was fired after speaking out against the Cleveland Clinic's decision to close Huron Hospital which served the city's predominantly Black east side.

Without any significant support, Hall founded the NEOBHC in 2011. Today, it has three full-time staff and hundreds of volunteers. A friend gave Hall a vase full of pebbles, sand, and some big rocks. Hall says it has become a metaphor for NEOBHC work: "I used to think I wanted to be important, so I wanted to be a big rock," she said. "God wasn't preparing me to be a big rock. God wanted me to be the sand because I can get in the places that the big rock can never go."

Hall's credibility and relationships allow her and her organization to reach people the big



players can't. She recently teamed up with UHCAN Ohio, the Ohio Unity Coalition, and the Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competency to ask 1,000 Ohioans about racism in health care. They found that 61% of Black female respondents and 59% of Black males believed they experienced racial discrimination in a health care setting, compared to 7% of white women and 10% of white men. As a result, about a quarter of respondents said they wouldn't return for future appointments.

That's why Hall says she takes a "gentle hand" with her outreach programs. For example, NEOHBC's monthly vaccination clinic not only provides COVID shots, but also gives out lunches and bottles of water so attendees don't have to worry about getting something to eat. To reach men who might be unwilling to talk about their health and wellness, NEOBHC teams up with Care Alliance and African American car clubs for "Aches, Pains and Automobiles: Men's Health Tune Up." Men receive free vital health screenings and get to explore cool cars — all in the same trip.

In addition to providing critical services like these, NEOBHC uses its trusted position in the community to push for more just public policies. The coalition helped found Cleveland Lead Advocates for Safe Housing, which forced the passage of Cleveland's lead safe ordinance. At the state level, it's part of a group fighting to ensure that the children cared for by relatives after being removed from their family of origin receive proper support from the state.

"My priority is going to be to get the best services to the community — whether it's food, whether it's housing, whether it's talking about racism," she said. "People trust us, and I think that's more important to me than anything else."

Caitlin Johnson is the Director of Communications for Policy Matters Ohio.

Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit policy research institute. They create a more vibrant, equitable, sustainable and inclusive Ohio through research, strategic communications, coalition building and policy advocacy.



POLITICS

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE A SHERO: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



By Senator Charleta B.
Tavares (Ret.)

As we think about Women's History Month and legislative champions of our time, a policy maker, and a charismatic and phenomenal legislative leader has emerged from Georgia onto center stage as an African/Black woman running for Governor. Stacey Abrams is a political force, legal scholar, writer and healthcare finance attorney who is a shero to many in such a time as this.

According to Ms. Abrams website she is a tax attorney that developed a specialty in hospitals and health care finance, and she leveraged that experience as House Democratic Leader. She consistently engaged with Georgians in rural, suburban, and urban communities alike to protect Georgia community hospitals and to expand and improve healthcare access in Georgia. She introduced legislation to expand Medicaid, and she led the House Democratic Caucus in a statewide campaign to raise awareness about its importance.

As a civic leader, she founded a program to sign up low-income Georgians for the Affordable Care Act across 39 counties in South and Middle Georgia. In addition, Abrams spearheaded critical legislation to combat the misclassification of workers as independent contractors, which denied them access to employer-based health insurance. "One of the challenges in the state of Georgia is that we have a largely publicly financed health-care system (Medicaid)," Stacey Abrams responded. "If you're in an urban area, you have private providers, but by and large, most of the medical provision of services comes from public providers: FQHCs [Federally Qualified Health Centers], county-based hospitals, and community hospitals that rely on public financing."¹

Why is Abrams pushing to expand Medicaid?

- Georgia has a low-wage population
- High Poverty rate
- Reliance on public provision of health care
- Fifteen percent of women in Georgia are uninsured—the third-highest rate in the country
- Approximately one-fifth have not seen a doctor in any given year because of costs
- Twenty-two percent do not have a personal doctor
- Fifth-highest infant mortality rate within one-year after delivery.

Abrams's public policies are informed by her life. The state is in the grip of a crisis, one that affects, in particular, the lives of black



women like Abrams and like those who form the foundation of her coalition and organizing base. African/Black women's health across America and in particular the fate of mothers and their newborns is at crisis levels. The mortality rates in not just Georgia and the southern states but in Ohio and the Midwest have continued to climb while Caucasian/White mothers and babies have met the 2020 Healthy People measures. This issue has been front and center in mobilizing black women in Georgia. It is also dominant in her policy platform of her candidacy once again to be the first black woman governor in U.S. history. Stacey Abrams is not just a candidate for governor in Georgia this year, she is an advocate and beacon of hope for African/Black women throughout the United States in the debate over health care access, health inequities and their impact on the life or death of them and their families.

Legislative Update

Congressional and Legislative Maps and the Supreme Court

The Ohio Redistricting Commission voted once again on a new set of Ohio House and Senate Districts on Thursday, February 24 by a vote of 4-3. One Republican, the Auditor voted with the Democrats against the maps that many Voting Rights Advocates, League of Women Voters, ACLU and others are still insisting are unfairly drawn to favor Republicans (as the Supreme Court previously agreed).

Meanwhile, the Ohio Redistricting Commission introduced a second congressional map on March 1 in which they plan to vote on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. The map favors Republicans to win 10 and Democrats five out of the 15 seats congressional seats in Ohio. Democrats on the Commission once again are unlikely to vote in favor of the map which sends it, once again, to the Ohio Supreme Court.

On another note the Ohio Supreme Court asked the Commission members why they should not be held in Contempt of Court for refusing their requirement to draw fair and constitutional districts. The Redistricting Commission members including the Governor were to make a court appearance on March 1, 2022 however, it was postponed by the Court while it reviews the Commission's third set of maps.

Bill Updates

Three bills have been signed into law by the Governor:

Senate Bill 181 – explicitly allows high-school athletes to wear religious apparel, such as hijabs, while competing.

House Bill 4- which creates a Youth and Family Ombudsman Office to investigate, report and/or resolve complaints regarding child protective services, foster care and adoption.

House Bill 229 – which gives campsite operators qualified immunity from civil lawsuits for any harm to a camper or visitor that results from a risk inherent to camping, and exempts that host historical re-enactments from needing a state camping operation license.

Footnotes:

¹STACEY ABRAMS'S PRESCRIPTION FOR A MATERNAL-HEALTH CRISIS, article by Vann R. Newkirk II, Nov. 2, 2018 The Atlantic

Former Sen. Charleta B. Tavares, D-Columbus, is the 1st Democrat and African American woman to serve in the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate from Franklin County. She is also the first African American woman to serve in leadership in the history of Ohio and the 1st Democrat woman to serve in leadership in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate (House Minority Whip and Senate Assistant Minority Leader).



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Registration is required. Email Andy Haggard, COAAA Medicare Outreach Manager, at ahaggard@coaaa.org. For a complete 2022 'Medicare for Beginners' workshop schedule, visit www.coaaa.org/medicare.

This project was supported in part by grant number 2101OHMIAA/MIDR-00 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Subrecipients undertaking a project with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

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COVER STORY

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE HISTORICAL BELITTLEMENT OF BLACK WOMEN



Members of the National Coalition of Colored Women, Founded in 1880.



By Suzanne Parks, MEDL

Before I could even begin to write this article, I belabored for a very long time with myself, contemplating the title as well as the content. I had started to doubt whether it would be received in the right context. Did it sound too angry, too pitiful, a put down from one sister to another, or like an accusatory finger-pointing at everyone who is not a Black woman? Would Black women find it antithetical to the thing called Black Girl Magic?

Black girl magic is an affirmation of Black feminine power, beauty, and success. Only we are women, not girls in the same spirit that our men were not boys. We are women upon which history has shown that we have not been taken seriously in the race or gender movements for equality. We are women who have had to take a back seat to our men in order for them to feel relevant. We are women who still harbor some level of self-loathing because of the way we look.

We have had to fight to be allowed to wear our hair in its original curl pattern without ridicule from the Big Mamas and Papas who let it be known that going out into public with your hair looking "crazy" meant you had lost your mind. Then there are those employee handbooks that ban natural hairstyles as inappropriate for the workplace dress code. If Black hairstyles are absent from the dress code, can we prove we did not get hired because of the Bantu Knots that crowned our heads?

Even the usage of the word curl to define our various hair textures, curl connotes an...um...prettier image than the spoken behind closed doors adjective "nappy." And controlling one's "edges" to me says we are still insecure about our halos and kitchens.

Colorism or what the old folks used to call being color struck is an issue. Fairer-skin sisters have had an advantage over their more melanin-kissed counterparts whether it was in the workplace or in pursuit of happiness. But the newsflash is not all light-skinned women are privileged. Especially if light skin is a generational, living embodiment of the men of the White planter class during slavery times and his descendants violating Black women because they could. Regardless, the resulting conflict is personal and a back-and-forth battle among Black women.

I decided to test run this article with my youngest son. It was an impromptu, informal experiment to gauge his reaction. The minute, I read the title, he immediately interrupted me and asked, "What about the Black man?" He started hitting me with the language from the Black Liberation Movement where the role of the woman was to quietly support the deliverance of the Black man from the shackles of White Supremacy.

I immediately shut him down and started reading to him what I had written. He gave me a thumbs-up, but not without restating that Black women were duty-bound to get behind the Black man because of how the White man treated them. His worldview was Black women competing with Black men was a Black woman code of conduct violation. He had been schooled by the male elders in

the Afrocentric Tribe and thought he was schooling me on stuff I came of age hearing from some of those very same men. I even agreed with them at the time that women should remain in the background, in order to uplift the brothers.

We ended our debate with neither one of us conceding to the other. But now he knows that his mother has evolved into a Black feminist who will not ignore the historical belittlement of Black women and their relegation to 4th class citizenship in the race and gender caste systems.

Black women have always played a role in all of the Black freedom movements including Abolition and Black Suffrage during the 19th Century. The significance of their contribution was usually predicated by gender and what Black men determined as allowable. Movement leadership was a battle between the sexes, where Black women were left on the outside, despite their talents, courage, intelligence, verve, and contributions. There were exceptions, like Harriet Tubman, whose 200th birthday anniversary is March of this year.

My 3rd great aunt, Sara Griffin Stanley Woodward was an abolitionist, published writer, educator, and an ardent supporter of the 15th Amendment. Impassioned about Black Suffrage she wrote a speech on behalf of the Delaware Ladies Anti-Slavery Society to be read at the state of Ohio's Convention of Colored Men, which convened on January 16-19, 1856. In the speech titled, "To the

Continued on Page 21

Convention of Disenfranchised Citizens of Ohio," she pledged on behalf of Christian wives, mothers, and daughters to "exert our influence unceasingly in the cause of liberty and humanity."

Liberty nor human dignity was extended to her as she was denied entry into the assemblage due to her gender. In a conciliatory manner, delegate William Harris read her speech to the colored men.

My 3rd great aunt died in 1918, two years before White women were given the right to vote and 47 years before Black women everywhere were officially guaranteed democratic citizenship in the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Black women were victimized by the same systems as Black men. Black women have had to endure enslavement, racial apartheid laws, police brutality, and racial terrorism. However, if we understand that supremacy and patriarchy have never been fully obliterated or separated, White men remain at the apex, while the optic for Black women over the last four hundred years has been almost a non-starter. Only through grit and determination have we risen.

Legal scholar, writer on race and racism, and Black feminist theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, who coined Critical Race Theory and intersectionality, noted that intersectionality was another hindrance for Black women on the road from discrimination to equal justice. Using myself as an example, I have experienced discrimination and inequality in the workplace. I am in all four of the legally protected classes: I am Black, a woman, a senior citizen and I am disabled, making me a quadruple minority.

Yet, I cannot legally prove that I have experienced workplace discrimination in any one of these classifications. When they intersect, there is always a pushback defense. For example, when much younger White women are promoted and given higher wage increases than myself, I cannot say I have been discriminated against due to my gender. Age is eliminated because my employer, a White man almost young enough to be my son is over 50 years old. I cannot use race or ethnicity because during my tenure of 14 years they hired a Black man (who was fired just over a year of his employment) and a Latin woman. My disability, the result of a workplace accident, might work but some of them struggle with mental wellness.

The final insult came from a Black woman who worked for the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. Her job was to conduct impartial mediation between myself and my employer. During the session, she accused me of being a disgruntled employee.

There has been an increase in social consciousness on the part of the board and my employer. I received nominal gestures of goodwill, that included a delayed wage



increase that my employer expected me to do a happy dance for him. The increase did not reduce the earning gap between myself and the 20-something White woman I had trained. It did however allow the organization to cast me as proof of a diverse and equitable workplace. The fact that I have more comprehensive work-related experiences than any of them, worked at that particular organization longer than all of them, not to mention that I earned higher degrees of education in a world where those types of qualifications should count for me not shattering the Black woman glass ceiling. I am still the old-but partially disabled Black woman who works there and earns less than the younger ones who were hired fresh out of college, years after I was hired.

