BLACK HISTORY MATTERS

Mr. Reginald McGregor
Board of Education, President

Ms. Crystal Puckett
Board of Education, Secretary

Dr. Shawn A. Smith
Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Carla Johnson
Chief of Human Resources

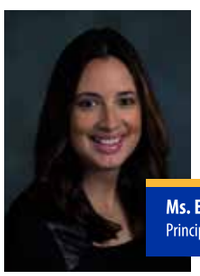
Ms. Shawn Bush
Director of Student Services

Ms. Tierney Anderson
Director of Elementary Education

Mr. Carl Blythe
Principal of Mary Castle Elementary

Mr. Franklyn Bush
Principal of Lawrence Central High School

Ms. Conni Davis
Principal of ELC Winding Ridge



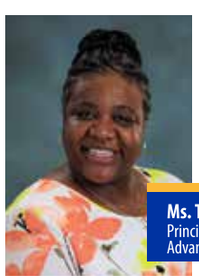
Ms. Edyza Deynes
Principal of ELC Brook Park

Ms. Alicia Gatewood
Principal of Brook Park Elementary

Ms. Alicia Harris
Principal of Winding Ridge Elementary

Dr. Justin Hunter
Principal of Skiles Test Elementary

Mr. Jerome Lahlou
Principal Forest Glen Elementary



Ms. Tracey Means
Principal of Lawrence Advance Academy

Ms. Mari Swayne
Director of McKenzie Center for Innovation & Technology

LIVING BLACK HISTORY, EVERY WEEK

By STAFF

The Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper, the nation's fourth-oldest African American newspaper, is celebrating 126 years of being a voice for the community and serving the underserved while maintaining a high level of journalistic integrity.

Not many Black-owned businesses — or businesses in general — have existed for 126 years! This accomplishment is a testament to the Recorder's significance to the city of Indianapolis — not just the African American community.

What began in 1895 as a two-page church bulletin, created by co-founders George P. Stewart and William Porter, now hails as Indiana's Greatest Weekly by consistently providing the community with up-to-date local and national news grounded in journalistic excellence.

Stewart and Porter, a local attorney, operated a commercial printing company at 122 W. New York St., which was also the original location of the Recorder. Porter sold his shares of the paper to Stewart in 1899, and the newspaper remained in the Stewart family until 1988 when local journalist Eunice Trotter purchased the company.

After becoming sole owner, Stewart moved to 414 Indiana Ave. in 1900. He moved two more times, 236-40 W. Walnut St. and 518-20 Indiana Ave., before settling into the current location, 2901 N. Tacoma Ave., in 1975.

Despite the oftentimes overt systemic racism of the early years, intimidation via death threats directed at its journalists from the Ku Klux Klan, burglary of its offices, and the hard-hitting economic crisis, the Recorder has remained steadfast in upholding the mission encapsulated on its masthead, "preparing a conscious community today and beyond."

"I joined the Recorder because of its rich culture and unique legacy," said Recorder Media Group President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Shegog, who began leading the historic media organization in June 2018. "While I'm not a journalist by trade, I understand the power of the written word. Not only does the Recorder hold itself to the highest journalistic standards, but we're also a voice for the underrepresented — especially in today's media climate where only a few are heard above the cacophony. We are truly for us, by us."

See LIVING, 4 ►

Eunice Trotter: 1988-1990

William G. Mays: 1990-present

George P. Stewart: 1895-1924

Marcus C. Stewart Sr.: 1925-1983

LIVING

► Continued from 3

PUBLISHERS

GEORGE P. STEWART: 1895-1924

In 1895, George P. Stewart and William H. Porter founded the Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper. Originally a two-page church bulletin with an emphasis on statewide news for African Americans, the Recorder expanded to a weekly publication to encourage the Black community to become more civically involved and stand up for equality.

MARCUS C. STEWART SR.: 1925-1983

As the Indianapolis Recorder continued to expand and include more pages and special sections, it remained a family business under the control of Marcus C. Stewart, the son of co-founder George P. Stewart. During the Marcus Stewart era, the publication covered a lot of issues related to crime and politics in Indianapolis and within the state of Indiana.

EUNICE TROTTER: 1988-1990

Longtime and respected journalist Eunice Trotter purchased the Indianapolis Recorder in 1988. With Trotter's journalism experience, the publication began to focus less on crime and more on the positive aspects of the community. Under the leadership of Trotter, the company updated much of the equipment needed to produce the weekly paper.

