

# STRONG MEN, STRONG MINDS

A DISCUSSION ABOUT EMPOWERING AND UPLIFTING THE BLACK COMMUNITY



**Moderator:**  
Larry Smith  
Community Servant  
Indianapolis Recorder  
Newspaper Columnist



**Panelist:**  
Kenneth Allen  
Chairman  
Indiana Commission on the  
Social Status of Black Males



**Panelist:**  
Keith Graves  
Indianapolis City-County  
Council District 13



**Panelist:**  
Minister Nuri Muhammad  
Speaker, Author  
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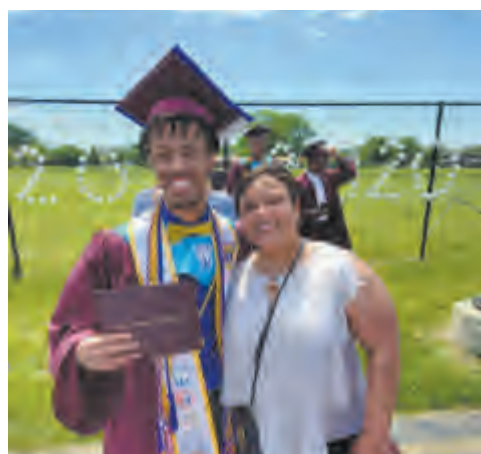
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**Taran Richardson (left) stands with Kelli Marshall, who previously worked at Tindley Accelerated Schools, where Richardson graduated from this year. Richardson plans to attend Howard University in the fall to study astrophysics. (Photo provided)**

## Tindley grad ready for a new challenge at Howard University

By **TYLER FENWICK**  
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

When Taran Richardson was in high school at Tindley Accelerated Schools, he developed an appropriate motto for himself: #NoSleepInMySchedule.

Richardson, who graduated this year, was a four-sport athlete at Tindley and put the motto on the back of his warm-ups for all of his sports: cross country, basketball, soccer and track.

He made the Dean's List his junior and senior years with a 3.7 GPA and graduated as salutatorian. That was while serving as class president all four years of high school, working a part-time job at Walmart and earning Eagle Scout honors.

"It's me essentially saying I'm gonna persevere and push through," Richardson said in an interview.

Now, Richardson is on his way to Howard University, one of 65 colleges he was accepted to, where he'll study astrophysics.

"You know how you want certain things for your child? For me, it's like, wow, it's really happening," Rita Richardson, his mother, said. "I'm so proud of him. He is an awesome, wonderful kid and has been since the day he was born."

A mother's praise doesn't mean Richardson followed a straight and easy path from birth to Howard, though. Rita didn't like the direction her son was going in middle school, when Richardson started looking at what his classmates had — a cell phone, more name brands — and began prioritizing material pursuits over his education. He even drew Nike symbols on his socks.

Education must come first, Rita would tell him, which is why Richardson enrolled at Tindley in seventh grade. He wasn't on board at first — he had to cut his dreadlocks and the

See **TARAN, A7** ▶

## 'Elicit a change': protests then and now

By **BREANNA COOPER**  
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

Mmoja Ajabu was 19 when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. He was in the military at the time, in training in Missouri. He and the other Black soldiers in his base were relegated to a remote part of the base and told they would be shot if they attempted to leave as the white soldiers went out to "quell the rebellion in St. Louis," he said. "I started understanding at that point what the hell was going on," Ajabu said.

See **PROTESTS, A5** ▶



**NiSean Jones, founder of Black Out for Black Lives, addresses a crowd downtown on June 19. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)**



**The 1953 eighth grade class at John Hope School #26. (Photo provided)**

## Alumni remember John Hope School on 100th anniversary

By **TYLER FENWICK**  
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

The alumni of John Hope School have many stories to tell about the teachers, the friends, the neighborhood that raised them from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Bill Gibson, from the class of 1958, remembers a teacher coming to his house one rainy evening in the fifth or sixth grade because he was acting up in her class. Gibson is hesitant to say he remembers something for certain, but the details from that night are clear: His mother was upset and embarrassed, and his siblings made fun of him for a month.

"Back in the day, parents did not want a preacher or teacher to come to the house to talk about their kids," he said.

Gibson, a 76-year-old retired information technology worker, looks back on that day fondly, though, because he came to learn his teacher would only take the time to do that if she really cared for her students.

Betty Glenn, from the class of 1953, can remember her music class walking the halls around Christmas time to sing carols. Classrooms would stay silent and leave their doors open as the class

See **ALUMNI, A7** ▶

## IPS MAY VOTE TO CHANGE COURSE

By **STAFF**

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) could change course and go to e-learning for all students instead of giving students the option of virtual learning or going to a building.

The IPS Board of School Commissioners will vote whether to begin the 2020-21 school year remotely at the next board meeting July 30.

Students and staff were set to return to the classroom Aug. 17. It is unknown at this time if that date will change.

If the recommendation is approved, IPS students will continue e-learning until at least October, in hopes that COVID-19 cases in Marion County will have decreased by that time.

In a press conference earlier this month, IPS Superintendent Aleesia Johnson said school administration were flexible with reopening plans, and she didn't want to have a "blanket response that we would put into place."

This story is ongoing, and will be updated online at indianapolisrecorder.com.

## Embarking on the genealogy journey

By **MIKAILI AZZIZ**

All Doris Fields knew about her father was he was Jamaican — and he wasn't present in her life.

With Fields' mother unwilling to talk about him, she was left in the dark. She joined the Indiana African American Genealogy Group (IAAGG)

See **GENEALOGY, A7** ▶



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‘It feels like going into a battleground’: some schools set to reopen

By BREANNA COOPER  
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

Jo Burnside is gearing up to begin her 17th year as a teacher in the Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Wayne Township. In a typical summer, she prepares for the nearly 30 children who will fill her classroom and stocks the room with supplies. This isn't a typical summer. Due to COVID-19, Burnside is preparing to teach her third graders through a face shield, figuring out a way to maintain social distancing and teaching her students how to use the appropriate technology if the township is forced to return to e-learning. Not only that, she's been discussing her plans and wishes with her family in case she gets sick. Wayne Township teachers return to school on Aug. 6, and Burnside said they will undergo training to help students deal with the pandemic and all the changes it has caused. However, Burnside isn't convinced it will be enough.

“It takes a certain type of teacher to be able to navigate that,” Burnside said. “If this teacher has possibly been dealing with the effects of COVID or financial problems because of it, that puts an educator in a very tough space to be able to nurture students the way they may want to. “I hope everyone is ready, but if I'm speaking realistically,” Burnside continued, “I think it's going to be difficult.” This year, Burnside said she'll have roughly 24 students in her classroom, but that number could drop due to parents opting to have their child continue e-learning. In Washington Township, families don't have a choice to send their children back to school — it's all e-learning. Tammy Mann, whose son Mylan will be a senior at North Central High School, isn't happy about that. Mylan struggled with e-learning last semester, and Mann disliked that he was assigned what seemed to be busy work. While MSD of Washington Township officials said e-learning will be more structured this time around, Mann is concerned assistance won't be readily available. “I just hope they'll provide some kind of help,” Mann said. “He doesn't do well in math, and it looks like Russian to me, I just hope they take stuff like that into consideration,” she added with a laugh. Despite her issues with e-learning, Mann also wasn't comfortable with the idea of sending her son back to school without a vaccine available. “No, I couldn't have done it,” Mann said. “I was



torn, because it's his senior year, and he kept saying 'I'm going back.' I could understand where he was coming from, but I wasn't comfortable with it.” Mann isn't alone. In districts where families have the option, including in Wayne Township, schools are seeing a significant number of students opt for e-learning. Burnside said roughly 100 families in Rhoades Elementary have opted to continue learning from home. While she's nervous about returning to the classroom, she said e-learning last quarter hindered her ability to foster the relationships she had built with her students. “Because of the relationships I had made prior [to COVID-19], though, I was successful,” Burnside said. “That's not the case for everyone.” Burnside isn't worried about her students struggling to wear masks; she's seen children wearing masks with no problem when they came to pick up items left behind in classrooms. She is, however, concerned about what children are exposed to at home, and what they'll bring into the school. “I'm doing everything on my end to make sure I'm as healthy as I can be mentally and physically, but it feels like going into a battleground,” Burnside said. “... Just not knowing who the kids are around before they come to me is scary. ... They're only with us seven hours out of the day. What are they being exposed to at home?” Nothing was left unchanged by COVID-19, including curriculum. Burnside and other teachers will have to incorporate what students should have learned throughout the e-learning period into the first quarter of the

