

110th Anniversary Edition

# The CRISIS

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*W. E. B. DuBois*  
“The problem of the  
~~twentieth~~ twenty-first  
century is THE problem of  
the color line.”

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Chadwick Boseman  
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Contributor

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**Crisis Statement of Principles** At *The Crisis*, we remain committed: To battle tirelessly for the rights of humanity and the highest ideals of democracy ■ To tell the world the facts ■ To expose injustice and propose solutions ■ To speak for ourselves ■ To speak the truth to power ■ To serve as a trustworthy record of the darker races ■ To serve as a reliable antidote to ignorance ■ To shape and strengthen our collective consciousness ■ To serve humbly and forthrightly as memory and conscience, as spirit and heart.

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# 110 Years Later: Du Bois is Calling

One year after the founding of the NAACP, NAACP co-founder W.E.B. Du Bois created *The Crisis* magazine, which became the official publication of the NAACP. The first issue of *The Crisis* was published in November 1910. It sold 1,000 copies in its first year and more than 100,000 copies by 1920.

Du Bois noted that *The Crisis* would be "A Record of the Darker Races" and wrote of the magazine's formal mission:

*"It will first and foremost be a newspaper: it will record important happenings and movements in the world which bear on the great problem of inter-racial relations, and especially those which affect the Negro-American. Secondly, it will be a review of opinion and literature, recording briefly books, articles, and important expressions of opinion in the white and colored press on the race problem. Thirdly, it will publish a few short articles. Finally, its editorial page will stand for the rights of men, irrespective of color or race, for the highest ideals of American democracy, and for reasonable but earnest and persistent attempts to gain these rights and realize these ideals. The magazine will be the organ of no clique or party and will avoid personal rancor of all sorts. In the absence of proof to the contrary it will assume honesty of purpose on the part of all men, North and South, white and black."*



In its early years, *The Crisis* covered the women's suffrage movement, lynching laws, segregation

and racial discrimination. It also highlighted Black culture. The pages of *The Crisis* were open to the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance including Langston Hughes and artist Aaron Douglas.

In an essay titled "Returning Soldiers" published in the May 1919 issue of *The Crisis*, Du Bois wrote that the Black soldiers who fought in World War I, "fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals." But he also noted that despite the Black soldiers' sacrifice, America lynches, disenfranchises its own citizens, encourages ignorance, steals from poor and marginalized communities, and insults Black people.

Sound familiar?

During the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Justice, the NAACP's Roy Wilkins led the crowd of more than 250,000 in a moment of silence in tribute of Du Bois, who had died the night before. He said of the civil rights leader, "Regardless of the fact that in his later years Dr. Du Bois chose another path, it is incontrovertible that at the dawn of the 20th century his was the voice that was calling to you to gather here today in this cause."

Today more than ever we hear Du Bois' voice.

2020 has been a year of a national pandemic and social unrest.

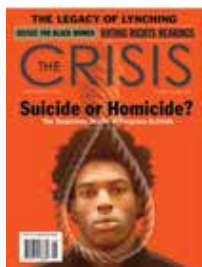
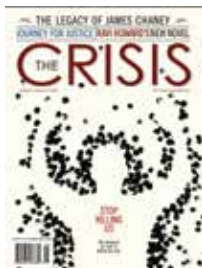
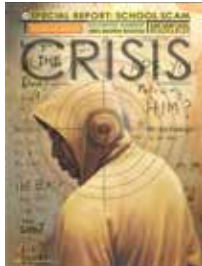
We've experienced great loss and witnessed great compassion.

This year has also been one of historic proportions with the election of Sen. Kamala Harris as the nation's first woman, first African American and first person of South Asian descent to be elected vice president of the United States.

Du Bois' voice is still calling. Do you hear it?



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## 2020: A Year of Possibilities

I always look at the calendar and when a year ends in zero, it means we've come to the end of something or the beginning of something and sometimes it's both. 2020 brought us to another level in so many ways. We lost some things that were valuable.

But it's also been an incredible year of possibilities. It's opened the door a little wider in terms of what we can be.

That's what W.E.B. Du Bois did 110 years ago when he created *The Crisis* magazine as "a record of the darker races." Du Bois was a visionary. He could visualize us being in a better place. He gave us hope. In *The Crisis*, you could see folks who climbed through everything and arrived at a good place.

I don't think there's any other source that goes back like *The Crisis*. It's been a handbook on how to help build a perfect union. It's been an asset — even to people who think they don't need it. It's existed 110 years. I don't know how many print instruments can even come close to that record. You see *The Crisis* at the barbershop, beauty salon, doctor's office and on your coffee table. It means something.

*The Crisis* magazine has played a role of telling our story as no one else has been able to tell it. The magazine had an impact that made a difference in our development — what we ought to think about and what we ought to be doing.

We need to make sure that our story isn't buried and the hills that we need to climb don't disappear. You have to push and shove and scrape your knees a few times to achieve things. I'm hopeful that we have young men and young women who are willing to scrape their knees a little bit to get to that next level. There are a lot of rough patches, and I hope the new generation has the courage to go through those rough patches and not take it easy. I see our brilliant young people doing some incredible things. *The Crisis* magazine helps to tell that story.

*The Crisis*, even if it has to take a new shape as a digital product to fit into this era, is still needed.



Laura D. Blackburne, Publisher  
*The Crisis Magazine*

# CONTRIBUTORS



## Intisar Abioto

Photographer

### QUOTE:

In the midst of our call for collective courage, vision, transformation and liberation, attending to Black life through images and storytelling is my deepest contribution to life itself. I work within a legacy and tradition of Black storytellers and imagemakers working through spirit. I am not the only one.

### BIO:

*Intisar Abioto is a photographer and multi-disciplinary artist based in Portland, Ore.*



## Laylah Amatullah Barrayn

Photographer

### QUOTE:

As a photographer who is documenting my own lived experience as a Black woman through the communal experiences of Black America during the time of a global racial uprising and reckoning, I am both saddened and inspired. I am saddened because I am currently engaged with the very same fight of liberation and civil rights of my ancestors; and I am also inspired that this ongoing quest for global justice has not been extinguished, that it is enduring and that this generation feels passionately about the freedom and equity of Black people globally. I am honored to be present to record this pursuit of justice.

### BIO:

*Laylah Amatullah Barrayn is a documentary photographer and co-author of the book "MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora."*



## Rosella Joseph

Photographer

### QUOTE:

Being able to document the protests in Kenosha (Wis.) was an honor. I felt like I was contributing to history. It's sad that it's 2020 and we still have stuff like this going on. But I feel like I am doing my part as a creator because creators capture moments in time and it's important that we have control of our own narrative.

### BIO:

*Born in Port Au Prince, Haiti, Rosella Joseph is a Milwaukee-based photographer who blends the love of her culture and symmetry to capture the world from her perspective.*

## The Crisis Magazine and Magnum Foundation Partnership

The year 2020 has been a year of racial reckoning in America. The tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor set off worldwide protests in support of Black lives. In a historic partnership, the Magnum Foundation, which

supports a global network of social justice and human rights-focused photographers, and *The Crisis Magazine*, the official publication of the NAACP, teamed up to document the nationwide civil unrest that occurred this summer.

The Magnum Foundation provided production grants to five members of the MFON Black women photographers collective

to capture the stories of rising social justice activists in Portland, Louisville, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Kenosha. The photos are a record of a changing of the guard, centering a new generation in the fight for social justice and civil rights. They serve as a hopeful beacon for our future and mark an important juncture in our collective history.

# CONTRIBUTORS



## Zakkiyyah Najeebah Dumas-O'Neal

Photographer

### QUOTE:

Photographing the portraits of women who are intentionally finding ways to creatively build up their communities through care, concern and collective organizing feels more impactful and hopeful for me than what this government or any policy can provide at this time. Activism isn't always a response to a particular moment, but a way of living or doing that consistently acts in service to the well-being and care of people, and these Black women model just that. More people are starting to realize that it's time to stop depending on this country and its "leaders" to empower us and meet our needs, when we have individuals and groups who are more than willing to step up and do what needs to be done."

### BIO:

Zakkiyyah Najeebah Dumas-O'Neal is a Chicago-based visual artist, educator and independent curator.



## Andrea Ellen Reed

Photographer

### QUOTE:

My work has always been about my Black community and the fight for us to be seen as full human beings. Photographing right now during this historic time has been painful, hopeful, devastating and inspiring. Painful to see how hurtful this world can be. Hopeful that our voices are being heard and change is happening in certain spaces. Devastating to see our people continually cut down. Inspiring to see just how strong, creative and resilient we are. I am humbled to be included in the pantheon of Black photographers giving voice to this movement. Our stories and photos have been worthy of an audience all along. I hope the attention paid to our voices continues.

### BIO:

Andrea Ellen Reed is a Minneapolis-based multimedia artist who specializes in still photography, film directing and soundscapes. Her work seeks to advance the multifaceted narratives that make the vibrant and resilient African-American community thrive.



## Adama Delphine Fawundu

Project Co-Producer

### QUOTE:

I am honored for the opportunity to co-produce this very important piece for *The Crisis*. At this moment in history, I am truly understanding the need to holistically reflect on our collective past in order to actively change the present and make the futures that we want. I am hoping that at some point, Americans and citizens of the world will advance themselves enough to understand that adhering to racial, gendered and social class hierarchies is violent and destructive.

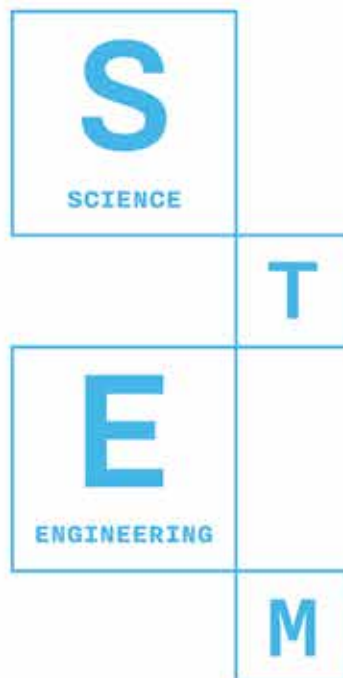
### BIO:

Adama Delphine Fawundu is a research-based visual artist and educator based in Brooklyn, N.Y. She is the co-founder of MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora.

**The Magnum Foundation** is a nonprofit organization that expands creativity and diversity in documentary photography, activating new ideas through the innovative use of images. Through grantmaking and fellowships, the Magnum Foundation supports a global network of social justice and human rights-focused photographers, and experiments with new models for storytelling.

**The Crisis Magazine** is the official publication of the NAACP. It is the nation's oldest continuously published African-American publication. The quarterly journal was created in 1910 by NAACP co-founder W.E.B. DuBois and focuses on social and political issues, African-American history, Black art and culture.

**MFON** is dedicated to providing women and non-binary photographers of African descent with opportunities that will enhance their professional development and growth. In 2017, the anthology *MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora* was the first book to showcase a global perspective of women photographers of African descent.



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# upfront

Blacks and COVID vaccine

New App for HBCUs

Tribute to Marian Wright Edelman

## ACTIVISM



## Black Voters Made the Difference

Findings highlight how Black people voted, why they voted and how they are at the front of a powerful political coalition

By Maria Morales

**A** coalition led by people of color is now the dominant political reality in the United States.

This is the conclusion of a 2020 American Election Eve Poll and results from the NAACP's nationwide efforts to get out the Black vote.

"We celebrate the historic outcome

as the result of the progressive bloc that we know as the African-American vote," said NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson.

Nearly nine out of 10 African Americans supported Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his selection of Kamala Harris as his running mate for vice president. The strong support of Biden among

Black voters in the 2020 election was the result of a strategic consolidation of the Black voting bloc, according to findings from the poll, completed by the African American Research Coalition (AARC).

"In light of how this election turned out, it is clear that Black voters are the backbone of Biden's coalition," said Henry Fernandez, principal at AARC.

The AARC, at the behest of the NAACP, the Vera Institute of Justice and several minority political action groups, conducted a large scale poll that oversampled people of color in critical battleground states who had already voted or were likely to vote, as well as large samples of white voters.

More than eight out of 10 young Black Americans voted for Biden. In contrast, whites under age 40 voted for Trump at 55 percent—two points higher than whites older than 60, which shows that young white voters are not particularly more progressive than older white voters.

In addition to the presidential election, the poll showed the most important concerns for African Americans were racial justice and the coronavirus pandemic. The damage wrought by COVID-19 was the major issue of the 2020 election, regardless of race, Fernandez said. But Black Americans continue to be disproportionately harmed by the pandemic, which influenced how and why they voted.

Black voters also want policy and reform around criminal justice including banning chokeholds and strangleholds; shifting funds from policing to community and family support; and reducing immigrant detention.

"Black voters are overwhelmingly concerned about systemic racism, especially as it relates to the criminal legal system," said Nick Turner, president of Vera. "Criminal justice reform should be a priority for the [incoming] president and Congress."

The NAACP's "Black Voices Change Lives" campaign targeted infrequent Black voters. NAACP spent \$15 million in outreach targeting Black communities in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Alabama, Virginia, Florida and Nevada.

Johnson said the NAACP's unique, data-driven approach targeting infrequent African American voters made the difference in this election.

"The NAACP has spent the past 100 years mobilizing Black people across the country to get out the vote," said Johnson. "Black people have always led the charge to make this country live up to its ideals of fairness and equality."

## PIONEERS

# Adding Her Story to History

### Preserving the history of Black women pioneers

By Kathryn De Shields

**M**aya Angelou. Katherine Johnson. Oprah Winfrey. Madam C.J. Walker. Dr. Mae Jemison.

All these women are well known as Black pioneers in their respective fields. But, what about the countless other doctors, artists, teachers, scientists, civic leaders, military personnel and executives who are not known household names?

Take Ursula Burns, for example.

From 2009 to 2016, Burns served as chair and CEO of Xerox. She started as an intern at the company in 1980 and worked her way up to CEO. To date, the only other Black woman to lead a Fortune 500 company is Mary Winston, who served as an interim CEO at Bed Bath & Beyond in 2019.

As a trailblazer in the business world, Burns is concerned that the stories of women like her will be forgotten, buried or lost. That's why she looked to the online project, The HistoryMakers, which she describes as "a more inclusive chronicle of American history," to find a way to highlight stories that would focus on the achievements of Black women.

Founded in 1999 by Julieanna Richardson, The HistoryMakers archives African-American stories. To date, the collection houses more than 3,300 video interviews (more than 10,000 hours of content) with African Americans, spanning locales,

industries and areas of expertise. These interviews, also known as biographies, are sorted into 15 industry-based categories. According to its website, The HistoryMakers is now "the single largest collection of African American first-person video oral history testimony in the world."

"I wanted to create the largest repository in the world about the Black experience, and I wanted to do that with people talking about their own stories," Richardson said during an interview at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. "When you look at this side of the Black community, you see an amazing, amazing people. I don't think we know enough about ourselves."



On Jan. 31, 2020, at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, Burns presented Richardson with a \$1 million gift to launch the WomanMakers initiative. The initiative will focus on adding more interviews with pioneering Black women to the HistoryMakers digital archive. An advisory committee of Black women leaders and executives across multiple industries will help select 180 trailblazing Black women to interview as part of the initiative.

"We have to value our own stories," Burns said in an interview with ABC News about the WomanMakers initiative. "We have to teach ourselves to actually value ourselves in our society."

# 1910

NAACP co-founder  
W.E.B. Du Bois creates  
The Crisis magazine.



## Lives

■ **Jason Wright** was named president of the Washington Football Team, making him the first Black team president in the National Football League. Wright, a former NFL running back who played in San Francisco, Cleveland, Atlanta and Arizona, has an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. He was a partner at McKinsey & Company, spearheading the firm's Black Economic Institute, which aims to advance economic empowerment for African Americans.



■ **Erik Moses** is the first Black track president in NASCAR history. Founding president of the XFL's DC Defenders, Moses was also CEO of the DC Sports & Entertainment Commission. A graduate of the University of North Carolina and Duke University School of Law, Moses has served as an adjunct professor in Georgetown University's Sports Industry Management Program since 2010.

■ Interim CEO **Judith Batty** is the first Black CEO in Girl Scouts history. Batty started off as a Brownie, continued as a Girl Scout, troop leader and National Board Member. Batty was also a trailblazer in corporate America and spent almost 30 years as an executive at ExxonMobil. Batty, who has a law degree from New York University, worked nearly 30 years as an executive at ExxonMobil, becoming the first woman and the first Black

person to serve as general counsel at ExxonMobil's affiliate in Japan.

■ Princeton University will create its first residential college named after a Black woman, alumna **Melody Hobson**. Hobson, who was the first in her family to attend college, is co-president and CEO of Ariel Investments. Hobson College will be built on the site of what was once known as Wilson College, named for President Woodrow Wilson.

■ **Mickey Guyton** made history as the first Black woman to perform solo at the Academy of Country Music Awards. Her song *Black Like Me*, written in 2019 but released in the summer of 2020, is a ballad about racial inequality. Guyton came on the scene in 2015 with a self-titled EP and the following year was nominated for an Academy of Country Music award for New Female Vocalist. Her latest EP, *Bridges*, was released in September.

■ **Asya Branch** has achieved two firsts: she's the first Black woman to be crowned Miss Mississippi and the first Miss Mississippi to be named Miss USA. Branch is a



student in the School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi. She plans to make criminal justice and prison reform the central issues of her tenure.

■ Midshipman 1st Class **Sydney Barber** has been selected as the U.S. Naval Academy's first Black female brigade commander. The brigade commander is the highest leadership position within that group. Barber, a member of the National Society of



Black Engineers (NSBE), launched a STEM outreach program aimed at middle school-age girls of color.

■ **Victor Glover** is the first Black astronaut to spend more than six months as a crew member on the International Space Station. He's also just the 15th Black astronaut of more than 300 astronauts overall that NASA has sent to space. Glover is a Navy commander and test pilot. He holds a bachelor's degree in general engineering from California Polytechnic State University as well as three master's degrees: in flight test engineering, systems engineering, and military operational art and science.

■ **Brett Peterson** was named the first Black general manager in the National Hockey League. Peterson was named to the position by the Florida Panthers. Prior to his new role, Peterson was Vice President, Hockey for Wasserman Media Group. Peterson is an adviser and consultant to the NextGEN AAA Foundation, a nonprofit that provides mentoring and hockey programs to underprivileged youth and underserved communities. This year, the foundation's all-minority team won the 2020 Beantown Summer Classic Tournament. In joining the Panthers, Peterson will also work with the team's foundation and community-based programs to make hockey more inclusive.

## Blacks' reluctance for COVID-19 vaccine trials has historic roots

By Emiene Wright

**T**he first vaccine for COVID-19 has been released but African Americans were not well represented in vaccine trials or during the testing phase of the vaccine. This could have dire implications for the vaccine's safety and effectiveness for Black people.

Drug companies Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer/BioNTech and AstraZeneca did not have a significant number of African Americans participate in the clinical trials. Black people have been disproportionately devastated by COVID-19, representing a quarter of COVID-19 deaths, according to the study *Color of Coronavirus* by APM Research Lab.

The nation's history of enacting medical atrocities on African Americans is well-documented from the Tuskegee Experiment to today's implicit bias in medicine.

"The many disparities being uncovered, combined with all of the recent attention on social injustice in this country, is a perfect storm against building trust for African Americans to join clinical trials for a vaccine," said Dr. Amber Brooks, a Winston-Salem, N.C.-based pain medicine physician who leads clinical research trials focusing on populations of color. "I would argue that we are so disproportionately affected by COVID, we should actually be overrepresented in clinical trials. We make up 13 percent of the population but we're the ones being most affected."

It's vital that the cohort of volunteers in clinical trials mirror the people being most affected, Brooks said, in order to prove the vaccine works adequately in those populations and to note any side effects before moving into mass production.

"Immune responses look different depending on your genetic makeup and part of that makeup is tied into how our immune systems respond to different viruses. There needs to be appropriate representation in trials to show that immunity or lack thereof," Brooks said.

Usually any new drug or vaccine undergoes pre-clinical animal testing, small group testing, then data collection to characterize safety and

immune responses. But we've moved at historic speed for the COVID-19 vaccine. The aggressive timeline has undermined health officials' attempts to reassure the public that the vaccine will in fact be safe.

It should be noted that Dr. Kizzmekia "Kizzy" Corbett, a leading Black female scientist, was on the team at the National Institutes of Health that developed the vaccine that will be released by Moderna.

In a CNN podcast hosted by Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Corbett said she understood why African Americans were hesitant about taking the coronavirus vaccine.

"I would say to people who are vaccine-hesitant that you've earned the right to ask the questions that you have around these vaccines and this vaccine development process," Corbett said. "Trust, especially when it has been stripped from people, has to be rebuilt in a brick-by-brick fashion. And so, what I say to people firstly is that I empathize, and then secondly is that I'm going to do my part in laying those bricks."



**The vaccine for the coronavirus was released in December, but African Americans are reluctant to get the vaccine because of medical mistrust.**

# Words

"Women like Mary Church Terrell and Mary McCleod Bethune, Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash, Constance Baker Motley and Shirley Chisholm. We're not often taught their stories. But as Americans, we all stand on their shoulders."

– Vice President-elect Kamala Harris

APPS

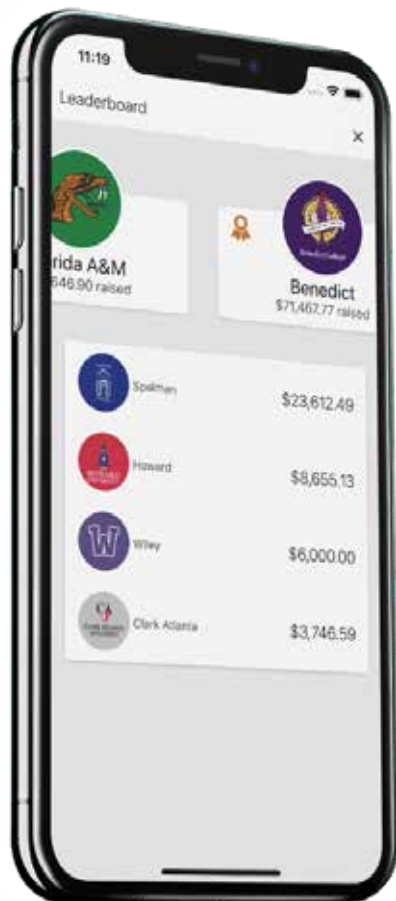
## New App Brings Support for HBCUs

Creative funding for historically Black colleges and universities in need

By Ida Harris

**F**inancial support for historically Black colleges and universities has taken a turn toward innovation. A new micro-donation app called HBCU Change intersects technology with philanthropy. Founder Xavier Peoples hopes to raise \$1 billion in five years for HBCUs. The app and fundraising initiative was officially launched on Aug. 1.

"HBCUs rely heavily on government funding and sporadic large donations to keep their doors open," said



Peoples. "HBCU Change was created as a model of consistency for HBCU fundraising year in and year out. It gives alumni and supporters a chance to change their university with 'change.'"

In the same vein as innovative fundraising apps like Acorns and Stash, HBCU Change takes the amount of micro change that is left over from credit or debit purchases and transforms the amount into small but significant HBCU donations. Peoples projects an HBCU funding goal of \$1 billion by 2025. HBCU Change could have a profound effect on monetary gifting by making it easier for alumni to donate digitally, and accessible for others who want to contribute to Black institutions on a consistent basis — as opposed to when schools fall into financial crisis.

This could be good news for HBCUs, particularly those that struggle financially and lack the sustainable endowments that is known to many predominantly white institutions. A 2017 Bloomberg analysis revealed that even the \$578 million endowment that Howard University receives is a mere 2 percent of the \$35.7 billion endowment Harvard University receives. Those numbers are a far cry from the \$5 million Bennett College needed to keep its doors open after 146 years of operation. In 2019, the North Carolina HBCU found itself scrambling to raise funds to prevent the loss of accreditation and closure. In the race with time, the small women's college prevailed by the grace of aggressive fundraising and public charity.

"It's estimated that all HBCUs' endowments total \$2.1 billion. When you consider that there are several single institutions of higher learning in this country that have more than \$2.1 billion in their endowment, then you realize that \$1 billion for 103 HBCUs is only the starting point," said Peoples. "We have to think big and believe that our schools can have large endowments as well. It starts with us using group economics to support our schools on a consistent basis."

To learn more about HBCU Change and support historically Black colleges and universities, check out the app website at <https://hbcuchange.com/>.

REPORTS

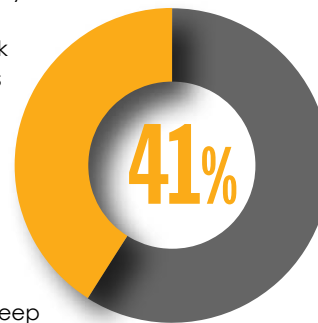
## According to Reports

**T**he number of African-American business owners plummeted from 1.1 million to 640,000, a loss of 41 percent between February and April

2020, according to a report by the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#). The report, titled *The Impact of Covid-19 on Small Business Owners: Evidence of Early-Stage Losses from the April 2020 Current Population Survey*, found the drop in the number of Black business owners in a two-month period was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It noted that no other group suffered such steep declines during this phase of the global health crisis.

In comparison, the number of Latino business owners fell by 32 percent and Asian business owners by 26 percent. The number of white owners fell 17 percent. Immigrant business owners declined by 36 percent and female-owned businesses were also disproportionately hit by 25 percent.

The report found that the number of Black businesses concentrated in industries hit hard by the pandemic is one reason losses are higher than the national average. It concluded that many of these closures may be permanent because of the inability to pay ongoing expenses and survive the shutdown.



**African-American business plummeted from 1.1 million to 640,000, a loss of 41 percent**

## Marian Wright Edelman: The Nation's Fiercest Child Advocate

In 1967, Marian Wright Edelman advised the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Sen. Robert Kennedy to recommit themselves in the fight against chronic poverty. Not yet 30 years old, she was the director of the NAACP LDF, Inc. in Mississippi. Her prodding encouraged King to launch the Poor People's Campaign a year later. For Kennedy, who she escorted on a poverty tour in the Mississippi Delta, her insistence elevated poverty reduction to the forefront of his future presidential campaign.

Edelman founded the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in 1973 to challenge the United States to improve its policies for children. Her anti-poverty activism included grassroots mobilization and institutional advocacy. In September, she stepped down as president and CEO. However, Edelman remains a member of CDF's board of directors and continues to work as the organization's president emerita in the Office of the Founder.