The usurping of intersectionality out of the Black community and specifically from Black feminists has hindered the struggle for freedom and equality. The omission of any conversation about Black feminism, racism, sexism, and classism, as well as other social and political identities during the Black Liberation Movement and the Civil Rights Movement would almost be like holding up a mirror in this era that reflects back to those times.

Our position in today's struggle against White Supremacy, political apartheid, sexism, sexual assault and abuse, classism, in addition to economic disparity, our role in the world of politics, cultural, and social liberation demonstrates that Black women have not overcome at the same extent as White women during the 20th and 21st centuries.

How does one even begin to grapple with what happened to Anita Hill without first releasing a deep sigh enveloped in anger, sadness, frustration, disillusionment, humiliation, feeling defeated and horribly violated as a class? True, it did not happen to any one of us on a personal level, since it was Hill who had to endure being interrogated by a tribunal of White men. Despite his bluster infused bellyaching to the contrary, it was Hill, not Clarence Thomas who was publicly lynched. And not just by the men on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The case of Anita Hill illuminated just how deeply wounded Black women had become. Some sisters, after centuries of programming by patriarchy and presumably organized religions of many faiths, came out in support of Thomas. It was as if we had somehow forgotten that what had happened to her was the same type of sexual atrocities that had victimized our mother ancestors in the slave quarters, then during Reconstruction, into the era of politically sanctioned "racial apartheid" (Jim Crow/Mass Incarceration), and even in our own communities by the hands of Black men who also were party to our sexual victimization. Or worse still, some had simply accepted that it was okay since accountability was usually applied to the women, especially if they fought back.

Clarence Thomas has been on the Supreme Court since Hill's 1991 testimony. She faded into relative obscurity until the Me-Too Movement and the election of Joseph R. Biden as the 46th President of the United States, who apologized to Hill for his role in the hearing.

I understand that some might view the calling out the Black man's role in sexual assault and harassment cases as too harsh an indictment of Black men. But being Black should not shield those who were party to such behaviors a pass.

Are our race and gender two of the reasons why we have been somewhat silent during the height of the Me-Too Movement? Yes, Black women told their stories. But how many of us dared to name and accuse our high-profile attackers?

When Black women did speak out like in the case of R Kelly, why did the victims not get the same level of support as the victims of Jeffrey Epstein or Bill Cosby whose accusers in both cases were predominantly White women? Why did it take such a concerted effort to finally get an indictment and conviction against a man whose victims were primarily Black women and girls? Why did Black men and women continue to support him even after decades of "egregious, excessive, and damning" allegations including child pornography dating back 25 years, or longer if we include the late singer Aaliyah?

The challenges facing Black women are complicated and extensive. In this article, I barely scratched the surface. However, we must acknowledge the essence of what has allowed us as women to survive, which according to Crenshaw, is Black love. Black love is the radiance of our creative expression. It has been the balm that spurs us to get up from the impediments, that hinders Black women from being equal to White men, White women, and yes, our beloved Black men.

Suzanne Parks is a contributing writer for the news journal.

SENATE GEARS UP FOR CONFIRMATION OF FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO SUPREME COURT



By Alexander Bolton

President Biden's Supreme Court pick, Ketanji Brown Jackson, is expected to be confirmed by the mid-April recess and stands a good chance of picking up bipartisan support to become the first Black woman to serve on the high court.

Jackson will hold her first round of meetings with senators Wednesday when she will sit down with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Judiciary Committee ranking member Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.).

Democrats say their goal is to get her seated on the Supreme Court before the April recess, which begins on April 9. She would replace the retiring liberal Justice Stephen Breyer.

Durbin told reporters Monday he hasn't yet set the date of the confirmation hearing but that he'd like to get everything wrapped up before the Senate leaves for the two-week recess.

He said he hasn't begun whipping members of the Democratic caucus but hopes that all of them will support the nominee. He also said he thinks there's a small group of Republicans who might also vote "yes."

"At this point I don't have any Republicans committed to her. I'm reaching out to any number that includes some of the obvious choices, but there are some that are not so obvious and I'm not going to tell you their names," he said. "I'm hoping I can appeal to them at different levels concerning this particular nominee."

Senate Republicans say Jackson is likely to have enough votes to win confirmation unless an unforeseen controversy erupts. Democrats think there's a good chance that moderate Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and possibly additional Senate Republicans, will vote to confirm her.

Durbin said he's not going to rush the nominee through the process in deference to Collins and other GOP senators.

"We're not trying to set any speed records here. We want to do it the right way," he said. "Not only Sen. Collins but the American people want to see a fair process."

Durbin will wait for Jackson to return her Senate questionnaire and then meet with Grassley, Schumer and possibly McConnell to lay out the schedule for hearings, a committee vote and a floor vote.

Josh Blackman, an expert on constitutional law and the Supreme Court at South Texas College of Law Houston, said Republicans "are going to try to get their punches in but then they're going to let her through with a couple of Republican votes."



"I think Republicans will put up a fight knowing they're going to lose," he said. "She'll get though," barring the emergence of a controversy."

Collins, Murkowski and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) voted with every member of the Democratic caucus last year to confirm Jackson to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, though Graham recently expressed disappointment that Biden didn't pick South Carolina District Judge J. Michelle Childs.

Graham tweeted last week that Jackson's selection meant "the radical Left has won President Biden over yet again."

Durbin on Monday warned that personal attacks on Jackson's character could fan partisan flames and put her and her family at risk.

"Senators try to judge many things with nominees and one of them is temperament. Will this judge have the appropriate temperament to deal with the power that we will be giving her? And I listen to the questions from some of my colleagues and it doesn't reflect on their temperament," he said. "I think there's an opportunity to be direct and pointed without being confrontational and disrespectful."

Durbin said a recent nominee who came before the panel was targeted with threats after Republican colleagues posted on Twitter statements slamming her testimony.

He noted the nominee was asked "hard questions over and over again" by Republican colleagues and "one or more of the senators on the other side decided to put on Twitter some statements about her testimony."

"There were threats to her family after that," he said. "It's hard enough to ask people to join up for public service. ... To subject them to that kind of abuse is inexcusable. In a high-profile hearing like this, I hope my colleagues on both sides will go out of their way to avoid that."

Carrie Severino, the president of the conservative Judicial Crisis Network, pointed to two of Jackson's rulings that were reversed

by a higher court when she served as a judge on the federal district court for Washington, D.C.

The D.C. Circuit Court overturned Jackson's 2019 decision blocking a Department of Homeland Security policy under the Trump administration that was intended to speed up deportations.

That court also reversed her 2018 ruling that struck down three Trump executive orders that rolled back civil service protections for federal workers.

Another part of her record expected to draw scrutiny from Republicans is her work as a federal public defender from 2005 to 2007 and her work on behalf of suspected terrorists detained at Guantánamo Bay prison.

Republicans are also looking closely at Jackson's November 2019 ruling in favor of House Democrats who wanted to subpoena former Trump White House counsel Don McGahn. Jackson found that he and presidential advisers did not have absolute immunity from testifying before Congress.

She wrote that "presidents are not kings" and that current and former White House employees "work for the people of the United States and that they take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

That kind of rhetoric is already drawing fire from conservative critics, who say it's evidence of Jackson's liberal political leanings.

"I was concerned by the really political language that she seemed to be using there in terms of criticizing President Trump. It's one thing to say, 'You don't actually have the ability to say you can't show up for a subpoena.' She went on to basically say he was acting like a king, not a president. It was very intemperate language," Severino said.

Severino said the 53-44 bipartisan vote to confirm Jackson to the D.C. Circuit in June doesn't mean her confirmation to the Supreme Court will proceed as smoothly.

"The appellate confirmation process and the Supreme Court confirmation process are very different beasts. One example is Justice Clarence Thomas was confirmed by a voice vote to the D.C. Circuit," she said, noting that Thomas's Supreme Court nomination became one of the biggest judicial confirmation battles in Senate history.

"It just illustrates that there's a different standard" for a Supreme Court confirmation fight, she added.

"It's going to definitely be a more contentious process than the appellate nomination was and that's just always the way it is," she said.

Alexander Bolton is a staff writer with The Hill.

Article from www.thehill.com

MOST BLACK AMERICANS STILL EXPERIENCE ECONOMIC INSECURITY

By Khadijah Edwards

Most Black adults say their household finances meet basic needs with either a little or a lot left over for extras, even amid economic disruptions due to COVID-19. Yet financial challenges exist. Fewer than half of Black adults say they have an emergency fund, and some have taken multiple jobs to make ends meet, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey of Black Americans.

The survey also finds that Black Americans typically experience higher levels of economic insecurity than Americans overall. This insecurity has worsened during the coronavirus pandemic amid health and financial challenges, which include a relatively high unemployment rate for Black workers.

Yet within the Black population, the economic experiences of Black Americans have long varied due to income and economic inequality. Before the pandemic, the top 10 percent of households headed by Black adults earned 14 times the amount of Black households in the bottom 10%, a gap that has grown over the decades.

The long-standing differences in economic experiences among Black Americans remain today. According to the October 2021 survey, about two-in-ten Black adults with lower incomes (18%) say they don't even have enough to meet basic needs, and another four-in-ten (43%) describe their household finances as just meeting their basic needs. Black adults with higher incomes report a starkly different situation: Only 4% of Black adults with middle incomes and 1% of those with upper incomes say they don't have enough to meet basic needs.

At the same time, most Black adults with middle and upper incomes say their household finances cover basic needs with some left over for extras. Roughly three-quarters (76%) of Black adults with middle incomes say this, as do 93% of Black adults with upper incomes. Meanwhile, just 38% of Black adults with lower incomes say their household finances meet basic needs with money left over. And while relatively few Black adults overall say their households have a lot left over for extras (14%), nearly half (47%) of Black adults with upper incomes say this, highlighting a diverse range of economic experiences among Black people.

Economic experiences also vary widely by educational attainment. A majority of Black adults with a postgraduate degree (82%), a bachelor's degree (77%) or some college experience (61%) say their household finances are enough to have a little or a lot left over for extras. This share drops to 44% among Black adults with a high school diploma or less education.

Most Black adults do not have an emergency fund

While most Black adults say their household finances meet basic needs with some left over



for extras, just 36% say they have an emergency or rainy day fund to cover three months of expenses in case of sickness, job loss, economic downturn or other emergencies. But there are wide disparities across family income tiers and educational attainment levels.

Seven-in-ten Black adults with upper incomes say they have an emergency or rainy day fund to cover three months of expenses in case of an emergency, more than three times the share (21%) of Black adults with lower incomes who say the same. Among Black adults with middle incomes, fewer than half (44%) have an emergency fund.

Similarly, about a quarter (24%) of Black adults with a high school diploma or less say they have a three-month emergency fund, while roughly a third (35%) of Black adults with some college experience say the same. The gap between those with at least a college degree is smaller: 53% of Black adults with a bachelor's degree and 57% with a postgraduate degree say they have an emergency fund.

An April 2020 Pew Research Center survey found only 27% of non-Hispanic Black adults said they had an emergency or rainy day fund that would cover their expenses for three months in case of emergency. Since then, the share of non-Hispanic Black adults with an emergency fund has grown to 35%.

For Black adults with more than one job, multiple incomes often essential to meeting basic needs

About 15% of Black adults say they have worked more than one job at the same time in the 12 months prior to the survey. Among those who have, 45% say they did so because the combined income was essential, and another 28% say the combined income helped meet basic needs.

The share of Black Americans who worked multiple jobs differs across demographic subgroups.

Black adults with a postgraduate degree are among the most likely educational subgroups to say they worked more than one job at the same time – 21% say this. Meanwhile, 18% of Black adults with a bachelor's degree and 16% with some college experience worked multiple jobs at once. Just 10% of Black adults with a high school diploma or less say they worked multiple jobs at the same time.

By contrast, roughly one-in-ten Black adults with lower incomes (12%) and upper incomes (14%) say they worked more than one job at the same time, while 19% of Black adults with middle incomes say the same.

And when it comes to immigration status, roughly two-in-ten Black adults who were born in another country (21%) say they worked more than one job at the same time in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 14% of Black adults who were born in the United States.

Black Americans face more economic insecurity than Americans overall

The survey also finds Black Americans are less secure in their finances than Americans overall: 60% of Black Americans say their household finances meet basic needs with at least a little left over for extras, compared with 71% of all Americans. Similarly, while 36% of Black Americans have a three-month emergency fund, 54% of all Americans say they have one. Similar gaps between the groups exist across all major demographic subgroups.

However, Black Americans are just as likely as Americans overall to say they have worked more than one job at the same time in the 12 months prior to the survey – 15% of each group says so. Among those who have held more than one job at the same time, large majorities of Black Americans and U.S. adults overall (73% vs. 67%) say they did so to meet basic needs.

Khadijah Edwards is a research associate focusing on race and ethnicity research at Pew Research Center.