2020-21 school year, just in case students had difficulty accessing or understanding the material. “I think it's going to be very difficult,” Burnside said. “Wayne [Township] is going full steam ahead, and I'll still be teaching five days a week in class. It's definitely going to be a no-second wasted three months of work on top of what I should be doing.” One issue Burnside is worried will be left out of the conversation when students return to the classroom is trauma. Not just trauma stemming from the ongoing pandemic, but from heightened racial tensions as well. “I know that because of where I work, I'm sure some kids have probably been affected because of the racial tensions that they may feel in their homes ... or from being out there with their parents marching,” Burnside said. As one of two Black teachers in her building, Burnside feels responsible for leading conversations about race, but it's not something she's comfortable doing. “I feel like a spokesperson, which I don't like,” Burnside said. “I do it because I know it needs to be done, but I have to lead with, ‘I don't speak for the Black collective. I speak for me and the things I have faced.’ I have to hope that my colleagues are going to be allies, and you don't always know that because you're not in the classroom with them. I don't know what's being done to make their students of color feel comfortable, for them to feel safe.” Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.



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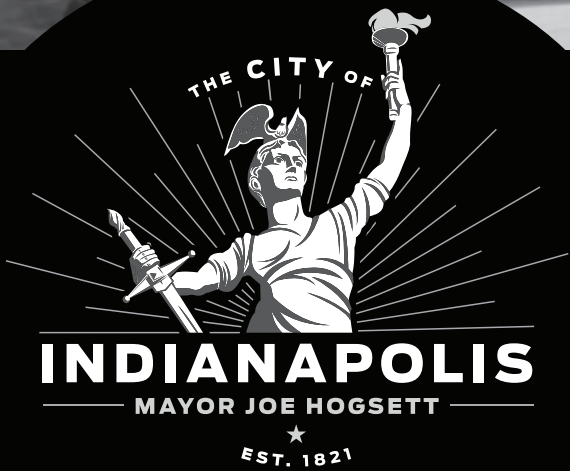
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Fonseca Theatre Company actors during an outdoor production of “Hype Man” by Idris Goodwin. (Photo/Ankh Productions)

## 2020: Stop-and-go entertainment

By BREANNA COOPER  
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

When COVID-19 threatened to shut down businesses left and right, Fonseca Theatre Company survived through innovation because, according to founder Bryan Fonseca, “Artists are creative. ... We find a way to get to opening night.”

Fonseca, a local theater veteran, and his company — of which 80% are racial or ethnic minorities — turned their parking lot into a theater, complete with a stage, socially distanced chairs and a hand sanitizing station, along with a mask requirement. From July 9 through July 26, the company put on a production of “Hype Man” by Idris Goodwin, which focuses on race relations and police-action shootings.

“The play was a response to the protests,” Fonseca said. “Our mission is to be very current to what’s happening in the world, nation and city around us. Theater has to keep going on because the voices need to be heard, this mission needs to be heard, and we can’t retreat in any way, shape or form on this issue.”

While the cast and crew of Fonseca Theatre are still calling for racial justice, they are no longer doing so from a stage. After an actor developed symptoms of COVID-19, the theater temporarily closed, and Fonseca said it could be anywhere from three weeks to a month before it reopens. “We have to be responsible,” Fonseca said. “And closing temporarily was the only responsible response to it.”

Fonseca Theatre Company, of course, is not the only group to have to cease work due to the pandemic. Every facet of entertainment, from theater to sports, were forced to shut down due to COVID-19, and many organizations are facing setbacks in reopening due to a spike in cases.

This stop-and-go method of live entertainment may be the “new normal” for a while, especially if Marion County residents don’t follow the mask

mandate, which took effect July 7.

Beyond the health of performers and audience members, perceived safety is also an issue.

Alyssa Whitt, who was an avid concert-goer before the pandemic began, said she’s uncomfortable at the thought of attending any live performance in the near future.

“I would not, at the moment, feel comfortable going to a show right now just due to everyone still not being smart about masks,” Whitt said. “... I would like to think we could go back to that, but who knows?”

If live performances were to resume in the near future, many venues, including Fonseca Theatre Company, would have to remodel to allow social distancing.

“We would have to completely redo our interior,” Fonseca said. “We would have to reduce the number of seats and have blank seats in between people. We are literally going from 80 seats to 55.”

Like everything else in the age of COVID-19, the future of live entertainment is unpredictable. Fonseca, however, is confident his company will be OK, thanks to its audience.

“Unlike a lot of theaters in town, we have a reputation for having a younger, more culturally diverse audience,” Fonseca said. “That has helped us tremendously. They are outside on a regular basis at protests, and they are caused-minded people, and they connect with the mission of the theater.”

Despite the uncertainties, fans are hopeful things will soon return to normal.

“I think hopefully by the new year things could return, with masks required,” Whitt said. “I think COVID has changed how people feel about large crowds. ... Maybe limiting the number of people and seating at shows could help in the long run.”

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaN-Cooper.

## Live music’s back but at a social distance

By MIKAILI AZZIZ

The summer season has been extremely different. For months, it seemed summer staples such as festivals, live music and other public events became a thing of the past.

Fishers Parks and Recreation is bringing back its concerts through the Fishers Pop-up Concert Series — with a socially distanced twist.

The free outdoor shows will be limited-capacity and first come, first served.

“We’ve been working to try to figure out a way to have live music in a way that people can enjoy culture and arts in a safe manner,” said Sarah Sandquist, Fishers Parks director. “We’ve been cautious — that’s why we’re only doing three shows during this series.”

The series kicked off July 24 with the band Toy Factory, a local favorite. Huckleberry Funk, originally from Bloomington, will perform Aug. 21, followed by the eighth annual Fishers Blues Fest on Sept. 4 and 5.

Dexter Clardy, lead singer of Huckleberry Funk, is excited to perform despite the changes in atmosphere.

“I’ve always been a big advocate for live performances. There’s just something different about being able to go and hear an artist,” he said.

From Clardy’s point of view, socially distanced concerts don’t need to be low energy or boring. Enjoying live music safely may be the perfect way to let off some steam after months of being stuck at home.

“It’s definitely going to be a little weird at first,” he added. “But I think people will be more at ease with it since it’s outdoors.”

In preparation for the series, grids have been drawn to separate attendees at the Nickel Plate District Amphitheater, where the concerts will be held.

Though masks are a requirement while standing in line at the gate, they won’t be necessary while eating, drinking or being within each reserved grid. Those who are not able to maintain the 6-foot distance within a grid, however, will need to have a mask.

“I think we’ll still have that communal feel, even though you’re not shoulder to shoulder with others. And I think that being spread out will really make people feel safe,” Sandquist said. “Our hope is to give the community a taste of a normal summer.”

Contact newsroom intern Mikaili Azziz at 317-924-5143. Follow her on Twitter @mikailiazziz.



Toy Factory

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# Memorial balloon lift and motorcycle ride



Memorial balloon lift and motorcycle ride in memory of 8-year-old Rodgerick Payne Jr. and 16-year-old Nya Cope both killed by stray bullets.



Nikki Cope mother of Nya Cope



Rodgerick Payne Sr. father of Rodgerick Payne Jr.

## PROTESTS

► Continued from A1

Now, over 50 years later, Ajabu sees little difference in the struggle for civil rights. Protests popped up all around the nation — including in Indianapolis — following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May. While chants of Floyd’s name and “No justice, no peace” filled Monument Circle for several weeks, local activists will tell you the demonstrations weren’t just for Floyd. For many, the viral video of Floyd’s death was a painful reminder of deaths more close to home.