Born in Bennettsville, S.C., in 1939, Edelman developed a righteous indignation to injustice at a young age. As a student at Spelman College, she was arrested in 1960 for protesting racial segregation in Atlanta. Her involvement in the sit-ins brought her into the movement circle of Ella Baker and other activists who made up the nucleus of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

After graduating Yale Law School, Edelman moved to Mississippi where she became the first Black woman in the state to pass the bar. She soon developed a reputation as a fierce advocate for Head Start through her work with the Child Development Group of Mississippi. She won a monumental victory with the passage of the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

Backed by an apparatus of regional, state and local affiliates, the CDF operated as a social policy ombudsman under her leadership. It monitored regulatory and budget

decisions affecting policies such as Medicaid, children's health insurance, Head Start and tax credit programs. It also published research reports tailored for lawmakers on issues pertaining to racial disparities and school discipline, child poverty and gun violence.

Among Edelman's signature initiatives was the formation of the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC) in 1990. Her impetus for the BCCC was announced in a 1990 commencement speech at Howard University, calling "the nation to action to save Black children — and all children — and to replace the current climate of despair with one of hope and struggle." The BCCC blossomed into a national network of prominent advocates and public health officials. The Black Student Leadership Network (BSLN) was formed in 1991 as the BCCC's youth arm.

The summer freedom school program was the centerpiece of CDF/BCCC/BSLN activities. Staffed by hundreds of students and young adults, freedom schools spread to dozens of cities and educated thousands of low-income children. The CDF's Haley Farm, a 157-acre farm purchased from

author Alex Haley in 1994, served as a movement training center for freedom school activists, child advocates and religious leaders.

By marrying grassroots mobilization and institutional advocacy, Edelman influenced nearly every piece of anti-poverty legislation at the federal level in the last 50 years. At the same time, she situated communal caregiving institutions and Black advocates at the center of important social policy debates. In 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded Edelman the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Edelman leaves the CDF with an outsized legacy. As a fitting tribute, she will be remembered as the conscience of the nation and a prophetic voice — a precursor to the Black Lives Matter movement — directly responsible for saving the lives of thousands of children. She belongs in the pantheon of freedom fighters — along with Bethune, Baker, King and Kennedy — that breathed justice into the American democratic experiment.

**Sekou Franklin** is associate professor of political science at Middle Tennessee State University. He is the author of *After the Rebellion: Social Movement Activism and Popular Mobilization Among the Post-Civil Rights Generation* (NYU Press, 2014) and co-author of *Losing Power: African Americans and Racial Polarization in Tennessee Politics* (University of Georgia Press, 2020).



EMMA MCINTYRE / STRINGER

# Q&A

## Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson: New Children's Defense Fund Prez

Interview By Cindy George

There's been a lighting of the torch for the next era of leadership at the Children's Defense Fund, the national child advocacy organization.

The Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, an activist, minister and philanthropist in St. Louis, Mo., steps into the role of president and CEO inaugurated nearly 50 years ago by Marian Wright Edelman, now CDF Founder Emerita.

Wilson is the president and CEO of Deaconess Foundation, a faith-based and grant-making organization devoted to making child well-being a civic priority in the St. Louis region.

After the 2014 shooting of teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., Wilson co-chaired the Ferguson Commission. And from 2008 to 2018, he served as pastor of Saint John's Church (The Beloved Community), a congregation which hosted the #BlackLivesMatter Freedom Ride to Ferguson and served as the welcome center for #FergusonOctober.

Wilson attended Xavier University in New Orleans where he competed in NAACP oratorical competitions sponsored by the school's college chapter. He also attended Eden Theological Seminary and received a doctoral degree in ministry from Duke University. The 44-year-old has four children and his wife, Dr. LaToya Smith Wilson, is a dentist.

In a conversation with *The Crisis*, Wilson discusses his development in children's advocacy, community organizing and movement building.

**The Crisis: How do you introduce yourself to people now that you have a national platform?**

**Wilson:** I just tell my story. I grew up in Dallas, Texas. I am a son of the church and the community. I lost my older brother and my youngest uncle to community violence in the same

neighborhood and I committed pretty early to a life of service. I've always worked in the social sector and most of that time bi-vocationally — leading in church settings while also leading in the social sector, which has included the United Way, the Urban League, a Black professional theater company and, for the last 10 years, in philanthropy with the Deaconess Foundation, a faith-related philanthropy here in the St. Louis region.



**“We’ve got an obligation and responsibility to keep children at the center of our conversations.”**

**The Crisis: What is your philosophy about the nation's children?**

**Wilson:** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 is the first year in American history where the majority of children under the age of 18 are children of color. What we are projecting about America hits children first. In 2011, the number of children under the age of 4 were children of color. So, for the last nine years, if you've been talking about early childhood education, you should have been talking about cultural competency. The instability of Black

children and brown children is the instability of America's future.

**The Crisis: How do you describe your battlefield?**

**Wilson:** We've got an obligation and responsibility to keep children at the center of our conversations whether those are policy conversations, whether those are conversations about the economy or whether those are conversations about the future of our religious or other structured communities. The reality is that none of these things has a future if the children don't thrive.

**The Crisis: What is your vision as the new president and CEO of the Children's Defense Fund?**

**Wilson:** Early on, it's important for me to have an ear versus an eye. Right now, I'm spending a good amount of time listening to people I know who love children, love this mission and have its best interest at heart. The process of discernment, through that listening process, will be able to cast a really clear vision about what we can be for our children, knowing that we cannot be all things.

**The Crisis: How does your Texas upbringing and mostly Midwest career influence your effectiveness at a national nonprofit?**

**Wilson:** I've been blessed in the last six or seven years to spend a good amount of time in New York, D.C., L.A., Oakland — places that mean a lot in the social sector because they are also deeply resourced and metropolitan. Building bridges to the middle of the country and connecting with the roots of the South has been critical for the strength and anchoring of movement work for Black people. The ability to connect that to these coastal realities is part of the charge before me in leading CDF.

B E Y O N D   T H E

Influential  
Black Voices

Look at Issues  
Facing Black  
Communities  
Post-Election

Compiled by  
Ida Harris

N O I T C O E T E





In the past four years, President Donald Trump has emboldened the white supremacist voice and attitude, upended the executive office with Twitter tirades, impeachment hearings, the undoing of critical, social policy, and mishandled the nation's deadly encounter with a global pandemic.

As it stands, Black people reside in a country that must be convinced Black lives matter and are to be taken seriously. The American justice system continues to fail African Americans. On Sept. 24, a Louisville, Ky., grand jury could not bring itself to indict three white officers for the shooting death of Breonna Taylor. On average,

Black women and men face police-involved fatalities over three times more than white people, according to a recent study from the journal *PLOS One*. As of 2014, Black people made up 34 percent of the U.S. carceral population and were imprisoned at five times the rate of white people. Education, health care, housing and mortality statistics were equally abysmal.

Though behemoth in weight, these are just a modicum of issues that burden Black communities. A pressing question then is what should be the African-American focus post-election? *The Crisis* asked influential Black voices to weigh in. They lay bare a better future where full Black liberation thrives. Their respective approach requires African-American desire, participation and the ability to envision transformation — not change.

## **Hari Ziyad** Author/Human Rights Activist

For many Black activists and organizers in the United States, the changes to

the Supreme Court will be devastating, and the social justice leaders are understandably afraid of what's to come. I do not bemoan their fear. When you lose your biggest asset, fear makes sense.

What doesn't make sense is insisting on investing in the same precarious assets year after year.

My hope for Black people after this election is that our work not be so reliant upon what happens in a system created based on our exploitation and enslavement. It will take great work to become completely autonomous. We can argue about how helpful it is to use the tools that this political system provides in the meantime. But what should be undeniable is that this system's tools should not be the only tools in our arsenal, to the point that we are always lost and devastated whenever they are inevitably taken away.

## **Reginald Dwayne Betts** Poet/Prison Abolitionist

The political scene is complicated on a national front. We argue that all politics are local, but I don't think we're engaging enough in local politics. Prison is my issue. Call me a one-issue voter. When you ask [what African Americans should focus on post-election], I ask what I should be doing. I think it's really about, on the decarceration front, figuring out how to manage what punishment should look like and what immediate mercy looks like. [Decarceration is the opposite of incarceration. It is the process of reducing the number of people in custody by removing them from such institutions as prisons or mental hospitals.]



## **Laurie Bertram Roberts** Executive Director/ Social Justice Activist

We must focus on coalition building across issues and communities of color. We cannot take our eyes off of the long-ranging goal of defeating anti-Black racism, classism and white supremacist culture. This work will continue to make people uncomfortable. An even though the White House has changed hands, we will encounter backlash — in fact, maybe even more so, because people will believe just removing a blatant racist from office is enough, and we know that it's the quiet racism embedded in the system itself that is just as dangerous. We must be prepared for that backlash in all forms as a solid, unshakable coalition, ready to hold our allies just as accountable as our enemies.



## **Cirilo R. Manego III** J.D./Chief Strategic Partnership and Advocacy Officer, Black With No Chaser

Black people have been used as political pawns in every election while never receiving the full breadth of this nation's promise. That is not a hyperbole; that is a fact. And no, one does not need to traverse the dark forest of history to glean that that is the case. Apartment walls seem to possess more value than our lives, than Black lives, than Breonna Taylor's life. As we cast our eyes beyond the November horizon, past Election Day, we must take it upon ourselves to see the value in building platforms, systems and communities that lean on one another. Interdependence is how we shall thrive. It is the reason Black With No Chaser was born. Controlling our narratives, free of whiteness, and centering our joy as a means of resistance is power. While I cannot speak, nor will I speak for all Black people, however, what I will say is remain hopeful, keep fighting and breathe by any means.



## **Rukia Lumumba** Justice Strategist/ Human Rights Activist

The next critical step toward a new Black politics is co-governance where we engage in the long-term practice to educate, motivate and organize our people to be more engaged, prepared and committed to engaging the governing process. It is a return of politics to ordinary people/residents. It requires that we reinvent what it means to do politics and what it means to be a resident. True democracy starts at the local level in assemblies. It is transparent with candidates that are nominated by the people of that



community to run for office, and those candidates are 100 percent accountable to their communities; they are delegates rather than wheeling and dealing representatives.

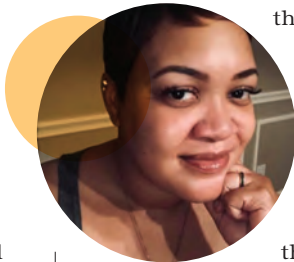
Co-governance centers community; recognizes that community is central and not peripheral to system change. It is founded on the belief that individuals, grassroots, faith and neighborhood organizations in local communities are most effective in doing work that is transformational, liberating. So, we must focus our efforts on building our hyper-local community spaces of co-governance. People's Assemblies are examples of these spaces where residents of a city — regardless of their prior criminal history, immigration status, age or income — are a part of making small and big policy decisions regarding the governing of their cities. It is through these processes of community-centered and issue-based policy development that we are able to effect change and bring people's lives to a place of full participation and equal treatment.

## Kirsten West Savali Cultural Critic/Producer

Regardless of who or what political party is in office, those of us who believe in freedom will have to work toward abolition so that we break the cycle of expecting justice from the very systems that kill us. Regardless of who or what political party is in office, those of us who believe in liberation will have to push back against the rhetorical dishonesty that the system is broken, when it is functioning exactly as it was intended to function.

There is no convenient time for the urgent movements in progress. From

defunding the police, dismantling the carceral state, and ending the drug war, to fighting for universal health care and confronting sexual violence in our institutions, communities and homes, it will be imperative that we continue to challenge the complacency and cowardice that prevent us from imagining and creating a new way of being. Still, we must also reckon with how Donald Trump rose to power in the first place in a way that



does not cast blame on the most targeted and vulnerable communities. Until liberals more committed to the “absence of tension” than the “presence of

justice” stop gaslighting those of us who know that this is a nation rooted in genocide, slavery, land theft and rape, we will find ourselves here over and over again.

The façade of democracy has crumbled. What will we build in its stead?

**Ida Harris** is a journalist and cultural critic covering a range of topics that intersect with Blackness, including activism, art, identity, pop culture, race and womanhood.

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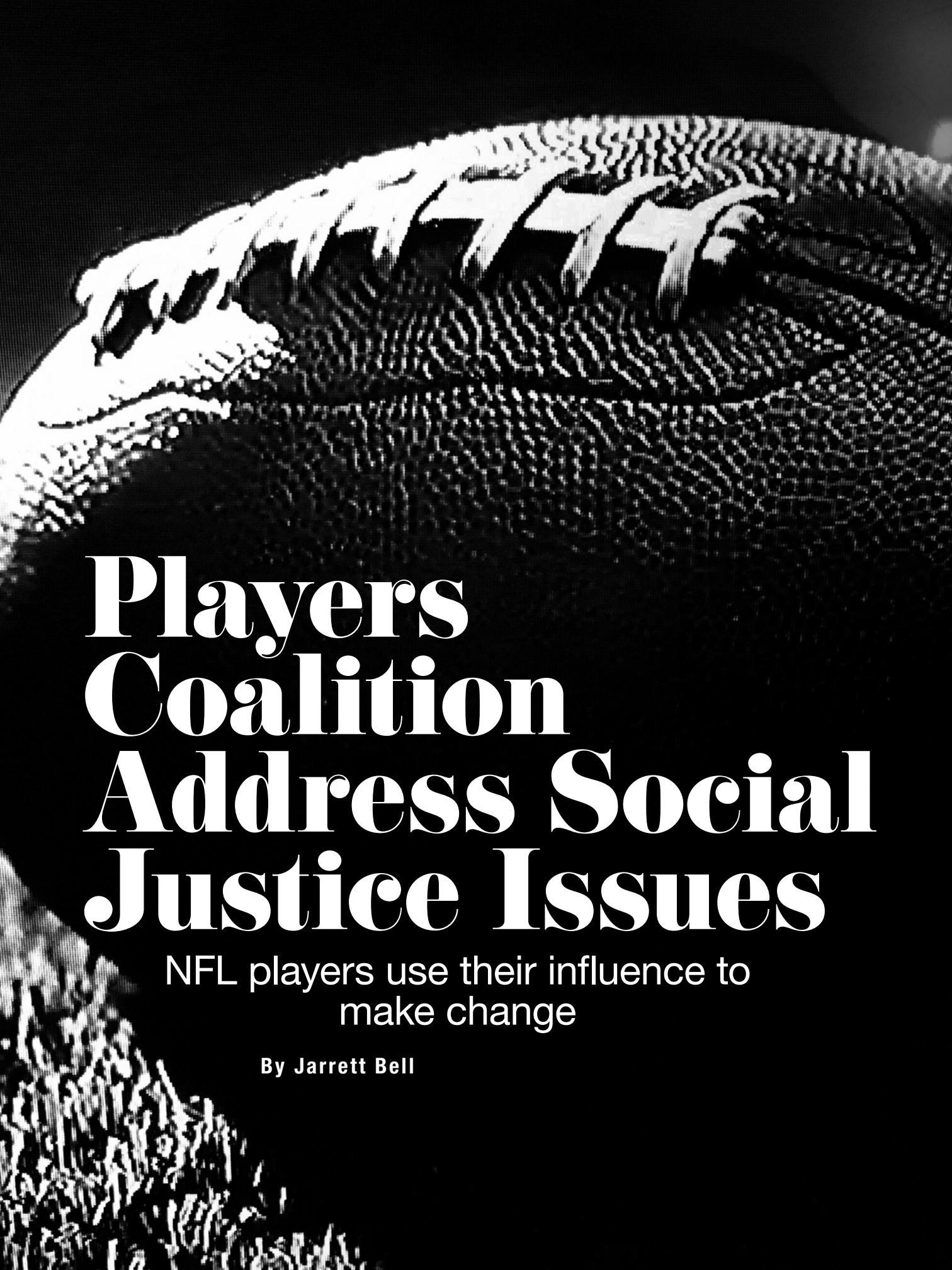
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# Players Coalition Address Social Justice Issues

NFL players use their influence to  
make change

By Jarrett Bell



When Anquan Boldin and Malcolm Jenkins founded the Players Coalition in 2017, there was no way they could have projected that less than three years later their organization would aid efforts to deal with a global health crisis. The Players Coalition, a group consisting of more than 100 current and former NFL players, has largely made its mark in fighting for social justice initiatives.

One of the group's key initiatives involves criminal justice reform, including bail reform, voting rights for the formerly incarcerated, standards for jury convictions, guidelines for cases that involve juveniles, and other issues. By collaborating with the NFL in April to donate more than \$3 million to aid Black communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19, the Players Coalition illustrated just how nimble of a force it has become.

Then again, scarce resources, economic strife, substandard schools, and other disparities in many minority communities beg for social justice, too. Such disparities — evident during the pandemic — have been institutionalized in American society.

“In the overall aspect, it’s caring for people,” said Boldin, who committed himself to social justice issues upon retiring in 2017 after 14 seasons as an NFL wide receiver. “For me, that’s what social justice is. That’s what police-

community relations is. That's what educational equality is. All of it is about people; making sure that people are taken care of, especially those who don't have a voice, who don't have the resources."

As Boldin alluded to, the Players Coalition was established on three pillars: 1) education and economic advancement, 2) criminal justice reform, and 3) police and community relations. During the first two years of the coalition's existence, the bulk of its events, contributions and energy fit within the defined pillars. Yet, as the coronavirus pandemic spread, Boldin and fellow board members were quick to push the NFL to divert the money that carried over from last year's social justice funding to be put to work immediately to assist in Black communities. The NFL has pledged to commit at least \$90 million over seven years to Players Coalition efforts combating social inequality.

In Black communities devastated by the pandemic, for example, the NFL and Players Coalition directed more than \$3 million to aid nonprofit organizations and health-care systems, including hospitals. Funds were sent to seven markets — Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Florida, Louisiana and Washington, D.C. — hit hard by COVID-19. Boldin said it was important for the Players Coalition to react because they believe that the disproportionate rate of deaths for African Americans and other people of color in many locations reflects systematic inequalities that exist in so many areas of society.

"It exposes everything that we've already known," he said.

Boldin, whose grandmother recovered from a bout with COVID-19, became frustrated during the early stages of the outbreak as he was unsuccessful in trying to secure coronavirus tests for people in his hometown of Pahokee, Fla.

"You talk about health care in minority communities; we all know there's a lack of health care available," he said. "You see these communities that are underserved, from an educational standpoint and on and on. And those things are happening without COVID. [The coronavirus] exposes stuff we're fighting for on an everyday basis."

There is no shortage of issues that the Players Coalition has been willing to address as it evolves into a viable conduit for community service and political action. In many cases, the group is doubling down to enlist the support of the league and its respective teams. Consider the following actions:

Jenkins, a veteran safety who rejoined the New Orleans Saints this year after six seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles, strongly advocated for transparency and accountability in 2019 as the city of Philadelphia began searching to replace its controversial police chief.

Several Eagles and Pittsburgh Steelers players lobbied for the Clean Slate Act in Pennsylvania. Signed into law in

2018 by Gov. Tom Wolf, the act places records under seal regarding nonviolent misdemeanor convictions that are 10 years old or older.

New England Patriots safety and co-captain Devin McCourty wrote an op-ed column with team owner Robert Kraft and team president Jonathan Kraft that supported juvenile justice reform in Massachusetts. Several Patriots players then lobbied state lawmakers for a bill that Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law in 2018 with new juvenile justice provisions.

New Orleans Saints linebacker Demario Davis campaigned for a law passed in 2018 that wiped out the "10-2" system in Louisiana that allowed for felony convictions with only 10 of 12 jurors voting guilty. Louisiana was one of only two states that allowed for a felony conviction without a unanimous jury verdict. The 10-2 system was believed to be an underlying reason for the state's high ranking for the number of wrongful convictions ultimately overturned. Also, in 2018, Davis and since-retired tight end Ben Watson rallied behind a bill that passed to restore voting rights for the formerly incarcerated on probation or parole in Louisiana.

The swath of initiatives carried under the banner of the Players Coalition has been wide and relentless. During an era where the polarization of America has become more pronounced with distinctions often falling along political, economic and racial fault lines, it has been refreshing for social activists and other interested parties to witness the proactivity of a group that has not always been so inclined. This is clearly a new era when it comes to athlete activism. Collectively, the members of the Players Coalition have demonstrated the power that professional athletes possess to leverage their status, resources, connections, platforms, and yes, desires, to help fill voids and wield influence.

"There is obviously power in numbers, right?" Jenkins said during an interview with *The Crisis*. "You hear that cliché your entire life. But the other side of that coin, which a lot of people don't talk about, is that it's hard to organize. Especially for guys with entirely different schedules, families, charitable things, all across the country, in different time zones. Even just having meetings and conference calls requires a lot of engagement and sacrifice for us to all be on the same page. But guys care enough about it to make it work," Jenkins continued. "When we're doing things together, pooling resources, we're pooling influence. You have a lot more bass in your voice when you start to speak, and you know you've got other players with just as much clout and respect behind their names, speaking right with you."

What a striking departure from the general approach that most pro athletes held for the better part of two generations since the 1960s. It is no longer taboo for athletes to take a strong stand on social issues. Although

NFL player Malcolm Jenkins of the New Orleans Saints and founder of the Players Coalition.



## **“More than 70 percent of the players in the NFL are African American, yet only in recent years has that group (and their peers in other major sports) raised its voice strategically to push for social change.”**

there may still be resistance among some team owners who would prefer that the NFL stage is not used as a platform for such messages, the Players Coalition illustrates how far players have advanced in exhibiting their social awareness.

More than 70 percent of the players in the NFL are African American, yet only in recent years has that group (and their peers in other major sports) raised its voice strategically to push for social change.

The Players Coalition, which doesn't have a full-time staff, uses independent contractors for management, public relations, research, event staging and other functions. It partners with several established organizations in the social justice arena, which boosts credibility in its messaging. And by affiliating with many grassroots entities, the group maintains a pulse on specific issues. Players from different teams in different

markets typically take the lead on various initiatives, while supported from other members of the Players Coalition elsewhere.

“I applaud the Players Coalition for, No. 1, raising social issues that go beyond them as individuals,” said Rod Graves, executive director of the Fritz Pollard Alliance, a watchdog group that monitors and promotes diverse hiring of coaches and executives in the NFL. “And they seem to speak about it with a passion. Also, they were willing to upset the business model of the league in order to bring attention to these issues.”

Of course, it all started with former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick. In 2016, Kaepernick dared to kneel during the playing of the national anthem, rather than stand as is customary, to protest the shooting deaths that year of unarmed African Americans by white police officers, along with other societal inequities.

# Kaepernick encouraged other NFL players to speak up about injustice.



Kaepernick paid a tremendous price. He's effectively been blackballed from the NFL, unable to land a job despite a dearth of talent at the quarterback position and a resume that includes leading a team to the Super Bowl.

Even so, Kaepernick ignited a game-changing shift of historical proportions as other NFL players joined in with national anthem protests, while NBA players and athletes from other sports likewise protested their discontent. And while only a handful of NFL players protested during the early stages of the 2017 season (with Kaepernick out of the league), Donald Trump reignited the movement with his harsh criticism of protesters, virtually all of them Black, and erroneously cast their actions as political.

The shift that Kaepernick created encouraged other NFL players to speak up about injustice. The Players Coalition was an opportunity for these players to work on behalf of their communities.

"We understood very quickly, right after Colin took a knee and all the hype around it, that not only did Colin feel very strongly about it, but there were a bunch of guys around the league that are very, very passionate, that were looking for ways to get involved that had never been presented before," Jenkins said. "We wanted to create a vehicle for guys to get educated on issues in their respective markets and then give them a vehicle to actually create change, to do it collectively, to blow it up as much as we can."

Still, the fact that Kaepernick has never had any role with the Players Coalition while the group has engaged in a partnership with the NFL fuels suspicion and scrutiny.

Kaepernick was invited to participate with the Players Coalition as it was established. However, given the sticky circumstances, he refused to engage, despite the similar concerns about the inequities in society. (Kaepernick, incidentally, donated \$100,000 to COVID-19 relief efforts and tweeted about the disproportionate deaths of African Americans and other minorities.)

Veteran safety Eric Reid, a close friend who knelt alongside Kaepernick as a 49ers teammate in 2016, accused the Players Coalition of "selling out" during meetings with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and several team owners, when the deal to partner with the league was

forged. Reid was the most vocal critic, but several other players joined him in renouncing their membership in the Players Coalition just weeks after it was formed.

There were allegations that the NFL money for social justice programs was tied to ending the national anthem protests. But Jenkins has repeatedly denied those allegations and maintains that he's still willing to work with Kaepernick.

"That door, on my end, has always been open," Jenkins said of Kaepernick. "If at any point in time there's an opportunity to work on something, I won't hesitate on that, if I believe in it," he added. "What I've accepted is that we have different philosophies and ideas on how to get to the same place, but I also recognize that we're trying to get to the same place."

It's hard to imagine, however, that Kaepernick would join the Players Coalition at this point, given its ties to a league that hasn't had an NFL team willing to sign him to play.

Beyond that, when music mogul Jay-Z joined forces with the NFL in 2019 to bolster its social justice agenda and to create entertainment projects, he took an apparent swipe at Kaepernick by declaring, "We've moved past kneeling."

That's exactly what the Players Coalition has done for more than two years — and it can't be knocked for that.

During the first two years of its existence, the Players Coalition recorded 83 public service announcements, authored 32 op-ed columns, had eight legislative bills passed that it lobbied for, and hosted 79 events and town hall meetings.

The NFL, meanwhile, works arm-in-arm with the Players Coalition and has marketed its social justice efforts under a campaign dubbed, "Inspire Change." Heading into 2020, the league and its charitable foundation, in conjunction with the Players Coalition, donated more than \$25 million over two years in social justice grants. The league boasts that in 2019 alone, NFL teams hosted or participated in more than 500 social justice events, including ride-along excursions with police and listen-and-learn sessions with elected officials.

Still, for all the contributions, it remains strange that



Kaepernick — who ignited the social justice awareness — has no association or job within the NFL.

Boldin, though, while not diminishing Kaepernick’s legacy, will tell you that there’s been an institutional shift with the NFL in addressing social issues that resonate with its large base of African-American players. Three years ago, Goodell wouldn’t even use the words “police brutality” in a written statement or press conference remarks pertaining to the concerns of the players.

Yet, fast-forward to the broadcast of Super Bowl LIV in February. The NFL’s logo was displayed as the sponsor for a 60-second PSA built around a narration by Boldin that detailed the shooting death of his cousin Corey Jones in 2015 by a plainclothes police officer in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., as he waited by his disabled car in the middle of the night. That tragedy, Boldin stated, prompted him to co-found the Players Coalition to effect change.

“I’ve never seen an entity as big as the NFL make a statement on one of the biggest platforms in the world,” said Boldin, referring to a telecast that averaged 102 million viewers. “To see them step up that way and be unapologetic about it, that speaks volumes.”

The Super Bowl LIV commercial reflected one of the more conventional ways for the Players Coalition to get out specific messages. An unconventional blast came from Jenkins during the spring of 2018, after Trump abruptly canceled his invitation for the Super Bowl champion Eagles to visit the White House (after several players indicated they would not attend). Jenkins stood in front of his stall in the Eagles’ locker room after practice and responded to various questions by displaying handwritten posters with facts that addressed inequalities in the criminal justice system that disproportionately

affected minorities.