HEALTH

HEALTHCARE FIRMS WERE PUSHED TO CONFRONT RACISM. NOW SOME ARE INVESTING IN BLACK STARTUPS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Marcus Whitney stands out in Nashville's \$95 billion health care sector as an investor in startups. In addition to co-founding a venture capital firm, he's organized an annual health tech conference and co-founded the city's professional soccer club.

And, often, he's the only Black man in the room.

So in summer 2020, as Black Lives Matter protesters filled city streets around the country following George Floyd's murder, Whitney pondered the racial inequalities that are so obvious in his industry — especially locally.

"I sat at the intersection of two communities — one that I was born into and one that I had matriculated into," he said.

On a quiet Sunday morning after the protests died down, he pounded out a long letter to his peers that pointed out those making the most money from Nashville's for-profit health care industry are still almost all white men.

Whitney hit publish on Monday, leading to weeks of intense conversations.

The racial reckoning of the past couple of years has inspired many industries to take a look at their histories and practices. In health care, there are long-standing and well-documented disparities in care for Black and white patients.

Those disparities have carried over into who gets funding for research and health startups. Of the nation's more than 900,000 health care and social assistance companies, which include home health and other health services, roughly 35,000 — or fewer than 4% — are Black-owned, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Whitney wrote that this problem isn't his to fix, but he realized he's in a unique position as one of the few Black venture capitalists in health care. So his firm, Jumpstart Foundry, launched a dedicated fund to get behind Black entrepreneurs in health care. The letter was "pretty key" to pulling in investors, he said.

The fund is called Jumpstart Nova. It's a tiny slice of the estimated \$42 billion of venture funding invested last year in health tech. But it did exceed its initial goal, raising \$55 million from the likes of pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, medical supplier Cardinal Health, and the hospital chain that started Nashville's health care industry, HCA.

Each corporation measures its annual profits in the billions of dollars, so the fund represents only a sliver of their investments. But Jumpstart is also just one part of their broader diversity investment initiatives. For example, Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly has committed \$92 million to Black-led venture capital firms since December 2020, according to company spokesperson Carrie Martin Munk.

Whitney said he didn't have to convince those blue-chip firms that investing in Black founders was a wise move, but he did have to make the case that they would have enough promising startups from which to choose.

"That was really emblematic of the fact that there was a disconnect between the communities. These investors simply did not know enough Black people to know whether or not there were enough deals out there," Whitney said. "This is not like an indictment of them. This is the reality of our country."

Jumpstart Nova is the lead investor in three of the four companies it's working with so far. That means Whitney's team scrutinizes the business plan, vouches for the founder, and draws up all the financial and legal documents so it's easier for others to come along.

"It's validation. You need someone to say, 'We're in,'" said Dr. Derrell Porter, founder of San Francisco-based Cellevolve Bio, one of the first startups to land a lead investment from Jumpstart Nova.

His firm is trying to streamline the process of commercializing promising cell therapies. Hundreds are in development, and of those, each is customized for a patient by using the patient's own cells. The therapies target cancer, central nervous system diseases, or viruses. Cellevolve is partnering with academic medical centers and small biotech companies in an attempt to make the commercializing process more similar to how a pharmaceutical company shepherds a drug to market.

"Marcus was one of the few investors that I spoke to that immediately got what we're talking about," Porter said. "He was like, 'This is either not going to work at all, or it's going to be massive. It's nowhere in between.'"

Porter said his only discomfort has been feeling pressured at times to play the role of a Black entrepreneur with a hard-scrabble upbringing. "Folks are looking for the story to tug on their heart strings," he said. "But that wasn't my life."

He grew up in Compton, California, in a middle-class family, with a mother who is a nurse and a father in construction. "I can't tell you this traumatic, inner-city, drama-filled narrative," said Porter, who has an M.D. and an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania.

Jumpstart is primarily looking for Black-led companies with untapped profit potential. But the venture fund's backers also say they expect some startups will work on fixing health inequities.

One of the fund's initial investments is in DrugViu, which consolidates the medical records of people with autoimmune diseases — particularly underrepresented people of color — so their personal health data can more easily be included in scientific research.

Dr. James Hildreth, president of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, said he hopes some startups will work to ensure health inequities don't get worse, especially now that so many new companies in health care are built around using artificial intelligence. Hildreth said he fears what big data could do without Black representation in the decision-making process or — as DrugViu is trying to resolve — in the clinical data.

"The people designing the algorithms can unconsciously sometimes put their own biases into how the algorithms are designed and how they function," he said.

The historically Black medical school launched its own for-profit arm in 2021 to seek "profitable activities that align with Meharry's mission of eliminating health disparities." Meharry has also invested in the Jumpstart Nova fund. Hildreth said he sees it as an opportunity to make money and to make a statement to students.

"We believe enough in the ingenuity, the innovation, and the intelligence of folks who look like us that we're willing to invest in them," Hildreth said. "With the expectation that the companies that come out of this fund are going to have a huge impact, not just on our communities, but people in general."

KHN (Kaiser Health News) is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues. Together with Policy Analysis and Polling, KHN is one of the three major operating programs at KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation). KFF is an endowed nonprofit organization providing information on health issues to the nation.

Article from www.khn.org

EXITS BY BLACK AND HISPANIC TEACHERS POSE NEW THREAT TO COVID-ERA EDUCATION



By Heidi de Marco

Lynette Henley needed one more year to receive her full pension after 40 years as a teacher, but she couldn't convince herself it was worth the risk.

So Henley, 65, who has diabetes and congestive heart failure, retired last June as a math and history teacher at Hogan Middle School, in Vallejo, California, which serves mostly Black and Hispanic children.

"You're in a classroom with 16 to 20 kids and a lot of my students weren't vaccinated," said Henley. "I just didn't feel safe. It wasn't worth it to possibly die to teach."

Henley, who is Black, is part of a nationwide surge of teachers who are leaving the profession — especially evident among members of the profession with minority backgrounds. Amid the pandemic's toxic brew of death, illness, and classroom disruption, these departures of seasoned teachers have created another strain for students.

The California State Teachers' Retirement System reported a 26% increase in the number of teacher retirements in the second half of 2020 compared with the same period in 2019. Of those surveyed, more than half cited challenges of teaching during the pandemic as their main reason for leaving. A national survey published by the National Education Association on Feb. 1 found that 55% of teachers planned to exit earlier than anticipated, up from 37% in August 2021. The numbers were highest among Black (62%) and Latino (59%) educators.

The issue was palpable when in-person classes resumed in Southern California in January. In some large districts, more than a quarter of schoolchildren were absent the first week back. Some of those who did return entered classrooms that had no teacher or were staffed by underqualified substitutes.

Bryan Monroy, an 11th grade physics teacher at Lennox Mathematics, Science & Technology Academy, in the Inglewood section of Los Angeles, walked into a half-empty school after winter break.

Five teachers, about a fifth of the charter school's staff, were out, presumably sick with covid or taking care of relatives, said Monroy, 29. And that's on top of an underlying problem hiring and holding onto staff, he said.

"We hired some people to teach chemistry and math and for whatever reason they had to resign halfway through the year during the pandemic with no one to replace them," he said. "The kids had to finish off their year with substitutes and teacher's aides, and that was really hard for them."

Covid has been harder on teachers of color because many of them return to the communities where they were raised and which have suffered the most, Monroy said. His students are nearly all Hispanic and about

75% are on free or reduced lunch, he said. As the son of Mexican immigrants, he can relate to their struggles, but "because there are so many similarities that resonate between me and my kids, the vicarious trauma is also even more real."

Studies have shown that teachers of color improve educational outcomes for students of the same background. But Black and Hispanic teachers tend to have shorter teaching careers than their white colleagues, according to a report by the U.S. Department of Education, which cites a lack of support and poor working conditions as the impetus for early departures.

According to a 2019 study by the Learning Policy Institute, a nonprofit research group in Palo Alto, shortages affect 80% of California school districts, most severely those with low-income families and students of color. To make up the gap, schools have hired poorly prepared replacements, which aggravates learning difficulties, said Tara Kini, chief of staff and director of state policy for the Learning Policy Institute. Another study by her group found that minority-majority schools were four times as likely as mostly white schools to employ uncertified teachers.

Plunging standardized test scores in California last year revealed a widening learning gap between whites and Black and Latino students. A little over a third of Black and Hispanic students met or exceeded proficiency standards in English, compared with 60% of whites. In math, only about a fifth of Black and Hispanic students met or exceeded standards, compared with nearly half of white students. Relative to 2018, Hispanic students' scores fell by 12 percentage points in English. White students' scores fell 5 percentage points, while those of Black students remained about the same, on average. (Hispanics can be of any race or combination of races.)

Online learning has been harder for poorer children, contributing to difficulties for their teachers. In July 2020, the University of Southern California and Partnership for Los Angeles Schools surveyed more than 1,100 Los Angeles Unified School District families whose children attend historically low-income public schools and found that about 1 in 6 had no internet access at all and roughly 1 in 12 had mobile internet only. Additionally, 1 in 7 said they never had a space free of noise or distraction.

Teaching in person with the threat of covid, meanwhile, is "living in a constant state of anxiety" because a single positive test in the classroom can disrupt all teaching plans instantaneously, said Katie Caster, manager of curriculum and evaluation at Latinos for Education in Boston, a group that mentors new teachers.

Caster said teachers of color have an extra burden. "I call it the brown tax. It's having to go above and beyond all the time, whether it's the cultural connection, the language, being asked to translate, or connecting families with resources," she said. "The pandemic has exacerbated the issue."

This problem was reflected in a 2019 study by the nonprofits Teach Plus and the Education Trust, which found that teachers of color feel pressure to take on added work to help students who share their demographic backgrounds.

Monroy said the pandemic made him question his career.

"Before the pandemic, I was 100% certain that I would continue teaching and retire as a teacher," said Monroy. "Now, feeling the dread of coming to work instead of feeling excitement, I have my doubts of even making it through the end of this year, let alone, like, staying until I retire."

At L.A. County's San Gabriel High School, where nearly three-quarters of the 1,777 students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, grades fell during the year of remote learning, said band and music teacher Benjamin Coria. "These students were occupied with pandemic-related things, like taking care of siblings, or working," he said. "Some just didn't engage no matter how many times you called home."

Coria's school is part of the Alhambra Unified School District, where absenteeism was 27% in the first week back in school, starting Jan. 3. In neighboring L.A. Unified, the absentee rate was 31% when classes resumed on Jan. 11. (By Feb. 4, L.A. Unified's absentee rate had shrunk to 13%; Alhambra's was down to 14%).

The Alhambra district, whose teachers are 70% people of color, hired 286 substitutes to help fill the gaps for teachers out sick or on leave. In many cases, district administrators are filling in. Still, the school has had to plan special no-school days to help teachers catch up.

The pandemic has also taken a toll on Coria. His father died just before the pandemic, and he lost a grandfather to covid a year later. Snarled school and work schedules have sharpened daily challenges for him, his wife, and their two children. "All these things that would normally be hard are just so much harder in this environment," said Coria, 39, who has taught for 16 years.

But Coria, whose parents were first-generation Mexican Americans, isn't retiring. He does his best to remain upbeat in the classroom, he said, and smiles even when he doesn't feel like smiling.

"We set the temperature," he said. "If we're not in the mood, then the students aren't going to be. Anything I can do to make the environment a little more positive, including for myself."

This story was produced by KHN, which publishes California Healthline, an editorially independent service of the California Health Care Foundation.

Heidi de Marco is a Reporter and Producer for California Healthline.

HEALTHCARE SHEROES - EXPANDING HEALTH IN COLUMBUS AND VICINITY



By Charleta B. Tavares

This is the story of two women – former Columbus City Councilwoman Les Wright and Jewel Barron, founder and Executive Director of ECCO Family Health Center (now a part of PrimaryOne Health). These two women are the reason for Columbus Neighborhood Health Center, Inc., our Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Central Ohio coming into existence.

Jewel Barron along with other community residents on the near eastside of Columbus founded ECCO Family Health Center which was incorporated in 1970. Ms. Barron would later work with Congressman Chalmers P. Wylie to establish the health center as an FQHC (a designation given to health centers that meet strict requirements) which are funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Barron was a forward-thinking and innovative leader who saw the value of establishing a community-based and geographically-focused health center to serve the needs of African/Black and other populations who were underserved and/or experiencing homelessness in Columbus. She saw a need and found a solution. Her tenacity, compassion and commitment paved the way for Columbus Neighborhood Health Center, Inc. now known as PrimaryOne Health.

Unfortunately, sometimes all that glitters is not gold. While the city of Columbus was one of three or four cities in America back in the 1990's funding primary care services for their residents, not all community health centers were the same. In Columbus, the city funded seven independent health centers, the seven centers were: Billie Brown Jones Health Center (Atcheson/Mt. Vernon Avenue); ECCO Family Health (E. Main Street); Franklinton Health Center (W. Broad Street); Hilltop Health Center (Sullivant Avenue); John R. Maloney Health Center (Parsons Avenue); St. Mark's (N. High Street); and St. Stephen's (E. 17th Avenue). Each of the centers was independently operated by a board of neighborhood residents. Only one of the centers was designated a Federally Qualified Health Center, ECCO Family Health Center, which was located at 1166 E. Main Street on the near eastside. This center included a pharmacy and primary care including family medicine, vision and women's health.