Dreasjon Reed. McHale Rose. Aaron Bailey. Michael Taylor.

These names — all Black men in Indianapolis who died either by police-action shootings or while in police custody — have been repeatedly brought up throughout the protests. Crowds calling for answers and justice for these men have been nonstop for months. From marches throughout downtown to early morning “No justice, no sleep” rallies outside the homes of Mayor Joe Hogsett and Indianapolis Metropolitan Police (IMPD) Chief Randal Taylor, those participating often remind one another that “this isn’t a moment, this is a movement.”

But, a movement needs leaders. Luckily, for the hordes of people who have been protesting, several young Indianapolis residents were more than willing to step up to the challenge.

NiSean Jones, 22, formed Black Out for Black Lives after she attended the first protest in Indianapolis following Floyd’s death. She said she didn’t want the demonstrations to be a “one-time thing,” and was inspired to organize events to continue to shed light on civil rights issues.

Jones isn’t surprised many local organizers are young adults. She knows what it’s like to grow up in the age of social media, where hate crimes and injustices frequently go viral.

“A lot of the people who come to the protests are around our age, like 18 to 30,” Jones said. “In our lives, we’ve witnessed horrific events that have happened between Black people and police, where George Zimmerman walked off scot-free [after killing Trayvon Martin], and those injustices we’re seeing are only magnified due to social media. ... So, our generation knows what’s morally wrong, and we’re trying to change those things.”

### ‘The process is never beautiful’

Over the past several months in Indianapolis, demonstrators have been arrested, tear gassed and some beaten with batons just minutes past a curfew imposed by Hogsett.

Jones, who was tear gassed while demonstrating, said the experience taught her what she was fighting for.

“It was traumatizing,” Jones said. “To see people bloodied up, crying and on the verge of passing out because they can’t breathe. ... But I felt like that was something I needed to witness, because it was something my ancestors went through. It was beautiful to see people in my community come together, but the process was ugly. The process is never beautiful, but the outcome is what’s beautiful.”

In June, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Indiana filed a lawsuit on behalf of Indy10 Black Lives Matter against IMPD for its use of tear gas on protesters.

Jessica Louise, an Indy10 representative, echoed Jones’ argument that exposure to tear gas is traumatic, and took issue with IMPD’s use of the chemical agent, especially in the midst of a pandemic which attacks the respiratory system.

IMPD officials claimed tear gas was used as a final resort after protesters began damaging the City-County Building on the evening of May 29. Protesters claim the damage done in the city that weekend occurred after IMPD deployed tear gas.

### ‘You cannot change a system’

While protests throughout the city are ongoing, Jones hopes the demonstrations and the conversations they start inspire those who feel passionately about social justice to invoke change in other ways.

“Protesting is not all we have to do,” Jones said. “You cannot change a system, you have to break it. To do that, you have to vote. You have to be active in your community.”

At many demonstrations, there are designated tents to get people registered to vote, and organizers, including Mat Davis, who formed the Indiana Racial Justice Alliance, frequently reminds crowds of the importance of their voice and their vote.

At a June 13 event at Monument Circle, Davis brought City-County Council President Vop Osili to speak to the group.

“The way that we’re able to fight, the way we’re able to make change in our city is when you are behind us,” Osili told the crowd. “When you say ‘Get it done’ and your voice is heard. ... What we need is your voices to continue. ... The only way that we will have true change, true transparency and the voices of our people is if you continue to speak, con-

tinue to shout and hold us accountable.”

### ‘Understand the enemy’

To truly make change and make one’s vote count, however, Ajabu believes one must know what they’re fighting against.

“You have to understand the enemy,” Ajabu said, “and the enemy that they are fighting is tyranny. Tyranny is defined as the government being able to do something that a citizen can’t, and not be held accountable for what they did.”

To help organizers and activists better understand tyranny, Ajabu recommends signing up for an online course, led by Dr. Lasana Kazembe of Indiana University, that focuses on the history of tyranny throughout the world.

“I’m saying to the youngsters that they got to understand the makings of tyranny,” Ajabu said. “As an OG, if I might use their language, I want to help. Become knowledgeable of what they’re fighting for. You can’t defeat an enemy of which you’re not knowledgeable.”

### ‘Taking the steps to get free’

Ajabu has been fighting for the same cause since 1969: freedom.

Before going to college in the 1970s and becoming a commander in a local chapter of the Black Panther Party in the 1990s, Ajabu began questioning race relations in the United States while serving the country in Vietnam.

“In January of ‘69, the Vietnamese had loud speakers on the perimeter of our base, and they were asking Black soldiers why would we fight them when the country we were fighting for was fighting us,” Ajabu said. “ ... As a veteran who is a recipient of the second highest medal that the government gives a soldier — a Bronze star — I didn’t earn that medal to come back here and be treated like this. ... We’re tired of limited acceptance. We want to be free, and we’re taking the steps to get free.”

As a leader in IUPUI’s Black Student Union (BSU) in the 70s, Ajabu was arrested for his activism. Today, IUPUI BSU president Sha-Nel Henderson is still advocating for Black students at IUPUI.

During a June 19 demonstration through the downtown campus, Henderson and other students were calling for reparations for the Black families displaced by the creation of IUPUI, courses looking critically at Black history and racism in Indianapolis, and a student center specifically for Black

For more information on the Global Studies Workshop on tyranny, search “Dr. Lasana Kazembe” on EventBrite.

students.

As a group of roughly 45 IUPUI students marched through campus chanting “We’re the change,” it became evident that, in 50 years, not much has changed.

“Where IUPUI is built today, there once stood a strong Black community,” Aahron Whitehead, a member of the Indiana Racial Justice Alliance, said. “ ... We want IUPUI to basically repay the community for their actions.”

### ‘Elicit a change’

While Jones doesn’t believe protesting is all that’s needed to bring about change, she knows it helps.

“In order to elicit a change, you have to talk about it,” Jones said. “Protests allow that.”

Through Black Out for Black Lives, Jones doesn’t just want to talk about police brutality. Systemic injustice, she says, goes much deeper than that.

“Every time I see a police officer behind me, my heart shouldn’t drop to my stomach,” Jones said. “I’m scared to have a baby. ... Black women have the highest mortality rate when it comes to delivering a baby. I shouldn’t have to fear that.”

Jones went on to discuss discrimination in corporate America, the prison system and economic disparities that sometimes lead to an increased crime rate.

“I come from Haughville; I come from poverty,” Jones said. “I took one route, and a lot of people took a different one. I’ve seen friends who dealt [drugs] die due to the streets. We don’t talk about how traumatic it is to be Black and young in America.”

Jones wants to use her organization to educate Black children about the Black leaders they don’t learn about in school to let them know their options are limitless.

Her end goal is the same as Ajabu’s: not just limited acceptance for Black Americans, but freedom.

“America can’t exist without people of African descent,” Ajabu said. “ ... I would just like to say to the youngsters, don’t despair. It ain’t over. If we work together, we’ll eventually be free.”

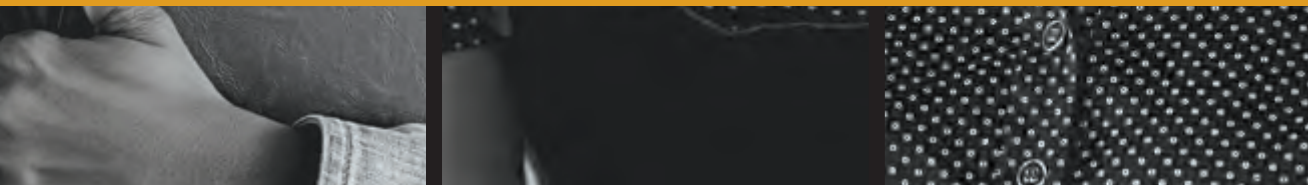
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EDITORIAL

‘I can’t breathe’

By Oseye Boyd



“I can’t breathe.”

Those were the words uttered by Eric Garner, George Floyd and Cornelius Fredericks, a 16-year-old living in Lakeside Academy youth facility in Michigan after his mother died and his father was sent to prison.