One sign read: “In 2018, 439 people shot and killed by police (thus far). In U.S. pop 8% = African-American males. Shot by police 25% = African-American males.”

Another read: “ANY GIVEN NIGHT, 500,000 SIT IN JAIL. CONVICTED? NO. TOO POOR? YES. #ENDCASHBAIL.”

It was a brilliant use of his platform as Jenkins — typically a popular source for reporters, giving thoughtful comments about football and social issues — refused to answer questions and opted instead to stage a “silent” press conference for several minutes.

Jenkins, who was at the forefront in pushing for Pennsylvania’s Clean Slate Act, joined several teammates for a meeting with lawmakers at the state capitol in Harrisburg, the day after playing a Monday night game in Philadelphia. He maintains that generally the reception he receives from lawmakers and other officials while advancing the cause of social issues has been encouraging.

“So, it becomes a thing, maybe a little bit of the politics, but also how do you put pressure on the people who can make those changes?” asks Jenkins. “So, if there’s an elected official who has the power to vote, or the guy you’ve got to swing, how do you put pressure on him? When we show up, we know what we’re talking about and we usually show up with cameras. Nobody can smile in our face and then vote another way.”

The most significant brushback Jenkins says he’s received since establishing the Players Coalition came from a Philadelphia police union official in the form of an op-ed column that essentially charged that the football player pushing for accountability with police needed to stay in his lane.

“There are obviously people whose best interests are on the opposite end of the spectrum for what we’re trying to get accomplished,” Jenkins said. “There are people who have a vested interest in keeping our prison system the same, in keeping laws hard on crime, all these sorts of things,” he added. “The one thing we haven’t run into is an elected official — Republican or Democrat — or a police chief, who doesn’t believe that we have issues, especially when it comes to race, disparity and the facts that we talk about. Those things can’t be disputed.”

Players Coalition founder Malcolm Jenkins greets documentary filmmaker Ken Burns during a special screening of *College Behind Bars* at The Apollo Theater on November 12, 2019 in New York City.



A PROMISED LAND

A black and white portrait of Barack Obama, smiling broadly and looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark sweater over a light-colored collared shirt. The background is a plain, light color.

BARACK  
OBAMA



# A Promise Built on Hope

Our nation's first Black president remembers the sacrifice of our civil rights veterans and sees a bright future in a new generation of activists

by **Lottie L. Joiner**

President Barack Obama, in his new book, *A Promised Land*, takes us through his journey from childhood to being the nation's first African-American president. Obama provides a unique behind-the-scenes look into the operation of our federal government at the highest level. We learn of the values that guide him, the strong partisan resistance to his agenda, and the strength of family and community that propel and inspire him. The 44th president surveys the current political landscape and warns that "our democracy seems to be teetering on the brink of crisis — a crisis rooted in a fundamental contest between two opposing visions of what America is and what it should be." According to Obama, this crisis "has left the body politic divided, angry, and mistrustful, and has allowed for an ongoing breach of institutional norms, procedural

safeguards, and the adherence to basic facts that both Republicans and Democrats once took for granted.”

It will indeed be a tough road ahead for President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, who made history this fall as the first Black, first woman and first person of Asian descent to be elected vice president. Nevertheless, Obama sees the hope and change he talked about more than a decade ago in a new generation of activists. He took time away from a busy book tour to answer written questions from *The Crisis* magazine. In this Q&A Obama honors the legacy of civil rights veterans whose sacrifice helped build a better nation, and he recognizes the power of Black women, who are too often “unsung,” in bringing “America closer to a true democracy.”

**The Crisis:** This year was marked by a pandemic, social unrest and a historic election. How would you describe 2020?

**President Obama:** There’s a word I learned from my staff when we were in the White House that could be used to describe it, but you probably can’t print it in your magazine.

What I will say is that it’s been a hard year for everybody. That’s especially true for families who’ve lost loved ones, medical professionals and first responders who’ve risked their lives and worked themselves to exhaustion, and workers who’ve always been essential to our economy, even if they’ve only just been given the title.

I do hope it’s a year that caused us all to re-evaluate and cherish the things that are meaningful and truly matter; to be grateful for what we have and to be alive to the pain of people who are less fortunate. At the same time, I’ve also found a lot of inspiration in everyone who found new ways to help people, and in the protesters of every race and age who saw injustice in their streets and their institutions and demanded that America become better.

**The Crisis:** A new movement for Black lives erupted this summer after the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. There were worldwide protests for social justice. Why do you think so many people were marching and demonstrating? How were these protests different from the ones that happened during your administration — following the deaths of Trayvon Martin,



President Barack Obama awarded the late Rep. John Lewis the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011, calling him the “conscience” of Congress.

Alex Wong / Staff

# I do take inspiration from this young generation of marchers. They've taken up the baton. They're going to take it a little further. And when they do, the generation that comes after them will be starting from a better place.

Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling and others?

**President Obama:** Well, the protests represented a genuine and legitimate frustration over a decades-long failure to reform police practices and the broader criminal justice system in the United States. But they also represented this young generation's conviction that everyone should be treated fairly, and their response to those ideals being breached.

I think what made this time different, though, was that we saw at least some shift in the general population in recognizing that there really is an ongoing problem of unequal justice in America. The protests were led by young people, but you saw people of all ages show up. The protests were led by Black Americans, but you saw people of all races join in. The demographics of the marches weren't always what you'd expect. You'd see a Black Lives Matter march in some small, predominantly white town. I believe that these young people were helping to change people's minds, fostering a growing recognition that there's a genuine problem with racial discrimination in our justice system.

That's a huge shift from just five, 10 years ago. If you had asked me the same question after Ferguson, for example, I think it's clearer now that the broader population is more clear-eyed in recognizing there is a problem. That, I think, is promising and hopeful.

Now, as always, the issue becomes: What do we do with that?

Protests can be exciting and inspiring. But eventually they disperse, and there can be a bit of a letdown. I remember having some of the Black Lives Matter activists come to the Oval Office, back when it was still a relatively new movement, still making the jump from a hashtag into the national consciousness, and we had a long conversation about how challenging it can be to translate impulses into action, to change more than hearts and minds; to actually change laws, institutions and practices. And that requires concrete policies, and it requires electing not just a president, but also district attorneys

and state's attorneys and sheriffs, too, and it requires recruiting allies and inviting people in to help. But it can take time.

All of that can be frustrating when there's a clear problem that needs to be addressed right away. That's just human nature, and it is the nature of putting together political coalitions, which is the essence of democracy, right? You can feel righteous about your own position, but if you're actually going to get something done, how do you get enough votes?

But I do take inspiration from this young generation of marchers. If the Civil Rights Movement was the Moses generation, you looked out there this summer and saw a whole generation of Joshuas. They've taken up the baton. They're going to take it a little further. And when they do, the generation that comes after them will be starting from a better place.

**The Crisis:** This year, we also saw some of our most beloved civil rights veterans pass away — the Rev. Joseph Lowery, the Rev. C. T. Vivian and Rep. John Lewis. What impact did they have on democracy and American society?

**President Obama:** Well, I've always said that I'm only here because of that civil rights generation. I stand on their shoulders. They inspired me to get involved in public life. But they also made it possible in the first place. On the battlefield of justice, they liberated us all in ways that many Americans came to take for granted.

They changed America in enormous ways. Let me amend that — they and their contemporaries in the Civil Rights Movement, as much as anybody, built America as we know it. They brought this country closer to a true democracy. Like I said in my eulogy for John, their lives vindicated the most American of ideas — the idea that ordinary people without rank, or wealth, or title, or fame, can challenge the status quo and remake this country for the better. And when we do finish that long journey toward freedom, however long it takes, they'll be founding fathers of that fuller, fairer, better America.



The Obama Family, from left, Malia Obama, Sasha Obama, mother-in-law Mrs. Marian Robinson, first lady Michelle Obama and President Barack Obama, attend the national Christmas tree lighting ceremony on the Ellipse south of the White House December 3, 2015 in Washington, D.C.

**The Crisis:** Rep. Lewis was your hero and mentor. What did he teach you about life?

**President Obama:** Well, the thing is, even though John's life was exceptional, at the same time, he never thought that what he did was more than what any citizen of this country might do. He believed that each one of us has the capacity for great courage and a longing to do what's right. The last time I spoke with him privately, I made sure to tell him that new generations of protesters out there, those of every race, religion, background, gender and sexual orientation — they are his children. They learned from his example, even if they didn't know it. He taught them what American citizenship requires.

**The Crisis:** In November, we elected the first Black female and South Asian vice president. What does that say about America? Is it progress?

**President Obama:** Of course. It took far too long, but I think we're getting to the point where women, Blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, people of all backgrounds can aspire to and become president or vice president. That doesn't mean there won't be additional burdens to overcome for any candidate who doesn't look like almost all of our other presidents. Women are unfairly looked at through a different lens, or deemed "too emotional," even though we just had a president who threw daily tantrums on Twitter. And part of that is just human nature. Change takes time. I mean, people forget what a big deal it was for JFK to be elected our first Catholic president. We just elected our second, and it wasn't even an issue. But regardless, Sen. Harris will be a fine vice president. She's

one more step to the point where all our candidates are judged not on race, gender, religion or ethnicity, but on how well they can do the job.

**The Crisis:** This year we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment and women getting the right to vote. Talk about the power of Black women and their role in advancing democracy.

**President Obama:** You asked earlier about some of the civil rights leaders we lost this year, but we should always be elevating the women who were, in Coretta Scott King's words, the backbone of the movement — women like Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, Ella Baker, and so many others. Throughout our history, it has been Black women, as much as if not more than anybody else, mostly unrecognized and unsung, who've brought America closer to a true democracy; who've reliably shown up, and marched and voted, even in moments of great pain for the community, even when society's mechanisms to keep people in their place hit them twice as hard for being Black and for being women. But society is making progress. And as we break down more barriers and expect our daughters to get the same opportunities as our sons, and hire and elect more women in positions of power, the Black woman's role in advancing democracy is only going to take off and take us to a better place.

**The Crisis:** What surprised you the most during your eight years as president?

**President Obama:** The work didn't surprise me. Basically,

problems wouldn't reach my desk unless nobody else could solve them. If they could be solved, somebody else would have solved them already. And so you were always dealing with problems that didn't lend themselves to a simple solution, and you were working with probabilities and you'd have to make your best judgment knowing that not everything was going to work out exactly as you wanted. That didn't surprise me much either.

The thing that did strike me is how much America and the American government underwrite the world order. I think we underestimate this. Things don't happen internationally if we don't put our shoulder behind it. If you go to an economic summit or a climate summit, if there's a disaster or disease outbreak, no other country has the combination of bandwidth, experience and ideas to mobilize the world around the problem. If America's not doing anything, it's not happening. You see that with the pandemic response. With Ebola, we rallied other countries and we successfully kept an outbreak from becoming a global pandemic. Now, with the absence of American leadership the past four years, you've seen other countries filling the void, even if they can't do it at the scale we can. Sometimes that's OK. But we don't want other countries setting the rules without us, or moving forward without us. That's how much America's government and America's democracy hold things together. Sometimes we take that for granted. We can't afford to anymore.

**The Crisis:** What role did the NAACP play in your election as president and what role does the NAACP play in today's democracy? Why are we needed today?

**President Obama:** Well, when you consider the 111-year journey of the NAACP, you've got to consider where that journey started. And that takes us back to a time before any of us were born, before the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act and *Brown v. Board*. It takes us back to a time just a generation past slavery, when Jim Crow was everyday life and lynchings were all too common.

But because someone like W.E.B. Du Bois and his fierce passion for justice could unite people into an association dedicated to promoting equality and eradicating prejudice, a different story for America suddenly became possible. Over time, men and women, mostly young but of every age, race and faith, would embark on Freedom Rides, sit at lunch counters, and register voters in rural Mississippi, knowing that they would be harassed, attacked and might never return.

Because they took those journeys — because the NAACP took its journey — America is unquestionably a better place. Knowing and celebrating that doesn't diminish all

the very real work that remains toward progress. I mean, I called my book *A Promised Land* knowing that I'm gray enough that I won't see it either. But I wrote it for young people. One of the themes of this book is this contest of ideas between two visions: a vision that says that, for all our differences, we share a common humanity, and it is possible for us, in a multiracial, multiethnic country to see each other, understand each other, respect each other, and work toward progress together.

There's also an older, contrasting vision that says we're just a collection of tribes, inevitably at war, and it's a zero-sum game with winners and losers in hierarchies of power and subjugation. That vision has been the default of humanity for most of human history. It was the default



President Barack Obama sings *Amazing Grace* during the funeral service for South Carolina State Sen. Clementa Pinckney who was killed during the Mother Emanuel AME church massacre on June 17, 2015.

for much of our history. The newer vision, to truly treat everybody's voice as equal — that's still a work in progress.

I want this young generation to understand that they're going to be the ones who decide which way we go. I want them to know that it's within their power to create a better world. I start the book as a young person, just a mixed-race kid without wealth or power in America, specifically to show them that the presidency wasn't some kind of birthright for me, or that I was good at everything. I just hitched my wagon to something bigger. If I can make a difference, so can they. And I think they will. When you talk to them, it's not controversial to say our differences are something to celebrate. It's obvious that all people have equal worth and should be treated fairly. And I am confident they are going to be the ones to usher in the change we need. So, more than anything, I wrote this book as an invitation for them not only to imagine a better world — but to build it themselves.



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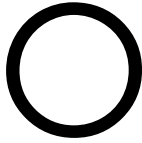




# TIPIC FOR

# PASSING THE BATON

On the eve of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, NAACP co-founder W.E.B. DuBois died in Ghana where he had lived since 1961.



For more than 50 years, DuBois, a leading Pan Africanist, was at the forefront of Black protest in America. During the two years he lived in Ghana, the Civil Rights Movement in America was in full swing. There were Freedom Rides and children's marches, voting rallies and school integration, protests and demonstrations. Segregation, Jim Crow, racism and discrimination were eating at the soul of the nation. The time was ripe for a march on Washington.

Before his death at age 95, DuBois had sent a telegram from Ghana congratulating the organizers of the march. He had helped lay the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement, now he was passing the baton. During the historic event, the NAACP's Roy Wilkins led the crowd of more than 250,000 in a moment of silence in tribute of DuBois. He said of the civil rights leader, "Regardless of the fact that in his later years Dr. Du Bois chose another path, it is incontrovertible that at the dawn of the 20th century his was the voice that was calling to you to gather here today in this cause."

DuBois had paved the way for the 1963 March on Washington. His fighting days were over. He was now passing the baton to a new generation. This new generation joined the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial that day and included Rep. John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Rev. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Rev. C.T. Vivian, a fierce freedom fighter also of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

During his tenure as president, Barack Obama presented Lowery (2009), Lewis (2011) and Vivian (2013) with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for their contributions in making this a better nation, their commitment to make America live up to its creed that "all men are created equal." In his speech during the virtual 2020 Democratic National Convention, Obama acknowledged the work of these civil rights veterans who were "spit on at lunch counters" and "beaten for trying to vote." But, Obama noted, "they didn't give up."

Indeed. The efforts of Lowery, Lewis and Vivian led to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the 1968 Fair Housing Act and many more changes throughout America.

This summer as protesters marched for justice, Lowery, Lewis and Vivian laid down. They had done their part in the fight for freedom, now it was a new generation's turn. Lewis was the last living speaker of the 1963 March on Washington and like DuBois, he was passing the baton.

Today, nearly 60 years after the height of the Civil Rights Movement, there's a new movement for justice. The tragic deaths of George Floyd in Minnesota, Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia and Breonna Taylor in Kentucky prompted worldwide protests and an international uprising during a pandemic. Amy Cooper, who falsely reported to police that Christian Cooper, an African American, was threatening her and her dog in Central Park, reminded too many of the 1955 brutal lynching of Emmett Till in Mississippi. Activism looked different as social media tools were used to engage and mobilize.

During his remarks at the DNC virtual convention, Obama also recognized this new generation of activists, those marching and protesting for Black lives today.

"To the young people who led us this summer, telling us we need to be better — in so many ways, you are this country's dreams fulfilled," Obama said. "...You can give our democracy new meaning. You can take it to a better place. You're the missing ingredient — the ones who will decide whether or not America becomes the country that fully lives up to its creed."

In a partnership with the Magnum Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports a global network of social justice and human rights-focused photographers, *The Crisis* set out to tell the story of this summer's unrest through the eyes of five Black female photographers. These creative artists traveled to Portland, Ore., Louisville, Ky., Chicago, Minneapolis and Kenosha, Wis., to photograph a new generation of activists leading the charge for civil rights and social justice. Check out their work on the following pages.

The baton has been passed. A new generation has taken the mantle.

LOUISVILLE, KY

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

KENOSHA, WI

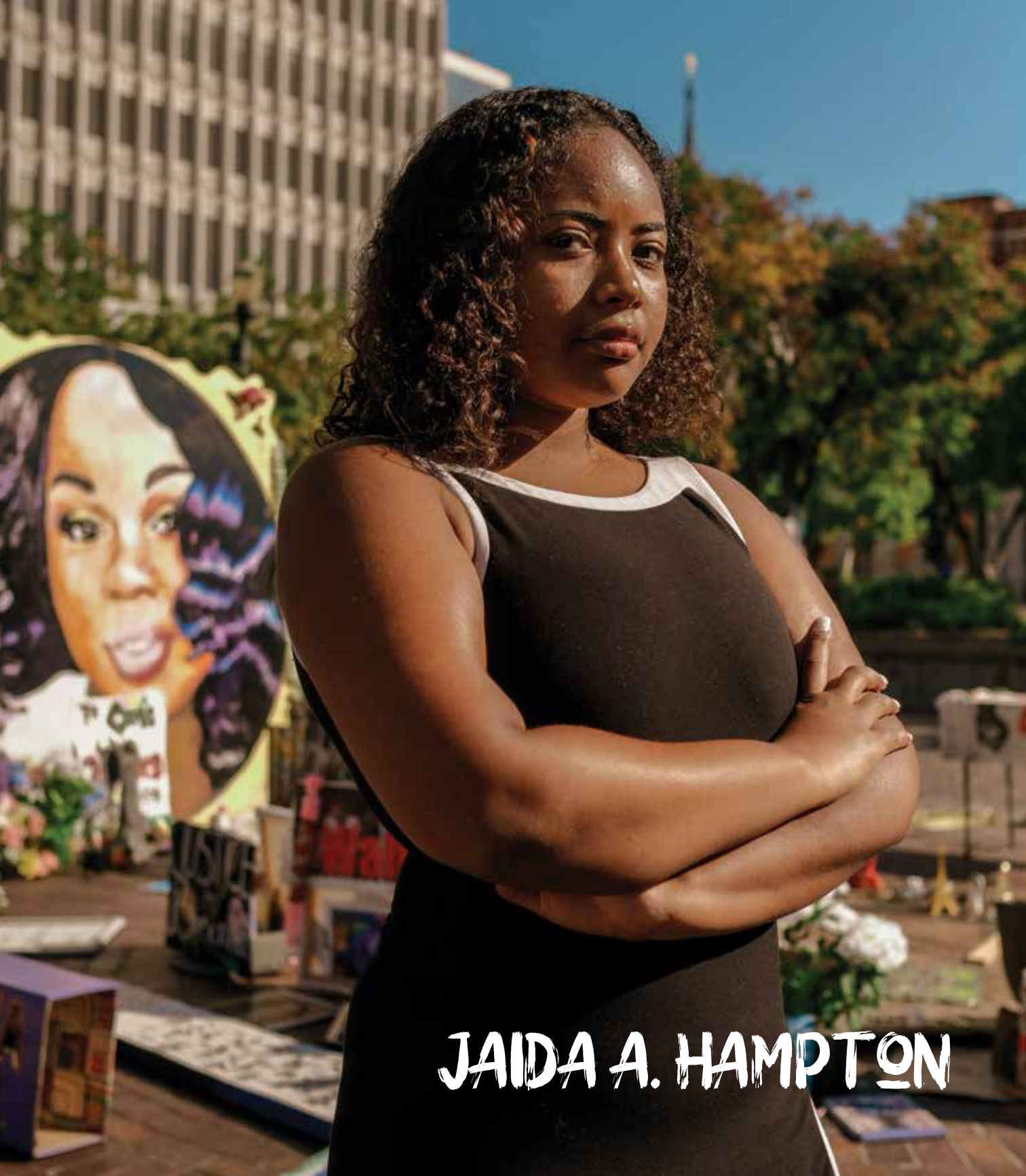
PORTLAND, OR

CHICAGO, IL

WASHINGTON, D.C.

D.C.

ATLANTA, GA



# JAIDA A. HAMPTON

**Louisville, Ky.**  
*President, Kentucky NAACP Youth &  
College State Conference*

I protest because my ancestors fought for us to have a voice and taught us the way to fight for our freedom. I believe that direct action and the power in our voices can bring the change we seek in this world.

Photo By: Laylah Amatullah Barryn



Minneapolis

Photo By: Andrea Ellen Reed





# LESLIE REDMOND

**Minneapolis**  
*President, Minneapolis NAACP*

My mission is to live a life of activation. I want to inspire others to “Don’t Complain, Activate.” My grandmother’s favorite gospel song was *I Won’t Complain*. It’s OK to complain, but we have to activate the abilities God gave us and be the change that we want to see.

Photo By: Andrea Ellen Reed



TRINA REYNOLDS

ANDREA YARBROUGH

**Trina Reynolds-Tyler**  
**Chicago**

*Data Director, Invisible Institute*

I want a world where we do not use prisons and police to respond to harms occurring in our community. A world where we use transformative justice to support communities, survivors and where everyone's basic needs are met.

**Andrea Yarbrough**  
**Chicago**

*Curator, "In Care of Black Women"*

I want a world with systems and structures that aid our most vulnerable communities, a world that values people over profits, a world that cares deeply for those who labor tirelessly.

Photo By: Zakkiiyah Najeebah





# BIANCA JONES

**Bianca Jones**  
**Chicago**

*Educator and organizer for The Village Leadership Academy Change the Name Campaign and 360Nation*

My mission is to use my gifts and talents as an educator, organizer and connector to promote the positive development of Black youth and self determination in the Black community.



# MAC SMIFF

**Portland, Ore.**  
*Editor, We Out Here Magazine*

I protest because wrong should not be met with silence.  
I value honesty, patience and clarity.  
I want a world free of police.  
My mission is to serve righteousness.

Photo By: Intisar Abioto





# PORCHE BENNETT

Photo By: Rosella Joseph

# MAKE AMERIKKKA GREAT

By Porche Bennett

What would make Amerikkka great?

When our ancestors get the respect they deserve.

When we as Black women no longer have to fear that we are birthing targets and not humans.

When we no longer have to fear the exact people who are supposed to protect us.

When officers and racists are given the same treatment as Blacks.

When people of power speak up against the wrong that is done in this country.

When there is no more gentrification.

When a white woman can no longer get away with lying on our Black men.

When there are no longer any brown babies locked in cages.

When we won't get fined for kneeling against racism.

When we can sleep in our beds and not worry about being killed in our sleep by law enforcement.

When we can walk from the store with just Skittles and a tea and not be killed.

When the prison system no longer holds innocent Black people.

When we are no longer shot in the back seven times in front of our children.

When the people we vote for actually make that vote worth it and help us.

When racists understand that we are the generation that will stand up and continue to speak up against police brutality and systemic racism.

When the [nation] truly understand WE WILL NOT GIVE UP!

Then and only then will Amerikkka be made great.

**Porche Bennett is a social justice activist in Kenosha, Wis.**



ROBB  
Bu  
Sh  
goes to  
Washington



By Sheila Banks

# On Aug. 3, 2020

44-year-old Black Lives Matter activist and community leader Cori Bush did the impossible. She defeated longtime incumbent U.S. Rep. William Lacy Clay Jr. in Missouri's Democratic primary, ending 52 years of the Clay family political dynasty in the state's 1st Congressional District. The presumed underdog, Bush was like the young biblical figure David who victoriously toppled the giant Philistine warrior Goliath in the famous Bible story. The stunning primary win was a major accomplishment for Bush, who once was homeless and living in her car, and it virtually guaranteed her a seat in Congress. She is the first Black woman to win a seat in Missouri's 1st District.

Bush's primary upset ousted the Clay family dynasty that began when William Lacy (Bill) Clay Sr., then a St. Louis alderman, won the 1st District congressional seat in 1968. Clay Sr. later became a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. In 2000, his son, Clay Jr., then a Missouri state legislator, took his father's place in Congress when Clay Sr. retired after 32 years. The 1st Congressional District, which includes the city of St. Louis and much of north St. Louis County, is historically the most Democratic district in the red state of Missouri. (A red state is a state that usually votes Republican.)

In her hotel room for an unconventional Zoom interview, a fresh-faced Cori Bush exhales, free of the obligatory upper wardrobe, hair and makeup. "I'm still in shock," Bush says of her win. "Every day I wake up and it's still true. I mean, I believed it could and would happen. But for this to actually come into fruition is still beyond my wildest dreams." It's the morning of Sept. 2, just days after Bush participated in the "Get Your Knee Off Our Neck" 2020 March on Washington in the nation's capital sponsored by the Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network and Martin Luther King III. The march's rallying cry was a reference to the way George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, was killed by a white police officer months earlier in Minneapolis. The march occurred on the 57th anniversary of the first March on Washington in 1963 where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous *I Have a Dream* speech.

Representing her district in Congress is both an unexpected dream for Bush and one that she has unknowingly been groomed for her entire life. She is a lifelong resident of her district. Bush credited her father, Errol, for her improbable victory, calling him "the wind beneath my wings." She described her family as a typical, hard-working, lower middle-class family that included both parents, her brother Perry, and her sister Kelli. Bush's father was a union meat cutter for 20 years. Her mom, Barbara, was a computer analyst.

"I guess we were always activists, very Afrocentric," said Bush. "Ours was not the household where my sister and I played with Barbies."

Bush recalled an incident during her childhood in which she begged her parents for a Strawberry Shortcake cartoon poster to put on her bedroom wall, but her father refused. Instead, she said her bedroom space was adorned with the great queens and kings of Africa. Their home was also filled with pictures of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders. When the family watched television, it was documentaries such as *Eyes on the Prize*, a multipart series on the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. "It was to the point where I had memorized all the episodes," Bush recalled.

Growing up, Bush said her parents instilled in her and her siblings the knowledge of their African roots and took them to Kwanzaa celebrations honoring African heritage. "My parents wanted us to know where we came from — greatness, not slavery." She was taught that "dark skin is amazing and to never let anyone tell me otherwise." Bush said she didn't understand it at the time, but she remembers that every morning before school her father would sit her and her brother down and drill into them these words: "You are a leader, not a follower." "Be accountable." "Responsibility, responsibility, responsibility."