WILLIAM G. MAYS: 1990-PRESENT

In 1990, entrepreneur and civic leader William G. "Bill" Mays, the founder of Mays Chemical Company, purchased the Recorder, reviving it through financial contributions and connecting the publication to key city leaders and organizations. Due to Mays' reputation in the state of Indiana and throughout the country, he drew a great deal of attention the Recorder, which helped establish major advertising deals for the newspaper. His focus was to ensure the Recorder remains one of the best newspapers in the country while sharing positive and useful Black news with the local community. Although Mays died in 2014, he is still recognized as publisher due to the lasting impact of his contributions and legacy.

PRESIDENTS

CHARLES BLAIR: 1991-1997

Charles Blair became vice president and general manager in 1991. He pushed the publication to become more directly involved in the community through initiatives such as circulation promotions, bike giveaways for children and more. Blair also welcomed youth into the company by increasing paper deliveries by children.

Charles Blair: 1991-1997

CAROLENE MAYS-MEDLEY: 1998-2010

In 1998, William "Bill" Mays asked his niece, Carolene Mays-Medley, to take charge of the Indianapolis Recorder as the new century approached. Mays-Medley made the business more profitable within one year and enhanced its editorial content. Under her tenure, the building's structure was significantly improved. In addition, full color and specific sections of the paper were introduced during this time. Mays-Medley, who also served in the state legislature during much of her time at the Recorder, also heightened the Recorder's presence in the community locally and nationally.

Carolene Mays-Medley: 1998-2010

SHANNON WILLIAMS: 2010-2018

In 2010, Shannon Williams continued Medley-Mays' efforts to develop the Indianapolis Recorder into one of the best newspapers in the country. As a result of her extensive background in journalism and communications, Williams helped continue the solid company structure while assisting newsroom staff with crafting quality articles on positive and useful news in the African American community. In addition, the Recorder Advisory Council and Recorder Media Group were created under Williams' leadership. A major focus during this time was placed on electronic media, including expansion of the website and social media platforms. Williams also increased the Recorder's presence in the community and sought to attract younger readers. In 2011, the Indianapolis Recorder became the first African American newspaper to digitize its archive editions.

Shannon Williams: 2010-2018

ROBERT SHEGOG: 2018-CURRENT

President and CEO Robert Shegog has been instrumental in building continuity across all of the company's products and amplifying community engagement strategies. He and his team continue to usher in a new era of leadership with the charge to extend the rich legacies of the Indianapolis Recorder and Indiana Minority Business Magazine for generations to come by better utilizing the online platforms for both publications.

Robert Shegog: 2018-current

BILL MAYS SOARED IN BUSINESS AND SAVED THE RECORDER

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Bill Mays, whose philanthropic and business footprints stretched all over Indianapolis, prioritized the advancement and preservation of the city's African American community. His two most celebrated accomplishments: starting what became one of the nation's largest minority-owned businesses in Mays Chemical Company, and buying the Recorder. Mays died in 2014 at 69 years old.

Founded in 1980 as a one-man operation, Mays Chemical in 2018 was the 42nd-largest minority-owned business in the country, and the largest in Indiana, according to Black Enterprise. Mays Chemical provides chemicals to manufacturers in the auto, pharmaceutical, food and beverage industries. Mays retired from executive leadership in 2011, after having invested his time and money into more than 100 companies and donating millions to philanthropic causes.

Bill West, who worked closely with Mays at the company, recalled the late legendary media personality Amos Brown asking sometime in the late 1980s how many organizations Mays Chemical supported. West guessed it was around 40 or 50, but he went back to the previous year's ledger and found out it was actually 160.

"That wasn't even a busy year," West said. "That was a normal year."

Mays required those at his company be involved in the community, whether that was serving on boards of directors or volunteering a weekend afternoon for a community event. West said Mays would sometimes walk into people's offices to tell them he'd just gotten back from a meeting and volunteered them for something he didn't personally have time for.

That Mays turned himself into such a success wasn't surprising to those who knew him before the days of Mays Chemical, including college roommate and lifelong friend Edwin Marshall.

"One of the driving statements he made that I still follow today is that it's always about access," Marshall remembered. "You don't have to take advantage of everything that comes your way, but you want to be prepared for the opportunities that arise."

Mays and Marshall were in the same fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi, at Indiana University in Bloomington, and lived in an apartment together their last couple years of college. They were opposites in some ways — Marshall said he hated to clean, while Bill seemed to love it — but went on to godfather each other's children.

When Mays bought the Recorder in 1990, the newspaper was in danger of going out of business. Mays was a well-established figure in the community by that point and was approached regularly with different opportunities. But as West remembered, the Recorder was special to Mays, and he wanted to see the paper get to its 100th anniversary in 1995.

"That was important for him," West said. "He wanted to see that. He wanted to make sure that happened."