Like Garner and Floyd, Fredericks died for a minor infraction. On April 29, he threw food at or to another child in the cafeteria. When approached by staff, he threw more food. This was enough to cause staff members to now throw Fredericks to the ground and restrain him. In all, seven adults piled on top of this boy — two on his torso — for about 12 minutes. A nurse at the facility stood by, watching but did nothing to intervene.

For much of the 18-minute video, Fredericks appears to be unconscious. His pleas of “I can’t breathe” were ignored. He went into cardiac arrest and died on May 1 in a hospital. It was also discovered Fredericks tested positive for COVID-19, a disease that affects the respiratory system.

Garner, Floyd and now Fredericks are just a few of the cases where a Black American told those restraining him he couldn’t breathe and those pleas were ignored. There are countless more that we never hear about.

The New York Times recently found at least 70 people have died in the last decade after saying, “I can’t breathe.” The ages range from 19 to 65, and their occupations range from chemical engineer, real estate agent, meat salesman, church drummer, registered nurse, doctor and active-duty soldier. Their murders happened in cities across America. According to The New York Times, more than half were Black.

Conventional wisdom says if you can say, “I can’t breathe,” you’re lying because you have enough breath to talk. I’ve heard and read this many times over. In fact, a sign at the Montgomery County Jail in Dayton, Ohio, said just that as late as 2018 — six years after an inmate died in 2012 because his cries of being unable to breathe were ignored. Robert Richardson’s family sued and Montgomery County, Ohio, settled the lawsuit for \$3.5 million. Richardson’s crime: failing to show up for a child support hearing.

The idea that if you can talk you can breathe is faulty, according to Dr. Carl Wigren. While you can muster up enough breath to speak, you may not be able to get enough oxygen in your lungs to actually, well, breathe. If you’ve ever seen someone suffer from an asthma attack, you soon realize they are getting some air but not enough, which is why the inhaler is needed — quickly. They may be able to tell you they’re having trouble breathing, but it’s clear they’re in distress. It’s scary. I’m no medical expert, but I imagine those who said “I can’t breathe” were terrified because they knew they couldn’t breathe properly.

The fact is most of us aren’t medical professionals and don’t know what’s happening inside a person’s

body. Police officers say they hear any number of complaints from those being arrested or restrained such as the handcuffs are too tight or the person is cold or hot, etc. I’m sure the complaints become easy to ignore in the cacophony of an arrest, causing one to be desensitized, but saying you can’t breathe should be taken seriously — especially if you’re kneeling on someone’s neck or torso.

Seven adults held Fredericks down. Seven. Why did it take so many to hold one young man down? At one point, one man is just holding Fredericks’ ankle. It’s as if he just had to do something so he found one spot not already taken. Well, he did something, all right. He helped kill a teenage boy. So far, three people have been charged. All should be.

The facility lost its contract with the state and license to operate and there were numerous complaints about the facility before the murder of Fredericks. It’s obvious from watching the video, the youth at the facility are used to seeing adults manhandle their peers. No one seemed fazed. Some of the youth moved the tables out of the way.

Like Breonna Taylor, the death of Cornelius Fredericks took months to come to light. While my heart breaks each and every time an unarmed Black American dies at the hands of the state, I truly believe that it is up to those of us still living to make sure their deaths aren’t in vain. We can’t sit idly by. We have to keep demanding accountability from a system that uses our tax dollars. That’s being patriotic.

By the way, today would be a good day to arrest those responsible for killing Breonna Taylor.

OPINIONS

Revisionist history

By LARRY SMITH



If Americans were to enumerate countries in which teaching false history is (or was) sanctioned by the government, the U.S.S.R. would place near the top. Yet, in 1988, the former Soviet Union canceled

final history exams due to decades of inaccurate teaching. That decision affected 53 million students who were aged 6-16. (If only Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton were as wise and honest as former Soviet leaders...)

The Los Angeles Times covered the story 32 years ago. It reported, “The government newspaper Izvestia explained... that the extraordinary decision is intended to end the passing of lies from generation to generation, further consolidating the Stalinist political and economic system that the current Soviet leadership is trying to end.”

The Times went on to report, “The guilt of those who deluded one generation after another, poisoning their minds and souls with lies, is immeasurable ... Today, we are reaping the bitter fruits of our own moral laxity.

We are paying for succumbing to conformity and thus to giving silent approval of everything that now brings the blush of shame to our faces and about which we do not know how to answer our children honestly.” What stunning commentary from a state-run newspaper in a totalitarian society.

Ironically, it was around that time that the phrase “revisionist history” was gaining popularity among political conservatives in America. While the phrase was intended to be pejorative, the fact is that what critics referred to as “revisionist history” was (and is) about *correcting* the historical record. As is the case with just about everything of importance in American society, the teaching of history has become increasingly politicized. Of course, there was little need for overt politicization when everyone was taught the same flawed, jingoistic “historical” lessons. (I am reminded of Napoleon’s famous rhetorical question, “What is history, but a fable agreed upon?”)

America’s record on race, especially as it regards to slavery, is arguably the most controversial battleground in the cultural war for “historical accuracy.” Slavery, as well as the near genocide of Indigenous peoples, constitute America’s original sin — even before this land became known as “America.”

However, only relatively recently has that view begun to take hold in our school systems — from elementary to postsecondary institutions. As was the case in the former Soviet Union, many American educators have first had to learn history for themselves before they were qualified to teach our children.

The fact is that history has always been subject to being “revised.” Indeed, such is the *literal* job of historians. The word “revise” has a Latin root that means “to look at again.” History is always worth a second — or third — look. Understanding this reality, bestselling author Malcolm Gladwell created a podcast called “Revisionist History.” According to the podcast’s website, “Each week for 10 weeks, *Revisionist History* will go back and reinterpret something from the past: an event, a person, an idea. Something overlooked. Something misunderstood.”

Gladwell has taken a page — figuratively and literally — from educators such as Howard Zinn. Zinn wrote “A People’s History of the United States,” which has been both highly praised and roundly criticized for its “controversial” (i.e., mostly accurate) re-telling of American history. People like Zinn, Gladwell and “1619 Project” author

Nikole Hannah-Jones cut against the grain of America’s mythology about itself. It is depressing that truth-seeking causes such alarm. Plato’s “allegory of the cave” is instructive as an explanation of why “light” causes disorientation, disruption and even pain.

This is easiest to understand if one considers the fact that people increasingly don’t even agree about what is happening in the present. (Was Barack Obama a good president? Is Donald Trump?) Some try to build a proverbial wall around certain established “facts,” protecting them from outside “invaders” who would destroy them. Yet, as the Chinese found out, even a well-fortified and high wall eventually will be overcome.

The teaching of history is important because it is far more than the mere memorizing of facts. History is an integral component of our individual and collective identity. We fight over history because our “story” helps to define who we were, who we are and who we strive to be. Fables and myths make great storytelling, but truth makes great nations.

Larry Smith is a community leader. Contact him at [larry@leaf-llc.com](mailto:larry@leaf-llc.com).

Honoring Congressman John Lewis

By ANDRE CARSON



Our nation, and the entire world, lost a giant with the passing of Congressman John Lewis. I was blessed to serve with him in Congress for many years. He was not just a colleague. He was a mentor, a friend and an inspiration to me. The memories I made with him, and the values he taught will continue to guide me for the rest of my life.

I’ll never forget the day 10 years ago when Congress was poised to pass the Affordable Care Act. Congressman Lewis and I, as well as several other lawmakers, walked through an angry and physically aggressive group of protesters who came to Washington, D.C., to oppose the health care law. Many

hurled insults and racial epithets at us, but Congressman Lewis — himself no stranger to these acts of hate — remained steadfast and determined to go cast his vote.

His resilience in the face of such bigotry and potential violence that day, and throughout his life, continues to motivate our fight for equality. The bravery he showed, and our eventual passage of the Affordable Care Act, also reminds us that fighting for justice in our health care system remains a key part of achieving the “Beloved Community” Congressman Lewis and his mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., spent their lives working to build.