(L to R) Former Councilwoman, Les Wright; Jewel Barron and her husband.

During 1996-97, sadly ECCO was experiencing some financial challenges. Leadership at HRSA, which was the federal funding source for the FQHC reached out to the other major funder's leadership, the city of Columbus, to seek their guidance and ability to resolve the issue or they were going to pull the federal funding. Councilwoman Les Wright was the chair of the Health and Human Services Committee under which ECCO and the other health centers' program and funding came. Councilwoman Wright worked with William "Bill" Myers, City Health Commissioner to devise a remedy to keep the federal dollars coming in to serve the ECCO patients and provide a system of care for all of Columbus' residents.

The solution was to create a new non-profit which was named, Columbus Neighborhood Health Center, Inc. (CNHC). CNHC was established in May, 1997 as a Section 330(e) funded non-profit community health center organization (better known as FQHCs), and a Section 330(h) funded Health Care for the Homeless Program. This new non-profit organization brought all seven independent health centers together under one umbrella with three board members from each to form a new 21-member board.

CNHC provided an opportunity to grow our FQHC system from one site to seven. In 2015, I was selected by the Board to become the first woman to take over the helm of the first and largest FQHC in Central Ohio. The board and staff worked together with a marketing firm to develop a new name, logo and tagline that reflects who we are, what we do and our aspirational goal of being one voice and system in order to be "Your first choice for quality care". Our new name honors our past and celebrates our future. We are one system with twelve sites and two mobile health centers, speaking with one voice, under one moniker, PrimaryOne Health.

Over the course of the last twenty-five years, PrimaryOne Health has continued to work to build a cohesive, consistent and quality

system of health center sites throughout Central Ohio to serve the health care needs of vulnerable, un/under and insured residents within the community. Today, the organization has twelve (12) health center sites and two mobile health centers located throughout the medically underserved areas of Columbus, Franklin and Pickaway counties.

I am proud to be standing on the shoulders of Jewel Barron, Billie Brown Jones, Councilwoman Les Wright and other women who established community health centers throughout Columbus more

than 50 years ago. As central Ohio's oldest and largest community health center system, we are celebrating our 25th Anniversary of bringing the original seven independent health centers together to serve the residents of our underserved neighborhoods.

We have to be the answer to the health and advancement of our communities. We have to stand up, speak up and take the actions needed to ensure that we are doing all that we can to inspire and support others to be change makers, like the sheroes highlighted. Each of us have the ability to contribute to the advancement of our community but do we have the tenacity, love of our people and resolve to get it done?

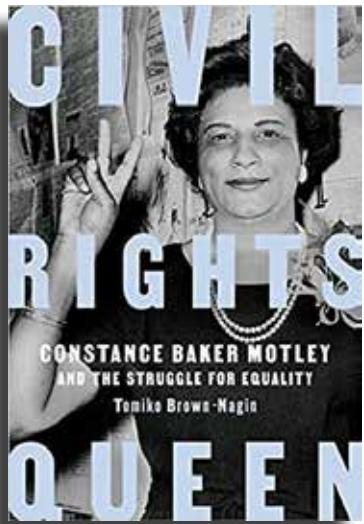
Join us in November 10, 2022 for our 25th Anniversary and Healthcare Justice Awards!

We are all in this – together. We are One!

Charleta B. Tavares is the Chief Executive Officer at PrimaryOne Health, the oldest and largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) system in Central Ohio providing comprehensive primary care, OB-GYN, pediatric, vision, dental, behavioral health and specialty care to more than 48,000 patients at 12 locations in Central Ohio. The mission is to provide access to services that improve the health status of families including people experiencing financial, social, or cultural barriers to health care. www.primaryonehealth.org.

BOOK BAGS & CRAFTERS

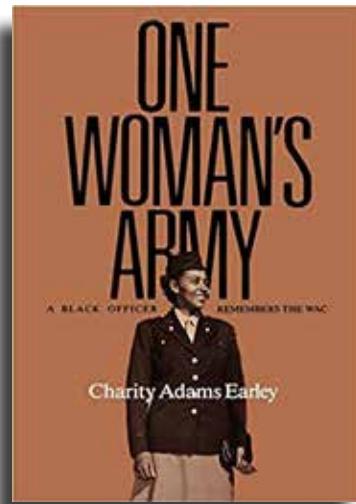
By Ray Miller



Civil Rights Queen - Constance Baker Motley and The Struggle for Equality
By Tamika Brown-Nagin

Born to an aspirational blue-collar family during the Great Depression, Constance Baker Motley was expected to find herself a good career as a hair dresser. Instead, she became the first black woman to argue a case in front of the Supreme Court, the first of ten she would eventually argue. The only black woman member in the legal team at the NAACP's Inc. Fund at the time, she defended Martin Luther King in Birmingham, helped to argue in *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, and played a

critical role in vanquishing Jim Crow laws throughout the South. She was the first black woman elected to the state Senate in New York, the first woman elected Manhattan Borough President, and the first black woman appointed to the federal judiciary.



One Woman's Army - A Black Officer Remembers The WAC
By Charity Adams Earley

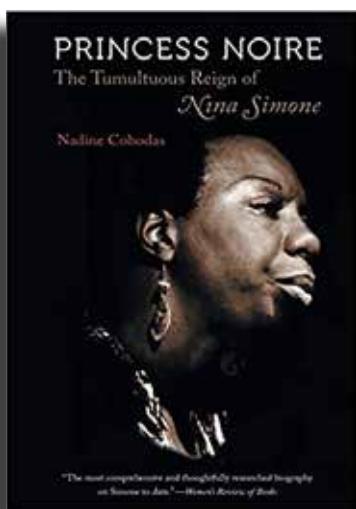
When America entered World War II, the surge of patriotism was not confined to men. Congress authorized the organization of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (later renamed Women's Army Corps) in 1942, and hundreds of women were able to join in the war effort. Charity Edna Adams became the first black woman commissioned as an officer. With unblinking candor, Charity Adams Earley tells of her struggles and successes as the WAC's first black officer and as commanding officer of the only organization of black women to serve overseas during World War II. The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion broke all records for redirecting military mail as she commanded the group through its moves from England to France and stood up to the racist slurs of the general under whose command the battalion operated. They stood up for its commanding officer, supporting her boycott of segregated living quarters and recreational facilities.



Kamala's Way - An American Life
By Dan Morain

In Kamala's Way, he charts her career from its beginnings handling child molestation cases and homicides for the Alameda County District Attorney's office and her relationship as a twenty-nine-year-old with the most powerful man in the state: married Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, a relationship that would prove life-changing. Morain takes readers through Harris's years in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office, explores her audacious embrace of the little-known Barack Obama, and shows the sharp elbows she

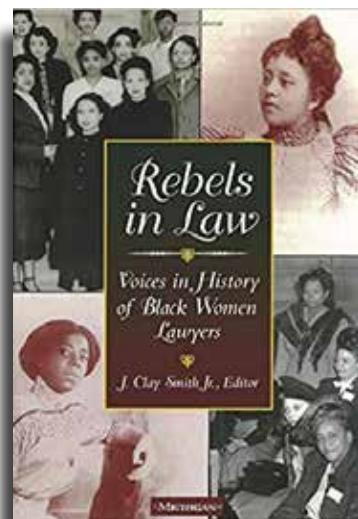
deployed to make it to the US Senate. He analyzes her failure as a presidential candidate and the behind-the-scenes campaign she waged to land the Vice President spot. Along the way, he paints a vivid picture of her values and priorities, the kind of people she brings into her orbit, the sorts of problems she's good at solving, and the missteps, risks, and bold moves she's made on her way to the top.



Princess Noire - The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone
By Nadine Cohodas

Born Eunice Waymon in Tryon, North Carolina, Nina Simone (1933-2003) began her musical life playing classical piano. A child prodigy, she wanted a career on the concert stage, but when the Curtis Institute of Music rejected her, the devastating disappointment compelled her to change direction. She turned to popular music and jazz but never abandoned her classical roots or her intense ambition. By the age of twenty-six, Simone had sung at New

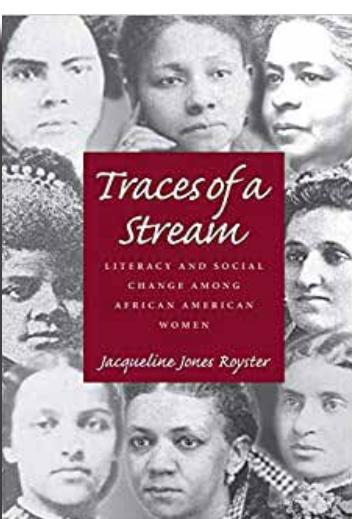
York City's venerable Town Hall and was on her way. Tapping into newly unearthed material on Simone's family and career, Nadine Cohodas paints a luminous portrait of the singer, highlighting her tumultuous life, her innovative compositions, and the prodigious talent that matched her ambition.



Rebels In Law - Voices in History of Black Women Lawyers
By J. Clay Smith, Jr.

Black women lawyers are not new to the practice of law or to leadership in the fight for justice and equality. Black women formally entered the practice of American law in 1872, the year that Charlotte E. Ray became the first black woman to graduate from an American law school. Rebels in Law introduces some of these women and through their own writing tells a compelling story about the little-known involvement of black women in law and politics. Providing an opportunity to study the origins

of black women as professionals, community leaders, wives, mothers, and feminists, it will be of interest to scholars in the fields of law, history, political science, sociology, black studies and women's studies.



Traces of A Stream - Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women
By Jacqueline Jones Royster

Traces of a Stream offers a unique scholarly perspective that merges interests in rhetorical and literacy studies, United States social and political theory, and African American women writers. Focusing on elite nineteenth-century African American women who formed a new class of women well positioned to use language with consequence, Royster uses interdisciplinary perspectives (literature, history, feminist studies, African American studies, psychology, art, sociology,

economics) to present a well-textured rhetorical analysis of the literate practices of these women. With a shift in educational opportunity after the Civil War, African American women gained access to higher education and received formal training in rhetoric and writing. By the end of the nineteenth-century, significant numbers of African American women operated actively in many public arenas.

FIGHTING TO GROW: BLACK FARMERS CONTINUE TO BATTLE SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION



By Dewayne Fatherree

By any definition, Kendall Rae Johnson is an exceptional child.

It all started when her parents saved some collard green stems and planted them for a garden in honor of her great-grandmother.

"A week later she came in and said, 'Hey, we got something growing,'" said her mother, Ursula Johnson. "Then she was inspired. She planted cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers. She watched it, touched it, made sure there were no bugs. That was the beginning."

Now, at the tender age of 6, Kendall Rae is the youngest certified farmer in Georgia history, fulfilling those requirements last fall.

"I like playing in the dirt," she said.

What sets Kendall apart from other children is her fascination with – and passion for – learning about raising plants and animals. A century ago, that would not have been so unusual for an African American child. Then, Black farmers made up 14% of the producers in the United States. As of 2017, that number had dropped to just 1.4%, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) most recent agricultural census. They also lost 90% of their property, some 16 million acres worth up to \$350 billion, during that time, compared with just 2% for white farmers.

Like all people who work the soil, Black farmers have had to contend with Mother Nature and her whims. But unlike their white counterparts, they have had to fight a war on two fronts. While the federal government has provided loan and subsidy programs on a large scale to farmers, studies have shown that the bulk of that aid has historically gone to white farmers and has been largely withheld from Black farmers.

And that is not just an issue from days gone by. Even today, government programs intended to help farms survive the market effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have largely missed Black farmers. In fact, efforts aimed directly at socially disadvantaged producers – those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society – are tied up in a Texas court, where a trial judge ruled that programs aimed at rectifying more than a century of discrimination are in and of themselves discriminatory.

"(T)he Government puts forward no evidence of intentional discrimination by the USDA in at least the past decade," according to the court's opinion on the matter. "To find intentional discrimination, then, requires a logical leap, as well as a leap back in time. In sum, the Government's evidence falls short of demonstrating a compelling interest, as any past discrimination is too attenuated from any



present-day lingering effects to justify race-based remedial action by Congress."

Basically, the court has ruled that there is a time limit on how far back Congress can go to remediate intentional discrimination by the government. This has enormous implications for other kinds of reparations as well.

No place at the table

The challenges facing Black farmers go back to the abolition of slavery and to the Reconstruction era that followed. In fact, two pieces of legislation that have primarily aided white farmers over the years – the Homestead Act and the Morrill Land Grant Act – were passed in 1862. By 1934, more than 270 million acres – 10% of U.S. lands – were transferred from the Tribal Nations into the hands of more than 1.6 million largely white homesteaders. Many of these transfers were made prior to the 1868 adoption of the 14th Amendment, which granted citizenship to formerly enslaved people.