The Recorder not only survived, but it grew. Readership went from about 10,000 when he purchased the newspaper to where it is today at around 100,000. When Mays died, former Recorder President Shannon Williams expressed the company's gratitude to its savior.

"I am grateful he had the insight and passion to purchase the Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper at a time when it was at its most vulnerable," Williams said at the time in a statement. "His efforts helped to preserve the history of African-Americans in Indiana."

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

The Madam Walker Legacy Mural

On temporary display at the Indianapolis International Airport
Dedicated February 23, 2021

"Commemorating Madam Walker is an important step in helping travelers associate Indianapolis with a strong inclusive culture and continuing values of entrepreneurship, community service, and civic pride," said IAA Executive Director Mario Rodriguez. "The airport mural, created by a local artist, will set the stage to inspire travelers with Madam Walker's historic importance as they experience the city and see traces of her impact that have carried through the past and into the present."

Tasha Beckwith

Tasha Beckwith
Entrepreneurs Awakening: The Making of a Legacy, (Detail), 2021
Digital design on vinyl

Indianapolis Airport Authority

MADAM WALKER LEGACY CENTER

WITH SUPPORT FROM: ARTSCOUNCIL AND THE CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

INDIANAPOLIS BICENTENNIAL 1820-2021

Eunice Trotter

EUNICE TROTTER INCLUDED THE RECORDER IN A DECORATED CAREER

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Eunice Trotter, a former owner of the Recorder and first Black editor at the Indianapolis Star, is a Hall-of-Fame journalist who has spent her career immersed in many communities around the country.

Her career took her all over the nation — California, Florida, New York — and across the state. Aside from the Indianapolis Star and the Recorder, Trotter worked at the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel from 1998 to 2002, where she oversaw three departments and managed extensive reporting on the rising Burmese population in the area.

It was a career that earned Trotter a place in the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame in 2017. She was the only African American inducted that year.

"It made me feel really special," Trotter said. "It made me feel that a lot of the work I'd done did not go unnoticed. It's an honor, not one that goes to my head, but it is an honor."

Trotter was also a pioneer, though she didn't know it right away. When the Indianapolis Star promoted her to city editor in the early 1980s, Trotter became the paper's first Black editor. She said she only learned that later when she discovered there was no one she could look up to.

"As you start looking back at mentors who had that same position, you found there was no one there who looked like you," Trotter said.

Trotter got her start in the business at the Recorder. She contributed to the heralded "Teen Talk" column, which rounded up all the local teen issues in gossip style and drew in a younger readership. Trotter had a family connection to the Recorder, since her great uncle was once on the paper's staff and her family came from Vincennes, the same town as the founders of the paper, the Stewarts.

Trotter's first byline in the Recorder came in September 1986. Her last came in August 1991. Between then, Trotter wrote about the AIDS epidemic, Black legislative leaders, the elderly and much more. She went on to own the paper from 1987 to 1991.

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

PROTESTS CAME TO INDIANAPOLIS IN 2020

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com
TYLER FENWICK
tyler@indyrecorder.com

A nearly hour-long standoff between demonstrators and Indiana State Police (ISP) June 1 ended peacefully after ISP officers momentarily removed their riot gear.

Late in the afternoon June 1, protesters began a march they hoped would take them to the governor's mansion. A group of roughly 50 people on foot marched, carrying signs reading messages such as "Black lives matter" and "Blue lives murder" and were trailed by a procession of roughly 80 cars as the protest made its way through downtown.

With car horns blaring and chants of "Hands up, don't shoot" echoing through the crowd, police were on high alert. While members of the Indiana National Guard Reactionary Force stood guard near Monument Circle, officers from ISP and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) were attempting to follow the crowd. Protest organizers streamed much of the procession on Facebook Live, but never revealed their exact location.

As they walked toward the governor's mansion, protesters noticed a line of over a dozen ISP patrol cars blocking off 46th Street. One protester draped in a flag reading "Don't tread on me" stopped the group and informed them, "They don't want us to reach the governor's mansion!" and encouraged the group to continue to move forward and confront the police.

As the crowd advanced toward the group of well over 40 officers, all in riot gear, it was roughly 15 minutes after the 8 p.m. curfew imposed by Mayor Joe Hogsett. As they reached the line of officers, many demonstrators took a knee, raising their hands in the air screaming "Hands up, don't shoot!"

After that, amid the chanting of the crowd, conversations took place: Protesters speaking to fellow protesters, and protesters speaking with officers. At several points, tension arose as words were exchanged. Organizers of the demonstration, however, worked to deescalate the situation, telling members of the crowd to step back. About 30 minutes into the standoff, officers deployed a low-dose pepper ball into the crowd after a few demonstrators crossed a threshold that was established by officers earlier in the demonstration.