Congressman Lewis’ short but courageous battle with pancreatic cancer further reveals that we still have a lot of work to do to achieve greater equity in health care. Pancreatic cancer is extremely deadly. It is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in this country, and it disproportionately affects people of color. This disease becomes significantly less deadly the earlier you catch it. Yet pancreatic cancer still has no dedicated early detection initiative. Therefore, no test exists to detect this form of cancer early. That is a clear injustice we must fight.

I’m working hard to fill this gap in medical research. Earlier this month, the House adopted my amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that will authorize \$5 million for a pancreatic cancer early detection initiative (EDI) at the Department of Defense (DoD). The provision will provide critical funding needed for more research and an early detection initiative (EDI) under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) at DoD. This amendment will empower America’s researchers to find new ways to detect pancreatic cancer early, which will help to make this disease less deadly and lessen disparities in care.

I introduced this amendment in honor of Con-

gressman Lewis and another congressional colleague, Rep. Alcee Hastings from Florida, who is also battling pancreatic cancer. I want both of them, and all who have suffered from this illness, to know that we won’t stand by and let this cancer claim more lives without a fight.

This provision is also another way to reaffirm that Black lives matter. At a time when our country is having a national conversation about the persistent inequalities in access to health care for Black and brown people during a global pandemic, Congress must do everything within our power to improve health outcomes through research and treatment. Providing dedicated funding for early detection research at DoD will help fill a critical gap in pancreatic cancer research and will help address the pancreatic cancer disparities for communities of color.

I am inspired to build on the legacy of Congressman Lewis, and I hope you will work with me to create “The Beloved Community” he envisioned. He never stopped fighting, and getting into what he called “good trouble, necessary trouble.” He knew the struggle to achieve equality for everyone is far from over, and we must “keep our eyes on the prize!” Though he is no longer with us, we should celebrate his incredible life, and be thankful that he left a blueprint that shows us how to continue moving forward as a society and toward a more perfect union. I know he will always be with us on this journey.

Rep. Carson represents the 7th District of Indiana. He is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and one of three Muslims in Congress. Rep. Carson sits on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Intelligence Committee, where he is chairman of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence and Counterproliferation. Contact Rep. Carson at [carson.house.gov/contact](mailto:carson.house.gov/contact).

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## ALUMNI

► Continued from A1

walked in uniform and kept tempo. “It was so mesmerizing,” she said. Glenn, 80, also enjoyed her home economics class, where she learned how to cook and make an apron. “It means everything to me,” she said of her time at John Hope. “Wonderful memories I’ll take until the end.” This year is the 100th anniversary of John Hope School #26, which was off of west 16th Street on the south end of Martindale-Brightwood. Most students graduated to Arsenal Technical High School or Crispus Attucks High School. The former John Hope building is now home to The Oaks Academy Middle School. Alumni planned a reunion in June but had to cancel it because of COVID-19. John Hope is where Ron Lovett, a 1971 graduate who helped organize the alumni event, met his best friend in sixth grade, when a boy named Rod Coffman moved to Indianapolis from Louisville. “I’d do all his artwork and he’d get A’s,” Lovett said laughing. He has some of the same memories as Gibson — teachers who took an interest in their students beyond the classroom. Lovett said he never got a house visit, but he had friends and cousins who did. Lovett is part of an alumni group that meets regu-

larly and said he hopes to be able to have a reunion next year. “It’s heritage,” he said of John Hope. “It’s a legacy school.” The oldest living alumnus of John Hope is 103-year-old Jimmie Luton, who lives just a couple of blocks from the old school. Luton was part of the class of 1932 and said music was always one of her favorite classes. “It was just like being at home,” she said. “The teachers were gonna make you obey just like mom and dad.” Luton went on to Crispus Attucks, where she graduated in in 1936, and worked in box offices at various Indianapolis theaters, including Walker Theater Company, before going into a factory job and later becoming a beautician. Back in her day at John Hope, the teachers were free to use the paddle on students who misbehaved, an education experience Luton is nostalgic of (though she said she never met the fate). “It just breaks my heart because they’re not like they used to be,” she said.

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## GENEALOGY

► Continued from A1

shortly after its formation in 1999 with an interest in tracing her roots. “I did a DNA test in 2011, and put it on Ancestry.com,” she said. “I was getting hits, you know, but only third and fourth cousins.” Without her father’s correct name and lacking additional information, she didn’t have enough to connect the dots. Years later, however, she finally had a breakthrough that changed her life forever. “I got a note in February of 2019 from someone who claimed to be my half sibling. When I saw it, I thought, ‘Oh my God. This is big,’” Fields said. “I called Charles Barker, president of IAAGG, to tell him about what I’d found. He said, ‘Girl, you done found your daddy.’” Since then, she’s visited her half siblings who live in London. To her relief, they accepted her with open arms. Like Fields, Charles Vaughn, vice president of IAAGG, felt that the organization was a helping hand in discovering his long-lost family members. Retiring after 41 years in the corporate world, he joined IAAGG in 2018. He decided it was time to pursue the genealogy journey he’d always wanted to embark on. “My two brothers and I were raised by our mom. I really didn’t know my dad, or his family at all,” Vaughn said. After conducting extensive research, he was able to organize the first-ever Vaughn family reunion in the summer of 2018 in St. Louis, Missouri. He described the family get-together as extremely rewarding. The way Vaughn sees it, he couldn’t have done it without the support of IAAGG. To date, the organization has 110 members, but he predicts that number will rise to over 150 before the end of the year. “Many of our members are resources themselves, and experts in genealogy,” he said. “We have monthly meetings where we discuss various topics that relate to genealogy.” Nichelle M. Hayes, one of IAAGG’s genealogy experts, said the initial research process is no easy feat. In fact,

### Genealogy Conference

The Indiana African American Genealogy Group (IAAGG) will host a virtual conference. **What:** Helping You Tell Your Family’s Story **When:** Sept. 19 **Where:** Online. Register at [iaagg.org](http://iaagg.org) For more information, or to start your genealogy journey, visit [iaagg.org](http://iaagg.org).

she’s been on her research journey for over 25 years. “A lot of your research becomes ‘I don’t know this’ or ‘I can’t find that.’ And then you spend years trying to find the answer to that question,” she noted. Hayes, who never knew much about her paternal side of the family, came to some tough realizations after her father died. “I didn’t know the exact day of my grandmother’s death, nor did I know where she died or was buried,” said Hayes. “That literally probably took me 20 years to figure that out.” Although many don’t know where to start retracing their history, Hayes has a simple piece of advice: Start with yourself and then expand outwards. “Write down all the info that you know about yourself. Then write what you know about your parents, grandparents and so on,” she added. “Don’t be that ancestor that can’t be found in 72 years when they crack open this year’s 2020 census.”

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## TARAN

► Continued from A1

middle school was boys-only — but Rita told him he could meet girls at the YMCA. Richardson said the education environment — Tindley’s motto is “College or Die” — helped him change his mind. Plus, he was able to get the school to change its hair policy as class president his sophomore year. Patrick Jones was the middle school principal when Richardson was there and became his mentor. Jones was the type of principal to call home when a student was just having a bad day — not necessarily a disciplinary thing — and that’s how he came to appreciate how much respect Richardson has for his parents. “He’s just a genuinely good person from the first time you meet him,” said Jones, who is now senior vice president of leadership and equity at The Mind Trust. Those who know Richardson describe him as an unassuming leader who has no problem taking charge with his actions. When he was in middle school he helped younger Cub Scouts and was part of a leadership program. Richardson was also involved with Stop the Violence Indianapolis, which empowers young people to take charge in public safety issues, and helped build a broadcast studio for the organization. His accomplishments inside and outside of the classroom led to recognition from the Carlton S. and Jennie Chaney Microlearning Center — which is named after Richardson’s great-grandfather and great-grandmother — and Emmanuel Connection Microlearning Centers during a virtual event July 25. “Success is something that is never guaranteed,” Richardson said during the event, “but just because it isn’t guaranteed does not mean that it’s unreachable.” What Richardson didn’t know about the program celebrating his accomplishments was that he was also getting a college stipend from the Chaney Fund, which was started by his great-grandfather and is meant to help support the family’s academic ambitions. Richardson said he was appreciative of the gift and hopes to continue his great-grandfather’s legacy while pursuing his degree and aiming for his dream job at NASA. It’s an honor to receive these types of recognitions, Richardson said, but that isn’t the reason he works hard and lends a helping hand. “It’s what I feel is right,” he said. “We should try to better ourselves and better our community with our actions. It should be a daily thing.”