Much of the discrimination was far more overt and directed. Over the years, courts have determined that Black farmers were discriminated against at every level. Government officials withheld loan and grant funds, making it difficult, if not impossible, for Black farmers to compete against their white counterparts.

Additionally, the lack of established wealth and land being passed from generation to generation left the Black farmers at a significant disadvantage, even before the detrimental actions of the U.S. government.

These are not just allegations. They have been documented for more than a half century. In its 1965 report on Black farmers, the U.S.

Commission on Civil Rights found numerous problems in the way federal programs treated farmers of color. The report documented how the USDA's Cooperative Extension Service, Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service denied thousands of Black farmers access to services provided to white farmers to help them diversify their crops, increase production, achieve adequate farming operations or train for off-farm employment.

The report also showed that of almost 5,000 county committeemen for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in 11 Southern states, none were Black, even though these committees had huge power over who received farm program payments and who did not.

Those findings, in various degrees, were repeated in similar reports in 1982 and 1997. The efforts to hold back Black farmers continued well into the 21st century.

In the landmark Pigford v. Glickman lawsuit, a federal judge in 1999 ruled that the USDA had systematically denied assistance to Black farmers. Under the consent decree settling the case, payments totaling \$1 billion were distributed to some 20,000 Black farmers.

But the discrimination didn't stop there. Another \$1.2 billion was awarded a decade later to settle claims in subsequent litigation that the USDA had continued its practice of ignoring Black farmers; many farmers who should have been compensated in the first settlement were denied payments because of delays and foot-dragging on the part of



government officials. Even then, the amount each plaintiff received was relatively small despite the overall size of the settlement.

'White nationalist litigation'

In recent years, efforts to offset the systemic discrimination against Black farmers are themselves being targeted as discriminatory.

Shortly after the passage of President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a group called America First Legal filed a lawsuit on behalf of Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller. The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court for North Texas, argues that two portions of the act, Section 1005 and 1006, are discriminatory because they set up some \$5 billion in aid specifically to pay off loans and provide other aid to farmers who have been discriminated against because of the smaller size of their operations.

Not surprisingly, America First Legal was established by former Trump senior adviser Stephen Miller, who has a long history of promoting white nationalist ideology and policies, both before and during his service in the White House. His connections to far-right and white nationalist groups have been heavily documented, most notably in a series of stories based on emails leaked to the Southern Poverty Law Center's HateWatch.

A trial judge blocked the distribution of aid to Black farmers under the two sections of

ARPA pending a resolution of the lawsuit, meaning that much of the aid is in limbo. While other funds are being released, the farmers depending on the ARPA funds to level the playing field instead must fight not only systemic discrimination but also the challenges of operating in the midst of a global pandemic.

Working within a broken system

While there is litigation underway to help remove the systemic roadblocks Black farmers face, other groups are trying to help those farmers operate within the existing flawed infrastructure. The SPLC, for example, has partnered with organizations including the EcoWomanist Institute and the Center for Community Progress to expand and deepen its on-the-ground advocacy for Black farmers.

"We are working to support several community organizations in Georgia essentially to help farmers develop the skills and expertise to scale up their farming operations," said Clara Potter, a staff attorney for the SPLC's Economic Justice Project. "These are folks who applied for microloans through a rural FSA [Farm Service Agency] office in Georgia and were denied loans on grounds we don't think totally add up."

Potter said that even though there is a history of discrimination, there is not always a long legal paper trail to follow.

"It's rare to find individual farmers challenging FSA offices on discrimination

grounds," Potter said. "As you can imagine, there are a lot of hurdles to bringing these lawsuits. There's a lot of opacity in these processes. We're helping these farmers first reapply for these microloans and hoping that they get approved or, if they are denied, assist them with the appeals process."

As these processes aimed at resolving historic discrimination move forward, Kendall Rae Johnson is cultivating hope for a brighter future. She is growing her own urban agriculture business, aGROWKulture, creating produce baskets for local customers. Because of the national media coverage of her certification, she has had a successful GoFundMe effort to expand the footprint of her garden.

She is also about to set another milestone, becoming the youngest person to charter her own 4-H classes.

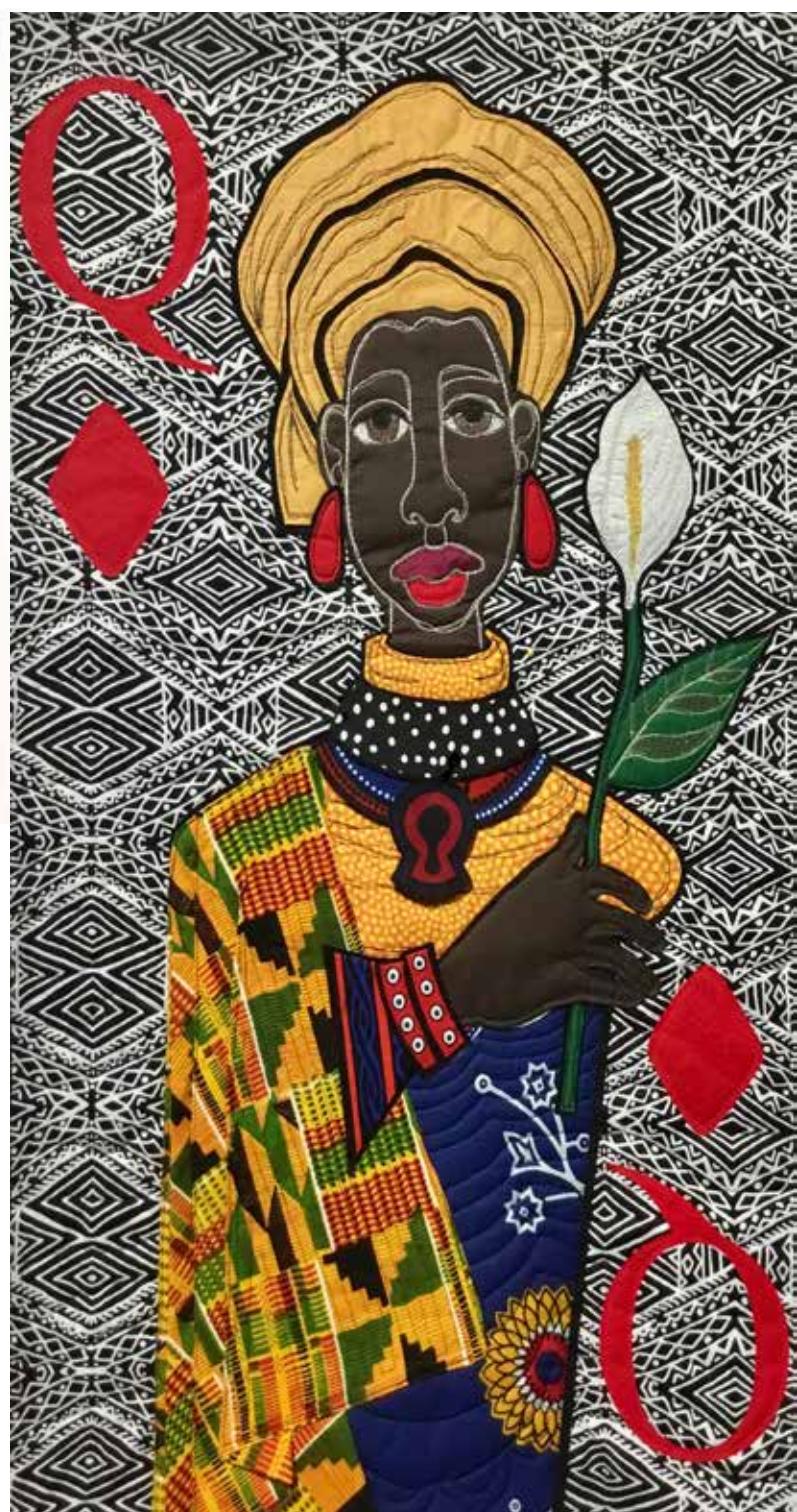
"She's going to start off with four classes," Ursula Johnson said. "Beekeeping, gardening, public speaking/leadership and animal companionship. She's using horses for that."

In the meantime, while winter hovers over the South, Kendall Rae is more focused on the things within her control that farmers have contended with for centuries.

"I put on a warm coat and get out there," she said. "I get out there and keep the cold away."

Article from the Southern Poverty Law Center, www.splcenter.org

KUUMBA CONNECTIONS - QUILTS BY CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTS ON VIEW



(Top Left) Carole Gary Staples - *Virus with Police Brutality*,
(Bottom Left) Stefanie Rivers - *Queen of Everything* (Right)
Wendy Kendrick - *Queen of Diamonds*

(Columbus, Ohio)—“Kuumba Connections: Quilts by Contemporary African American Artists,” curated by Bettye J. Stull, opened Sunday, February 6, at the Ohio Craft Museum. The exhibition showcases narrative work by nine members of “Kuumba Quilters,” a group founded by Ohio artists Monica Scott and Renée Wormack Keels.

The two started the group to not only preserve and promote the art of quilting and culture in the African American community, but to serve as a support system for African American artists. Started just before COVID-19 disrupted everything, the group met virtually to share their work, which allowed quilters and fiber artists from across

the country to join. The term Kuumba means “creativity” and is the sixth principle of Kwaanza.

The narrative quilts in this exhibition “reflect personal stories, African inspired and influenced by current issues,” states Stull. “The Kuumba quilters follow the tradition of African American women. They are the storytellers of our culture, and the creative connectors preserving our history and stitching together their stories for the viewer to enjoy.”

A special opening reception was held at the Ohio Craft Museum on Sunday, February 6, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, with a gallery talk by

Bettye J. Stull at 2:00 pm. Several exhibiting artists discussed their work as well. The exhibition will remain on view through Saturday, April 2.

The Ohio Craft Museum is located at 1665 West Fifth Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Admission and parking are free. Hours: Monday–Friday, 10 am–5 pm; Saturday, 11 am–4 pm. The Ohio Craft Museum is owned and operated by Ohio Designer Craftsmen and receives ongoing funding from the Greater Columbus Arts Council, Ohio Arts Council and the Columbus Foundation. Telephone (614) 486-4402, or see our website www.ohiocraft.org.

BIDEN SEEKS 'RESET' ON PANDEMIC AND HIS PRESIDENCY



By Chris Megerian

WASHINGTON (AP) — Midway through his State of the Union address, President Joe Biden pleaded with the country to finally, after nearly 1 million deaths, stop viewing the coronavirus as a political fault line.

"Let's use this moment to reset," he said.

It was a phrase that applied to much more than the pandemic.

After a first year that saw his most ambitious plans stall and his public approval ratings plunge, Biden delivered an address that sought to turn the page and prepare his party for midterm elections in November.

He did not mention the words "build back better," the name of his stalled legislative agenda, instead talking about "building a better America." He insisted he would confront inflation, promising that he has a "better plan" to reduce cost increases than Republicans.

He acknowledged that Americans are "tired, frustrated, and exhausted" as he marked a "new moment" where the coronavirus will be more manageable and masks will be required less often. He did not take credit for fulfilling his promise to end the country's longest war, eliding any mention of the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Biden instead focused on a new war in Europe, where Russia invaded Ukraine days ago, bringing to bloody life the global battle between autocracy and democracy that he's often warned about.

"While it shouldn't have taken something so terrible for people around the world to see what's at stake, now everyone sees it clearly," he said.

Instead of his usual cautionary words about the expanding power of dictatorships, Biden said that "democracies are rising to the moment, and the world is clearly choosing the side of peace and security."

In a flourish that wasn't in Biden's prepared remarks, he issued a warning to President Vladimir Putin as he rattled off a list of sanctions intended to undermine Russia's economy as punishment for the invasion.

"He has no idea what's coming," he said.

Even though U.S. troops are not being deployed to fight directly in Ukraine, the war could still have ripple effects that drive up gas prices. Biden promised to limit the effects and emphasized the need to confront Putin.

"When dictators do not pay a price for their aggression, they cause more chaos," he said. "They keep moving. And, the costs and threats to America and the world keep rising."



President Biden delivers his first State of the Union address on March 1, 2022. Photo by Shawn Thew/AP

Some lawmakers wore yellow and blue outfits or pinned ribbons to their lapels to show their support for Ukraine. The Ukrainian ambassador to the U.S. sat with first lady Jill Biden, who had an embroidered appliqué of a sunflower, the country's national flower, added to her blue dress.

Few presidents have had such urgent foreign and domestic crises fomenting at once, so early in their tenure, and with the nation deeply polarized on so many issues.

Biden tried to draw a connection between the two as he appealed for Republicans who have spurned him at almost every important turn to now join him in common cause.

It will not be an easy sell as just one speech is unlikely to have any dramatic impact on how Americans view Biden's job performance.

But Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster who worked for Biden's campaign, said the Ukraine conflict has created an opportunity for the president to showcase his strengths on the international stage.

"More people have a question mark, what kind of leader do we have in charge right now?" Lake said. "And they're going to see what kind of leader we have."