At one point, protester Anthony Brown stood between police and members of the demonstration, trying to bridge understanding between both groups.

"I was saying, you guys swore you were going to

"We need laws ... we need justice," four young activists said at a recent rally. (Photo/Breanna Cooper)

protect and serve," Brown said. "And, a bunch of people were asking them to serve with us, hand in hand. They did that. I would love to see more cops come out and do that."

Brown said he hopes this protest will create "listening ears and change," and said protesters were giving officers examples of what laws they think should be changed and how to move forward.

Nearly an hour after the standoff began, ISP officers briefly removed their riot gear and lowered their batons and weapons, seemingly signaling to protesters they heard what they were saying. Loud cheers and applause erupted from the crowd, and several members of the demonstration approached police to shake hands and exchange hugs. Others in the crowd, however, viewed the removal of riot gear as an empty gesture and were upset with protesters for engaging with police.

Mat Davis, an organizer who read a list of demands to police and led chants, told demonstrators to not shake hands and hug police.

He led chants of "Stop hugging the police!" as people made their way back toward downtown on Meridian.

Police followed behind in squad cars most of the way, and they were posted at many intersections.

The original plan was to walk to 16th Street in order to avoid downtown, but many people were parked downtown.

They continued to Vermont Street, where Davis, who talked with police earlier, told the group that officers said people would be able to walk to their cars and go home.

"They've definitely given us the green light to be able to do that," Davis said, stopping the group. "We don't have anything else. I gotta make sure that none of y'all get maced, billy-clubbed, beat up, arrested or none of that. Once we've splitten up, we've been given the word that they won't do anything."

Then he harkened back to one of the most common chants of the night: "Can I ask you a question?" he repeated. "Have the police ever deescalated a m**********n' thing!"

Everyone shouted no.

Shortly after, people split into smaller groups in order to stay together as they left, with most clearing the area by about 11 p.m.

Contact staff writers Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper. Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-78523. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

'LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM' CELEBRATES MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

The history of the Martindale Brightwood neighborhood came alive at the 37th Place Community Center in February 2020, thanks to collaborations from Indy Fringe, Harrison Center for the Arts and six "Great-tri-archs" -- people who have been in the community for decades.

"This is an area that has a very rich history as it relates to Indianapolis," said Gina Fears, assistant director of recovery and re-entry at Public Advocates in Community re-Entry (PACE) Inc. Fears facilitated the event, and said she enjoyed sharing the stories that made Martindale Brightwood what it is today.

"It's the heartbeat of the city," she said of the neighborhood. Fears worries valuable stories aren't being told because of social media.

"I had family members that told stories, and today we have Facebook and Snapchat, so we don't get those types of stories," Fears said. "We will have some 'Great-tri-archs there ... and they will give their reflections."

The six "Great-tri-archs" had a panel discussion about the history of the Martindale Brightwood neighborhood and how it has grown over the years.

"If I don't know where I've come from," Fears said, "how can I decide where I'm going? I grew up in the city, I know the east side and what it used to look like, and I show my grandkids that growth. I show them where I used to live, where businesses used to be. ... We can't celebrate growth and changes if we don't know the history."

Portraits of the Great-tri-archs, created by Harrison Center artist Abi Ogle, lined the building. At 4 feet by 6 feet, the portraits hung from the ceiling and imitated the styles of several famous African American artists.

Joanna Taft, executive director of the Harrison Center, said this is an appropriate homage to the people who shaped the city.

"All of them have been leaders in Martindale Brightwood," Taft said, "and have great stories about loving their neighborhood and wanting to grow new leaders to continue to tell that story."

Visitors to the living museum saw a play, "Wind Chimes and Promises," which details a family's escape from the Klu Klux Klan in the deep South, only to move next door to Klan members in Indianapolis in 1919. The play was adapted by local playwright Rita Kohn from the novel of the same name by Phyllis J. Adair.

Kohn, who wrote the play in 2009 after being "totally engrossed" by the novel, said the play highlights the importance of knowing the history of who we are and where we came from.

"I think that without knowing our history and our heritage, we lose so much of our beauty," Kohn, 86, said. "Right now in the United States, there's a lot of historical amnesia. We forget that some people did not choose to be immigrants; they were snatched from their homes. There are people living in Indianapolis who are descendants of the survivors of that middle passage. ... To not acknowledge ancestry, where we come from, is to disrespect what they went through."

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

Genesis Plaza to uplift Brightwood area

By STEPHEN B. JOHNSON
Staff Writer

People within communities throughout the nation have talked about what they feel their neighborhoods need and do not need, and normally their cries fall upon deaf ears.