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty\_Fenwick.

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## US agency vows steps to address COVID-19 inequalities

By MIKE STOBBE  
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — If Black, Hispanic and Native Americans are hospitalized and killed by the coronavirus at far higher rates than others, shouldn't the government count them as high risk for serious illness?

That seemingly simple question has been mulled by federal health officials for months. And so far the answer is no.

But federal public health officials have released a new strategy that vows to improve data collection and take steps to address stark inequalities in how the disease is affecting Americans.

Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stress that the disproportionately high impact on certain minority groups is not driven by genetics. Rather, it's social conditions that make people of color more likely to be exposed to the virus and — if they catch it — more likely to get seriously ill.

“To just name racial and ethnic groups without contextualizing what contributes to the risk has the potential to be stigmatizing and victimizing,” said the CDC's Leandris Liburd, who two months ago was named chief health equity officer in the agency's coronavirus response.

Outside experts agreed that there's a lot of potential downside to labeling certain racial and ethnic groups as high risk.

“You have to be very careful that you don't do it in such a way that you're defining a whole class of people as ‘COVID carriers.’” said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

COVID-19's unequal impact has been striking:

- American Indians and Native Alaskans are hospitalized at rates more than five times that of white people. The hospitalization rate for Black and Hispanic Americans is more than four times higher than for whites, according to CDC data through mid-July.

- Detailed tracking through mid-May suggested Black people accounted for 25% of U.S. deaths as of that time, even though they are about 13% of the U.S. population. About 24% of deaths were Hispanics, who account for about 18.5% of the population. And 35% were white people, who are 60% of the population.

Other researchers have pointed out problems for minorities as they try to access coronavirus tests or health care.

But while sometimes highlighting the disproportionate toll the virus has had on certain racial and ethnic groups, the CDC is being careful not to categorize them as high risk or meriting higher priority for certain health services.

Indeed, in May, the CDC took down guidelines it had posted that said minorities without symptoms should be among those prioritized for coronavirus testing. Government officials later said the posting had been a mistake.

Last month, the CDC revised its list of which Americans are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness, adding pregnant women and people with certain underlying conditions. Race and ethnicity were left out.

Dr. Richard Besser, chief executive of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, previously spent 13 years at the CDC. He ran the agency's emergency preparedness response for four years and was acting director when a pandemic flu hit the U.S. in 2009.

“I can tell you that we spent very little time on talking about who was able to follow our recommendations and who was not,” he said.

He sees many public health recommendations that “seem to have been created without any recognition of the conditions in which millions and millions of Americans live.”

People who are required to go to work to stock grocery store shelves or drive buses don't have the luxury of working at home. They also may not have a place to stay, away from others, if directed to go into quarantine or isolation. And many are minorities, experts said.

Dr. Michelle LaRue sees that. A senior manager at

an organization called CASA that helps Latinos and immigrants in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, she said lack of paid sick leave in industries in which many Latinos work, such as construction, forces people to pick between “feeding their families or staying home to self-isolate.” And multi-generational and multi-family housing settings are often people's only choice.

The CDC appointed Liburd, an agency veteran, in May to better address such issues — the first time the agency had created that kind of leadership role for an epidemic. The goal was to make her a central figure in the agency's coronavirus work, with input on research and other tasks.

Data collection will be key.

When doctors order coronavirus tests for patients, standard forms ask for important patient information, said Janet Hamilton, executive director of the Atlanta-based Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

But physicians often don't ask. Race and ethnicity data is missing 80% to 85% of the time, and patient address and phone number is missing as much as 50% of the time, Hamilton said.

Advocates have pushed for improvements for years, she said, “but it's never been prioritized or incentivized.” Public health officials “find it painful — quite honestly — at how incomplete the data is,” she said.



## Tips for Social Distancing during COVID-19

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact — usually within a distance of about 6 feet — for a prolonged period.

Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs.

Recent studies indicate that people who are infected, but do not have symptoms, can also play a role in the spread of COVID-19. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay at least 6 feet away from others when possible.

Social or physical distancing is especially important for people who are at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

When going out in public, keeping the recommended distance and wearing a cloth face covering is critical to slowing the spread.

The Marion County Public Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer the following tips for social distancing outside of the home.

**Know Before You Go:** Learn and follow the guidance from local public health authorities where you live or visit.

**Prepare for Transportation:** Consider social distancing options to travel safely when running errands or commuting to and from work, whether walking, bicycling, wheelchair rolling, or using public transit, rideshares, or taxis.

When using public transit, try to keep at least 6 feet from other passengers or transit operators; for example, when you are waiting at a bus station or selecting seats on a bus or train. When using rideshares or taxis, avoid pooled

rides where multiple passengers are picked up, and sit in the back seat in larger vehicles so you can properly distance.

**Limit Contact When Running Errands:** Only visit stores selling household essentials when you absolutely need to, and stay at least 6 feet away from others who are not from your household. If possible, use drive-thru, curbside pick-up, or delivery services to limit face-to-face contact with others. Maintain physical distance between yourself and delivery service providers during exchanges and wear a cloth face covering.

**Safe Social Activities:** Stay socially connected with friends and family who don't live in your home by calling, using video chat, or staying connected through social media. If meeting others in person at small outdoor gatherings, or in the yard or driveway gathering with a small group, stay at least 6 feet from others who are not from your household.

**Stay Distanced While Being Active:** Consider going for a walk, bike ride, or wheelchair roll in your neighborhood or in another safe location where you can maintain at least 6 feet of distance between others. Before visiting a nearby park, trail, or recreational facility, check for closures or restrictions, and consider how many other people might be there.

For anyone who is sick with COVID-19, has symptoms consistent with the virus, or has been in close contact with someone who is infected, it is important to stay home and away from other people until it is safe to be around others.

To learn the latest about COVID-19, please visit CDC.gov/covid-19. Current COVID-19 information and data for Marion County is available at MarionHealth.org/covid-19.

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The Black church faces an atypical crisis

Lisa Olivia Fitch  
Our Weekly News

If a tsunami happens on the other side of the world, some may be unaware and unaffected. Others may hear the news and be aware of the disaster, but still be unaffected. Still others may be aware and only inconvenienced by the tsunami, canceling plans to visit that part of the world.

But then there are those affected by the crisis and those who are deeply impacted. Relatives are lost, homes are lost, friends are lost, income is lost. During the coronavirus crisis, essentially everyone in the entire world has been affected.

Blacks in the U.S. have been disproportionately affected during the pandemic. Although African Americans only compose 6% of the population in the state of California, Blacks comprise 10.6% of the COVID-19 deaths. This has been attributed to the fact that a number of Blacks have underlying and sometimes untreated conditions — cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, etc. — which compound problems, when paired with the coronavirus.

“Some of us are only two degrees away from a COVID death — we know someone who knows someone,” said Dr. Erica Holmes,



executive director of the Champion Counseling Center at Faithful Central Bible Church. “The church is now being called back into the role of meeting the needs of the entire church body.”

During a recent meeting organized by Anchor of Hope Ministries, a local, faith-based nonprofit assisting the formerly incarcerated, Holmes said that the Black church has historically been centered to meet the community’s

needs in a variety of ways.

“Often, Blacks could not access governmental services,” Holmes said. “The church was the entity in the Black community that met the needs of the oppressed.”

After slavery and during the civil rights era and beyond, Black churches gave rise to community businesses, schools, banks, insurance companies and the like.