A glance around Capitol Hill revealed mixed progress.

Although nearly 2,000 people are still dying every day from the coronavirus, masks were made optional on Capitol Hill in time for the speech. Attendance was less limited than last year, when Biden spoke to a joint session of Congress a few months after taking office.

But law enforcement re-installed a security fence around the Capitol "out of an abundance of caution" because of concerns that demonstrations that could disrupt the city. The fence was last in place in the months after the Jan. 6 attack on the building as Trump's supporters sought to stop the certification of Biden's election.

Biden repeated his call to pass voting rights legislation, but he spent more of his speech singling out politically popular proposals such as limiting the cost of prescription drugs.

And he plans to continue promoting the benefits of the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure legislation that he signed into law last year, though he broke the plan down into some of its most popular components rather than pitching a bill that was in effect too big to describe.

Biden will follow the State of the Union by traveling to Superior, Wisconsin, which is home to the 61-year-old Blatnik Bridge. More than 33,000 vehicles use the bridge daily to cross the St. Louis Bay, even though its deteriorating conditions mean that large trucks are prohibited. This is a challenge because the bridge is a key connection to Duluth, Minnesota and its port, the country's largest freshwater hub for international and domestic cargo.

It is part of a vexing balance for him to strike, with his attention focused on the rapidly unfolding war in Ukraine, and the prospect that it escalates into a much larger conflict, and persuading Americans that he also has trained his focus on issues closer to home.

Only 29% of Americans think the nation is on the right track, according to the February poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Biden's approval rating has also fallen to 44%, down from 60% in July.

So the president spent the evening essentially asking for a fresh start, born of the most serious conflict with Russia in a generation, and another chance to explain his domestic agenda.

"He's got his back to the wall, and he's put his party's back against the wall," said Whit Ayres, a veteran Republican pollster.

Chris Megerian is writer for the Los Angeles Times.

A REBORN HBCU IN DETROIT IS OPENING A BLACK-OWNED FOOTWEAR FACTORY

PENSOLE LEWIS COLLEGE IS A NEW DESIGN SCHOOL FOR SNEAKERHEADS



Founder D'Wayne Edwards, a former Jordan Brand design director, at the Pensole Lewis College of Business and Design.

By Nick DePaula



In an effort to increase diversity in the footwear industry, a reborn HBCU is joining the parent company of retailer DSW to open what they say will be the first Black-owned shoe factory in the United States.

The company, Designer Brands Inc., is investing \$2 million with Pensole Lewis College of Business and Design to open the 20,000-square-foot facility in Somersworth, New Hampshire.

"The unacceptable fact is that Black designers comprise less than 5% of professionals across the design industry," said Roger Rawlins, CEO of Designer Brands. "DBI and DSW have an opportunity and responsibility to help create more opportunities for Black designers."

DSW will serve as the primary retail partner for footwear collections designed by Pensole Lewis students and manufactured at the New Hampshire site.

D'Wayne Edwards, a former Jordan Brand design director, worked with the founding family of the former Lewis College of Business to reopen the Detroit school, which was started in 1928 and closed in 2013. It is the only historically Black college and university in Michigan and the first HBCU to focus solely on design.

The school will open in May with an initial class of 350 students. It will be accredited through an affiliation with the College for Creative Studies, a nonprofit private art college in Detroit.

The connection between the factory, the college and DSW, that synergy is how corporations should work with colleges and with entrepreneurs," Edwards said. "Investing

in the person who is actually the consumer."

The inaugural class will have free tuition. Brands such as Detroit-based Carhartt, and luxury companies Jimmy Choo and Versace will be incorporated into the design curriculum of the first session as partners. The school is receiving an undisclosed amount of philanthropic support from Target and the Gilbert Family Foundation, founded by Cleveland Cavaliers owner Dan Gilbert and his wife Jennifer.

"A big challenge all young designers and brands have is distribution," said Bill Jordan, president of Designer Brands. "Through this partnership and the creation of [the factory], we are able to strengthen the process and open doors for these designers, hopefully propelling them into a successful career in the footwear industry."

The factory is being named JEMS by Pensole. JEMS is an acronym for Jan Ernst Matzeliger Studio, a tribute to the Black inventor who received five patents from 1883 to 1899 that revolutionized footwear manufacturing through a new lasting process.

"What he did, we wouldn't be as far as we are today without his invention," said Edwards. "Knowing that invention pioneered so much of how this industry has been built over the last 139 years, people need to understand that."

At the time, most of America's domestic footwear production was based in New England. Lasting, the process of merging a shoe upper with the sole, was done by hand and the best workers could produce around 50 pairs per day. Matzeliger's invention could produce as many as 700 pairs per day, cutting production costs in half. Because of his biracial background (his father was white and Dutch, his mother was a Black woman from Suriname), he wasn't given his due until decades later. He appeared on a U.S. postal stamp in 1991 as part of the Black Heritage

Stamp Series.

"I discovered Jan about 20 years ago, and I was embarrassed that I didn't know before that," said Edwards. "Over the years, he's had a stamp, and every once in a while, you'll see for Black History Month an organization mention him. But I don't think he's ever really been given his just due from the footwear industry. What we want to do is educate the footwear industry as a whole about the pioneers of the footwear industry. He was the pioneer for us in this industry."

Edwards designed Air Jordans and Carmelo Anthony signature shoes throughout the 2000s in his role at Jordan Brand and plans to design the first collection of Pensole footwear made at JEMS this year. The first sneaker is planned for production on Sept. 15, Matzeliger's birthday.

"I want to bring back leather sneakers," Edwards said of his upcoming collection. "I want to bring the craftsmanship that we used to have in the U.S. — really handcrafted sneakers."

From there, students will design and create collections. Edwards says the factory will be able to produce up to 125,000 shoes per year at full capacity.

"A lot of people think they want to have their own brand and think they want to be an entrepreneur, but they have no idea how hard it is," he said. "That's what the college does — gives them insights into what the opportunities of entrepreneurship looks like."

Edwards started working with students a decade ago when he founded the Pensole Footwear Design Academy in Portland, Oregon. That program will be relocated to the Detroit campus.

Continued on Page 33

Continued from Page 32

Besides providing Pensole Lewis students with factory experience that will prepare them for brand jobs, Edwards sees the emphasis on U.S. manufacturing as a long-term strategy that more brands should invest in. Over the last year, factory closures due to the coronavirus pandemic have strained the global supply chain across the athletic industry.

"I don't think it's a one-off, and I think it's going to continue," said Edwards. "I also think brands are going to look at diversifying where they get products made so they don't get stuck in this situation again. ... The real opportunity for U.S. manufacturing is that it's faster. The product will cost more, but we were doing the math, and by the time you add the increased taxes, the increased duty and the increased shipping, all of that is [potentially] equivalent to making them in the U.S."

A key purpose of opening the design academy in Portland was to provide brands with a diverse candidate pool and put students in position to land jobs immediately. His

first class, created in partnership with the University of Oregon 10 years ago, had 41 students.

"What's crazy is, 33 of them are professional designers till this day," Edwards said. He funded the academy himself for the first eight years before taking on outside investment.

He's long known that the cost of college has priced out many students with potential. Edwards estimates that most design colleges can now cost an "easy \$50,000 to \$80,000" per year.

"You have no idea how many people [brands are] eliminating that naturally have a gift, or started school and couldn't afford it," he said. "The industry has woken up to that. ... College is a great thing if you can afford it. It's a great thing if you can experience it. But not everybody can."

In the 10 years spent operating Pensole, Edwards has helped to place nearly 700 students in professional design roles at brands across the industry. Many of those former students are now continuing that cycle, creating educational workshops for future students. Last week, Edwards partnered with

Adidas to host workshops for students at a middle school in Los Angeles.

"The beauty of it is that other industries are coming," Edwards said of receiving corporate outreach from companies in the package design, graphics, furniture and user experience design sectors. "There's other brands that are in other industries that are appreciating what we've done in footwear design and they want to replicate it on their side. It's a testament to what we're doing on the footwear side."

Edwards hopes that the new factory and the inaugural class of students at Pensole Lewis can continue to provide a path for a future generation to take part in an athletic industry that has long been fueled by the creativity and talents of Black athletes.

"We've been able to show the industry that talent is everywhere," said Edwards. "You just have to be open to receive it, instead of being so pigeonholed to look at the traditional places that industries look."

Nick DePaula is a footwear industry and lifestyle writer at Andscape. The Sacramento, California, native has been based in Portland, Oregon

CENTRAL STATE CHORUS SHARES MESSAGE OF HOPE AT DAYTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION



The chorus hailing from Central State University lifted the spirits of inmates at a local correctional facility right before the President's Day weekend.

Central State University's Grammy-nominated chorus performed in front of a crowd of inmates at the Dayton Correctional Institution, celebrating Black history while also sharing a message of hope for a better future.

The 25 members of the chorus sang gospel songs to the incarcerated women at the prison run by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Carlos Brown, director of choral activities at Central State University, said the experience was a benefit to the students who got the opportunity to share a positive message.

"There is hope," he said. "Although your situations look dark and your situation may look very gloomy — for some of them they will never make it to the outside again — but for some that will make it out you are able to have a second chance and look at how your life can be different on the outside."

He said the message also can benefit those who won't get out by helping motivate them to change their perspective.

Westley Gaddis, the activities therapist administrator for the Dayton Correctional Institution, said programs like the chorus performance is important for rehabilitation. He said the prison offers activities year-round to help expand inmates' knowledge and help them discover new interests.

"It's about engaging them and giving them hope and knowing there is more," Gaddis said.

The department's mission is to reduce recidivism, he said, and the programming works to encourage the women to try new things and to stay out of trouble.

Gaddis said the experiences like seeing the chorus perform also can give the inmates new things to talk about with their family and friends, which improves morale.

The Historic Dayton Contemporary Dance Company also made its annual visit to the prison. Gaddis said community groups coming into the prison is important as it offers incarcerated individuals a connection to the outside.

AU 'DISTURBED' BY REPORTS OF AFRICANS STOPPED FROM ESCAPING UKRAINE

African bloc says all people have right to cross international borders during conflict as Ukraine-Russia war continues.

The African Union (AU) says it is "disturbed" by reports that African nationals in Ukraine are been prevented from safely crossing the border to flee the raging conflict in the country.

In a statement late Monday, the pan-African body said: "[A]ll people have the right to cross international borders during conflict, and as such, should enjoy the same rights to cross to safety from the conflict in Ukraine, notwithstanding their nationality or racial identity."

African nationals, mostly students, have accused Ukrainian security forces of stopping them from boarding trains headed to the border regions. Videos shared on social media also show Ukrainian border forces pushing African nationals as they attempt to leave Ukraine.

"Reports that Africans are singled out for unacceptable dissimilar treatment would be shockingly racist and in breach international law," the AU statement continued.

Al Jazeera spoke to several African and Asian nationals who said they were turned away by Ukrainian authorities at the border to Poland.

"We were the last people to get on anything, it was always like that." Madi Kemel Dinga, a Congolese student, told Al Jazeera at a reception centre in Korczowa, eastern Poland.

"They will first put their people first. And then us. For me, it was discriminating but for them, it is normal," Dinga added.

Some of the people Al Jazeera spoke to said a country at war could be forgiven for putting its people first. Others, some with Ukrainian families of their own, said the contrast in treatments was too stark.

"We understand that they need to save their citizens but we have been loyal to Ukraine," Ronald Mangu Achu, a Cameroonian student, told Al Jazeera. "We have been in their country lawfully. We have showed them love. I believe the least they could do is evacuate us."

African countries have been scrambling to evacuate their citizens from Ukraine since Moscow sent its troops across the border on Thursday.

Nigeria said it has about 8,000 nationals in the country and some have managed to cross the border into neighbouring countries.

On Sunday, the Nigerian government expressed concern over reports of discriminatory behaviour by Ukrainian and Polish border guards against its nationals.



"There have been unfortunate reports of Ukrainian police & security personnel refusing to allow Nigerians to board buses and trains heading towards [the] Ukraine-Poland border," the Nigerian presidency said in a statement posted on Twitter.

"We understand the pain [and] fear that is confronting all people who find themselves in this terrifying place. We also appreciate that those in official positions in security and border management will in most cases be experiencing impossible expectations in a situation they never expected," the statement added.

"But, for that reason, it is paramount that everyone is treated with dignity and without favour. All who flee a conflict situation have the same right to safe passage under UN Convention and the colour of their passport or their skin should make no difference," it said.

Nigeria's foreign minister Godfrey Onyeama told Al Jazeera on Monday the evacuation of the country's nationals from Ukraine would start on Wednesday. Onyeama said more than one thousand students have made it to Bucharest in neighbouring Romania.

The minister said Abuja was in touch with the Polish and Ukrainian governments, expressing their displeasure at the reported cases of discrimination.

On Sunday, South Africa's foreign ministry spokesman Clayton Monyela said in a tweet that several students from his country were stuck at the Ukraine-Poland border.