Three local development organizations are joining forces to bring a $2 million neighborhood office and retail center to Indianapolis' historic Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood.

Genesis Plaza, a two-story, 32,500-square-foot building, will be constructed on a two-acre site on the southeast corner of Keystone Avenue and 29th St.

Brightwood residents get a chance to offer suggestions regarding what stores and businesses they would like to see in the plaza with the developers of the project in a meeting on Thursday, September 8, at the Brightwood Community Center.

"The purpose of the meeting is to talk with the residents and get their input as to what they want

Architect Walter Blackburn's rendition of the "Genesis Plaza," which is a two-story, 32,500 square-foot building to be constructed on a two-acre site on the southeast corner of Keystone Ave. and 29th St.

Out with the old

A part of our Black community's history died last week when Pearl's Lounge and Foster's Motor Lodge, at McLean and Illinois Sts.

The Mind Trust
Great schools. Innovative ideas. Every student.

Our team is proud to celebrate Black History Month!

Year-round, we work to support and empower Black students, families, educators and community members so that every student – no exceptions – can have access to a great school.

Brandon Brown
CEO

Kristin Grimme
Senior Vice President of Strategy

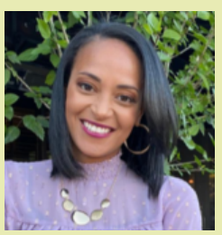
Patrick Jones
Senior Vice President Leadership & Equity

Lauren Rush
Senior Vice President of Strategic Alignment & Operations

Joe White
Senior Vice President of School Support

Shannon Williams
Senior Vice President of Community Engagement

Amber Audrain
Director of Alignment & School Investments



Porsche Chisley
Senior Director of Special Projects

Paula Glover
Manager of School Support

Stacy Helmuth
Director of Development

Corrie Lapp
Senior Director of Finance & Operations

Sara Marshall
Senior Director of Talent

Kay Mason
Executive Assistant to the CEO

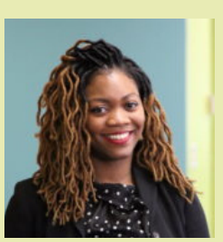
Holly Merchant
Director of Community Engagement

Sonja Peters
Senior Director of School Incubation

Lauren I. Peterson
Senior Director of Community Engagement

Madeline Poulakidas
Director of Finance & Operations

Michael Prihoda
Manager of Development & Communications



Chelsea Reed
Manager of External Communications

Tina Seymour
Senior Director of School Support

Kateri Whitley
Director of Communications

We believe Black Lives Matter.

YOUNG ACTIVISTS LED THE WAY IN A TURBULENT 2020

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

Following the police-action shooting death of Dreasjon Reed and the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, protesters led by Indy10 Black Lives Matter were out in full force in downtown Indianapolis. While the activist group received an influx of attention due to national conversations about race and policing, Indy10 has been at this for years.

Founded in 2014 following the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Indy10 members have taken an active role protesting injustices and advocating for the Black community. Beyond protests, Indy10 also offers a "no-questions asked" food pantry to help Hoosiers in need.

Jessica Louise, spokesperson for Indy10, said Indy10 members know what they're up against.

"This is a long fight for us," Louise said.

As Indy10 led large protests for weeks on end throughout summer 2020, another budding leader added her voice to the local activism scene.

Nisean Jones, 23, created Black Out for Black Lives after attending the first protest in Indianapolis following Floyd's death, inspired by the people she saw fighting for Black lives. Throughout the summer, Jones hosted several demonstrations, including a Juneteenth event where she spoke about the plight of Black women.

"Black women have this stigma they can't seem to shake," Jones said. "It doesn't matter what we do, we're always classified as ghetto, and it has to do with societal norms. Black Lives Matter was initially started by Black women, and I want to start having conversations about how Black women are treated in this country, by both white people and Black men."

Both Louise and Jones feel protests ultimately lead to more conversations.

"In order to illicit a change, you have to talk about it," Jones said. "Protests do that. You're seeing protesters having a conversation. ... But it's not all we have to do. You can't change a system, you have to break a system."

Other young people throughout Indianapolis also are finding their voice to spread the awareness of social justice issues.

Taylor Hall, 20, wanted to use her love of music to combat racism. During a protest at the Statehouse in June 2020, Hall shared her song, "I Can't Breathe."

Armed with just her acoustic guitar, Hall posed a haunting question to the thousands of Hoosiers gathered at the demonstration:

"Is this 2020 or 1969?"

Hall's work wasn't over after that protest, though. She helped organize a Youth Lives Matter rally in October 2020 at the Statehouse.