Cori Bush's exposure to political life began as a young child when her father became an elected official. She was 8 years old when he first ran for alderman of Northwoods township, a position he held from 1987 to 1995. That same year, her father was elected mayor and served until 2003. Now Errol Bush is serving as an alderman again. "Ours weren't the typical daddy-daughter dates," said Cori Bush. "Ours were daddy-daughter campaign events or banquets. I remember being on stage with him, speaking as a young child."

The Bushes also wanted their children to have the best education. That meant the children would attend the local parochial school conducted by a religious group rather than the public schools, even though the family was Baptist. (St. Louis is historically systemically segregated in education, housing and health care.) After high school, Cori Bush's dream was to attend Tuskegee University, where she would study nursing and pledge Delta Sigma Theta sorority, a historically African American Greek organization for college-educated women.







**Bush's father  
instilled in her:  
You are a leader,  
not a follower.**

Young Cori received a scholarship to one of the area's private girls' schools located in the "good" ZIP code of North County. She took the entrance exam for the school, along with 300 other girls, and achieved the highest score. However, school administrators wrongly accused Bush of cheating, declaring that a Black child never could have scored that high. They insisted that she take the entrance exam again, in the auditorium, and this time alone. The second time, Bush scored even higher on the exam.

From the very first day at that prestigious girls' school, which Bush prefers not to name, she was harassed and mistreated by students, teachers and administrators. "They beat me down," she said. "I would turn in an A paper and have it returned with a C. Or, if I turned in an assignment, some teacher would swear I never turned it in at all."

Bush said she actually watched teachers ball up her papers and pitch them into the trash. But she said the worst incident was watching a teacher spray canned whipped cream on one of her papers. After that, she said she fell into a



# “After everything I’ve been through, I’m not afraid to fight.”

deep depression. Her grades dropped, and her self-esteem was crushed.

After that first hellish semester, Bush’s parents transferred her to Cardinal Ritter College Prep, a coeducational, predominantly Black Catholic high school in St. Louis. But it was too late. The damage was done. “I couldn’t pull it together after that,” Bush recalled. “In my mind, being smart equaled getting hurt.” She graduated from Cardinal Ritter with a disappointing 2.7 GPA. The college scholarships, Tuskegee and her sorority dreams were squashed.

Bush then took menial jobs to pay for a few hours at the local HBCU, Harris-Stowe State University, and at the University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL). It was at Harris-Stowe where Bush says she fell into some “very dark situations” and “was living an ugly life.” She married a guy against her parents’ wishes and had two children. At that point, she couldn’t afford school anymore. She took a low-paying job at a preschool for the next 10 years to make ends meet. She said her husband became increasingly

abusive toward her, almost killing her twice. The second time, she said he choked her until she passed out on the floor, leaving her for dead. It was then that she decided to leave him and live in her car with her young children. While she knew her parents would have taken her in, she was ashamed. After all, she was still married, she rationalized.

In the midst of that dark period in her life, Bush said she found God. Although she attended church as a child, she said she never really got into church. But that wasn’t the case now. “Spiritual mothers were being sent my way,” said Bush. “I started to regain my strength and will. The God-sent women helped me get out of that marriage.” Finally, after many hardships—including having her utilities turned off, countless evictions, and living with her possessions in trash bags—Bush and her children moved in with her father, who was now divorced from her mother.

Eventually, Bush went to nursing school and earned a nursing degree. She began to share her story with others

and later became an ordained minister. According to Bush, “It was my faith that ordered every step I took from then on.”

Bush began to use her nursing and ministry skills in public clinics and on the streets. She discovered that many of her patients were victims of human trafficking and weren’t even aware that they were being held hostage. She teamed up with case workers to get people out of danger and into safe housing. She helped people with a variety of needs, including mental health services and housing needs.

When Michael Brown, an 18-year-old unarmed Black man, was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo., Bush became an activist, blending her work as a community organizer with protests over Brown’s death. “I was both a pastor and a medic,” she said. Since then, Bush has led or participated in many protests over police brutality against Black people. However, she recalled an incident in which she almost lost her own daughter, Angel, during one protest. According to Bush, a bullet fired through the trunk of her car went through the backseat and lodged in the front passenger side, where her daughter was sitting. Had it continued, she said, the bullet would have landed in her child’s spine.

Bush said she wanted better for her children and her community. She is a progressive who supported two-time Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt). She noticed that Sanders’ beliefs seemed to align with hers when she heard him speak as a 2016

presidential candidate. Remembering the speech, Bush chuckled, “When I heard this old white man say, ‘Black Lives Matter’ on a stage publicly, I was Bernie Sanders all the way.”

Against many naysayers, Bush first ran against veteran congressman William Lacy Clay Jr. in 2018, losing by 20 points. Her effort was chronicled in the 2019 Netflix documentary *Knock Down the House*, which followed the congressional races of four determined yet ordinary women, including Bush and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY). Ocasio-Cortez was the only victor that year. That documentary got the attention of the Sanders presidential campaign in early 2020. Bush endorsed Sanders this year, and Sanders endorsed her. “That’s when all the doors of fundraising and visibility opened,” Bush said.

Then the coronavirus physically debilitated Bush, causing her to be hospitalized for two weeks. Following her release, Bush endured a lengthy recovery at home from the end of March until Memorial Day in May when the world watched the horrific videotaped murder of George Floyd on TV. Protests, both peaceful and sometimes violent, triggered by Floyd’s death and other racial injustices helped propel Bush to victory.

Bush is walking into Congress with eyes wide open. She knows she’s up for a fight with her platform of equity across the board, Medicare for all, immediate financial COVID relief, reallocating police funds, and a national \$15-per-hour minimum wage. But she added, “After everything I’ve been through, I’m not afraid to fight.”

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# Kamala

## BLACKNESS AT THE TABLE



The nation's first woman and first Black vice president is uniquely positioned to uplift the race simply by being.

By *Sonyo Ross*

cala



**WASHINGTON** — Once upon a time, in an America that now seems so long ago, Toni Morrison mused about just how much Blackness America could tolerate in its presidents.

Then-President Bill Clinton, Morrison posited, carried a figurative Blackness about him that got him dogged and persecuted in a way that Black men, especially, know all too well. "... White skin notwithstanding, this is our first Black President. Blacker than any actual Black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime," Morrison wrote.

Of course, that was in the year of our Lord 1998 B.B. — before Barack. A decade later, when Barack Obama actually became the first Black president, bringing America's first Black first lady Michelle Obama with him, the pressure was even higher for both of them to keep their Blackness in check. "Post-racial" was the order of

the day. So even though Obama indulged his Blackness in myriad ways — singing a little soulful Al Green here and there, popping in on Omega Psi Phi's centennial convention, singing *Amazing Grace* from the pulpit of Mother Emanuel AME Church [in Charleston, S.C.] at the funeral for its church's murdered pastor — he also worked hard not to be a racial line-stepper, down to the details of his personal life. Burned so severely during his first campaign by controversy over the fiery sermons of his pastor back in Chicago, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Obama never did choose a church home in D.C.

Twelve years and two Obama terms later, here comes Kamala Harris, Democratic senator from California and now the country's vice president-elect. The first woman VP, first Black VP, first VP of Asian descent, bringing a lot of diversity through the door.

Opening Spread: Mark Makela / Shutterstock. This Page: Mario Tama / Staff; The Washington Post / Contributor



**Black women are too often overlooked, but so often proved that they are the backbone of our democracy.**

While those firsts attached now the country's vice president-elect. The first woman VP, first Black VP, first VP of Asian descent, bringing a lot of diversity through the door.

While those firsts attached to Kamala Harris count, they don't fully capture her true value. She also brings a rack of Black bona fides to the table: her college, her sorority, her civic ties, her roots in Black Oakland, the hot sauce she adds to her collard greens. In the twilight of Donald Trump's presidency with all its racist overtones, Harris' lived experiences put the best possible GPS at President-elect Joe Biden's right hand as he steers the nation past the stewpot of bigotry that Trump stirred up. This type of Blackness in the halls of power is the natural evolution that, for many, has been too long in coming. Through Kamala Harris, America will get to know on a more intimate level the Black world that made her — a world that is more than ready to be seen.

Kamala Devi Harris was born in Oakland, Calif., in the mid-1960s. Her mother and father, born in India and Jamaica, respectively, were civil rights activists steeped in academia. They divorced when she was 7. After graduating from high school, Kamala enrolled at Howard University, known as the "Mecca" of historically Black colleges, and let her Blackness blossom. There, she chaired the Economic Society, joined the debate team and pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., a storied sisterhood that itself broke barriers as the first Greek-letter sorority for Black women.

All along her rise to the vice presidency, Harris did what she's done every time she's broken a barrier in her political career: centered her Blackness, often alongside memories of her mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, who raised her to embrace it as well as her South Asian heritage.

"So, I am thinking about her and about the generations of women — Black women, Asian, white, Latina, Native American women — who throughout our nation's history have paved the way for this moment tonight," Harris said in claiming her election victory on Nov. 7. "Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all, including the Black women who are often, too often overlooked, but so often proved that they are the backbone of our democracy.

"Tonight, I reflect on their struggle, their determination and the strength of their vision to see what can be, unburdened by what has been," Harris continued. "And I stand on their shoulders."

In accepting the vice presidential nomination during the virtual Democratic National Convention in August, Harris cited by name and gave proper credit to Black women who continued the fight for equality

# Kamala Facts

- **Current office:** U.S. Senator from California since 2017
- **2020: Elected Vice President of the United States**
- **Born:** Oct. 20, 1964 (age 56 years), Oakland, Calif.
- **Nationality:** American
- **Spouse:** Doug Emhoff (m. 2014)
- **Parents:** Donald Harris, Shyamala Gopalan Harris
- **Education:** UC Hastings College of the Law (1989), Howard University (1986), Westmount High School (1981)
- **Sorority:** Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.



# Black leadership can come from different places than mainstream society believes it can come from.



long after the 19th Amendment extended voting rights to white women. Describing them as family, Harris also gave a shout out to “my beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha, our Divine Nine and my HBCU brothers and sisters.” (Harris’ mention of the Divine Nine refers to the nine Black Greek-lettered sororities and fraternities.)

“Reporters were Googling ‘Divine Nine.’ They hadn’t heard her talk about (that),” laughed Glynda Carr, president of Higher Heights for America, a political action committee dedicated to helping Black women candidates get elected at the local, state and federal levels.

That one mention, Carr said, opened a national conversation “about where Black leadership can come from, different places than mainstream society believes it can come from.”

“Little girls like my godbaby, will say, ‘I want to be an AKA and go to an HBCU,’” said Carr, who, like Harris, is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. “The Howard students and alumni stood a little taller that day. The entire ecosystem of HBCUs stood a little taller,” she

Kamala Harris, featured here in the Howard University yearbook, was active on campus.

Justin Sullivan / Staff; Joe Raedle / Staff; The Washington Post / Contributor





added. “I hope people will step up financially and support these institutions. That’s what I think her legacy is going to be in this moment.”

After graduating from Howard in 1986, Harris earned a law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1989. Then she went to work as a deputy district attorney in her native Oakland. She became district attorney in 2004. Upon winning election as California’s first woman and first Black attorney general in 2010, Harris identified herself as “a literal daughter of *Brown v. Board of Education*,” harking back to the day she joined the second class to integrate public schools in Berkeley.

It is significant, says Howard University President Wayne Frederick, for this country to have, after Barack Obama’s historic presidency, a vice president “in his likeness” whose sensibilities and breadth of experience are virtually unmatched both politically and from a Black cultural standpoint.

“What you also have added on is a relatability, as it were, to that Black experience in a very wholesome fashion,” Frederick said. “It gives the electorate, especially the Black electorate ... a prism to see her through that they can relate to.”

Harris was the commencement speaker at her alma mater in 2017, months into her Senate term. She “was able to really speak, as they say on my campus, truth to power,” Frederick said.

In that speech, Harris cited both her internship in the U.S. Senate and her participation in student protests against apartheid in South Africa as examples of how to reject conventional wisdom in the quest for social reform.

“Sometimes to make change, you’ve got to change how change is made,” Harris told the graduates. “So, do not be constrained by tradition. Do not listen when they say it

can’t be done. And do not be burdened by what has been when you can create what should be.”

The earliest moves by the Biden-Harris team appear to reflect that philosophy. Racial equity is one of four pillars in the incoming administration’s action plan. The review teams being dispatched to evaluate operations across all federal agencies are quite diverse. More than half are women, and roughly 40 percent are from groups that have been underrepresented in federal government — people of color, people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBTQ+.

“It’s still Black, it’s just a different kind of Black,” said Fredrick C. Harris, dean of social sciences at Columbia University and director of the university’s Center on African American Politics and Society. “And it’s not a triumph, necessarily, against whiteness. It’s also a triumph over a particular type of Black elitism,” he added. “... It pushes back on this idea that, in order to be a part of, or to make a contribution in public life on that level, you must be a Black person who comes from white institutions.”

As vice president, Kamala Harris will have to manage expectations among Black people that she will deliver quickly on an array of wish list items, particularly when it comes to the needs of HBCUs, said Dr. W. Franklin Evans, president of Voorhees College in South Carolina.

“There was this expectation from Black people that President Obama was going to do all these amazing things that nobody else had done,” Evans said. “They had these expectations that President Obama was going to walk on water for HBCUs, and that did not occur. ... People were upset.

“Sen. Harris, on the other hand, she is a product of an HBCU,” he continued. “... So, when America sees Howard, it also sees Morehouse. It also sees Philander Smith, Tougaloo. She knows firsthand the struggles of our institutions. She’s a wonderful spokesperson for us.”



By Dani McClain

# How We Survived A Year of Grief

This fall, Josie Pickens lost two family members in a week's time. Though neither of them died from COVID, both Pickens's uncle and godmother lived and died in a small Louisiana town that's been a cluster for the virus. The pandemic shaped how the family grieved. Pickens wasn't able to visit her godmother in the hospital in the days before she succumbed to cancer, and she was almost excluded from the funeral. New restrictions had been placed on the number of mourners allowed, and the small church had reached capacity when she arrived.

The repast proved to be the biggest test. Pickens, a Houston-based writer and educator, knew that funerals were often super spreader events. She'd been prepared to keep a distance, but that resolve changed once she was face-to-face with her grieving family members. "We have really developed a blueprint to Black care, family care, community care," she said, recalling how she eventually accepted and offered embraces during those back-to-back funerals. "As much as I knew, I was

Jupiterimages



**“Every grief experience is connected to another grief experience.”**

willing to face the danger in those moments.” Pickens took the necessary precautions, getting tested for COVID once she returned to Houston and then quarantining. But she’s still in awe of the conundrum she was faced with. “Who would’ve imagined that we would be in a place where we’d have to negotiate touch and comfort and care?”

Who would’ve imagined any of this? One way to characterize 2020 is as a year of grief. This could be said for all Americans and perhaps for people the world over, particularly in countries hard hit by COVID. But grief has blanketed Black America especially. We are dying from the virus at twice the rate of our white peers. As the pandemic rages on, the gap between Black and white unemployment has widened, with a higher rate of Black workers becoming permanently laid off while white workers disproportionately go back to work. We have learned of or watched still more lives snuffed out by police and vigilante violence, including Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Elijah McClain. And we have grieved as the courts engage in delays and outright refusals to prosecute their killers to the full extent of the law.

Much of the available literature on grief describes it in ways that don't capture the scale of what many of us are facing right now. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross wrote about the five stages we can expect to move through while grieving: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Viktor Frankl's writing on the topic established the possibility of "post-traumatic growth," a doubling down on one's commitment to life in the wake of great tragedy. But there's less scholarship that focuses specifically on Black Americans, for whom it could be argued that the "post" in "post-traumatic" never seems to come.

Instead, what we must consider alongside the acute pain that comes with losing a loved one or a disruptive period such as the pandemic is the experience of historical or generational grief, said Dr. Beverly Wallace, a Lutheran pastor and co-author with Paul C. Rosenblatt of the 2005 book *African American Grief*. "That trauma started with the Maafa," Wallace said, using a Swahili-derived word that describes African descendants' experience in the West. "It started with our enslavement from the continent and how we had to deal with the shock of being displaced." She connects the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the period of Jim Crow and the systemic racism and racialized microaggressions that continue to affect Black lives today.

Wallace, who is in her mid-60s, was at her home in Smithville, N.C., on Election Day. She explained how the current political climate was tapping into harm she had experienced as a child. On her way to vote, she passed a vendor with a large display of Trump paraphernalia. The signs promoting a president who showed tacit support for the Proud Boys and white supremacists who gathered in Charlottesville in the summer of 2017 brought back memories of another sign. The message "This is KKK Country. Love it or Leave it" had hung over the nearby Neuse (pronounced "Noose") River when she was a child, Wallace said. She recalled her grandmother rushing to pull down the shades in her home when the Klan rode through the town's streets, an effort to shield a young Wallace from the terrorist organization's brazen display of power. Just as the death of a loved one can bring up difficult, unresolved emotions around a previous loss, contemporary political assaults on Black lives remind us of past assaults. "Every grief experience is connected to another grief experience," Wallace said.

For many, the way we respond to our chronic collective grief and our experiences with personal grief is to repress it. We compartmentalize the hurt, try to tuck it neatly away and get on with our lives. "What good does it do to wallow in despair?" we might ask ourselves. But simply acknowledging our pain and allowing it to rise to the surface can help us manage

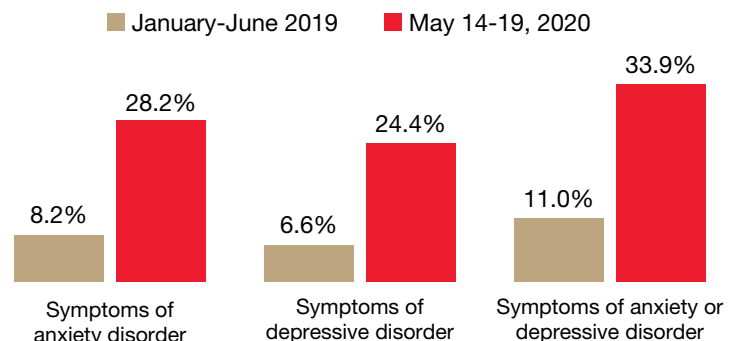
our grief, said Erica Woodland, founder and executive director of the National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network. "As Black folks, we are conditioned to see our inability to keep it moving as a personal failing," said Woodland, who uses the pronouns he and him. In the face of the widespread grief brought on by the pandemic, he finds himself offering clients tips on how to turn and face the reality of what they're going through. "I'm saying to people, 'Don't gaslight yourself. Don't gaslight your experience,'" he said. Instead of second-guessing our sadness or telling ourselves we're overreacting, Woodland suggests practicing self-compassion and reminding ourselves how challenging these conditions really are.

Tricia Hersey, known to followers of her work as the Nap Bishop, says making space in our lives for grief is necessary for healing to occur. Rather than powering on or telling our devastated loved ones not to cry when they're overcome with emotion, we should give ourselves over to the experience. While in divinity school, Hersey trained as a chaplain in a retirement community and witnessed a range of responses to loss. "We really, as a culture, don't know how to grieve," she said of Americans. In 2016, she founded the Nap Ministry, an organization that urges people to prioritize rest as a path toward liberation. "Rest supports grieving. Like silence and like prayer and like slowing down and dreaming and napping, all of those things help to remove veils from our eyes, help us to see more clearly what's happening," Hersey said.

We might hear this advice and not know where to begin, given our lives' many demands. In Hersey's view, rest is central to survival, and any beliefs we hold that being still and unproductive are displays of laziness are the result of centuries of oppression. "Everything in culture is working in collaboration for us not to rest," Hersey said. "We've been trained from the beginning

## Pandemic Causes Spike in Anxiety & Depression

% of U.S. adults showing symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder



Sources: CDC, NCHS, U.S. Census Bureau



to ignore our bodies.” For her, evangelizing rest as a restorative practice and antidote to grief is political. She talks about rest as a form of self-directed reparations for Black people. Like Wallace, she believes the violence experienced by our ancestors lives on in our bodies and unconscious habits. “We were the first commodity,” Hersey said, describing slavery as the engine of American capitalism. It was on plantations that we were pushed as “the edge of automation.”

In 2020, many of us find ourselves with more time on our hands, time we could use to nap and daydream as Hersey suggests. But in our current predicament the opportunity to relax can feel far-fetched. Instead, the pandemic has created an expanse of time stretching out before us that means lost income, a lost sense of direction, and no real sense of when it will end. The news that effective COVID vaccines are now available brought some optimism, but the sense of disorientation remains. Pickens, the Houston-based writer, has seen how the economic fallout from the pandemic is hitting the same Black communities that were battered by Hurricane Harvey just three years ago. Back then, she worked with Black Lives Matter HTX to distribute basic care items, filling gaps left by the city’s recovery efforts. Now the group is involved in a mutual aid project. Pickens recalled speaking with a woman in search of support. “So much of the phone call was her talking about how hard she’s worked. She’s always had two jobs. She’s always been able to take care of herself,” Pickens said. The group doesn’t require anyone to prove their need or explain themselves. But in the woman’s insistence on her previous self-sufficiency, Pickens could hear her profound sense of loss: “this grief of the ability to care for oneself; the grief of who you thought you were and what you thought your life was.”

The woman’s desire to share her story, even with a stranger, makes sense. We want to be witnessed in these hard times, we want to be held and to hold each other. Just because we can’t safely gather doesn’t mean that yearning goes away. Funerals and memorial services mark the passing of an individual’s life. But when we get through

these hardest months or years, how will we mourn the many losses we’re sustaining? How will we override shame and express our collective sense of grief?

For several years, spiritual teacher and author Spring Washam worked alongside Sobonfu Somé, a West African teacher who brought the grief practices of Burkina Faso to the rest of the world. Washam recalled the rituals she led with Somé for several years before Somé’s death in 2017.

“In Burkina Faso, [grief is] not a private issue. It’s a public health issue for everyone,” Washam said. She learned from Somé that healers and elders in Somé’s native country would be able to sense — from looking in people’s eyes or smelling the air — when members of the community needed a release valve for their grief. The traditional ritual would last days. The events Somé and Washam facilitated together at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in the San Francisco Bay Area would last an afternoon and involved separate altars meant for honoring ancestors, practicing forgiveness and releasing grief. Participants built and tended a bonfire meant to consume symbols of their grief.

“She always encouraged a lot of vocal release, so screaming, wailing, moving,” Washam said of Somé. “There’s something strong about allowing ourselves to feel. The suppression is what will make us ill. We need to honor this energy and let it have its life.”

From her home in Harrisburg, Pa., Julia Mallory is helping people grieve together virtually. Her online workshop “Can We Talk About Grief?” has reached at least 100 people since March. She is adamant that she’s a guide, not an expert. “I think they see a Black woman who has acknowledged her own grief, so they feel, ‘Maybe Julia can offer me the space to be able to work with my grief,’” she said. Mallory’s 17-year-old son Julian was killed in 2017. In the wake of the tragedy, the longtime poet deepened her commitment to writing and tapped into its therapeutic benefits. Through Black Mermaids, her creative literary arts company, she shares practices and tools that have helped her. One such writing prompt: Use the five senses to reflect on how grief is moving in your body. Reading Black writers who explore grief well can also be a balm, Mallory said. She lists Toni Morrison, Elizabeth Alexander, Zora Neale Hurston, Lucille Clifton and Jesmyn Ward among her favorites.

Black Mermaids sells a T-shirt that displays a simple sentence repeated more than a dozen times in bright, insistent colors: “We can’t avoid our grief and be free.” The phrase describes Mallory’s commitment to facing grief, refusing to avoid it, as so many of us try to do. “Sometimes we find ourselves collapsing because we’ve tried to put off engaging with our grief so long,” Mallory said. “I just want us to make sure that we’re really OK and not just looking like we’re OK.”



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## Nikkolas Smith: An American Patriot

BY CHANTÉ GRIFFIN

**W**hen Black Lives Matter activists asked artist Nikkolas Smith to paint a portrait of George Floyd that would go on a billboard in New York's Times Square, Smith outfitted Floyd in a black tuxedo and bowtie. The goal, said Smith, was to give Floyd the honor and dignity that he was denied when a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his knee for 8 minutes and 46 seconds on May 25, killing him.

The portrait was hauntingly reminiscent of a college graduation photo, meant to be shared with family and loved ones and to signify accomplishment and the hope of a bright future. Smith painted the piece to grieve personally and commemorate the collective grief that spanned the globe, he said. Since then, Smith has been contacted to paint many more tribute portraits including those of Breonna Taylor, the EMT worker who was killed by Louisville, Ky., police officers in her apartment while sleeping, and Ahmaud Arbery, the young Black man who was chased and gunned down by three White men outside New Brunswick, Ga.

Smith was first introduced to art by the paintings that lined the walls of his family home in Houston, Texas.



PHOTOS COURTESY NIKKOLAS SMITH

**Artist Nikkolas Smith has created memorable portraits illustrating the Black Lives Matter movement. He describes his work as activism.**



George Floyd



Breonna Taylor



Ahmaud Aubrey

# THE CRISIS

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“My mom had the blackest Norman Rockwell paintings, the ones that had the most racial tension,” Smith recounts, including “The Problem We All Live With,” where a young Ruby Bridges integrates a New Orleans elementary school.

But coming out of high school, Smith didn’t really know what he wanted to do. He liked math and liked to draw, so he decided to attend Hampton University, which had an architecture program. It was at Hampton that Smith learned critical design skills, but, just as importantly, the power and expansiveness of Black art. He says his five years at Hampton fueled a cultural consciousness and commitment to community that informs his socially conscious art today.

After graduating from Hampton, Smith spent 11 years designing theme parks.

“I’d go home and sketch and create,” Smith recalls.

Inspired by the hoodie movement that was sweeping social media, he and a friend asked, “What if great leaders throughout history were wearing hoodies?” Smith decided to reimagine the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in a hoodie — first in a photo, and then in a painting. The piece went viral, and Smith found himself

on CNN alongside King’s youngest daughter, Bernice King, discussing the controversy around her father’s image. Critics accused Smith of making the Rev. King look like a thug, but he said his goal was to depict King’s dream of not wanting children to be judged by the color of their skin.

“That was the week Black Lives Matter emerged,” Smith remembers.

Today Smith is a concept artist, children’s book author and film illustrator who has created iconic images including film posters for *Black Panther*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *Southside With You* and *Dear White People*.

He also started *Sunday Sketches*, in which he creates artistic pieces that speak to what is happening in the country. One *Sunday Sketch* of Colin Kaepernick kneeling evolved into a billboard spread in Los Angeles that Converse donated space for. Underneath the sketch, in big, bold letters, Smith wrote PATRIOT.

Smith has honored the weekly practice for years, and recently published *Sunday Sketch: The Art of Nikkolos* to capture some of his favorites.