“Black churches were ‘one-stop

See CHURCH B2 ►

Peace march

Several local pastors and community leaders gathered July 24 at 34th Street and Keystone Avenue to walk through the neighborhood to request community support to quell violence and homicides. The marches will continue each week in areas most impacted by crime and violence, with the hope that prayers and more community involvement will help lower the crime rate and improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhoods.



Participating members of the march, including Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett (right), gathered to pray for a safe walk.



Marchers walking north back to 34th Street were led by Rev. Malachi Walker, Young Men Inc. (far left with bullhorn).



Pastor Terry A. Webster, senior pastor at Nu Corinthian Baptist Church, offered the closing prayer of thanksgiving for a successful march. (Photos/Curtis Guynn)

ESC parking lot worship service



Eastern Star Church senior pastor Pastor Jeffrey Johnson at the parking lot worship service at the Cooper Road campus.



Sherri Garrison led praise and worship as members in there cars honked their horns.



A parking ministry member reminds worshippers to stay in the car. (Photos/David Dixon)



SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK

Make space ...

By SHEILA P. SPENCER



“Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God,” Psalm 46:10 (The Message)  
“Be still and know that I am God ...” Psalm 46:10 (NIV)  
“We interrupt your regularly scheduled programming ...”

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Did I say that interruptions come at the most inconvenient time?  
Life interrupted ...


For the past several months, our lives have been interrupted. The multiple pandemics fits the definition of interruption in that it has broken the continuity of our continuous process of an activity or process. It has altered plans, caused us to change directions and adjust. My pastor shared that one of the things we need to release is pre-COVID-19 expectations. We are in a season that calls us to lean on flexibility and grace. We do not need to worry about making space for interruptions. Interruptions make their own space.

But there are lessons in the interruptions.  
Make space for interruptions.

I usually travel on a regular basis, however, that has been interrupted. Several weeks ago, I flew for the first time in four months. There was a stillness within the usually bustling airport. The flight attendants reminded us that the boarding process would be slower so that we could socially distance. When we arrived at our destination, we were reminded to wait until the passenger in front of us was six feet in front of us. She said, “Make extra space, move at a slower pace and we’ll all get to our designated place.” I

*Kelly Taylor,*  
*words cannot express our sympathy for your loss.*  
*Wish we could be there, but in spirit we are.*

*Peace !!! Cheryl, Daphne and Gwen*  
*Xavierettes forever*



looked at the social distance reminders throughout the airports. I saw the symbol and reflected.

Life has been interrupted, and we are called to make extra space. We have had to slow down our hurried pace, and we have to extend ourselves and others flexibility and grace.

But there are lessons in the midst of the interruptions.  
This life interruption has taught me several lessons. One of the lessons is to be still and receive.

Be still and receive ... The two most difficult things for someone who is a goer and giver ... Someone like me.

During this season, sheltering in place and other restrictions have made us slow down. It is a challenge and an opportunity. I have had to slow down, be still and receive. And no, it never comes at a convenient time ... Never ... It meant a change of plans, letting go, repositioning and adjustments.

But in the midst, it is an opportunity for deepening relationships, intentional time and dialogue. It gives us opportunities to find ways to encourage and share with each other. This interruption reminds us that the church is not confined to a physical place, but we the people are the church and occupy every space.

Making space for interruptions,  
Rev. Sheila P. Spencer

*Rev. Sheila P. Spencer is an author, poet, teacher and preacher. You can contact her at CustomMadeInspiration@gmail.com and her website is www.sheilapspencer.com.*

CHURCH

► Continued from B1

shops’ because other means of access to community services were off limits,” Holmes said.

Holmes pointed to a recent Pew Research Center study that concluded that Blacks still have close ties to churches, as 47% of Black adults surveyed said that they attended religious services, compared to 39% of Latinx and 34% of whites.

An additional Pew poll showed that 43% of Black adults say they look to their religion for guidance on right and wrong.

“It speaks to the power of the pulpit,” Holmes said. “It’s important for the church to have accurate information to keep their congregations safe. How are those individuals who visit the pews one, two, or three times a week impacted?”

“They are looking to you to help them understand,” Holmes said. “Maybe they need to hear that the governor of California said it’s not safe yet, so sit back. You must be able to address the realities of life right now.”

Holmes also noted a silver lining, in that the crisis brought technology to some churches.

“With this pandemic, there has been a major reorganization, but we must see the opportunities as well,” she said. “Like being able to use things like Zoom, Facebook and telephone trees, where members are calling at least two other members per day. Those people are interacting with people they hadn’t interacted with in the sanctuary.”

Additionally, persons who already had difficulties surviving day-to-day before the crisis, may have those difficulties exacerbated, Holmes explained.

“Because their equilibrium is thrown off, they can’t usually find a way of coping and dealing with these new feelings,” she said. “It’s important for us in the faith community to pay attention to things we might see.”

Holmes explained that even though church leaders are not face-to-face with members, they should still be on the watch — via phone calls or internet services — for any signs of abuse that may be triggered by current events.

“Does the child have on a turtleneck shirt when it’s 80 degrees outside?” Holmes asked. “Are the parents yelling at the kids in the background? These individuals don’t feel that the safer at home order accurately describes their situation.”

Holmes encouraged her fellow church leaders to speak life into the current situation.

“The parishioners need to hear how the church is planning for the future,” Holmes said. “What is our next step? How are we going to address the ‘new normal.’”

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## Workers protest racial inequality on day of national strike

By AARON MORRISON  
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Workers from the service industry, fast-food chains and the gig economy rallied with organized labor July 20 to protest systemic racism and economic inequality, staging demonstrations across the U.S. and around the world seeking better treatment of Black Americans in the workplace.

Organizers said at least 20,000 workers in 160 cities walked off the job, inspired by the racial reckoning that followed the deaths of several Black men and women at the hands of police. Visible support came largely in protests that drew people whose jobs in health care, transportation and construction do not allow them to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

“What the protesters are saying, that if we want to be concerned — and we should be — about police violence and people getting killed by the police ... we have to also be concerned about the people who are dying and being put into lethal situations through economic exploitation all over the country,” said the Rev. William Barber II, co-chairman of the Poor People’s Campaign, one of the organizations that partnered to support the strike.

Barber told The Associated Press that the turnout showed the importance of the issue to the people willing to come out during a pandemic to make their voices heard.

“Sadly, if they’re not in the streets, the political systems don’t move, because when you just send an email or a tweet, they ignore it,” he said.

The Strike for Black Lives was organized or supported by more than 60 labor unions and social and racial justice organizations, which held a range of events in more than two dozen cities. Support swelled well beyond expectations, organizers said, although a precise participation tally was not available.

Where work stoppages were not possible for a full day, participants picketed during a lunch break or dropped to a knee in memory of police brutality victims, including George Floyd, a Black man killed in Minneapolis police custody in late May.

Dozens of janitors, security guards and health care workers observed a moment of silence in Denver to honor Floyd.

In San Francisco, 1,500 janitors walked out and marched to City Hall. Fast-food cooks and cashiers in Los Angeles and nursing home workers in St. Paul, Minnesota, also went on strike, organizers said.

At one McDonald’s in Los Angeles, workers blocked the drive-thru for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, about how long prosecutors say a white police officer held his knee on Floyd’s neck as he pleaded for air.

Jerome Gage, 28, was among a few dozen Lyft and Uber drivers who joined a car caravan in Los Angeles calling on companies to provide benefits like health insurance and paid sick



Protesters march outside a McDonald’s in Detroit on July 20. The national workers strike, dubbed the “Strike for Black Lives,” saw people walk off the job July 20 in U.S. cities to protest systemic racism and economic inequality. (Photo/Paul Sancy, AP)

leave to gig workers. “It’s basic stuff, and it creates a more profitable economic environment for everyone, not just the companies,” Gage said.

In Manhattan, more than 150 union workers rallied outside Trump International Hotel to demand that the Senate and President Donald Trump adopt the HEROES Act, which provides protective equipment, essential pay and extended unemployment benefits to workers who

cannot work from home. The House has already passed it.

Elsewhere in New York City and in New Jersey and Connecticut, organizers said 6,000 workers at 85 nursing homes picketed, walked off the job or took other actions to highlight how predominantly Black and Hispanic workers and the residents they serve are at risk without proper protective gear during the pandemic.