"If we can get the youth involved now in a safe environment, it could impact them and affect the future," Hall said. "They are our future and next leaders. We need to make sure they feel empowered."

Following the election of President Joe Biden, some activists worry complacency would undo some of the empowerment and progress the group made throughout 2020.

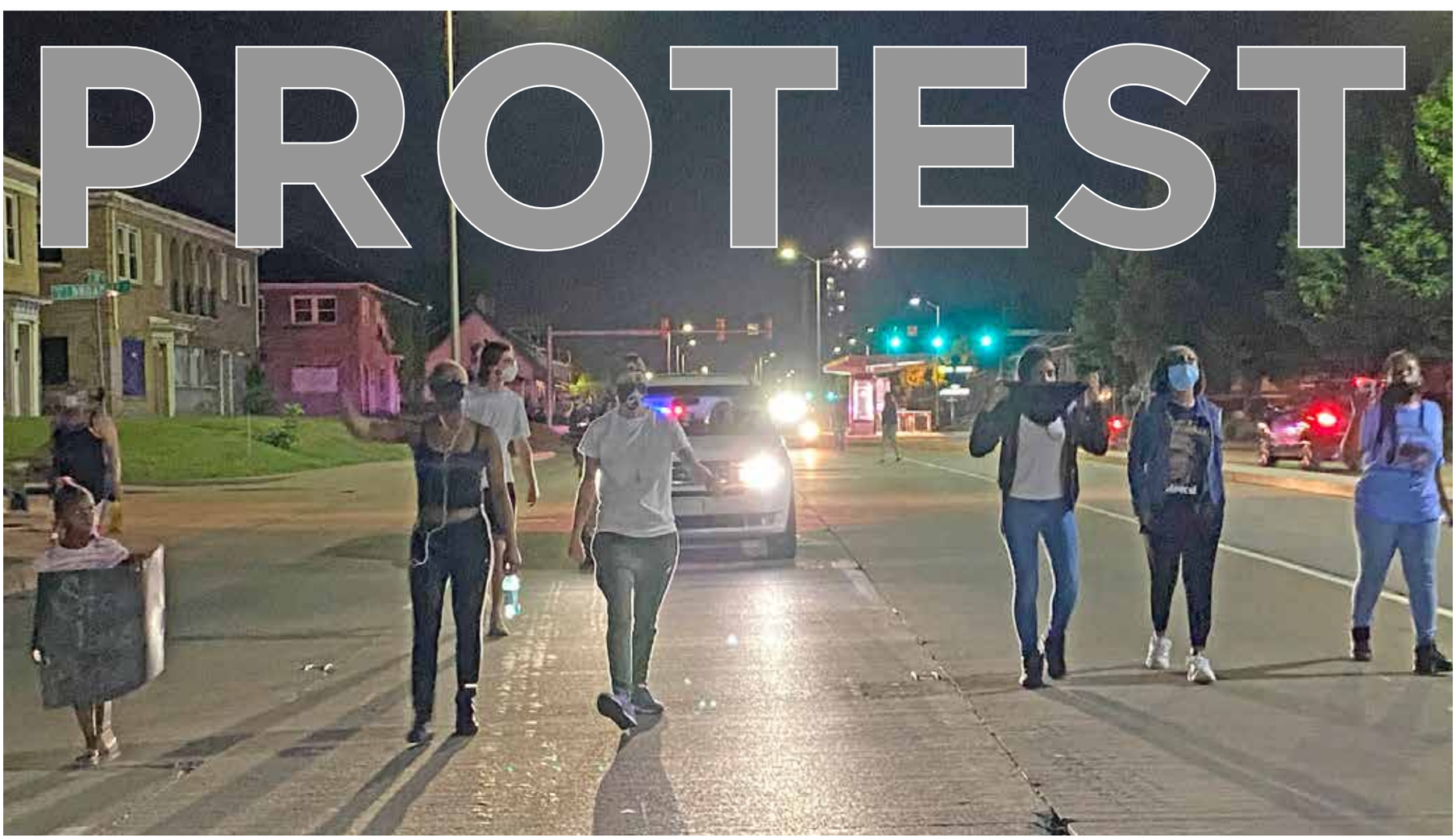
Indy10 is working to ensure that doesn't happen.

"We are already starting to work on educating people on what a Democrat-backed federal or presidential administration looks like and how the movement can operate inside and outside of said administration," Louise said. "One of our goals is to defund the police, and Kamala [Harris] was the former prosecuting attorney for California, so she's used to working alongside law enforcement. ... I'm not of the mind that a Democratic president is going to do our work for us. By a long shot, our work isn't done."