The South African ambassador to Poland was at the border trying to get the students through, Monyela added. South African and other African students have been treated badly at the border, Monyela said.

Meanwhile, the United States said it was coordinating with UN agencies and other governments "to ensure every individual, including African students, crossing from Ukraine to seek refuge is treated equally – regardless of race, religion, or nationality."

The number of people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine has surged to more than half a million and at least 102 civilians have been killed since Moscow's troops entered the country, according to the United Nations.

Article from Aljazeera.com

WILLIAMSON ERA DRAWS TO A CLOSE FOR HALE BLACK CULTURAL CENTER

By Aaron Marshall

More than four decades after arriving at The Ohio State University as a young graduate student, Larry Williamson Jr. steps down today after 30 years as director of the Frank W. Hale Jr. Black Cultural Center.

A native of Conshohocken, Pa., Williamson's time at the Hale Center and with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion spans eleven vice-provosts of diversity and inclusion and eight university presidents. One of the last contemporary links to the legendary Dr. Frank W. Hale, Williamson took a break from packing up his office to talk about the legacy he will leave behind, what he'll miss about his job, and what he is looking forward to in the next phase of his life.

*Answers have been edited and, in some cases, condensed.

How did you land at Ohio State working with the iconic Dr. Frank W. Hale, Jr., the namesake of Hale Hall?

I was a graduate student in art education, and I had a one-year minority fellowship. After that ended, I went to Dr. Hale, who had a curator of art and graphic designer position open. I started curating art exhibits and working with Rose (Wilson-Hill).

The Hale Center has an amazing collection of African-American art that you helped collect and curate over the decades. How did that art collection begin and what was your role?

I was really going out to people's houses and knocking on doors with a list I had received from ACE Gallery. (ACE stood for Art for Community Expression). I was able to get a lot of artists who wanted to show at Ohio State but didn't know how. It was prestigious showing at Ohio State, and a lot of these artists couldn't get into galleries and other places, so they wanted to be at Ohio State. We were doing a few shows a year at Bricker Hall, and so sometimes the artists would ask, 'Where are you going to put it—in the library?' And I'd say 'No, it's going to be outside the president's office.' That really got their attention. I'd say that I personally collected about 80 percent of the artwork, but it was Dr. Frank Hale's name that got my foot in the door. And, to a degree, Ohio State University sells itself.

What do you view as your legacy?

I'm retiring as one of the longest tenured directors of a Black cultural arts center in the country. I know my legacy will be the artwork in our collection. That artwork will be here long after I die, and to me it's one of the top collections of African-American art in the country, if not, the best. We have about 700 to 800 pieces, and that's probably about \$1.5 million worth of art. To me that's what I'm most proud of as well as the community of artists that helped us to achieve that goal.

And number two, we've had a lot of student workers who have come through here, and I'll always treasure the memories that they have. These are students who are chairs of departments, and doctors, and lawyers who came in as brilliant students but left as exceptional leaders. That I've helped nurture some of the leaders in their field means a lot to me.



You have always been someone who is a friend and mentor to students who work for you and who spend time at the Hale Center. Why was it so important to be someone who students can lean on?

I came from a Black college (Cheyney University) so I understand the Black experience and how important an atmosphere conducive to students' learning can be. When students flunk out, on the average, they don't flunk out because of academics, they flunk out because there's a situation that needs to be resolved. If you can remove that situation that needs to be resolved, then you can keep them. If I had to take extra steps to get that done, well, then that's what I was going to do.

What will you miss about your job?

The interactions. The people. The building. The art work. Just knowing that you are coming in everyday for a purpose and doing programming that you know has a purpose. Seeing students who come in uncertain of themselves and leave as some of the strongest leaders that you know.

What are you looking forward to doing in retirement?

Well, first of all, I'm still looking forward to coming back and working with the art collection at the Hale Center. But I want to get some more time with my family and do some of my own painting and drawing and things like that. I find it very therapeutic. I just want to do some leisure things, but I still want to be involved in the community; we have so many things to strive for and achieve in the African-American community. Retirement doesn't mean doing nothing, it means the next chapter of your life. You still have things you want to achieve and want to do still, but you don't have as many obstacles.

You are stepping down from your day-to-day role as center director, but you have plans to stay involved with the Hale Center. What do you see as your role in the future?

My role will be to work with the Hale Center and the artwork and support the leadership of the Hale Center and of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. There's still an expansion concept out there that I want to help and support. And I want to keep the legacy of Dr. Frank W. Hale Jr. alive.

The Hale Center has a long-standing tradition of hosting a Thanksgiving Dinner for students who are away from home that began your first year as director in 1992. How'd that all begin?

We had two graduate students that didn't have a place for Thanksgiving Dinner so they asked me if they could have a potluck dinner at the Hale Center for a few people. I told them, 'Look, there's probably some other students who are also in your shoes, why don't you take some flyers over to the South dorms and get some other people in on it?' And so instead of having six or eight students, we ended up with 25 students, and that's who we had at our first Thanksgiving dinner. The next year we had 50, and the year after that we had 100, and from that point on a tradition was established.

In 2013, the Hale Center moved across W. 12th Avenue into Hale Hall going from a freestanding building to a shared space with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Was that the biggest transition for the center during your tenure?

Yes, I'd say so. You know, the transition over here was challenging. I could look out my window and see the space they were demolishing. It was controversial too. I remember Archie Griffin was the head of the Alumni Association and was getting a lot of calls from alumni who were pretty upset. Finally, Archie said to them, 'Did anyone talk to Larry about this? Don't you think if something wasn't right about what was going on that he would tell the community?' That helped settle a whole lot of people down. One thing that I've appreciated in my job is that the African-American community really trusted me, and I really, really trusted them.

All in all, you've been here at Ohio State since the early 1980s. It turned out to be the work of your lifetime.

I believe that your destination is determined by everything you do and leads you where you're supposed to be. For me, it was being able to go to The Ohio State University and run one of the finest Black cultural centers in the world for one of the finest people in the world, and that was Dr. Frank W. Hale, Jr. to me. And I've loved the people that I worked with both on campus and in the community and, specifically, the African-American collective.

OFFICE ON AGING BEGINS NEW OUTREACH FOR SENIOR RESIDENTS

The Franklin County Office on Aging announced this morning a new outreach effort aimed at bringing its resources directly to older residents who may not otherwise be familiar with what the office has to offer. The new campaign, branded HOPE—Helping Our residents and families with Purposeful Engagement, will be an ongoing effort to support senior residents living independently by letting them know about services that can help them age in-place. HOPE will encompass direct outreach to seniors, families, and caregivers to check in on their health and inform them about services available through the Office on Aging.

"We have so many supports in place to help an older person to continue to live on their own, but not everyone knows about them," said Office on Aging Director Orvell Johns. "Our HOPE initiative is a way for us to reach out directly to the people we serve to find out what they may need and let them know what we have to offer."

During the HOPE campaign, staffers from the Office on Aging will be calling older residents on the phone in order to provide information directly to seniors and their caregivers. The focus in March is going to



be on making COVID-19 and other vaccines available. The team will also be letting people know about the office's direct supports, such as home-delivered meals for seniors as well as personal care, respite care, light cleaning, and minor home repair, and the Caregiver Support program, which supports people who are caring for older adults, including if they are themselves senior citizens.

In April, the Office on Aging will be spreading the word about the county's Kinship Care program, which supports older adults who are caring for children other than their own, and the Home Repair service, which helps aged residents to stay in their homes by providing minor plumbing and electrical work, new smoke alarms, handrails, wheelchair ramps, and more. The outreach in May will focus on the agency's Adult Protective Services.

"Five million older Americans are abused, neglected, or taken advantage of each year, and many of them or their loved ones don't know where to turn when they suspect that something like that is going on," said Johns. "Our Adult Protective Services team investigates these cases thoroughly and discreetly to help protect our older neighbors while preserving their dignity."

The Office on Aging's services are offered free of charge to eligible residents through support from the Franklin County Commissioners and the county's Senior Options levy. To learn more about eligibility and available services, visit [OfficeOnAging.org](#) or call 614-525-5230.

SHERRILYN IFILL TO STEP DOWN AFTER NEARLY A DECADE AT LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) today announced that President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill will step down from her role in the spring of 2022 after nearly a decade leading the organization through its greatest period of growth and transformation. Janai Nelson, LDF's current Associate Director-Counsel who has worked alongside Ms. Ifill for nearly eight years, will become the next President and Director-Counsel of the storied organization founded in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall. LDF has been a separate organization from the NAACP since 1957.

Since its founding, LDF has distinguished itself through groundbreaking achievements in every facet of racial and social justice. Under Ms. Ifill's leadership, LDF has advanced its legacy as the country's most high-profile racial justice legal organization. LDF has led the fight against voter suppression, inequity in education, economic disparities, and racial discrimination in the criminal legal system. LDF has also been at the forefront of protecting the integrity of the electoral process against a scourge of anti-democratic incursions and providing powerful and relentless advocacy against police violence.

Ms. Ifill and Ms. Nelson have both dedicated their lives to the pursuit of racial justice and consider leading LDF as the pinnacle of that work. Their transition marks the first woman-to-woman succession in LDF's history, and



(L to R) Marc Morial - President of National Urban League, Wade Henderson - Leadership Conference for Civil & Human Rights, Sherrilyn Ifill, Rev. Al Sharpton

they will continue to work closely together during the transition period to ensure LDF's vital role in advancing racial and social justice throughout the country.

"It has been the privilege of a lifetime to lead LDF for nearly 10 years. I began my career as a civil rights lawyer at LDF more than 30 years ago and every day leading this extraordinary, dedicated staff has felt like a dream come true," said Ms. Ifill. "I have given this work my all, and I am proud of our accomplishments, including our increased

growth and strength. But I am most proud of the leadership role LDF has played during one of the most tumultuous and volatile periods for civil rights in recent memory. And our fight is far from over. For the work ahead, I am thrilled that Janai Nelson, who has been my trusted partner, will take LDF to even greater heights. I have no doubt that she is the right leader to build upon the strong foundation we have laid over the last several years and Janai will continue to advance the

Continued on Page 37

Continued from Page 36

organization's mission to defend and protect the rights of Americans all over the country."

During Ms. Ifill's tenure, at critical moments during political and civil rights crises, her singular voice and vision have powerfully influenced our national dialogue. She has elevated and strengthened LDF's prominence as the country's leading civil rights law organization and achieved unprecedented growth in the organization's history. LDF's staff, annual budget, and endowment have increased five-fold under Ms. Ifill's leadership. In addition, the organization launched several lawsuits to protect the integrity of the 2020 election, while partnering with LeBron James' More Than A Vote to recruit over 40,000 people to apply to be poll workers across the country. LDF has also provided powerful and relentless advocacy against police brutality, housing discrimination, and education inequity – all while working to protect the lives, homes, and educational opportunities of Black communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Ifill first joined LDF in 1988 as Assistant Counsel, litigating voting rights cases for five years before joining the faculty of the University of Maryland School of Law. Ms. Ifill's scholarly work on the history and ongoing resonance of 20th century lynchings, including her widely acclaimed book "On The Courthouse Lawn," is credited with reigniting the contemporary focus on lynching and the movement to create lynching memorials. She returned to LDF as its seventh President and Director-Counsel in 2013.

Among many honors, Ms. Ifill is the recipient of numerous honorary degrees, and was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the world in 2021, honored with a 2021 Spirit of Excellence Award by the American Bar Association, and named Attorney of the Year by The American Lawyer in 2020. In 2022, Ms. Ifill will receive the prestigious Brandeis Medal, named for Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, and the American Bar Association's Thurgood Marshall Award.

"From the moment I learned about LDF's storied legacy in securing and advancing the civil rights of Black people in America and pressing this country to live up to its constitutional ideals, I knew that contributing to that effort would be the highest and most fulfilling pursuit," said Ms. Nelson. "LDF is unparalleled in its contributions to the cause of racial justice over the past 81 years and in the evolution and protection of civil rights for Black people. It is the utmost honor to continue the work of those who came before me alongside the exceedingly talented team of lawyers, advocates, organizers, researchers, communications professionals, and administrative personnel that comprise LDF today."

"It has been an extreme privilege to work alongside Sherrilyn Ifill since 2014 and to have worked with three of LDF's seven President and Director-Counsels, including Elaine Jones and Ted Shaw," Ms. Nelson



Janai Nelson will assume the role of President/Director of LDF.

continued. "As LDF emerges from the profound metamorphosis of the past nine years under Sherrilyn's leadership, I am honored to steward LDF's next chapter with the skill, vision, care, and courage that it demands."