Participants nation-

wide broadly demanded action by corporations and the government to confront racism and inequality that limit mobility and career advancement for many Black and Hispanic workers, who make up a disproportionate number of those earning less than a living wage.

The demands include allowing workers to unionize to negotiate better health care, sick leave and child care support.

In South Korea, mem-

bers of a transport workers union passed a resolution in support of the strike, raised their fists and chanted “Black lives matter” in Korean and “No justice, no peace” in English.

Justice Favor, 38, an organizer with the Laborers’ International Union Local 79, which represents 10,000 predominantly Black and Hispanic construction workers in New York City, said he hopes that the strike motivates more white

workers to acknowledge the existence of racism and discrimination in the workplace.

“There was a time when the Irish and Italians were a subjugated people, too,” said Favor, who is Black. “How would you feel if you weren’t able to fully assimilate into society? Once you have an open mind, you have to call out your coworkers who are doing wrong to others.”

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## NBA restart likely to provide TV audience new sights, sounds

By **KYLE HIGHTOWER**  
AP Sports Writer

During a normal NBA season, the sights and sounds of arenas serve as both a showy backdrop and home court advantage for its teams.

But with no fans allowed in the stands for the upcoming restart because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the league's Orlando-area bubble restart will have a decidedly different feel for both players and coaches, as well as the television audience watching from afar.

The NBA has promised to do its best to bring some of the familiar noises and environment that players are used to playing in and fans have grown accustomed to seeing when the curtain officially drops on July 30.

Count former NBA coach Stan Van Gundy, who will serve as an analyst for one of TNT's broadcasts on opening night, among those curious to see how players will be affected by the atypical setup and what kind of previously inaudible insights on the court could be available to fans peering in remotely.

"I think the idea is right, because with no noise, it's almost eerie," Van Gundy said. "I mean, it's just not what any player or coach is used to."

Visually, the NBA will be taking advantage of the unique setting by trying to bring fans even closer to the action on the court via a 31-camera setup, the majority of which will be operated robotically.

NBA head of Next Gen telecast Sara Zuckert said the league will be employing an "audio soundscape" that will try to mimic — at least as much as possible — teams' home arenas.

The league began testing some of their new enhancements during scrimmages last week, though they are saving a lot for when games officially count.

"Amplifying microphones in the arena can really lead to an enhanced feel and sound. You'll hear a lot of sneaker squeaks and ball bounces," Zuckert said.

The league has also worked with Microsoft to digitally bring actual fans' faces and voices of fans into broadcasts via their Microsoft Teams platform. These select fans, which will be determined by the home team each game, will be both seen on screens inside the arena and be heard on the telecasts.

Van Gundy said accounting for the fan variable is about necessity as much as innovation.

"It's not like (NBA Commissioner) Adam Silver sat down and said, 'Hey, you know, let's do some of these things. They'll be better than having fans at the game.' That's not what happened," Van Gundy said. "It was we can't have fans at our game, how can we make the atmosphere the best it can be under the circumstances? And that's what they've attempted to do."

While some on-court interactions will remain muted even with enhanced audio, it certainly won't drown everything out. There's simply no way to account for the lack of the sounds usually created by crowds in NBA arenas that seat anywhere from 18,000 to 20,000.

It could possibly include everything from the occasional curse word getting through to other on-court interactions that teams might want to keep quiet. And the benches could be a factor in providing off-court energy to fill the void created by the lack of fans.

All of it should provide some gifts for players and fans alike, Clippers coach Doc Rivers said.

"I don't think we need scouts right now, because every time a coach makes a call, we're gonna hear it. Every time we make one, they're gonna hear it," he said. "I don't think there will be a lot of secrets, that's for sure. I think players will hear things they've never heard before. Officials, unfortunately, will hear things they've never heard before."

Players know it will be different as well, though some don't expect much of anything beyond good-natured banter — which even referees also join in from time to time.

"Honestly, everybody's so worried about the trash talking," Utah guard Donovan Mitchell said. "There's a lot of just jokes being made on the floor. Obviously, come playoff time that kind of goes out the window."

Trash talk aside, TNT play-by-play man Kevin Harlan said fans will also hopefully get an appreciation for how much coaching happens on the floor, such as by players like Oklahoma City point guard Chris Paul.

"I think it's going to catch people and stun others by surprise when they hear just how much he vocally controls a game," Harlan said. "He uses his voice as much as any player in the game on both ends of the floor — calling out defenses, calling out the offense, directing players in front, telling guys to help shore up an issue. ... He's just one example of many that I think people are really going to be surprised at just how much communication is going on on the floor."



## Fauci says Marlins' virus outbreak could endanger MLB season

By **STEVEN WINE**  
AP Sports Writer

MIAMI (AP) — The Miami Marlins' coronavirus outbreak could endanger the Major League Baseball season, Dr. Anthony Fauci said July 28, although he doesn't believe games need to stop now.

More than a dozen Marlins players and staff members tested positive for COVID-19, stranding the team in Philadelphia and raising anew questions about MLB's attempts to conduct a season.

"This could put it in danger," said Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert. "I don't believe they need to stop, but we just need to follow this and see what happens with other teams on a day-by-day basis."

Fauci made his comments on ABC's "Good Morning America."

"Major League Baseball — the players, the owners, the managers — have put a lot of effort into getting together and

putting protocols that we feel would work," Fauci said. "It's very unfortunate what happened with the Miami (Marlins)."

Their outbreak continued to disrupt Major League Baseball's schedule July 28, the sixth day of the pandemic-delayed season, with the Marlins' home game against Baltimore postponed.

The game July 27 between those teams was also called off, as was the Yankees' series opener the same day at Philadelphia, where New York would have been in the same clubhouse the Marlins used last weekend.

Nine Marlins players on the 30-man roster, two taxi squad players and two staff members tested positive, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because the results hadn't been publicly disclosed.

"Obviously, we don't want any player to get exposed. It's

not a positive thing," Commissioner Rob Manfred said on the MLB Network. "But I don't see it as a nightmare. ... We think we can keep people safe and continue to play."

Meanwhile, Chicago White Sox manager Rick Renteria will be kept away from his team after experiencing a "slight cough and nasal congestion," general manager Rick Hahn said. Tests were planned.

The Marlins' outbreak was the talk of baseball, and Washington Nationals manager Dave Martinez choked on his words as he discussed the situation. Martinez missed time last season because of a heart condition, and the Nationals are scheduled to play in Miami this weekend.

"I'm going to be honest with you: I'm scared," Martinez said. "My level of concern went from about an eight to a 12. I mean this thing really hits home now. ... I got guys in our clubhouse that are really

concerned, as well."

The Marlins placed infielder Garrett Cooper, outfielder Harold Ramirez and right-hander Jose Urena on the injured list. They claimed right-hander Justin Shafer and left-hander Josh Smith off waivers from Cincinnati, and will likely rely heavily on reinforcements from their training camp in Jupiter, Florida.

Manfred said there are factors that would force MLB to alter plans.

"A team losing a number of players that rendered it completely non-competitive would be an issue that we would have to address and have to think about making a change," he said. "Whether that was shutting down a part of the season, the whole season, that depends on the circumstances. Same thing with respect to league-wide. You get to a certain point league-wide where it does become a health threat, and we certainly would shut down at that point."

MLB and the union held talks July 27 after aspects of the protocols were widely ignored during the season's first four days, such as the prohibitions on high-fives and other physical celebrations.

The NBA and NHL plan to resume their seasons in bubble environments, with basketball at Lake Buena Vista, Florida, and hockey at Edmonton, Alberta and Toronto.

"The NBA and the NHL have an advantage: smaller numbers of players, shorter period of time," Manfred said. "I understand why they did what they did. I'm just not sure it was workable for us."

The NFL has opted not to create a bubble environment as training camps open for the coming season.

"It might be that they have to go in a bubble," Fauci said, "but I think they're conscientious enough and want to protect their players and protect the personnel that they will do the right thing."