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

Nisean Jones

THE BIRTH OF A PROTEST



Demonstrators walk along 38th Street on May 29 to protest police shootings of Black people. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

A group of roughly 10 people, led by Black Panther organizers, crisscrossed the city May 29 looking for a good place to shut it down.

They had a location in mind, but Kwame Shakur, deputy chairman of the New African Black Panther Party, feared police got ahead of him when someone who claimed to be part of the media approached him with a phone asking questions about what he was about to do.

He bailed and lost whoever that was.

Plan B: Shut down an intersection on the north side. It was one lane in each direction; wouldn't require many people.

Cars met in a parking lot nearby. It had to be secret until it was time to execute.

But then Shakur heard about the crowd that had gathered downtown, and the group agreed they could go in and channel that energy. It was 7 p.m. by now.

Plan C: Take over the crowd downtown.

A motorcade took I-465 to I-70 to make it downtown. Family of McHale Rose — the 19-year-old killed by police in the early morning hours of May 7 — was part of the group and passed out goggles before everyone left.

There wasn't a clear way into the downtown protest, though. They thought it looked too blocked off. It was time once again to think of something else.

Plan D: Shut down 38th Street.

They met at the combo McDonald's and BP gas station at 38th and Salem streets and started canvassing the area to find anyone willing to join. They needed numbers.

The first person to join the group was Timothy Parker Bay, who was on the gas station side of the parking lot.

It sounded like this was the moment 52-year-old Bay — a muscular, excitable man with red and black gloves — had been waiting for his whole life.

"I've been excited," he later said as he walked behind the group on Graceland Avenue. "I've been running from my destiny my whole life. God wants me to do something. My prayer's been answered."

The first house the group hit on Salem was a success. Andy and Jacinta Hodges were relaxing on the porch with friends and family when they decided to drop what they were doing and walk to get more people.

Andy and Jacinta are married and have a son in the military. They apologized to the Rose family for their loss.

"It could be our son," Jacinta said as she held her husband's hand. "I feel for them. I couldn't imagine what they're going through."

Rose died just hours after 21-year-old Dreasjon Reed was killed by police following a chase. Police said Rose made a false 911 call to lure police to an apartment complex on the city's north side and ambush them.

Police said they returned fire in both incidents.

But the Rose family say police are hiding what really happened, and they're still searching for answers.

One of the common pleas with neighbors throughout the night was that it could be one of their loved ones next, and that they can't wait until then to stand together.

It worked for some. Others got excited about the prospect of getting involved but said they might join later.

Patrick Saling, a white 21-year-old student at Indiana University in Bloomington, was with the group from the beginning.

He got four children on the sidewalk to chant "Boots on the ground!" as the group, now with about 20 people, made its way south on Capitol Avenue.

Myron Rose and Tomorrow Rose, McHale Rose's father and stepmother, walked with Tomi Rose, his aunt, and Darius McGaughey, his brother. They held signs and wore shirts with Rose's face on them and asked people to join their cause.

"We've always said, 'yours, mine, ours,'" Tomorrow said.

There were about 25 people by the time the group approached 38th and Meridian streets.

Willy Booze, a 71-year-old pastor in a Colts jersey, followed closely behind in his GMC Denali with his hazards on. He prayed with them earlier on a side street, thanking God for leading this group to him.

It was time.

"We're taking 38th and Meridian here," Shakur told the people. "We're gonna hold this for a minute."

They blocked traffic going south on Meridian and west on 38th before marching east and taking up all of the lanes.

Jacinta elected to stay behind. She has asthma, her husband explained, and had already walked a long way in sandals.

Two police cars blocked the road at Washington Boulevard and 38th Street, and the group cheered as people honked and waved.

Keanesha Stone, 33, was taking her 11-year-old son and some of his cousins to the canal for ice cream when she saw what was happening. She parked her car at 39th Street and Washington Boulevard to join the march.

Her son and nieces and nephews were only a few of the children who became part of the protest.

Jayla Keys, 23, was with her 5-year-old daughter when people came up to her house and asked her to join.

"It's a hot day," she said. "Everybody's been out."

There were about 60 people marching when the group turned at Guilford Avenue to go back.

Saling had posted up at the back of the crowd, walking backward with a fist in the air, hardly ever more than 15 feet away from the police cars that crept along behind the marchers.

It's important to put white bodies between the police and "our Black and brown brothers and sisters," Saling explained as he continued walking backward.

"If they want to hurt them, they have to hurt the white folks that they're not used to going through," he said.

One man, Massiah Harley, 38, joined early in the march on a rickety bike and spent the whole time looping around from front to back.

"Injustice is injustice," he said, "no matter what color or what creed. We gotta stand up against this stuff."