“My mission is to inspire Americans to fight for that patriotic idea of justice for all, to address this 400-year issue, this pandemic of racism,” Smith says. ■

# kweliTV is Streaming for the Culture

BY STACY JULIEN

If you listen to DeShuna Spencer's back story, you understand completely. She minces no words or emotions to describe the struggle in launching a Black video streaming platform from scratch. But that the Tennessee native had the gumption to do it in a wildly competitive market isn't that much of a stretch.

"If I'm determined to do something, I'll do it," says Spencer, founder of kweliTV. "That's why I've been at this for so long."

Born the middle child to religious, working-class parents, her drive was unfolding as a preteen. By high school, Spencer had a job at Blockbuster Video and used her earnings to buy a car, pay for extracurricular activities and ultimately, cover her graduation cap and gown.

"I was a self-sufficient kid. That's been my life," she says. "I never wanted to wait for something to happen for me. That's always been my mentality."

It still is. That drive and determination — and a whole lot of sleepless nights — led her to start kweliTV in 2015. ("Kweli" means "truth" in Swahili.) And it was largely fueled by a desire to provide content that other streaming services only touched the surface on — films created by Black filmmakers for Black audiences. The service features indie films, news, web shows, documentaries and more. On kweliTV, stories that celebrate the global Black community are front and center 24/7, and not just during Black History Month or, lately, when the Black Lives Matter movement makes it trendy to do so.

"When you have these other



DeShuna Spencer created the streaming service kweliTV in 2015 to provide a platform for films created by Black filmmakers for Black audiences.

**"Our content deserves to be seen. We deserve international attention. What we have is just as good as what's on Hulu and Netflix."**

companies trying to cater to the Black audience, it's even more challenging to do what I'm trying to do," says Spencer, who graduated from Mississippi's Jackson State University with a degree in mass communications.

It also makes it sweeter that PCMag.com recently listed kweliTV on its 2020 list of Best Movie Streaming Services, alongside Amazon Prime, Disney+, and of course, Netflix. Spencer's company sits right next to HBO Max.

"It was validation for me. When you're not a part of the behemoth companies, people second guess if they can trust your content. They

question if they should pull out a Visa and buy your service," she says. "Our content deserves to be seen. We deserve international attention. What we have is just as good as what's on Hulu and Netflix. Our films may not have an A-list actor, but they're still just as good."

The onetime radio host knew zip about how to start a streaming service. Through research, aches and pains with developers and the help of \$20,000 in pitch competition winnings, kweliTV was born. The first developer started building the project but disappeared before the beta launch. Spencer debated on releasing the unfinished product, but stepped out on faith to see if she was on the right track.

"The site was bare bones. It didn't work that well. I released it to validate if it was something people wanted," says Spencer, who eventually survived four different technology officers. "As crappy as it was, people were excited about subscribing."

But by 2017, the company was in the hole and losing subscribers. Funds were low and filmmakers couldn't be paid. She was ignored

by potential investors who didn't believe Black consumers would support the concept. The platform had technical issues, and it was Spencer who felt the brunt of customer aggravation. With the exception of a small, tech team in Rockville, Md., Spencer is a one-woman show. She almost gave up.

Except she hates to quit, she'll tell you. And she definitely wants to prove the naysayers wrong.

It took a year to get out of the hole, but Spencer continued to raise money and improve the product. Today, kweliTV has more than 35,000 users on the platform, some who subscribe at \$5.99 a month or \$49.99 annually. Sixty percent of revenue is paid quarterly to content creators – mostly talented unknowns who get a chance to shine.

In addition to unique content, subscribers become part of a growing community with access to film screening events, kweliDEALS (discounts to Black-owned businesses and brands) and kweli

merch such as shirts emblazoned with "Streaming for the Culture" and "Black and Binging."

It's Spencer's way of connecting with her supporters who see the value.

Nothing about what she's accomplished is easy. Even with tight resources, her dream for kweliTV is hard to contain. Original programming has a place, but

that's not even the half of the journey.

"What if we are the company who can IPO and dedicate a percentage of the company to customers? And it changes their lives? That would be amazing to do that. Right now, day to day, we're focusing on being viable to our customers, but the goal is to become as big as we can." ■



## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NAACP RECORDS

For over fifty years, the Library of Congress has been the official repository for all NAACP Records, manuscripts, photos, etc. The Library acquired the NAACP records in 1964 with the help of Morris L. Ernst, a friend of Arthur Spingarn, the NAACP's longtime counsel and president. Totalling over five million items dating back to 1909, the NAACP Records are the largest single manuscript collection acquired by the Library and the most heavily accessed. Through the years, Mildred Bond Roxborough continued to facilitate the transmission of NAACP material.

The NAACP Records are the cornerstone of the Library's civil rights collections. The comprehensive civil rights collections also include the original records of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, National Urban League and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; and the microfilmed records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). These records are enhanced by the papers of such prominent activists as Roy Wilkins, Roger Wilkins, Moorfield Storey, A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, Joseph Rauh, Mary Church Terrell, Thurgood Marshall and Jackie Robinson.

If you have NAACP records, pictures, tapes, manuscripts, etc., please forward the material to the NAACP national headquarters so that we may forward this important material to the Library of Congress. Please contact India Artis at [iartis@naacpnet.org](mailto:iartis@naacpnet.org) for additional information or questions. Visit the NAACP collection at the Library of Congress at [loc.gov](http://loc.gov).

NAACP/India Artis  
NAACP National Headquarters  
4805 Mt. Hope Drive  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

BY JAZELLE HUNT

## 8 New Social Justice Podcasts to Keep You in the Loop

As Black communities deal with crisis on three fronts – the coronavirus pandemic, police/white supremacist violence, and a precarious political landscape – some of our brightest minds have taken it upon themselves to keep us informed and fortified each week. Here are eight social justice podcasts founded since the state of affairs took a turn for the worst in March 2020.

### 1 Podcast: COVID University of New York Host: Char Adams

With New York City being one of the hardest and earliest hit coronavirus epicenters in the world, this podcast from the City University of New York (CUNY) captures concerns and stories from disproportionately-affected Black and brown New Yorkers. With Black communities everywhere being the most at-risk for COVID complications, there's insight and relevance for listeners far outside NYC.

*"Several communities have preexisting vulnerabilities, whether due to racism, ableism or poverty. COVID University of New York gives special focus to them all."*

– Char Adams



HTTPS://WWW.GOTHAMCENTER.ORG/

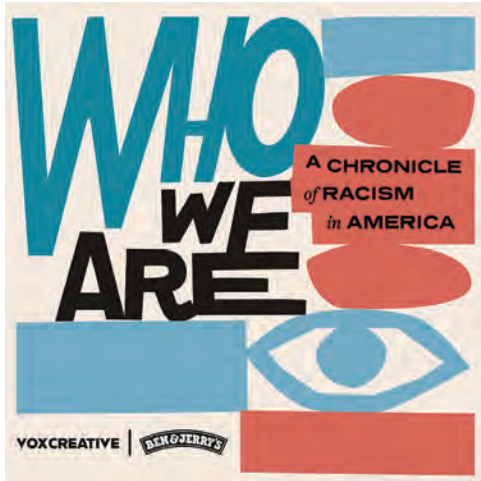
https://us.macmillan.com/



### 2 Podcast: Driving the Green Book Hosts: Alvin Hall & Janée Woods Weber

The Negro Motorist Green Book was an invaluable cross-communal resource that helped Black Americans avoid racial discrimination, police harassment and white violence on their interstate travels. This podcast features the book's safe locales and interviews with people who lived through the Green Book's heyday.

HTTPS://WWW.VOX.COM/



### 3 Podcast: Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America Hosts: Carvell Wallace & Jeffery Robinson

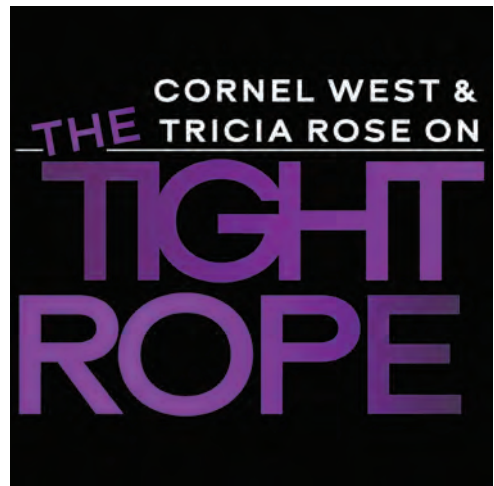
This past September when Ben & Jerry's announced it would launch an anti-racist podcast — yes, that Ben & Jerry's — it caused quite a stir. The six-episode podcast takes a deep dive into U.S. history and its white supremacist origins.

*"I believe that the death of George Floyd has presented America with what may be our last and best chance.... In order to undo 400 years of a system that was designed, either deliberately or by indifference, to create the society that we're in right now ... it is going to take huge steps. We are not going to be able to nibble around the edges anymore."*

– Jeffery Robinson

### 4 Podcast: The Tight Rope Hosts: Dr. Cornel West & Prof. Tricia Rose

For knowledgeable conversation about Black music/art, social justice uprisings and anti-racism, *The Tight Rope* is what you're looking for. With featured guests including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Daveed Diggs and more, each episode entertains and educates.



HTTPS://WWW.STITCHER.COM/

BARATUNDE.COM



### 5 Podcast: How To Citizen with Baratunde Host: Baratunde Thurston

Thurston's latest project explores the idea of "citizen" as a verb, and a responsibility centered on building and using collective power. True to the mission, Thurston records live, welcomes expert guests, and invites audience members to join in with questions.

*"One of the consequences of limiting our power [as citizens] to the interpretation of, 'you get to vote' ... is that you leave a lot of people off to the side. You leave people who don't have documentation, off... or if you're formerly incarcerated in some states... or by age."*

– Baratunde Thurston

## 6 Podcast: Sounds Like Hate

Hosts: Geraldine Moriba & Jamila Paksima

The Southern Poverty Law Center offers this documentary-style podcast that spotlights extremist groups and the people and communities who subscribe to the hateful ideologies therein. The journalistic storytelling format (as opposed to the conversational or Q&A format of many podcasts) makes for compelling episodes that feel more like Netflix than NPR.



SOUNDSLIKEHATE.ORG

## 7 Podcast: Black in Appalachia

Hosts: Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin & Angela Dennis

The podcast points out that Appalachia spans 420 counties in 13 states from New York to Mississippi — a huge region ripe with Black history, communities and social justice ills. In one episode, the scholars discuss the rise of “Nazi hunters” — individuals or groups who work to expose new white supremacy groups and their members who are hiding in plain sight.

*“We know that the general conception of Appalachia is that this place is rural, rugged and white. So we want to tell the stories of the Black folks in Appalachia, who have always been here — or, at least as long as white folks have been here.”*

**– Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin & Angela Dennis**



HTTPS://WWW.BLACKINAPPALACHIA.ORG/

## 8 Podcast: Black Lives Matter Presents: What Matters

Host: Kailee Scales

Black Lives Matter Global Network Managing Director Kailee Scales interviews activists, key figures and experts on a variety of issues that intersect with the Black Lives Matter guiding principles.

*“All of these things are happening right now – with Nina Pop, with Ahmaud [Arbery], we’re dealing with a pandemic – and then we hear about our sister Breonna with her beautiful, loving smile. It sometimes can feel overwhelming. But we’re stepping up. We have to do this again. We need justice for Breonna.”*

**– Kailee Scales**



LISTENNOTES.COM



# Bonus

**Podcast: Cite Black Women**  
Host: Christen Smith

Although this podcast was launched back in 2018, the public is sorely due for a reminder to listen to Black women and give credence and credit where it is due.

*"Cite Black Women is a movement...to push us all to critically engage and respect Black women's intellectual contributions. We seek to promote critical dialogue about the erasure of Black women from mainstream citational practices in academic spaces, public discourse and the everyday."*

**– Michaela Machicote (co-producer)**

# DENTAL Insurance

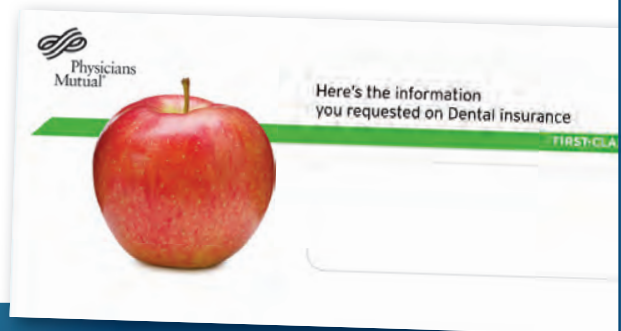
Get Dental Insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. It helps cover over 350 procedures – from cleanings and fillings to crowns and dentures. Call today to get help paying big dental bills.

- **See any dentist you want**, but save more with one in our network
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Call to get your **FREE** Information Kit

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# Books Published by Black Authors in 2020 Offer Something for Every Desire

BY STEPHANIA H. DAVIS

So...2020 has been a lot. Raging pandemic, sputtering economy, financial stress, closed schools and a historic election that gave us the nation's first Black and Asian female vice president.

## A Promised Land by Barack Obama

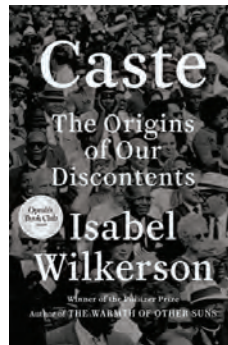
(Crown Publishing Group). After the last four years, it's nice to be reminded of a time when the presidency was more about the people of the country and less about one person. Obama's thoughtful account of his first term in office is filled with personal anecdotes linked to the major achievements of his administration. For example, he pushed the Affordable Care Act so hard, in part, so that people wouldn't have to worry about leaving their loved ones with medical debt as his own mother did as she died from cancer. At more than 700 pages — and this is just volume one — it requires a commitment of time, but it is well worth it for the insight he offers into the life of America's first Black president.



## Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents

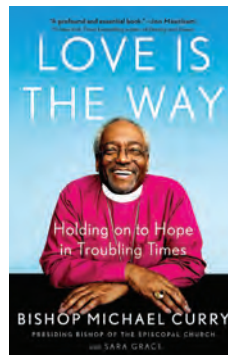
by Isabel Wilkerson (Random House). In this her second book, Wilkerson examines how racism and caste are deliberately and inextricably linked and conspire to perpetuate a social order in America that keeps whites at the top, Blacks on the bottom and everyone else — Latinos, Asians, Native Americans — fighting it out

for somewhere in the middle. Though the idea of a caste system is usually associated with Britain or India, Wilkerson demonstrates how America also has a caste system and connects the history with the sociology.



## Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times

by Bishop Michael Curry, and Sara Grace (Avery). You may remember the bishop's enthralling sermon during the 2018 wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, now the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. He spoke of love, of course, but also how it informs all of life. Here the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church breaks it all down, using stories from his own remarkable life as the descendent of slaves, and a veteran of the Civil Rights Movement to meet racism, poverty, despair and all manner of trials with love. Think of it as a sermon in your pocket.



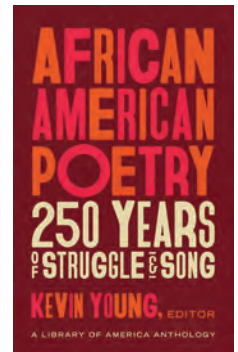
But it wasn't all bad; books by Black authors continue to offer spiritual solace, intellectual diversion and thought-provoking stories.

Since it looks like we may be spending the bulk of the winter inside, spend some time diving into one of the remarkable books published in 2020.

Here are some notable books published this year:

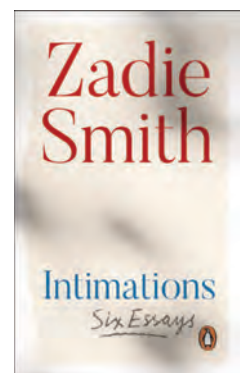
## African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song

edited by Kevin Young (Library of America). This anthology is a reminder of the vast contribution of African-American poets, and it's long overdue. From Phillis Wheatley, a slave who was the first Black author of a published volume of poetry, through the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement to contemporary authors, Young chronicles it all, thoroughly and lovingly.



## Intimations: Six Essays

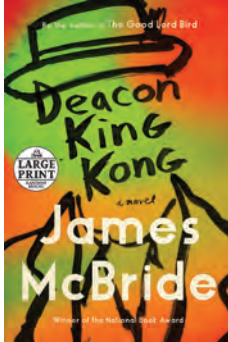
by Zadie Smith (Penguin Books). The essayist spent the New York lockdown earlier this year reflecting on the virus — COVID-19, as well as the virus of contempt — Mel Gibson, George Floyd and other topics. An intimation is an indication, or hint. With this collection Smith gives us an indication of what she has been thinking during our current moment.



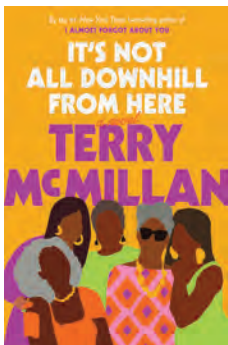
You're likely to find some common ground with your own thinking.

**Deacon King Kong** by James McBride (Riverhead). The writer won a National Book Award in 2013 for *The Good Lord Bird*, which was recently adapted into a miniseries on Showtime.

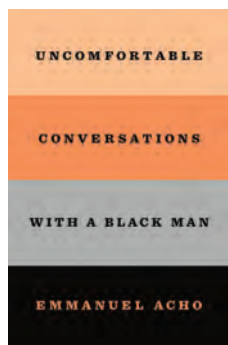
But this novel has more in common with McBride's other pastime, jazz musician. Dozens of characters in the Brooklyn housing project where it is set have elaborate backstories, even a colony of ants. The writing lifts and sways and crescendos like a saxophone solo.



**It's Not All Downhill from Here**, by Terry McMillan (Ballantine). When a sudden loss upends Loretha Curry's full and happy life, she and her loyal friends band together to figure out how to keep thriving. Our girl is back with a hilarious and thought-provoking look at love, family and friendship as we age.



**Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man**, by Emmanuel Acho (Flatiron Books). With his radiant smile and thoughtful manner, Acho puts people at ease and makes them comfortable enough on his video series to ask tough questions like



“Should I teach my kids to ‘see color’?” It’s not all advice for white readers; we can all learn something from his discussion of implicit bias and his unique perspective on American racism as the son of Nigerian immigrants.

**The Vanishing Half**, a Novel by Brit Bennett (Riverhead Books). This story is about light-skinned Black twin sisters who leave their small town in Louisiana for New Orleans, where one decides to pass for white, and the other doesn't. But no tragic mulattos here.



This page-turner chronicles how both sisters face the consequences of their choices and also makes some pointed observations about white privilege.

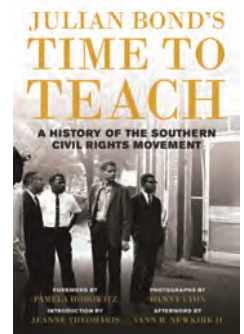
**Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019** edited by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain (One World) Technically this book will not be published until Feb. 2, 2021 (get your pre-orders in now). But there is a lot of excitement for this unique telling of the history of our people in America. Kendi and Blain have assembled, in one volume, 90



writers to take on a five-year period of that 400-year span and explore it however they chose. The result ranges from historical essays to short stories, personal vignettes and even poems. It is as diverse as the people chronicled. In explaining the project on Instagram, Kendi wrote that “The volume's first writer, Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of the *1619 Project*, journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones,

writes from August 20, 1619 to August 19, 1624. The volume's final writer, Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza, writes from August 20, 2014 to August 19, 2019. All 90 contributors are leaders in their fields. I can't wait to introduce all of them. The lineup is beyond belief.” No doubt.

**Bonus Read: Julian Bond's Time to Teach: A History of the Southern Civil Rights Movement.** Former NAACP chairman Julian Bond taught a history class at the University of Virginia on the Civil Rights Movement. A co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Bond lectured on the Civil Rights Movement from a personal perspective. This volume features the activist's original lecture notes, a must-read for today's generation of social justice leaders. Stephanie H. Davis teaches Communication at Manchester Community College in Manchester, Connecticut.



# The NAACP TODAY



## Oprah Winfrey, Stacey Abrams and Kamala Harris featured At NAACP 111th National Virtual Convention This Year

BY KAREN JUANITA CARRILLO

**D**J D-Nice started off this year's 111th NAACP National Convention by spinning records along the lines of his patented Club Quarantine parties. "Nothing but good vibes," he promised, "Let's Go!"

The dance music's sounds and patterns created a welcoming, festive feel to the organization's first-ever convention conducted entirely online Sept. 13-26, 2020. Though the 111th gathering had been scheduled to take place in Boston, Mass., the coronavirus pandemic put those plans on hold and have led to the Boston convention being rescheduled for the year 2023.

"This is obviously an NAACP convention unlike any other," commented Leon W. Russell, chair of the National Board of Directors during the Public Opening Address, "because we are not able to meet in a traditional convention setting where we could join in spirited conversation and debate or celebrate our programs or

determine our policies in that group setting."

Rather than risk the chance of participants becoming infected with the raging COVID-19 virus, delegates met from Sept. 13 through Sept. 26 in virtual workshops and break-out sessions which allowed NAACP members — and the general public — to log on all at once. The winners of the 2020 ACT-SO (Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) award ceremony were celebrated. And Black opera singers were featured singing the Black national anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, in an arrangement by Roland Carter which was juxtaposed with images of 1968's I Am a Man protests and this year's Black Lives Matter marches.

"Now comes 2020: Oh, what a weary year," Russell lamented. "But a year that has forced the yet-to-be United States of America to take a look at itself and reckon with the issue of race."

The conference featured workshops centered around the NAACP's #WeAreDoneDying campaign, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black communities, justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and

other victims of police violence, and combatting the harms of systemic racism.

The 111th NAACP convention will be remembered, though, for its strident call promoting the power of the vote — and the need for everyone to be prepared to vote. There has been a lot of confusion around voting in 2020 because of all of the inaccurate information about who's eligible to vote and how people can vote. University of Baltimore Law School professor Gilda Daniels, for example, noted "weapons of mass distraction" have been utilized to misinform people about what they need to do to cast a ballot that will be counted.

"We're really trying to make sure that people don't wait until the last minute. This is a season that really requires, because of the challenges with the U.S. Postal Service and mail delays — among other issues — that people really activate now to figure out how they intend to vote," said Kristen Clarke president and executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. "My hope is that we will see those people who are



Media mogul Oprah Winfrey joined with the NAACP to host *Own Your Vote: Our Lives Depend On It*. The virtual conversation mobilized voters and inspired others to register to vote.

marching and protesting intently every day embracing the power of their vote itself on Election Day, or before Election Day as well. If you care about criminal justice reform, if you care about police violence in our country, it's important that we

push our lawmakers to do their job, that we hold our elected officials accountable for bringing about the change that is necessary."

Clarke noted that voters shouldn't only think about the presidential candidates, but also district attorneys who make decisions about whether or not to prosecute cops who use force without basis, mayors who make decisions about police chiefs who preside over police departments that may be in need of reform, elected judgeships at the local and state level, and sheriffs who preside over jails and make decisions on things like solitary confinement. She also encouraged people to reach out to the Election Protection hotline 866-OUR-VOTE with concerns or questions.

"The way we're used to talking about voting, particularly in the Black community, is that ...our forebears before us risked their lives to vote, blood was shed on the Edmund Pettus bridge...all of the stuff that's absolutely true about how we have to honor the struggle that came before us," said Sherrilyn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. "But what I have seen is us returning to talking about



Former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams spoke about voter suppression during the NAACP's 111th Virtual Convention. The film *All In*, which documented Abrams' race for governor, was also featured during the convention.

"Now comes 2020: Oh, what a weary year. But a year that has forced the yet-to-be United States of America to take a look at itself and reckon with the issue of race."

- Leon W. Russell, chair of the National Board of Directors



Vice President-elect Kamala Harris was featured at the NAACP's 11th Virtual Convention where she discussed the national unrest, the global pandemic and her vision for the future of America.

voting in the way that actually was the intention that underlay the Voting Rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. ...The motivation around voting during the Civil Rights Movement was premised on the idea that voting would give Black folks political power, and therefore the power to transform the condition of their communities."

One of the standout events at the convention was a town hall by media mogul Oprah Winfrey on her OWN network. The event, #OWNYourVote: *Our Lives Depend On It*, was a virtual conversation to encourage voters — particularly Black women voters — to prepare for and vote during this year's election cycle. #OWNYourVote town hall panelists included Rep. Ayanna Pressley, NAACP National Youth and College Director Tiffany Dena Loffin, Judith Browne Dianis, co-director of the

Advancement Project, and political activist Minyon Moore of Power Rising.

"This conversation is about continuing Black women as a strong voting bloc," Winfrey noted. "Everything with me starts with not just a 'Why?' ...but 'What is my intention?' I vote for those who marched and who prayed ...those people who we pay lip service to, we stand on their shoulders, those people who died for the crown that you now get to pick up and wear.

"Voting is the best way I know to bring about change in our country and in our communities," Winfrey added. "Everybody who's going to do it, think about what your 'why' is."

But historically, systems have been put in place to suppress the vote noted former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams. She was

featured in the documentary *All In: The Fight for Democracy*, which chronicled her run for governor and highlights the voter suppression tactics used against minorities throughout history. *All In* streamed for free on Amazon Prime.

"Part of our responsibility in fighting back against those who've suborned voter suppression, who ignore voter suppression or who foment voter suppression is that we've got to know what it looks like so we know how to fight back," said Abrams. "We have to make a plan: Make a plan to vote early, make a plan if you live in one of the 41 states where you can vote by mail, go ahead and vote. You know they're going to attack it; now that we know, we can do something about it."

In a conversation with Angela Rye, then Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, who would become the first African American woman and the first South Asian American woman to be elected vice president of the United States, spoke on the last day of the convention. Harris spoke of the importance of protest, the legacy of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the Breonna Taylor case. Check out the entire conversation here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX8FBlr0\\_f8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX8FBlr0_f8).

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson noted that eliminating discrimination is key to a better world.

"We must understand that we didn't wake up in this posture," said Johnson. "There's a long history that brought us here. Not only is there a long history that brought us here, there's an intentionality to exclude our voices in this democracy — and it's systematic."

In addition to the national convention, the NAACP held virtual conversations throughout the year featuring social justice activists, industry leaders and public servants discussing the actions and solutions necessary to improve, protect and change our communities. Check out the discussions on the NAACP's YouTube channel: [YouTube.com/NAACP](https://www.youtube.com/NAACP) ■

## Young People Relaunch an Ohio NAACP Chapter

BY MARIAH STEWART

**P**eople of color in Licking County, Ohio now have a NAACP chapter after young advocates worked to reactivate the branch.