Ms. Nelson also began her civil rights career at LDF, first as an extern in 1995 while a student at UCLA School of Law, then as a recipient of the prestigious Fried Frank-LDF Fellowship in 1998 until she was hired as an Assistant Counsel by LDF's first female President and Director-Counsel Elaine Jones. Ms. Nelson went on to lead LDF's Political Participation Group, including the entire voting rights and redistricting docket, felony disenfranchisement, and voter suppression matters. After leaving LDF to do research in Ghana, West Africa, as a Fulbright awardee, she spent nearly 10 years in academia, where she became a full professor and high-level administrator and dean at St. John's University School of Law. While in the academy, Ms. Nelson was honored with the Derrick A. Bell Award from the American Association of Law Schools Section on Minority Groups and was named one of Lawyers of Color's 50 Under 50 minority professors making an impact in legal education.

Ms. Nelson returned to LDF in 2014 as its Associate Director-Counsel at Ms. Ifill's invitation. A member of the litigation and policy teams, Ms. Nelson served as lead counsel in *Veasey v. Abbott* (2018), a successful federal challenge to Texas' discriminatory voter ID law, and was the lead architect of National Urban League, et al. v. Trump (2020), which sought to declare President Trump's Executive Order banning diversity, equity, and inclusion training in the workplace unconstitutional before it was later rescinded by President Biden. Working closely with Ms. Ifill, Ms. Nelson has also helped to develop and execute LDF's strategic vision and oversee the operation of its programs.

Together, Ms. Ifill and Ms. Nelson launched one of the most far-reaching efforts to create the next generation of civil rights leaders: The Marshall-Motley Scholars Program (MMSP). The MMSP, named in honor of the nation's first Black Supreme Court Justice and LDF founder Thurgood Marshall, and iconic civil rights litigator Constance Baker Motley, is a multiyear commitment to endow the South with committed, prepared civil rights lawyers trained to provide legal advocacy of unparalleled excellence. They also launched the Thurgood Marshall Institute, a multi-disciplinary research arm within LDF.

LDF's Board of Directors – led for the first time in the organization's history by two women, Co-Chairs Angela Vallot, Partner at VallotKarp, and Kim Koopersmith, Partner and Chairperson at Akin Gump, Strauss Hauer & Feld – voted unanimously in favor of Ms. Nelson's ascension.

Ms. Vallot commented, "Sherrilyn has been a transformative leader who has done a remarkable job of leading LDF over the last 10 years. When it came time to name her successor, we knew exactly who it should be. Janai's leadership in close partnership with Sherrilyn over the past several years makes her the perfect person to take the helm as LDF continues to lead the fight for racial equality during this crucial time in American history."

Ms. Koopersmith said, "Sherrilyn Ifill is a true visionary and her contributions to LDF, and our country are extraordinary. She has risen to every challenge we have faced as a nation, and we are a better country for her leadership and tenacity. Equally importantly, she has given the greatest gift to LDF – a seamless transition to a truly exceptional new leader. As recent years have shown, the work of LDF remains as vital as ever and we are exceptionally fortunate to have Janai Nelson step into this crucial role as LDF's 8th President and Director-Counsel."

"Sherrilyn Ifill has been a stalwart crusader in the fight for equality in the finest tradition of LDF's leaders," said Mrs. Cecilia Marshall, widow of the Hon. Thurgood Marshall. "She is demanding and determined to advance the work of civil rights. We are all better for that talent and dedication and I am confident that we will continue to be inspired by her in her new role. Janai Nelson is a superb choice, fully in the tradition of LDF's commitment to equality and legal excellence."

Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Columbus, Ohio

March 8, 2022

Critical Race Theory: What Is It & Why Is It Under Attack? Social justice protests have caused many to rethink what they know about the history of race in America. From the role slavery played in building the American economy, to a lack of knowledge about the Tulsa race massacre, many question the lessons they learned—or didn't learn—in school. This awareness has brought new attention to the nearly 50-year-old academic framework of Critical Race Theory which argues racism is embedded in the American legal and economic systems. Not everyone agrees, and they argue supporters of CRT are trying to divide America and re-write history. This Dialogue discussion will explore Critical Race Theory and discuss why it has come under fire. This event is sponsored by WOSU Public Media and features: Hasan Kwame Jeffries, Associate Professor of History, The Ohio State University and Vince Ellison, Author and Member of Project 21 Black Leadership Network.

Address: Virtual

Time: Noon – 1 p.m.

Admission: Free; Registration Required

Contact: https://osu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UVftpwOKSO-xgLNm7ga3-w

March 17, 2022

The Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University is offering a forum on Building Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement Environments in Columbus and Beyond. Presenters are Jill Clark, PhD, Associate Professor & Kip Holley, Social Research Associate at The Ohio State University.

Location: The Kirwin Institute of the Study of Race & Ethnicity

Address: 33 W. 11th Ave. 43201

Time: 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Admission: Free; Open to the public

Contact: Kip Holley, holley.17@osu.edu

March 29, 2022

Please join Black Girl Rising, Inc. and representatives of organizations that serve Black girls for a discussion on the needs of Black girls in our city. During the session, you will have the opportunity to share what you do, what is working for your mission with girls and where you think the gaps are in building resilient Black girls. Please consider inviting another member of your organization to attend with you. Our conversation will be moderated. We will have materials/resource tables. Please bring information about your organization to share.

Location: Martin Luther King Branch, Columbus Metropolitan Library

Address: 1467 E. Long Street 43203

Time: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Admission: Free; Registration Required

Contact: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/black-girl-rising-inc-gathering-tickets-276965189337?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Dayton, Ohio

Current

Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive traces the global history of slavery between the 17th and 19th centuries. Database users can explore the history of slavery and anti-slavery in four parts: Debates over Slavery and Abolition, Slave Trade in the Atlantic World, the Institution of Slavery, and the Age of Emancipation – collections all supported by over five million pages of material from different countries that document the history of slave trade. Archives Unbound specifically offers 32 different collection titles covering a variety of sub-topics relating to African American history. The new databases, powered by Gale Primary Sources, are a welcome addition to the other African American research databases the library offers: Black Freedom Struggle, African American Heritage, and African American History Online.

Location: Dayton Metropolitan Library

Address: 215 E. Third St. 45402

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. Mon, Tues, Thurs. & 9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. Wed, Fri, Sat

Admission: Free

Contact: DaytonMetroLibrary.org/Research

March 24, 2022

Sinclair Talks: Moral Leadership for a Divided Age—Two Modern Examples. As part of the “Season of Non-violence,” the presenters will explore the idea of “moral leadership” and then discuss two 20th century figures who embodied that idea, Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The presentation will also provide lessons for our own time and will include opportunity for questions and conversation with the audience. Speaker(s): Larry Lindstrom, Multifaith Campus Ministry & Thomas Roberts, Ohio Fellows.

Location: Sinclair Community College

Address: 444 W. Third 45402 (Library Loggia or Virtual)

Time: 11 a.m. - Noon

Admission: Free

Contact: 800-315-3000

Current – March 31, 2022

Each year, Dayton Live partners with Shango: Center for the Study of African American Art and Culture, and Willis “Bing” Davis, exhibit curator and director of EbonNia Gallery, to display an exhibit of art by local African American artists inside the Schuster Center. This year’s exhibit, at the Schuster Center January 26-March 31, 2022, is 2022 Dayton Skyscrapers featuring the work of African American visual artists from the Miami Valley. The Dayton Skyscrapers art project is not a celebration of Dayton’s tall buildings or our skyline. Dayton Skyscrapers is a metaphor for those local and regional African Americans who stand tall in our minds and hearts for what they have achieved in their field and their contributions to the quality of life of Dayton and the Miami Valley Region. The Visual Voices 2022 team of Dayton and Miami Valley African American visual artists have selected a core of high-achieving African Americans as Dayton Skyscrapers.

Location: Shuster Center

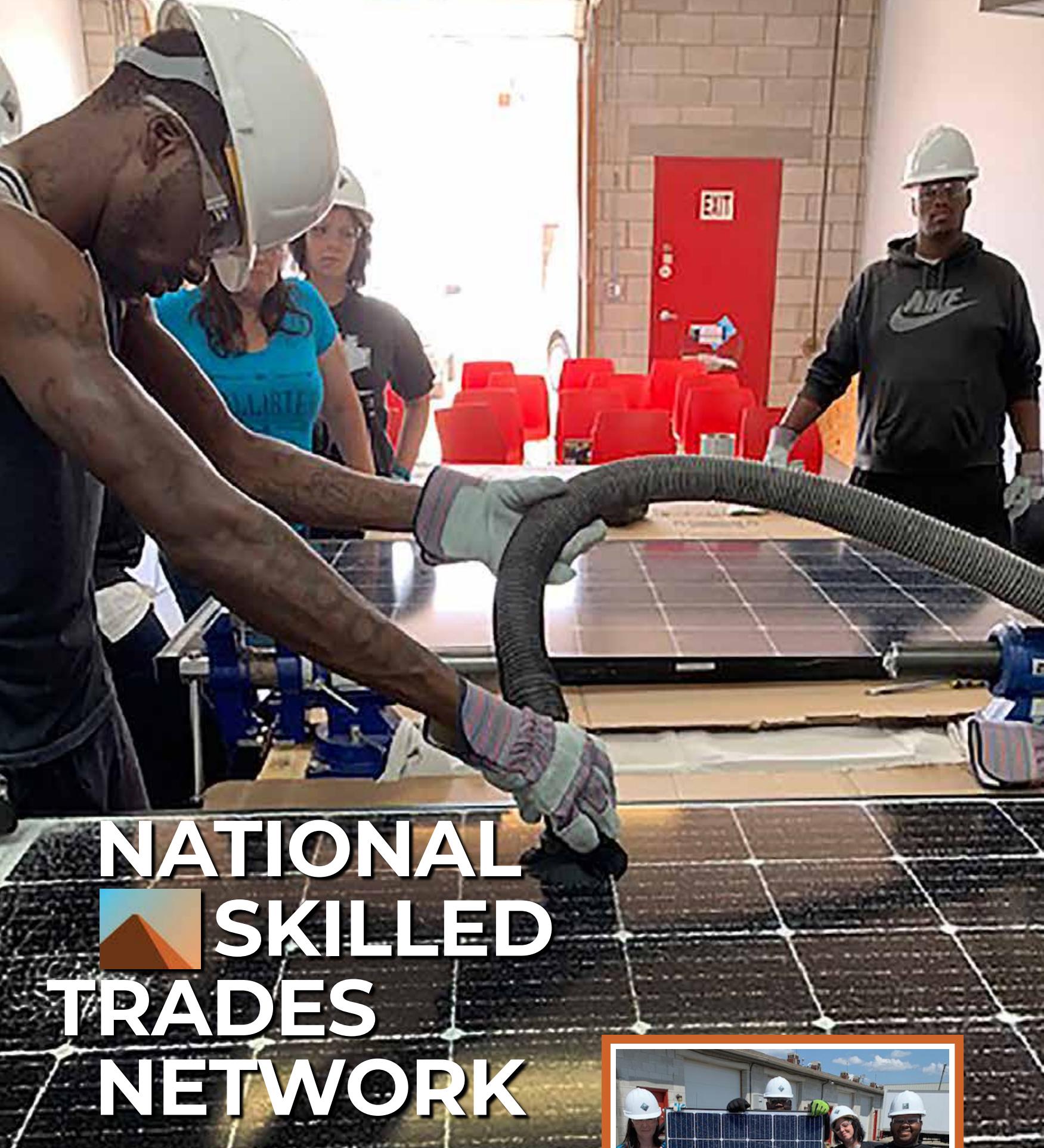
Address: 1 West Second Street 45402

Time: Varies

Admission: Free

Contact: 937-228-7591

Please note: Information for this section is gathered from multiple community sources. The Columbus & Dayton African American is not responsible for the accuracy and content of information. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. If you have an event that you would like to feature in this section, please call 614-826-2254 or email us at editor@columbusafricanamerican.com. Submissions are due the last Friday of each month.



NATIONAL SKILLED TRADES NETWORK

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT "CHANGING PERSPECTIVE CHANGING LIFE"

National Skilled Trades Network creates job opportunities in the community through NCCER accredited construction training. We prepare young men and women for lucrative skilled craft jobs of the future, like Solar Photovoltaic Installation (*pictured*). Possible tuition assistance available through the VTAC construction training program at IMPACT Community Action.

VISIT: <http://www.nstnetwork.org> | EMAIL: nstnetwork@nstnetwork.org



The Ohio Commission on Minority Health

SAVE *the* DATE

APRIL IS MINORITY HEALTH MONTH!

**The 2022 Virtual Statewide
Minority Health Month Kickoff Ceremony**

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

9am-12pm

Celebrating 35 years of Service

Register for our 2022 Virtual Statewide Minority Health Month
Kickoff and Awards Ceremony at: <https://ocmh.mjvirtualevents.com>

Sponsors to Date: Bronze Level: CareSource
Pewter Level: Buckeye Health Plan , Molina and Promedica,
Copper Level: Nationwide Children's

***The statewide listing of events can be accessed at www.mih.ohio.gov
on March 11, 2022***

This virtual event is Free and Open to the Public

Mike DeWine, Governor | Representative Sykes, Chairperson | Angela Dawson, Director