"We wanted to come together as a community and really just be that voice for change and be the change agent that we know we can be," says Bryanna Stigger, president of the Licking County NAACP. "Our goal is to educate and empower our community and to bring awareness to the racial injustices of this nation and to make our community better."

For Stigger, who shares the same namesake as Breonna Taylor, the 26-year-old Black woman who was fatally shot by police in her apartment in Louisville, Ky., the call to relaunch the Licking County NAACP was necessary.

"It didn't start with George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. There's a history of systemic racism and oppression that was built on this very nation. White supremacy and white privilege have exuded into our very existence," Stigger explained.

After Licking's annual Juneteenth celebration earlier this year, Stigger, along with Carmen Lewandowski, Jadya Paige and a group of high school students, relaunched the dormant local NAACP branch. They were joined by Jeremy Blake, a Newark, Ohio, city councilman.

Lewandowski, Paige and Blake serve as vice presidents for the revitalized branch. Lewandowski and Paige have organized protests, marches, vigils and social media campaigns. They both currently operate the branch's social media and data.

"Sometimes I feel there is no central power who is working for [people of color]... I feel like people are looking for a rallying point, somebody who works for the people," says Paige, a high school junior. "The NAACP gives people the opportunity to see a positive change with a centralized organization."

Licking County, which is the largest city in Newark, has a population of nearly 180,000 — 91 percent White and 4 percent Black or African American, according to data from the Census Reporter, an independent journalism project funded by the



**"It didn't start with George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. There's a history of systemic racism and oppression that was built on this very nation. White supremacy and white privilege have exuded into our very existence."**

**- Bryanna Stigger, president, Licking, Ohio NAACP**



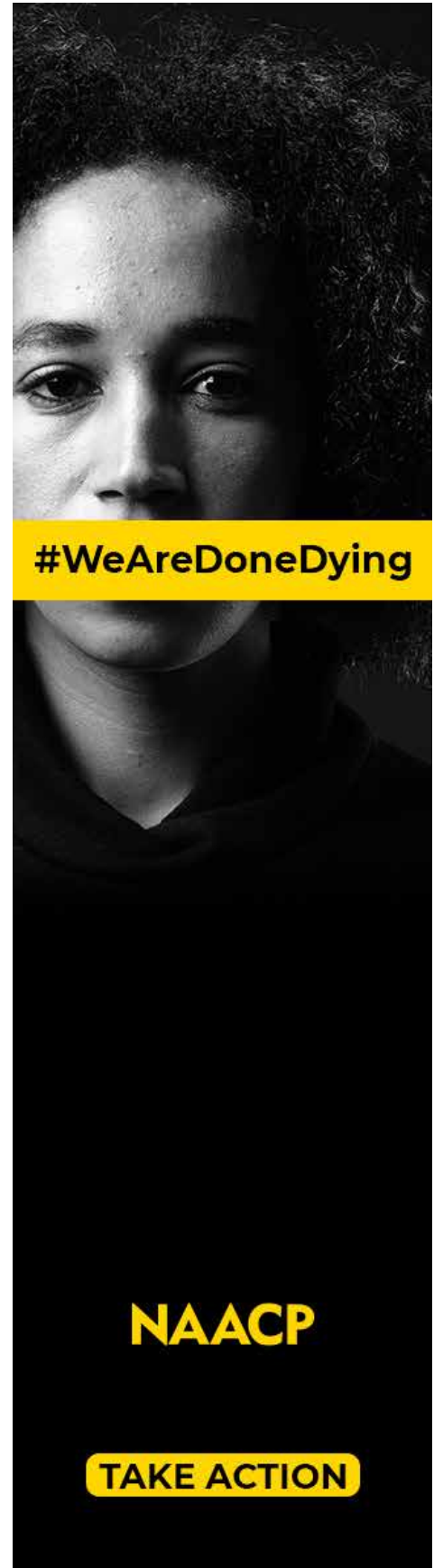
Carmen Lewandowski



Jadya Paige



Jeremy Blake



Knight Foundation. Stigger, who also serves as an outreach coordinator for the College of Social Work at Ohio State University, says it's common to see Confederate flags and swastikas in the small rural community.

"At our last event, we actually saw someone in a white truck with a Trump flag drive around for almost the whole event. We've had people try to intimidate us or say we're disgraceful or ask why is that [the NAACP] needed," Stigger explained. "Our biggest push is to really end the anti-blackness, to end the racism, to end the microaggression and to really just dismantle the systemic racism and oppression that we have faced collectively for centuries."

The newly reactivated chapter initially focused on voter registration and voter suppression during the election season. It has other events planned through 2021.

The goal is to create a more equitable environment and more inclusive environment, said Stigger. The Licking County branch will provide access to support and resources and ultimately, she said, the new branch hopes to enhance the lives of the Licking community members.

Paige, founder of the student anti-racism organization Generation of Change, says she wants to dispel the myth that the NAACP is racist. The civil rights organization is for equality and equity for all people, she noted. The Licking branch has already seen change in the short amount of time it's been reactivated.

"We don't have a high number of people of color in our community, but they still deserve our attention," Paige told *The Crisis*. "The NAACP brings hope. I'm continuing the legacy and really just creating a generation of change." ■



# NAACP

**Derrick Johnson**  
*President and  
Chief Executive Officer*

**Leon W. Russell**  
*Chairman  
National Board of Directors*

## **Strategic Realignment for a Stronger, Unified NAACP: A Letter to Donors from NAACP President/CEO Derrick Johnson**

As you know, in October 2017, following the same Board meeting where I was appointed President/CEO, the NAACP Board of Directors announced its plan to expand our national structure to include a new organization, tax-exempt under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. Going forward, this new entity will assume the name “**NAACP**” and serve as the parent organization that coordinates the work of our 2,200 local units and state conferences. The existing 501(c)(3) charitable entity will now be called “**NAACP Empowerment Programs, Inc.**” These two entities will work together at the national level in pursuit of our longstanding mission: to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

In these challenging times, civil rights advocacy requires more robust engagement in public policy than ever. By positioning a 501(c)(4) organization as the central “parent” organization in our IRS group ruling, we will be able to channel our resources more efficiently, better aligning our platform for advocacy. Dollars that come into the NAACP system through membership dues will flow up to the parent as unrestricted 501(c)(4) funds, better aligning our platform. The result will be a stronger, unified voice on behalf of communities of color.

Rest assured that our programmatic work will continue unchanged. The vast majority of our research, publications, and even our advocacy work will remain 501(c)(3) compliant. Thus, our valued donors, corporate sponsors, and philanthropic partners will be able to continue supporting our work through tax-deductible 501(c)(3) contributions and general support grants.

This realignment need not affect your individual relationship with the NAACP. NAACP members may continue to join the organization through their local Units. And individual donors can still support the NAACP’s charitable and educational work, as always. However, when making your gifts—either during your life or through your family’s legacy planning—please pay close attention to the new names of our two national entities in order to ensure your desired tax consequences.

Please consider the following suggestions, and be sure to consult your personal tax advisor to determine which giving option best aligns with your intentions. Some donors will need to revise their current legacy documents to ensure compliance with their wishes.

- We hope you will consider making your gifts and legacy bequests to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), now an organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section **501(c)(4)**, for maximum impact. Please remember that a gift to the NAACP during your lifetime will not be tax-deductible for income tax purposes. Moreover, a bequest to the NAACP may not be deductible for the purposes of federal estate tax. To avoid confusion during probate or estate administration, please be sure to include specific instructions regarding your intended gift. For example:

“I give to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a Delaware non-stock, non-profit corporation that is recognized as exempt from tax under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, [\_\_\_\_\_] % of my residuary estate, or the sum of [\$\_\_\_\_\_], to be used for its general social welfare purposes.”

- If you prefer to make gifts or bequests that qualify for income and estate tax charitable deductions, your payments should be directed to **NAACP Empowerment Programs, Inc.**, a New York non-profit corporation that is recognized as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. Contributions to this organization will continue to be dedicated exclusively to supporting our charitable and educational programs.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our legal team is standing by to answer any questions that you may have. Please don’t hesitate to call us at (410) 580-5105.

Thank you for your continued support. It means the world to us.

Sincerely,

Derrick Johnson  
President and CEO



## NAACP Bowie State Youth and College Chapter

BY LOTTIE L. JOINER

The Bowie State University NAACP Youth and College chapter has been busy. The college students are part of the school's Social Justice Alliance on campus. The alliance is a partnership between Bowie State and the University of Maryland that was created in honor of 1st Lt. Richard Collins III. In 2017, Collins, a Bowie State University student just days from graduation, was waiting at a bus stop at the University of Maryland when he was stabbed to death by Sean Urbanski, a 24-year-old white man who was known to be active in white supremacist social media groups.

Derrick Hinton, president of the Bowie State University NAACP, was one of several Bowie students who testified before the Maryland General Assembly in support of "Collins Law." The hate crimes bill went into effect Oct. 1.

"As a member of the NAACP, I've learned about the legislative process and connected with people I don't think I would have been able to meet if I was not the NAACP chapter president at my school," said Hinton, 22, during an email exchange.

Growing up in Thomasville, Ala., Hinton witnessed the impact his parents made on the community as members of the NAACP. When he arrived at Bowie State, Hinton reactivated the dormant campus chapter.

"The NAACP has made the world a lot smaller for me," said Hinton, a biology major. "It has given me the opportunity and platform to make a difference and have a brotherhood and a sisterhood behind me."

The chapter's vice president, Melody Arrington, was part of Bowie State's Get Out the Vote campaign. Arrington, a junior government major, is also the group's political action chair. A native of Upper Marlboro,



Members of the Bowie State NAACP chapter pose at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. They were styled by Courtney D. Mays, an NBA menswear stylist who worked with the NBA on its Black Lives Matter social justice initiatives this summer.

Photos were taken by Isaiah Ford a photographer who attends Bowie State University

Md., Arrington worked with Bowie State President Aminta Breaux and Maryland State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy to get students registered to vote and get a ballot box installed on campus.

And next spring members of the Bowie State NAACP will join with a student climate action coalition to lobby for a clean energy bill before the Maryland General Assembly during the upcoming legislative session.

In addition to working on social justice issues, the Bowie State NAACP chapter has also focused on education and health. The Bowie

State NAACP partnered with the Prince George's County NAACP Youth and College Chapter to sponsor an ACT-SO program at Charles H. Flowers High School. In addition, the high school's NAACP chapter, led by senior Jenise Swann, has focused on the arts and mental health. For example, the Flowers High School NAACP established a Council of Black Wellness. The student members organized a Zoom call with child actors from the Cartoon Network, Hulu and the TV miniseries *When They See Us*, to talk about adjusting to life in a pandemic.

And the Bowie State chapter's

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## NAACP TODAY

"As a member of the NAACP, I've learned about the legislative process and connected with people I don't think I would have been able to meet if I was not the NAACP chapter president at my school."

— Derrick Hinton,  
President of the Bowie State  
University NAACP



Bowie State NAACP president Derrick Hinton and Ke'Shyra Brown Miss NAACP, who was also crowned Miss Maryland 2020.

Miss NAACP, Ke'Shyra Brown, won Miss Maryland for 2020. She and other NAACP members were recently featured in a photo shoot organized by Courtney D. Mays. Mays styles professional athletes and helped push the league toward social justice leagues this summer. The students were photographed by Bowie State student Isaiah Ford.

"The NAACP has led social change for over 100 years," said Hinton. "The Association is very important to youth and college students because it gives us access to the community." ■

## West Jefferson Branch President Gaylor Spiller

BY DONNA M. MITCHELL

**W**hen Keevan L. Robinson, a 22-year-old husband and stepfather was killed in police custody in May 2018, his family was devastated. They were even more disappointed when the Jefferson Parish, La., district attorney decided not to prosecute the narcotics agents involved in Robinson's killing.

By the family's side was Gaylor Spiller, president of the NAACP West Jefferson Parish Branch 6082, demanding accountability in Robinson's death.

Law enforcement accountability is just one issue the West Parish branch 6082 is addressing during this unique time in our nation. Like many other Black communities, West Jefferson Parish is grappling with issues of a health care infrastructure that often fails to serve Black communities, the overwhelming costs facing families trying to send their young adults to college, voter suppression and the lack of confidence that some young voters express in the civic process.

**"The challenges of the Jefferson Parish are many and often steeped in a history of racism."**

Spiller began her career in public service in 1973, when she joined the Louisiana Army National Guard Reserves. She also served in the Army department for a few months. Afterwards she worked as a fiduciary clerk and union steward for the U.S. Department of Veterans. Then Spiller transferred to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, while serving as the union president for the local AFL-CIO.

After leaving the EEOC, Spiller opened a consulting firm, and helped African-American families resolve issues by connecting them with critical resources. After Hurricane Katrina, for example, she worked from a base in Texas to connect residents to a range of services, including housing, medication and mental health.

After joining the NAACP in 2015, Spiller learned that the West Jefferson Parish Branch had been inactive for seven years. She worked with 60 others to get the branch reactivated in 2016, even convincing her young adult children to join the organization.

Spiller says that the challenges of the Jefferson Parish are many and are often steeped in a history of racism and widespread mistrust of powerful figures. She says the



**Gaylor Spiller, president of the NAACP West Jefferson Parish Branch 6082, is working to make sure the NAACP is a voice for the Black community in addressing issues such as health disparities and education.**

branch will focus on three areas:

**Fundraising.** Spiller believes that with adequate resources, she can support critical community needs, such as providing financial support to the families of college-bound high school graduates. Local families are taking on college costs, and stipends to help cover the cost of textbooks can have a great impact.

**Hiring a civil rights attorney.** Though the branch has been successful in helping community members get various resources, Spiller says a civil rights attorney would be more effective in some cases.

"I get sick and tired of hearing folks say they won't talk to discuss [these issues], because I am not an attorney," Spiller said. "The first thing they say is, 'Who is she? Where did she come from?' I say, 'Ask God!'"

**Closing health care disparities.** Spiller envisions a clinic to address both the vast physical and mental health needs of local residents. The current pandemic has exacerbated two persistent issues: underlying chronic maladies such as diabetes and hypertension in the Black community, and the lack of adequate intervention at hospitals.

Spiller said she would like to enlist the help of retired nurses and doctors who could donate their time and expertise to a facility that would put access to health care much closer to the residents who need it.

Overall, Spiller says the NAACP's West Jefferson branch will be a voice for the community in addressing issues such as voter suppression, criminal justice, education and health care delivery that often fail them.

"The NAACP carries a strong name," Spiller said. "It will continue to stand. My specific goal is looking for specific people who understand the challenges ahead." ■

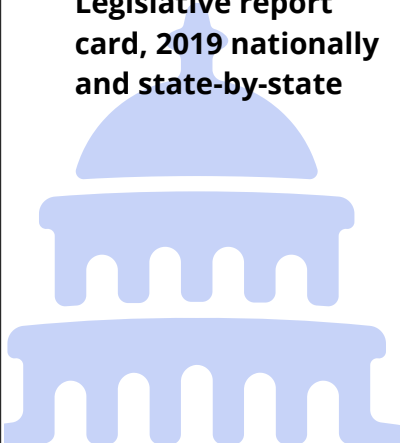


NAACP

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ALERTS

- Federal legislation regarding police accountability - Support for H.R. 7120, the "George Floyd Justice in Policing Act"
- Helping our nation and our neighbors weather the pandemic - Summaries of the different Coronavirus Bills
- The NAACP-supported *John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act* would repair, restore and strengthen the 1965 *Voting Rights Act*
- Federal Civil Rights Legislative report card, 2019 nationally and state-by-state



## NAACP TODAY



Famed writer Dorothy Parker's remains were removed from the NAACP national headquarters in Baltimore and returned to her beloved New York this past summer.

### Dorothy Parker's Last Stand

BY MARIA MORALES

*"Excuse my dust."*

**T**hat was Dorothy Parker's self-chosen epitaph. The words were emblazoned on a circular bronze marker where the acclaimed writer's cremains were interred in a memorial garden at the NAACP national headquarters in Baltimore, Md.

But on Aug. 18, after 31 years of being buried on the grounds of the NAACP headquarters, Parker's cremains were removed and returned to New York for burial.

An unlikely gathering — a rabbi, two lawyers, two journalists, a historian, a photographer and a couple of NAACP staffers — formed their own Algonquin circle as they gathered around the site in the memorial garden. The Algonquin Round Table was an informal gathering of New York City writers and critics who met daily at the Algonquin Hotel for lunch.

Not only was Parker a satirist and screenwriter (she wrote the 1937 screenplay of *A Star is Born*) she was

an outspoken voice on social issues. She was blacklisted in Hollywood in the 1950s for her left-wing views, considered extreme at the time.

Parker died on June 7, 1967, at age 73. A proponent of civil rights, she willed her estate to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with the condition that if something should happen to him, her estate would go to the NAACP. Less than a year later, King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. And per her will, Parker's family bequeathed her estate to the NAACP.

The NAACP manages the literary rights to all but a couple of Parker's writings, and in keeping with her wishes, license fees from her works benefit the organization.

"Most requests have a degree of devotion, awe and appreciation for Mrs. Parker's insights into life and relationships, and with every request I am reminded of how important her thoughts and works are," said Ned T. Himmelrich, an intellectual property attorney at Gordon Feinblatt LLC in Baltimore who has been overseeing the licensing of Parker's works for more than 25 years on behalf of the NAACP.

Himmelrich fields a few requests on average each month from across the entertainment industry, from

major motion pictures to high school productions. Her short stories, poems and infamous quotes — such as “What fresh hell is this?” — have been used in books, songs, plays, musicals, TV shows and commercials.

“When licensees are reminded that she left her estate to Dr. King and then the NAACP, they are appreciative of her gift and want to support the NAACP because Mrs. Parker did,” Himmelrich said.

While her estate was turned over to the NAACP, her cremains were in limbo for decades. Her close friend and executor, the writer Lillian Hellman, contested the will. Parker’s remains were unclaimed and the attorney who handled her estate kept the urn in a file cabinet in his office for 17 years.

In 1988, the NAACP claimed Parker’s cremains, and in October of that year a burial was held on the grounds behind the headquarters’ building. A picture captured by the Baltimore Sun shows a handful of community leaders watching as then-Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore and the late NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks lowered the urn into the ground.

The circular marker reads, in part, “This memorial garden is dedicated to her noble spirit which celebrated the oneness of humankind and to the bonds of everlasting friendship between black and Jewish people.”

Kevin C. Fitzgerald, a historian and founder of the Dorothy Parker Society, represented Parker’s family in the relocation process.

“The family is extremely grateful to the NAACP for keeping her and her legacy,” Fitzgerald said. “They were very happy that the NAACP interred her and they’re appreciative of what the NAACP has been doing all of these years in managing her estate.”

Fitzgerald revealed that negotiations to move Parker’s cremains began a year ago, when rumors of a possible NAACP move reached New York. “There had been talk about the NAACP moving for years,” he said, “but last summer we heard that it was really happening.”

The NAACP headquarters was based in New York City until 1986, when it moved to Baltimore. In June of this year, the NAACP signed a letter of intent with Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser to relocate to the nation’s capital. Staff is working out of rented space in an office tower in downtown Baltimore while the Washington site is completed.

Himmelrich mapped out a plan for disinterring and relocating the cremains, in consultation with NAACP Interim General Counsel Janette Wallace.

The plan required moving Parker in secrecy. In accordance with the contract hammered out by the legal team, *The New Yorker* and *The Crisis* were the only two media outlets permitted to cover the disinterment. *The New Yorker*, which Parker wrote for, was given first rights to publish the story.

“I’ve gotten calls from all over the country, as the word got out that the NAACP had moved,” Fitzgerald said. “I didn’t return them.”

On a balmy summer morning at 9:30 a.m., one construction worker, a Black man wearing a mask with “Black Lives Matter” printed on it, took a shovel to the dirt around the circle of bricks. And so began the arduous process of unearthing the urn containing Parker’s cremains.

Robert Harris, owner of Gambino Construction, a Black-owned company, watched the first shovel go in the ground. Harris and his two crew members dug with hand tools for more than two hours. The urn, in fact, had been placed inside a three-foot-long concrete cylinder, which was sealed by more concrete.

Harris’ team jackhammered the cylinder off the base, only to discover from the bottom of the cylinder that the hole had been cemented as well. Once the cylinder was cut in half, a little mound of raised concrete in the bottom half showed the top of the urn.

The crew carefully used the jackhammer one last time to chip away at the bottom half of the cylinder. It split beautifully, showing the



**NAACP interim general counsel Janette Wallace reads one of Dorothy Parker’s poems during the writer’s urn removal from the national headquarters of the NAACP.**

black urn encased. Harris pulled away a chunk of the concrete and placed the urn into a wooden box Fitzgerald handmade to transport the cremains back to New York.

The attendees then formed a socially distant circle under the shade trees in the garden for an impromptu homegoing service. Rabbi Floyd Herman, who served at the interment 31 years ago and is now 82 and retired, began the service with remarks about Mrs. Parker’s life and her dedication to humanity and civil rights.

And Fitzgerald noted that Parker’s legacy “is more than dust.” “Mrs. Parker always, always, championed the underdog,” he said.

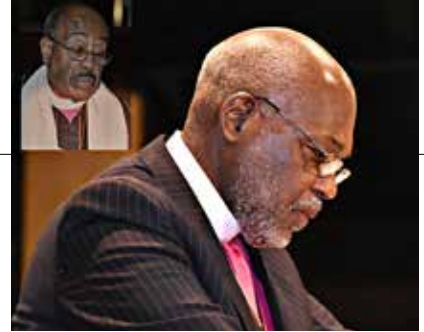
Fitzgerald read excerpts from her critiques of depictions of Blacks and Jews on Broadway and in film. “Mrs. Parker was an outspoken critic when it came to race and religion in Broadway productions,” he said. “She abhorred the racial stereotypes prevalent of the era.”

Wallace spoke on behalf of the NAACP. “We express gratitude to Mrs. Parker for being a pioneer in the Civil Rights Movement,” she said. “We will always be grateful for the life and legacy of Mrs. Dorothy Parker.”

Wallace then read from Parker’s poem, *Epitaph for a Darling Lady*:

**Leave for her a red young rose,  
Go your way, and save your pity;  
She is happy, for she knows  
That her dust is very pretty.**

The marker and a piece of concrete that encased the urn will be put in “a special place” at the new



## Bishop William H. Graves Memorial Membership Campaign

The NAACP's William H. Graves Memorial Membership Campaign will launch Feb. 12 and last until May 31. The new membership campaign is named for Bishop William H. Graves, former vice chair of the NAACP national board of directors. Graves, who was the 42nd bishop of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME), died in Memphis on Nov. 30 at age 83. The campaign is the brainchild of NAACP national board member Bishop Marvin Thomas and is being conducted in partnership with the CME church, which has more than a million members across the United States.

Graves was born in Brownsville, Tenn. He received a bachelor's degree from Lane College and studied at Phillips School of Theology of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. Graves also received a doctor of ministry degree from the Claremont School of Theology in California.

NAACP national board member Gloria Sweet-Love is excited about the establishment and the significance of a membership campaign in honor of Graves.

"The campaign will be an opportunity for reflection on the legacy of Bishop Graves," said Sweet-Love during a campaign committee meeting. "It will provide an opportunity for increased membership and commitment by new members to the work of the Association." ■

NAACP headquarters in Washington, Wallace said.

"She's going home but she'll always be a part of our family," Wallace said. "May she continue to rest peacefully."

Parker is now resting with her parents in a family plot at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, and she has some great company there. Madame C.J. Walker and her daughter A'Lelia, along with entertainers Miles Davis and Duke Ellington, Nobel Prize winner Dr. Ralph Bunche, suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton and novelist Herman Melville are among the notable people interred in this historic landmark, described by the National Park Service as "a popular resting place for the famous and powerful."

A private graveside service was held at Woodlawn on Aug. 22. Parker had no children but her sister, Helen, had a daughter. She along with a few cousins, comprise the remaining descendants of the Rothschild family (Parker's maiden name). They are all now in their late 70s and early 80s and reside in upstate New York. Fitzgerald said it was the elder generation that wanted to bring her home.

"Today is really about a homecoming to New York City. Having a New Yorker come back to New York is very special to all of us that are also New Yorkers," said Fitzgerald at the Woodlawn ceremony. "But, at this same time, I'd like to say thank you to the NAACP and its wonderful stewardship."



Kevin Fitzgerald is founder of the Dorothy Parker Society and spoke during the NAACP ceremony honoring her life in Baltimore.

NAACP board member and New York State Conference President Hazel Dukes noted that it wasn't "popular to associate with the NAACP at the time Dorothy Parker chose to do so."

"Similar to today, there was a lot of name calling going on for those who wanted to help others less fortunate than themselves," Dukes said. "We're such a divided nation now, but I think that her legacy speaks toward Black Lives Matter and in the willingness to speak up and say 'Hey, this is wrong.' Persons who have come out of corporate America, and other industries, now see they have a place to make things better than where we've been, and where we are now, and onward to future generations. So, it symbolized for us at the NAACP, what she did at that time and what the family continues to do in their contributions."

Fitzgerald, author of *A Journey Into Dorothy Parker*, broke down Parker's relevance for her contemporaries and to would-be allies today.

"When she was a Broadway critic in the 1920s, there were still blackface actors on Broadway at theaters that are still around today," said Fitzgerald. "That was 100 years ago, but she wrote about that being wrong. And she continued to write about how Black actors were being overlooked and that the roles for Blacks were horrible. She believed in social justice. Her FBI file is an inch-and-a-half thick. They were always following her around, like a lot of writers of the day."

Parker's life was more than cocktails and martinis, Fitzgerald said, noting that she was born with a social conscience.

"When she died in 1967, she left her estate to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man she had never met. Sadly, he only lived 11 more months than she did, but today those royalties from her work still support the work and the mission of the NAACP. Every time one of her poems is used or something gets placed in a Netflix show or something, that is a few more dollars that goes into the fund." ■

Additional reporting by Ricardo Hazell in New York.

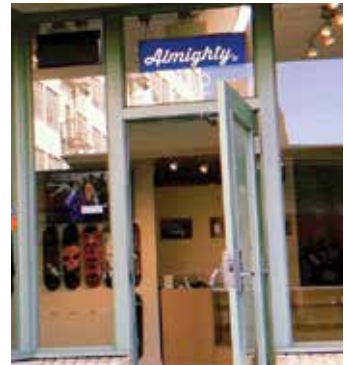
The coronavirus pandemic and the nation's civil unrest after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis disrupted Black life, particularly Black businesses. In an effort to assist Black businesses impacted by the coronavirus and protests, international superstar Beyonce partnered with the NAACP to provide resources for African-American entrepreneurs. Beyonce's BeyGOOD Foundation awarded grants of \$10,000 to 20 minority-owned businesses in five cities: Minneapolis, New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Houston. Check out the recipients of the first round of the Beygood Black-owned Small Business Impact Fund.

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Owner: Kester Wubben  
[www.mailboxsolutionsplus.com](http://www.mailboxsolutionsplus.com)

**“You could come to us and get great customer service. We were easier to access and friendlier than the post office.”**

CutzToo Barbershop,  
Minneapolis  
Owner: James E. Bynun  
WanderStay, Houston

**“I would like to come back strong and this support would help us open back up to continue serving the community much sooner.”**



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*Youth & College*

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** [@NAACP\\_YC](https://www.instagram.com/naacpyc)**





Aim High Prep, Houston  
Daycare Center  
Owner: Tiffany Turner  
[www.aimhighprep.com](http://www.aimhighprep.com)

**“I went through many hardships that most minority-owned businesses experience. As a true warrior, I didn’t get weak in the face of adversity. I kept going. Stayed open during the pandemic. Educating essential workers’ kids and putting the health and safety of my students above all things.”**



The Fade Factory,  
Minneapolis  
Barbershop  
Owner: Ray Deshawn James  
[www.facebook.com/pages/category/Barber-Shop/Fade-Fab-Factory-468799659799555/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Barber-Shop/Fade-Fab-Factory-468799659799555/)

**“So many barbers around here have gotten their first jobs in my shop. We’ve been a part of the community for a long time.”**



New Rules, Minneapolis  
Real Estate  
Owner: Christopher Webley  
[www.newrulesmn.com](http://www.newrulesmn.com)

**“I didn’t see anybody leading the charge to maintain and occupy space in Black and brown communities, and I wanted to model a different set of behaviors in the real estate space.”**



Darko Byrd Tennis Academy, Atlanta  
Owner: Whitney Shanise Byrd  
[www.darkobyrdtennis.com](http://www.darkobyrdtennis.com)

**“We’re promoting Black excellence to little Black children, showing them that we can dominate in a sport that may seem unfamiliar in the Black community.”**



Leslie Andrews  
Photography, Atlanta  
Owner: Leslie Andrews  
[www.leslieandrewsphotography.com](http://www.leslieandrewsphotography.com)

**“I finally felt like the challenges I experienced as a photographer hadn’t been in vain. The BeyGOOD grant will help 15 other photographers who cannot afford their own studios who want to continue their businesses as well.”**



Lee Lee’s Bakery, Harlem  
Owner: Alvin Lee Smalls  
[www.leeleesrugelach.com](http://www.leeleesrugelach.com)

**“We provide our baked goods to community organizations whose main goal is to support students, the elderly and other entrepreneurs.”**

Hank’s Mini Market,  
Los Angeles  
Owner: Kellie Jennifer Jackson  
[@hanksminimarket](https://www.instagram.com/hanksminimarket)

**“It’s been difficult to have the funds to keep up with the changing times and I had a vision to be more relevant to the kind of issues that are going on in the community and how we could be more reflective of the next generation in that sense.”**



Jikoni LLC, Los Angeles  
Kitchen studio rental and food video production services  
Owner: Kiano Moju  
[www.jikoncreative.com/](http://www.jikoncreative.com/)

**“God is good, because this grant came at a time where we were just able to legally open up... I had no clue that there could be something outside of our eyes, other than the sweat and tears that help keep our business afloat.”**



Sammy's Avenue Eatery,  
Minneapolis  
Owner: Samuel McDowell  
[www.sammysavenueeatery.com](http://www.sammysavenueeatery.com)

**"Sammy's Avenue Eatery was a gathering place for communication and healing instead of destruction. Locals and activists adopted the restaurant as a haven away from the stresses of a city in turmoil. They shared their deepest concerns about the current events. Some contributed food to help feed the crowd."**



Little Giants, Brooklyn  
Children's Clothing Store  
Owner: Khrys Hill  
[@wearelittlegiants](https://www.instagram.com/wearelittlegiants)

**"The protests nor the pandemic has stopped Little Giants from supporting their community. We plan to continuously serve people the best way we can. Our community is the only reason we're still here."**



Wilbourn Sisters Designs, Atlanta  
Owner: Janice ANN Wilbourn Woods  
[www.wilbournsistersdesigns.com/](http://www.wilbournsistersdesigns.com/)

**"Wilbourn Sisters Designs will operate as a studio and retail space, a teaching hub for young and upcoming fashion designers and a community event space."**



Curl and Co., Harlem  
Owner: Stacy Blanco  
[www.curlandco.studio](http://www.curlandco.studio)

**"Blanco started her studio because she wanted the women of Harlem to not feel like they should travel outside of their neighborhoods for quality hair services. She created Curls & Co. Studio to bridge beauty and community together that everyone can access."**

Ivy Leaf Farms, Houston  
Owner: Ivy Lorraine Wells  
[www.ivyleaffarms.com/](http://www.ivyleaffarms.com/)

**“Food deserts are a public health issue that Ivy Leaf Farms is addressing. It is a source for organic produce within the community and helps to alleviate some of the food scarcity issues we face. Ivy Leaf Farms has a goal of delivering fresh produce to at least 50 families weekly. Residents can have access to the fruits and vegetables year-round.”**



Humble School of Martial Arts, Brooklyn  
Owner: Master Sabu Thomas Lewis  
[www.facebook.com/mastersabu](http://www.facebook.com/mastersabu)

**“This grant also gives us the opportunity to be able to reach our youth and to help nurture positive relationships with law enforcement. We want our community to have a better understanding of their rights while helping them to further distinguish and appreciate their self-value and respect for their lives.”**



Dwana Smallwood Performing Arts Center, Brooklyn  
Owner: Dwana Smallwood  
[www.dwanasmallwoodpac.org](http://www.dwanasmallwoodpac.org)

**“Since 2013, the Dwana Smallwood Performing Arts Center has served 20,000 people directly through its free performances, classes and family amusements. The center also lent their space for a voter registration drive. We believe that when you bring more arts to a community, it comes more alive.”**

LVLS, Bloomington, Minneosta  
Owner: Brandy Lajoyce Moore  
[www.instagram.com/levels\\_roc/](http://www.instagram.com/levels_roc/)

# NAACP Values Partnerships with the Divine Nine

BY MARIA MORALES

The Black Greek-letter fraternities and sororities also known as the “Divine Nine” have had a long and invaluable strategic partnership with the NAACP. The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) Council is the governing body for the nine major Black fraternities and sororities that comprise the Divine Nine: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.; and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc.

During the 2020 election, the Divine Nine partnered with the NAACP to mobilize Black voters on both the national and local levels. The fraternities and sororities held voter registration drives, conducted no-contact canvassing on foot and in car caravans through predominantly Black neighborhoods, and worked phone banks to reach low-frequency voters and voters in battleground states. Black fraternity and sorority members also provided rides to the polls. In addition, the Divine Nine worked with the NAACP on the importance of completing the census.

But the Divine Nine’s partnership with the NAACP just didn’t start with the 2020 election. The Black Greek-lettered organizations have a long history of working with the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights organization on issues relevant to the African American community.

The Divine Nine organizations, for example, have collaborated with the NAACP in the civic engagement arena, and have supported the NAACP financially and through their NAACP membership. Some of the fraternities and sororities have



Members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity march to the Brooklyn Bridge after a memorial service for George Floyd, the man killed by a Minneapolis police officer who pressed his knee into his neck on May 25. Floyd’s brother, Terrence, Mayor Bill de Blasio, local politicians and civic and religious leaders also attended the event before marching over the Brooklyn Bridge.

created unique programming specific to their relationship with the NAACP. Here is a rundown by organization highlighting some of the programs between the NAACP and the Divine Nine.

## Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

Founded in 1906, the Alphas are the oldest Black Greek-letter organization and their involvement in the NAACP goes back to W.E.B. DuBois, one of the founders of the NAACP in 1909 and *The Crisis* in 1910.

This election year, the Alphas, along with the other Divine Nine organizations, mobilized with two NAACP programs: GOTV – Get Out The Vote; and GOTC – Get Out The Count. GOTV included community-based voter initiatives carried out by chapters, including the ability for the chapters to apply for grants to develop programming that gets people to the polls.

“Our biggest relationship with the NAACP is voting and its various iterations,” said Dr. Colin Campbell, vice president of civic engagement

for Alpha Phi Alpha. “I do know that the brothers got out of their homes and pounded the pavement. They set up voter registration drives and mobilized their communities.”

The GOTC campaign promoted completing the census and jobs with the census, Campbell said.

In 2019, the fraternity signed a historic MOU with the NAACP to share common priorities and shared objectives to ensure the political, educational, economic and social equality for all citizens; to achieve equality of rights and eliminate racial prejudice; to remove barriers of racial discrimination; to seek the enactment of federal, state and local laws securing civil rights; to inform the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination; and to educate people as to their constitutional rights.

Those objectives are being carried out in a variety of programs, Campbell said. “Building capacity and infrastructure at both organizations for sustainable impact in our communities and society is our overall goal with this partnership.”

## Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

The first Black Greek-letter sorority for women of color, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., has always advocated for legislative issues and public policies on behalf of its communities, and particularly on behalf of African-American women. Sorority members are encouraged to be NAACP subscribing life members at a minimum with a pathway toward life membership. The sorority holds its own NAACP membership drives within AKA.

The first African-American woman to become chair of the NAACP board of directors was Margaret Bush Wilson, an AKA, in 1975.

"There are many synergies between the work of the NAACP and the social justice agenda of Alpha Kappa Alpha," said Roslyn Brock, international connection committee social action chair for AKA and NAACP chairman emeritus.

Areas of parallel civic engagement between the two organizations include health care, education, financial and economic empowerment. In partnership with the NAACP Youth and College Division, the sorority provides programming on K-12 back-to-school preparedness, academic excellence and achievement, and career readiness. Also, AKA members serve on the education committees of NAACP branches to help execute and implement their programs.

The sorority has also worked collectively with the NAACP on joint legislation around domestic violence, women's rights and pay equity, and is currently working on legislation in support of reinstating the Voting Rights Act.

"Alpha Kappa Alpha is a ready source of membership and legislative outreach at the grassroots level for an extended NAACP touch and reach," said Brock.

Alpha Kappa Alpha is also working to close the wealth gap by increasing opportunities for wealth building, entrepreneurship and financial stability. The sorority hosts seminars and outreach programs with speakers from the NAACP.



Janis McElrath, of Wilmington, came out in support of her sorority sister, Kamala Harris and Joe Biden during their appearance at a news conference announcing the 2020 Democratic presidential ticket. Alpha Kappa Alpha is the nation's oldest Black sorority.



NAACP Chairman Emeritus Roslyn Brock

Early in its history, AKAs were chronicled in *The Crisis* attending a women's suffrage march in 1913

with the sorority's first international president, Nellie Quander. Quander helped ensure the safety of Black women who attended the march, Brock said.

Previous partnerships between AKA and the NAACP include integration of the armed services in the 1940s and '50s (which is documented in the Smithsonian); vaccinations for farmers in the Deep South; and tackling public health issues in urban areas.

"We're really proud of the social justice history of the women of Alpha Kappa Alpha," Brock said. "We're pleased that as women of Alpha Kappa Alpha, we embody the NAACP's missions and policies."

### Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.

Kappa Alpha Psi is the first Black Greek-letter organization to require NAACP membership of its members.

Since the fall of 2018, all new Kappa initiates have become NAACP members as part of their intake process with the fraternity. The fraternity then gives the NAACP a check for the total dues collected by its members for that year. In the program's first year, the fraternity provided almost 2,500 new members and more than \$50,000 in dues revenues to the NAACP, according to John F. Burrell, executive director of Kappa Alpha Psi.

"We really wanted to focus on strengthening our membership engagement with the NAACP," Burrell said of the program.

In addition to its membership program, fraternity members also participated in the NAACP's voter engagement campaign during the 2020 election season. Kappa members in cities such as Houston and Jackson, Miss., for example, volunteered to drive people to the polls.

Burrell also said it's a way for the more seasoned members to educate the younger generation on the importance of the NAACP and its role in the community. The fraternity counts among its members the late civil rights activist and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy and social justice advocate Colin Kaepernick.

"The NAACP has been in the struggle for a long time, fighting for our community, and the older brothers want to ensure that battle continues and that we continue to support the NAACP," said Burrell.

### Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., has had a long partnership with the NAACP, both formal and informal. Notable NAACP leaders who are members of Delta Sigma Theta include former NAACP board chair Myrlie Evers-Williams and NAACP New York State Conference president Hazel Dukes.

During the 2020 election season more than 3,000 Deltas, 400 of whom are attorneys, volunteered at the



Members of Kappa Alpha Psi and others honor the life of George Floyd with 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence at the Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C. on July 19. The men marched from the historic Kappa House in the city.

polls, call centers and virtually to monitor and document complaints said Shavon Arline-Bradley, co-chair of the sorority's National Social Action Committee.

"The NAACP is our main partner in social action and we're very proud of our partnership with the NAACP and the work we do," said Beverly Smith, national president and CEO of Delta Sigma Theta.

The Deltas have social action commissioners in each chapter who work with the local NAACP branches. Sorority members also serve as first responders for the NAACP. When the NAACP identifies a hot spot, Smith said, the Deltas dispatch a rapid response team from the local chapter in that community to work with the local NAACP branch. The team also drafts official statements on issues of social justice in alignment with NAACP national efforts.

Like other NPHC organizations, the Deltas have adapted the NAACP's Social Action Toolkit for its chapters and encourages their sorority members to be active in the NAACP in their communities.

"The NAACP and Delta are synonymous because we are an organization of social action," said Arline-Bradley, who previously served as the NAACP's executive VP of

**"The NAACP is our main partner in social action and we're very proud of our partnership with the NAACP and the work we do."**

**— Beverly Smith,  
national president and CEO  
of Delta Sigma Theta**



**Ms. Hazel Dukes,  
NAACP New York State  
Conference President**

strategic planning and partnerships. "The NAACP knows that Delta has an infrastructure on the ground that advances social action."

### **Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.**

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., recently established the Phi Beta Sigma James Weldon Johnson Scholarship with the NAACP's youth development program. Johnson, who penned the Negro National Anthem, *Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing*, was a member of the fraternity. He also served as the first African American executive secretary of the NAACP from 1920 to 1930.

"The pandemic is wreaking havoc for students from all backgrounds and under these current economic conditions, many students are not going to receive the financial assistance they need because universities are strapped," said Daryl A. Anderson Sr., Phi Beta Sigma's international executive director. "We want to support those students, but we wanted to do so via the relationship we already have with the NAACP."

The Sigmas funded the scholarship with a \$50,000 initial contribution. The NAACP will oversee the administration and distribution of funds, as well as the selection of recipients. The awards will be issued to graduating high school seniors and currently enrolled college students.

Phi Beta Sigma also partners with the NAACP on health and financial literacy, economic development and environment justice programs, key pillars of the NAACP's civic engagement.

The Sigmas volunteer in the VITA income tax assistance program by offering free tax help to low-income residents. Those programs are run through local NAACP branches and even at Phi Beta Sigma headquarters in Washington, D.C.

In addition, the fraternity's chapters sponsor job banks and job development programs in collaboration with their local NAACP. The fraternity also assists members of the community who need to have charges expunged.

"The pandemic is wreaking havoc for students from all backgrounds and under these current economic conditions, many students are not going to receive the financial assistance they need because universities are strapped. We want to support those students, but we wanted to do so via the relationship we already have with the NAACP."

— Daryl A. Anderson Sr.,  
international executive director Phi Beta Sigma

### **Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.**

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., has had a long relationship with the NAACP dating back to the sorority's founding on the campus of Howard University. For example, Zeta Karen Boykin-Towns currently serves as vice chairman of the NAACP board of directors.

"Since our inception in 1920 we've focused on being community conscious and action oriented," said Nicole Butler, international social action director for Zeta Phi Beta. "The NAACP has a longstanding tradition of advocating for change and that's also what Zeta is about."

One example of their partnership was when the NAACP Brunswick, Ga., branch and the Eta Gamma Zeta chapter of Zeta Phi Beta came together for a town hall in June after the death of Brunswick resident Ahmaud Arbery. Since then, the entities have hosted voter registration drives, educational forums, census drives and other activities for the local community.

The Zetas are currently engaging in a little friendly competition with their Sigma brothers to see which group can get the most members to join the NAACP. Both organizations, together known as the "blue and white family," began the membership drive in September.

The Zetas' goal is to increase their NAACP membership by at least five percent every year at the yearly and life membership levels. Zeta Phi Beta, as an organization, is a life member of the NAACP.



**NAACP Vice Chair Karen Boykin-Towns**

Butler noted: "We've aligned with the NAACP because we want to set the tone that change is necessary in our communities."

### **Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.**

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., has partnered with the NAACP for decades and its primary relationship has always evolved around getting out the vote, according to David Marion, grand basileus of Omega Psi Phi.

The Omegas were engaged in the Get Out the Vote campaign during the 2020 election, working with the NAACP's civic engagement team. Fraternity members worked phone banks to call voters with low participation to encourage them to vote in this year's election. Omega chapters coordinated with NAACP branches for voter education, particularly on down-ballot issues, Marion said.



The fraternity looks to the NAACP to provide crucial information on criminal justice reform, housing, education, health care reform and HBCUs so its members can receive trusted, detailed information on the issues, Marion said.

The Omegas can boast that two of their late fraternity brothers were NAACP executive directors: Roy Wilkins and Benjamin Hooks.

"NAACP is just an all-around partner on civil rights and social action activities and it's one of the best partnerships we have," said Marion.

### **Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.**

For the women of Sigma Gamma Rho, the fight for social justice became personal when one of their sorors, Sandra Bland, died while in police custody after a routine traffic stop in 2015. Bland's death launched the #SayHerName movement to raise awareness of Black women who have been victims of police violence and created a new women's movement.

"That was a pivotal moment in history," said Sigma Gamma Rho International Grand Basileus Rasheeda Liberty.

The Bland tragedy also activated SGRHO to develop a social action agenda focused on the empowerment of women, youth advocacy and police reform, and strengthen its relationship with the NAACP.

The sorority has hosted panel discussions with the NAACP and NOBLE, the National Association of Black Law Enforcement. Together, they developed the Golden Alert program, which has been taught on college campuses. The program targets ages 18-25 and how they interact with the police. Regional NAACP leadership educate attendees about police reform in their local communities.

Each March since Bland's death, between 300 and 500 SGRHO chapters have held a youth symposium. NAACP members presented workshops during the symposium on how to safely interact



**Members of Kappa Alpha Psi and Omega Psi Phi fraternities talk during the NAACP Hillsborough County Branch Souls to the Polls voter drive on Nov. 1, 2020 in Tampa, Fla. The Souls to the Polls event was geared to push for a stronger African-American turnout in the 2020 election.**

with police. The NAACP will also participate in the SGRHO's 2021 virtual national youth symposium.

Looking toward the future, Liberty says SGRHO will be focused on developing a leadership training program with the NAACP that will train women to run for office and other leadership roles.

For SGRHO, as the only black sorority founded at a predominantly white university, their "why" goes back to the reason they were founded. The seven young educators were experiencing racism on the campus of Butler University in Indianapolis.

"Our organization wasn't founded on just the principle of unifying as African American women. We were uniquely founded on the principle of seven African American women at [Butler] University with KKK marches being held on the corner of the campus. Foundationally, we were already set apart to deal with social action immediately, but several interactions that have driven our

social action, most notably the death of our soror, Sandra Bland, in a Texas jail, and has been a catalyst for why our relationship with the NAACP has bloomed," said Liberty.

### **Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc.**

Iota Phi Theta does not have proprietary programming with the NAACP, but they follow suit with the Divine Nine organizations in supporting the NAACP, especially when it comes to voting initiatives.

As with the other Divine Nine fraternities, the Iotas partnered with the NAACP on get out the vote activities including voter registration and voter education projects, primarily at the chapter level, said Andre R. Manson, international grand Polaris of Iota Phi Theta.

For example, the Iotas worked closely with the NAACP on the "Black Men Vote" project to get one million Black men to the polls.

"We all [had] the same goal, to get as many Black men to the polls as possible," said Manson. ■



W.E.B. Du Bois wrote...

“THE PROBLEM OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IS THE PROBLEM OF THE COLOR-LINE.”

IS THE COLOR-LINE THE PROBLEM OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

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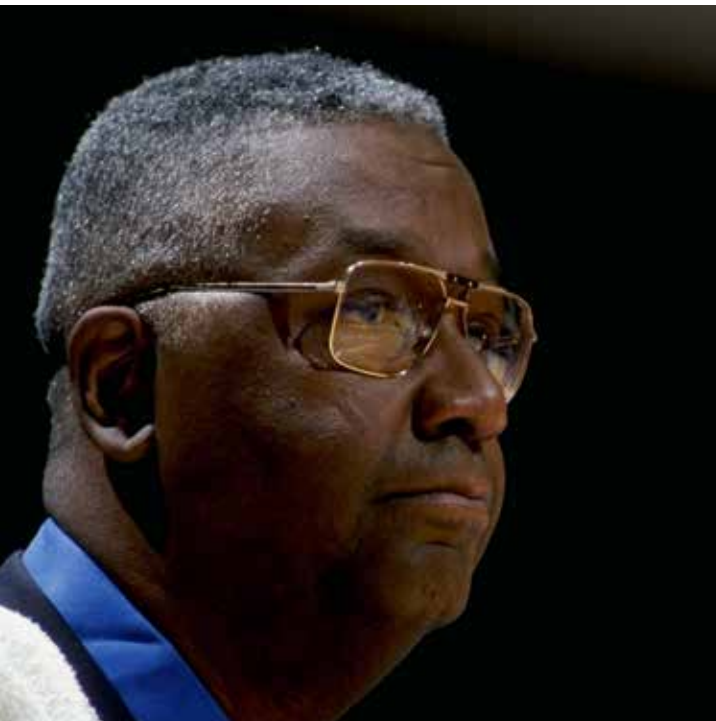
# In Memoriam

Ruth Bader Ginsburg  
Kobe Bryant  
Chadwick Boseman  
John Thompson  
David Dinkins  
Charley Pride  
Little Richard  
Katherine Johnson



**Three Giants Tribute**  
Rev. C.T. Vivian  
Rep. John Lewis  
Rev. Joseph Lowery

## In Memoriam



**Ruth Bader Ginsburg**  
Supreme Court Justice

**John Thompson**, coach,  
Georgetown Basketball

**David Dinkins**  
Former New York Mayor

**Chadwick Boseman**  
Actor



**Charley Pride**  
Country Singer

**Little Richard**  
Rock & Roll Singer

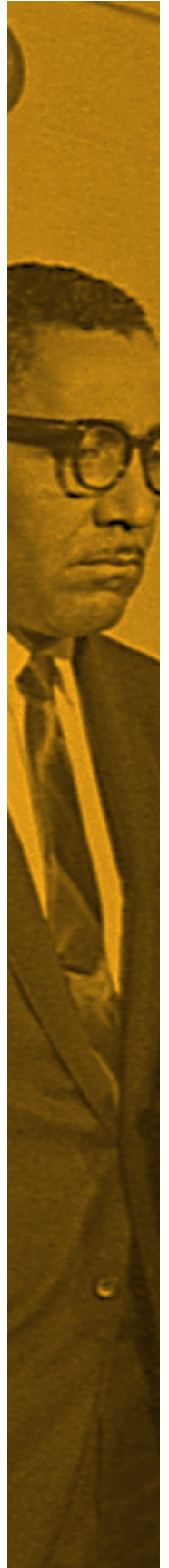
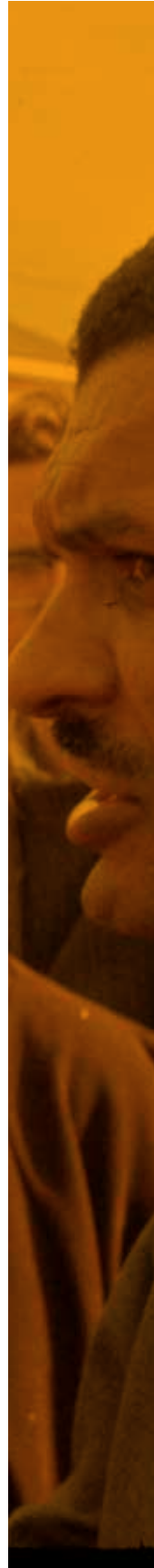
**Kobe Bryant**  
NBA Basketball Player

**Katherine Johnson**  
NASA Mathematician

**In Memoriam**

# Three Giants

By Ambassador Andrew Young



**T**hree giants have gone to glory — the Rev. Joseph Lowery, the Rev. C.T. Vivian and Congressman John Lewis. My mentors and leaders and brothers and friends departed this earth in the midst of the pandemic — though none died of the coronavirus. They were all three victims of nearly a century of sacrificial service to humanity and to this nation.

John Lewis, as our congressman, got a chance to say goodbye and pass his legacy on to the young people of Black Lives Matter when he stood on 16th Street in Washington, D.C. He bowed his head and crossed his arms in Wakanda fashion before coming home to Atlanta to die. I was at his home when he arrived, and I could see at that moment as he lay in his bed that he was ready to go on to glory.

Nobody had done any more, suffered any more, dreamed any more, or planned any more than Congressman John Lewis. But, without the Rev. C.T. Vivian and the Rev. Joseph Lowery, John Lewis might not have had the impact that he had on this nation if he had not met Rev. Vivian and Rev. Lowery when he was 18 years old.

Joe Lowery was a distinguished Methodist pastor of Warren Street United Methodist Church in Mobile, Ala. Joe strove to be the voice of the disenfranchised. He probably would have been the first Black bishop of the United Methodist Church had he not been such an activist. Joe understood that the poor were being gerrymandered and their votes suppressed, and he was the voice of those people. In the very early days in the 1950s, while he was pastor, he assisted the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in his position as leader of the Alabama Civic Affairs Association, an organization devoted to the desegregation of buses and public places. Following that, he worked with Dr. King to establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in New Orleans in 1957. He served as its chairman until Dr. King's death. Then he took over the leadership of SCLC serving as its president and CEO until his retirement in 1998.

Like Lowery, the Rev. C.T. Vivian combined faith and activism. He began his service to the nation and to God in 1947 in Peoria, Ill., when he led sit-ins. This was long before any of us were involved in nonviolent direct action. C.T. has always been one of the people who had the most insight, wisdom, integrity and dedication. C.T. moved to Nashville in 1960 to serve the National Baptist Publishing House. He joined his friend Jim Lawson and Kelly Miller

Smith in establishing a workshop to train the Nashville sit-in movement in the finer points of nonviolent social action. They deliberately set the training time for 6 a.m.

Many of the young leaders of the '60s came out of the Nashville movement to literally change the world. They elected John Lewis as the first president of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). C.T. was one of John's teachers. Though there were hundreds of brilliant, articulate and aggressive leaders, including Diane Nash, James Bevel and Bernard Lafayette, C.T. was chosen as the SNCC chairman because nobody could match him in courage. He demonstrated fearlessness and determination in the sit-ins and later in the freedom rides that demanded everyone's respect. He was 96 the day he died.

Together these three giants represented a century of suffering, sacrifice and leadership without which America would not be the nation it is today. None of us would enjoy the fruits of their attempts at abolishing legal segregation and affirming voting rights. From Nashville, Mobile, Atlanta, Greensboro and New Orleans, they represent the foundation of social change in this century.

Only John was privileged to stand tall and humbly pass the torch on to the most powerful demonstration that the world has ever seen. Montgomery, Birmingham, Selma, Chicago were all very effective movements with hundreds of dedicated foot soldiers. But thanks to social media and cellphones, the Black Lives Matter movement reached millions around the world in a matter of a few hours.

It is a new day, a new movement led by a new generation. But it is a movement that was built on the foundation laid by the work of King, Ralph Abernathy, Hosea Williams, Roy Wilkins, Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley, to name a few. Lewis, Lowery and Vivian join a pantheon of saints who have paved the way for this nation's survival and triumph over the plagues of racism, war and poverty. They passed the baton. They are now at rest.

**Andrew Young** is a longtime civil rights activist. A close confidant to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement, he served as executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Young is a former member of the United States House of Representatives and a former United States ambassador to the United Nations. He also served as mayor of Atlanta (1982-1990).

**In Memoriam**



**Rev. C.T. Vivian**

The Great Preacher

October 6, 1921 – March 27, 2020

**Rev. Joseph Lowery**

Dean of the Civil Rights Movement

October 6, 1921 – March 27, 2020

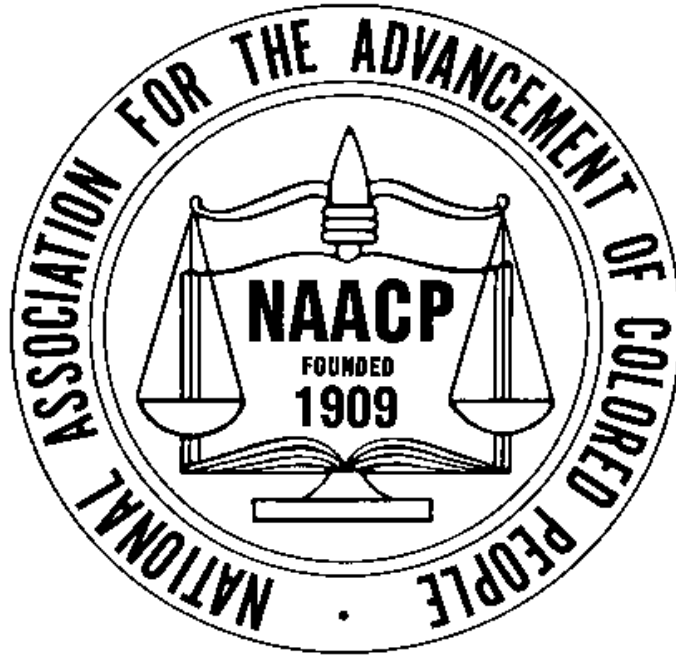




**Congressman John Lewis**

The Conscience of Congress

February 21, 1940 – July 17, 2020



# **RESOLUTIONS**

**SUBMITTED UNDER ARTICLE IX, SECTION 1 OF THE  
CONSTITUTION OF THE NAACP**

All resolutions were reviewed by the 111<sup>th</sup> Convention of the NAACP, held September 26, 2020 at its Legislative Virtual Meeting. These resolutions were ratified by the National Board of Directors on October 17, 2020.

## CIVIL RIGHTS

### 1. *Stop the Infiltration of the U.S. Military by Violent Far-Right Extremist Organizations*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP supports amending the *U.S. Senate National Defense Authorization Act*, to include a provision which disqualifies anyone seeking to serve in any branch of the United States military if they are proven "white nationalists."

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for federal policy that dishonorably discharges any and all active members, to include reservists and National Guard, of the U.S. military if they are proven to be a member or active supporter of white supremacist organizations or associations.

### 2. *Supporting Right to Language and Anti-Language Discrimination*

**THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP reaffirms its policy position and advocate at the federal, state and local levels for policies that outlaw discrimination based on language ability.

### 3. *Hair Discrimination is Race Discrimination*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP will advocate for federal, state, and local legislation and public policy recognizing that hair discrimination is racially discriminatory and work to further prohibit such practices as they relate to employment, education, sports, housing accommodations, and public accommodations.

## COMMEMORATIVE/MEMORIAL

### 1. *Honoring 15 African American Men and a Southern White Lawyer in their Fight for Voting Rights in the State of Mississippi during the 1950s*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) commends these 15 African-American men; Rev. Isaac C. Peay (Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church), Mr. Benjamin F. Bourn (Owner of Bourn's Grocery), Mr. Rufus Howze (Owner of Whitney's Grocery), Mr. Ratio Jones (Teacher), Dr. Charles W. Smith (Physician), Rev. Johnnie H. Mays (Pastor, Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church), Mr. Clifford S. Kelly (Teacher), Rev. Charlemagne P. Payne (Pastor, St. Paul Methodist Church), Dr. Theodore J. Fykes (Dentist), Mr. Joe Knox, Sr. (Farmer), Mr. Joe Knox, Jr. (Principal/Teacher), Mr. Milton Barnes, Sr. (Owner of Barnes Cleaners, the Hi-Hat Club, and Black Sox Baseball Team), Mr. Alfonso Clark (Teacher and Owner of Clark Funeral Services), Mr. Barry L. Neal (Teacher and Commander of Post 9832 VFW), and Dr. E. Hammond Smith (Pharmacist and Owner of Smith Drug Store); for having advanced our mission, goals and objectives as active members of the Hattiesburg/Forrest County Branch of the NAACP at the time of filing the voting rights case on April 11, 1950.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) lauds the historical contributions of these remarkable, valiant 15 African-American men of Forrest County, Mississippi, along with their intrepid attorney, T. Price Dale, for their tenacity and bravery during the perilous times that exposed them to significant dangers posed by white supremacist and segregationist groups who opposed African-American men and women exercising their 15th Amendment Right to Vote.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocates for the historical contributions of these unsung heroes to be prominently recorded and preserved in civil rights history throughout the State of Mississippi and larger historical context of the movement, for making the first voting rights challenge to the 1890 Constitutional Provision, Section 244, solely enacted to disenfranchise African-American voters.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP calls upon the State of Mississippi and all national civil rights archival entities to join us commemorating the voting rights legacies of these 15 African-American men and their attorney on the 70th Anniversary of this landmark case and further petitions for their historical fortitude to be afforded the level of eminence as within the United States Commission on Civil Rights, that repeatedly references the case of *Peay vs. Luther Cox*, in all of their reports on voting rights in the State of Mississippi.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 1. *Racial, Economic, and Health Equity or COVID-19 Response*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) calls upon all federal, state and local governmental entities to take immediate action to initiate and implement COVID-19 policies to eliminate any and all racial, ethnic, gender, origin, age, religion, ability or sexual preference discrimination and ensure that the most disproportionately impacted communities are afforded equitable treatment and provided access to affordable testing, preventive healthcare, economic recovery, emergency loans, loan forgiveness, housing assistance, proper nutrition, educational stability, job security and paid medical and family leave; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP urge the United States Congress to provide targeted, increased stimulus funding to the most disproportionately impacted, hard hit communities of color to ensure an equitable and just recovery; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP appeals to medical providers to ensure, equitable, scientifically sound and quality diagnostic, preventive and post medical care be administered ethically and culturally appropriate.

### 2. *Financial Literacy Equity Gap Training in School*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP will advocate at the federal, state and local levels to create a financial literacy program aimed to support and promote the positive impacts of a financial literacy training program for African American children in K-12 American schools; and collaborate with African American faith-based groups and community benefit organizations to launch a national campaign to close the financial literacy gap for the African American Community.

### 3. *Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories and Department of Energy National Laboratories – Racial Equality*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP demand legislation to withdraw federal funding and grants to the laboratories and contractors who do not, within the next two years, develop, implement, monitor, and enforce specific practices and procedures designed to achieve racial parity and equality for all races, ethnicities, genders, LGBTQ status, and other differences in the hiring, retention, training, and promotion practices at the laboratories and its contractors as prescribed by law; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP join the Congressional Black Caucus, Black Organizations and other partnering organizations to press together for the immediate implementation of existing laws regarding equal employment and contracting opportunities for all communities of color.

### 4. *Eliminating Fraud in the Administration of the Opportunity Zone Program*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for sustainable economic models in areas designated as opportunity zones that directly benefit low-income and working class citizen living within opportunity zones; and speak out against unfair dealing and injustices at the National, State, and local level stemming from the administration of the opportunity zone program.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP will urge Opportunity Zone Executive Director, and HUD Secretary to meet with community members and community based organizations and receive a transparent assessment of the challenges faced by racial and ethnic minority communities and work to craft solutions that fit the unique economic needs of each community.

### 5. *Racial Discrimination in Rideshare Services*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate at the federal, state and local level for the prohibition of ridesharing services' practice of providing information to drivers that indicates the race of the rider, or their destination that can allow discrimination.

### 6. *Key Policy Solution for Lasting Economic Recovery*

**THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) reaffirm our policy positions advocating for and continuing to urge Congress to pass legislation that establishes

lasting economic policy measures making Unemployment Insurance a sustainable federal program; establish Universal Paid Sick Leave and non-employer based Health Insurance that will protect our workforce and their families from the devastation of economic collapse ensuring stability and equal access; and protect state and local budgets from devastating cuts in programs, services and jobs.

## **7. At Will Employment Reform**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People strongly condemns the discriminatory practices associated with At-Will employment.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP urge state legislatures and local governments to repeal discriminatory at-will employment statutes and enact legislation that protects all laid off and fired workers in the same or similar way that the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) does for certain classes of laid off workers.

# **EDUCATION**

## **1. Homeless Student Food Security, Housing Stability, and School Performance Among College Students**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for a federal and state housing voucher program which supports the homeless and housing-insecure; provides assistance to help cover the cost of rent that low-income students who meet federal income eligibility requirements established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and who qualify for the Section 8 program and are homeless or housing-insecure qualify for the program.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for state and federal policy changes simplifying the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process; expanding SNAP eligibility for college students; remove financial aid barriers to homeless youth in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, in particular HEA reauthorization should address barriers related to age and determinations of homeless status; reinstating year-round Pell Grants and raising the amount of Pell Grants to \$15,000 to improve struggling students' ability to succeed academically and professionally.

## **2. Bias Training Court & Schools**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP calls on the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Education, state bar associations, state departments of education, local school boards, law schools, and the federal and state judiciary to undergo and conduct yearly implicit bias, cultural competency and bias disruption training with the teaching faculty, staff, judges and law students to eliminate racial bias within the legal and education systems.

## **3. Civic Education Instruction in K-12**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, The NAACP reaffirm our 2017 Civic and Character Education in Schools Resolution and recommend civics lessons that should be included for K-8, as well as types of lessons that are appropriate for grades 9-12, and will urge our units through their Education Committees and Youth Councils to help to develop and review their State's Social Studies Standards applicable to Civics Education; and then meet and work with students, and social studies teachers, to discuss the curriculum and teaching of those standards in the local schools. NAACP representatives will then meet with State and local school officials to address concerns about the standards and/or curriculum and instruction for civics education (based on those state standards) in their communities.

## **4. A Call to Action: Oppose Trump's Proposed 2021 Education Budget!**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP opposes the Trump-proposed FY 2021 Education block grant and urges Congress to continue to provide robust, dedicated funding for essential programs such as Title 1, student support and academic enrichment grants, supporting effective instruction state grants, education for homeless children and youths, and comprehensive literacy development.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate that States take action to address any failure to provide equitable state and local funding to underfunded districts.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate against any effort by the current administration, for political reasons, to negatively impact state or local school district financial assistance; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP oppose the nearly \$5 billion tax credit to fund an Education Freedom Scholarship Program for students to attend private schools.

#### **5. *Ditch the College Debt/Post-Secondary Education & Financial Stability***

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** That the NAACP work for free higher education for all and cancellation of all student loan debt.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

#### **1. *Support for Sustainable Electronics Throughout the World***

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** That the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People urge the electronics industry to: develop precautionary health-based exposure limits to protect all electronic mining, production, and e-waste workers as well as, their offspring and their communities; abolition of child labor; provide effective health and safety training; provide access to information about the hazards that workers are exposed to; provide effective protection against exposures; implementation of green design; abolition exposure to hazardous working conditions; provide tracking and reporting disease associated with the electronics mining, and production and e-waste sectors in all electronics-producing countries; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** That the NAACP declares its commitment to support initiatives of the many human rights activists who are working around the world to promote corporate and government accountability and sustainability in the global electronics industry and who are united by concern for the life-cycle impacts of this industry on health, the environment, and workers' rights. We further commit to support the development and the capacity of grassroots organizations, local communities, workers, and consumers, to achieve social, environmental and economic justice; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** That the NAACP take action necessary to expose environmental and economic injustices throughout the entire lifecycle of the global electronics supply chain and to call on the industry governance entities to develop policies and practices to protect the workers and impacted communities around the world.

#### **2. *Hurricane Evacuations in Pandemic Quarantines***

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** That the NAACP urges Congress, state legislatures and municipalities coordinate with emergency management officials to develop plans for shelters, as well as quarantines, and organize a unified message to communicate to citizens.

## **HEALTH**

#### **1. *Reduce Health Disparities in the African American/Black Community***

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP work with the National Medical Association, American Medical Association, community based organizations and faith based organizations and partners to implement a holistic public health plan for African American/Black people that will provide both public and private insurance funding; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for federal, state and local policies and resources for annual medical examinations that will reduce health disparities, and implement programs that educate and empower individuals and families on chronic disease risk factors and warning signs, healthy eating, and physical activity to address these critical issues within the African American/Black populations.

#### **2. *Curing the Epidemic of Black Youth Suicides***

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP call for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct extensive research regarding Black youth suicides, followed by the development of an extensively researched national plan of action for suicide prevention among all youth.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the plan of action include national policy that mandates youth suicide prevention training and awareness in states and communities.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That NAACP work with community stakeholders to ensure that the trainings occurs in local communities.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the plan of action also include the creation of a suicide prevention and cyberbullying hotline for youth of all racial and ethnic groups. The hotline should be implemented to address the present racial disparities in mental health treatment and cyberbullying of youth of color.

### **3. Correctional Care Coordination: The Continuum of Health, Corrections, Re-entry, Pipeline to the Community**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP supports and advocates for services to improve health literacy and healthcare system navigation for criminal justice system-involved persons and their support system as a component of care coordination access.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP affirms the National Commission on Correctional Health Care's recommendation for the development and use of uniform electronic health records (EHR) and urges that it become a requirement for accreditation; that the EHR is recommended for continuity of care between community and correctional providers; and that until the EHR is completed, all individuals scheduled for release receive a release packet that includes continuity of care documents, a care plan with supportive service documents, community resource lists, a collaborative comprehensive case plan, and personalized instructions.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocates for the use of trauma-informed care coordination models employing criminal justice system-informed peer support specialists.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP supports and advocates for a state strategy to obtain Medicaid coverage for every eligible incarcerated person before being released into the community; and, in states where Medicaid coverage is available for the newly released inmates but the correctional system doesn't apply for Medicaid on their behalf, the NAACP encourages its branches to advocate for legislation that mandates DOCs, jails, and juvenile justice systems to screen everyone before release for Medicaid eligibility, and, if a person is found to be eligible, institutional staff must submit an application on his or her behalf (e.g., Illinois Public Act 101-0351, effective 1/1/2020).

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocates for the use of innovative, promising, and evidence-based programs that utilize trauma-informed, patient-centered, and community-based strategies to address individual and population health concerns for the criminal justice system-involved; reduce the stigma associated with being criminal justice system-involved; eliminate health disparities; and advance public health practice and health equity.

### **4. NAACP Supports "Affordable, Quality Health Care Now"**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP reaffirm our resolutions demanding affordable and equitable health care for all Americans, including the "Regarding Health Care for All (Universal Health Care)" resolution of 2006, the "NAACP Supports Full Implementation of the Federal Health Care Reform Law" resolution of 2010, the "NAACP Calls for Full Implementation of the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act" resolution of 2013, and the "Prescription Drugs — Eliminating Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PMB) Gag Clauses" resolution of 2018; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP vehemently oppose any effort by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government to repeal the Affordable Care Act or undermine its provisions, including coverage of contraceptives without cost sharing, Medicaid expansion, and protections for those with pre-existing health conditions.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP call on pharmaceutical manufacturers, pharmacy benefit managers, and health insurance companies, all of whom significantly impact the cost and availability of prescription drugs, to collaborate effectively to make drug prices affordable for all Americans and to dedicate more effort and resources to educate African Americans about patient assistant programs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP urge Congress to develop and pass a public option that builds on the Affordable Care Act by further expanding coverage and requiring all states and municipalities to reduce disparities in care, lowering consumer costs for prescriptions and health care, and providing a publicly-sponsored alternative to private insurance.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP work individually and with other advocates, health care leaders, public policy experts, and policymakers to demand sound policy solutions to the social determinants of health in the United States in order to address our growing health and health care crisis and our longstanding health and social disparities, which systematically undermine well-being and opportunity for communities of color, including African Americans, and ultimately shortchange the nation as a whole.

## HOUSING

### 1. *Discriminatory Effects of the HUD Disparate Impact*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP will continue to advocate for federal legislation preserving the use of the “disparate impact” analysis under the Fair Housing Act.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### 1. *Protecting Youth from Data Exploitation by Online Technologies and Applications*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for strict enforcement of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act to protect youth from exploitative data practices that violate their privacy rights or lead to predictive harms.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for federal, state and local policy to ensure that schools, districts, and technology companies contracting with schools will neither collect, use, share, nor sell student information unless given explicit permission by parents in plain language and only after being fully informed on the specific data that would be collected and how it would be utilized.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP work independently and in coalition with like-minded civil rights, civil liberties, social justice, education and privacy groups to collectively advocate for stronger protection of data and privacy rights.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP oppose state and federal policies that would promote longitudinal data systems that track and/or share data from youth from infancy/early childhood in exploitative, negatively impactful, discriminatory or racially profiling ways through their education path and into adulthood.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP urge Congress and state legislatures to enact legislation that would prevent technology companies engaged in big data and predictive analytics from collecting, sharing, using and/or selling children’s educational or behavioral data.

## IMMIGRATION/INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1. *Petition Regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP convey to the US Department of State the importance of not only being a neutral facilitator but also being seen as truly neutral by parties in order to be effective in achieving a 21st century solution.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the NAACP urges a fair and balanced solution be formulated and implemented on the basis of a framework that guarantees and respects the sovereignty of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Egypt over the sources of the Blue Nile and the operating of the dam.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED**, That the NAACP calls on the World Bank to engage in a solutions process as a neutral facilitator and reengage in affirmative consideration of financing the GERD project.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP support a fair and balanced solution based on a framework that guarantees and respects the sovereignty of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania over the sources of the Blue Nile and the operation of the dam.

## LABOR

### 1. *Protection for Whistleblowers*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP reaffirms its support for more protection of whistleblowers at the federal, state and local government levels, the need for more independent oversight to prevent retaliatory behaviors in organizations, and the development of procedures to promote disclosure of misconduct against whistleblowers.



## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ACTION

### 1. *In Support of U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 1055 Affirming Strong Ties Between the United States and Liberia and Calling for Full Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Recommendation*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP urges the US Congress to support providing additional assistance to the oppressed people living in Liberia.

### 2. *In Support of the Adoption of the Ban Conflicted Trading Act, Prohibiting Members of Congress from Owning or Trading in Individual Private Stocks or Sitting on Corporate Boards While in Office*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocate for the passage of the Ban Conflicted Trading Act; and **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP support the investigation, prosecuting, and/or removal of any and all members of Congress found using insider trading information for private gain.

### 3. *Repeal Electoral College*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NAACP reaffirm our support for the repeal of the Electoral College and replace it with the popular vote.

### 4. *Force Arbitrations Antithetical to Civil Rights*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP demand the passage and enactment of legislation and regulations in every state, the District of Columbia and all territories opposing forced arbitration as a threat to and abridgement of civil rights, and prohibiting such practices as they relate to employment contracts and business-consumer transactions.

### 5. *Misuse of Personal Data and Biometrics*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP demand that Congress, state legislatures and municipalities enact policies against the collection and sale of personal data by companies without affirmative, opt-in consent; ban targeted political advertising based on personal information unless they have explicit consent; ban the use of facial recognition technology by law enforcement; and propose a regulatory system for public bodies to use biometric identifiers which are non-biased, accurate and balance democratic values with security concerns.

### 6. *The Impeachment of Attorney General William P. Barr*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP demand the immediate impeachment and removal from office of Attorney General William P. Barr.

### 7. *End Capital Punishment in the United States of America*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People reaffirms and stands united and will continue to advocate to end capital punishment at the federal and state level permanently; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That units of the NAACP encourage the proper government authorities and all people of good will to halt capital punishment in the United States of America. This will be in keeping with 104 countries that have already abolished this inhumane act.

## VOTING RIGHTS

### 1. *The NAACP Support Reforms that Achieve Voting Rights for All During the Coronavirus Pandemic and Beyond*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP advocates for the US Congress to provide adequate funding and resources to state and local jurisdictions to improve and provide safe, secure and effective voting systems and that no excuse mail-in voting be secured in every state and territory; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That the NAACP strongly urge elected officials of all political parties at the national, state and local levels to work together to enact policy, appoint federal, state and local election officials and judges who will protect the health of every voter and ensure the opportunity to cast a free and unfettered ballot and have their vote counted.

## EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

### COMMEMORATIVE

#### 1. *NAACP Celebrates and Commemorates the Life and Struggles of John Lewis*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, In honor of John Lewis' consistent bravery and life-long dedication for the right to vote that every NAACP member and unit contact their U.S. Senators and President Trump and urge the United States Senate to swiftly pass, and for the President to immediately sign into law H.R. 4, the "*John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of 2020*" and work to eliminated obstacles that prevent every eligible American from casting an unfettered vote and having it count.

#### 2. *NAACP Mourns the Death and Celebrates the Life of Reverend Cordy Tindell "C.T." Vivian*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP celebrates the life and mourns the passing of Reverend Cordy Tindell "C.T." Vivian.

#### 3. *Honoring the Life and Legacy of Chadwick Boseman*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP, during this 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, pauses to acknowledge, appreciate and celebrate the life, legacy and illustrious contributions of Mr. Chadwick Aaron Boseman, a real life superhero, for his immeasurable legacy, telling the necessary stories, serving his community and embodying his purpose.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That a copy of this resolution will be placed in the NAACP archives and given to Mr. Boseman's family.

#### 4. *Honoring the Life and Legacy of the Honorable Nathaniel Raphael Jones*

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the NAACP, during this 111<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention, pauses to acknowledge, appreciate and celebrate the life, legacy, and major contribution of the Honorable Judge Jones; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, That a copy of this resolution will be placed in the NAACP archives and given to the family of the Honorable Nathaniel Raphael Jones.

# NAACP NATIONAL RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE: 2020

**Leon Russell**  
Chairman

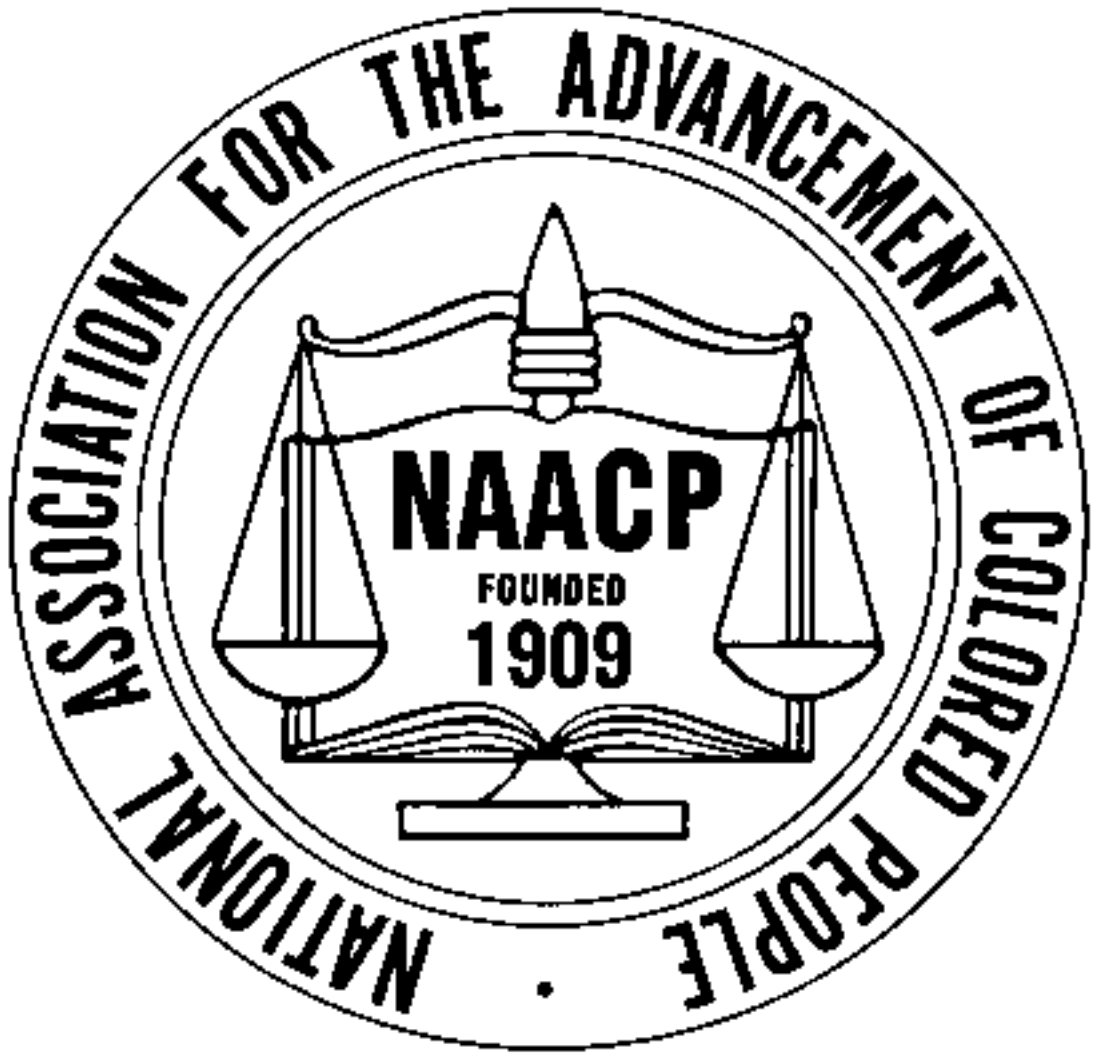
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NAACP

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# OUR GENERATION

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