Anthony Smith, 47, said he lives on Pennsylvania Avenue and could hear what was going on outside. He decided to get involved, too.

"I was coming this way to check on my grandma anyway," he said.

Shakur stopped the crowd at Illinois and 38th streets and put the Rose family front and center while traffic was mostly blocked from going in any direction.

He held up his phone for a livestream as the Rose family talked.

"He was 19," Myron, the father, said. "He had a whole life ahead of him. ... I have no more strength, but I'll tell you what, I'll keep fighting for my son."

The group held that intersection for almost a half hour. Some cars managed to turn right from Illinois Street onto 38th Street, and others were directed to make a U-turn if they really wanted to get out of there, though it was basically a guarantee they would get berated in the process.

The crowd began to disperse around 11:40 p.m., and a smaller group moved south of the intersection to block just some of Illinois Street for their send-off.

They put on their "uniform" — a raised fist — and promised they would give a final rallying cry before going to bed that night.

"I —" they shouted, "am a revolutionary!"

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

IPS SUPERINTENDENT REMEMBERS THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE HER

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Aleesia Johnson is the first African American female to lead Indiana's largest school district, but she's quick to point out that she certainly wasn't the first to be qualified.

Plenty of Black women have come before her. She thinks of icons such as Patricia Payne, who joined Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) in 1962 and now leads the district's Racial Equity Office. There's Sojourner Truth, who was bought and sold four times as a slave and delivered the famous "Ain't I Woman?" speech.

Locally, nationally, globally — Johnson sees the Black women who laid the groundwork for her and others.

Johnson, 42, took over as the head of IPS first in an interim role in December 2018 and then permanently when the school board tapped her for the position in June 2019.

Aleesia Johnson

She made it clear from the beginning — including when she participated in a public interview process with two other finalists for the job — that under her leadership, racial equity would go to the forefront for IPS.

During the public interview, Johnson showed a picture of dead fish floating in a lake as she talked about how Black students are often overrepresented in negative outcomes from grades to suspensions.

"That's not a problem with the students. That's not a problem with the fish. That's a problem with the lake," she told the board.

IPS adopted a racial equity policy in June 2020 that includes an annual disaggregated report on academic performance, attendance and discipline, as well as increasing the diversity of candidates for job openings. The district partnered with the Racial Equity Institute, with the goal of getting all school staff into racial equity training by the 2021-22 school year.

Principals also have monthly conversations about race and racism to help them guide conversations in their schools.

Johnson said she's still impatient with the district's progress on racial equity and feels a "deep sense of urgency" to move quicker.

"I have to remind myself that though we're not close to where we want to be, we're doing important work," she said.

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted almost everything and, at the same time, reinforced what Johnson and other education officials already knew: Their Black students started at a disadvantage.

"If you were ignoring it before, COVID-19 certainly created a world where you can't do that," she said.

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

YOUNG DEMOCRAT MAKING WAVES

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

When James Wells, 26, decided he wanted to make his mark on Indiana's political landscape, he went all in. Currently running for vice chair of the Indiana Democratic Party, Wells was inspired to run by his circle of friends, mentors and by seeing the opportunity he believes the party has to gain more control in the state.

Wells got his start in politics early. As a high school student in Gary, Wells said he advocated for himself and other students when a dangerous mold issue arose in the school building by bringing their concerns to school administration.

"I realized then that politics and government were all a way that I could help my peers get our issues resolved," Wells said.

This passion for politics led Wells to work in Mayor Joe Hogsett's administration as a neighborhood advocate and becoming the vice president of the Indiana Young Democrats (IYD). Wells said this work has helped him realize he's "capable and my voice can bring attention to issues and different ways of doing things within the Democratic Party."

James Wells

Among the changes Wells wants to bring to the party is an increase in the use of technology and digital tools to promote party values and legislative concerns and making sure Democrats are reaching young voters who may feel disenfranchised from politics.

Unlike a regular political campaign, the public won't be casting a ballot for Wells. Instead, the State Central Committee – made up of Democrats from each county – will elect new party leadership at a reorganization meeting March 20. So far, Wells is the only person running for the position. If appointed to the position, Wells would certainly stick out among Democratic Party leadership.

The average age of Democratic elected officials in the state is roughly 58, 5.9% of whom are Black. Despite the difference in age and experience, Wells is confident he has what it takes to make a difference in the state of Indiana.

And IYD has his back.

"Over the last few years, we have seen Indiana Young Democrats step into leadership roles, run for office, manage campaigns and mobilize Hoosiers in ways that have not only helped flip key seats, but have led the Democratic Party in a direction of inclusivity," IYD President Arielle Brady said. "We need more young people in party leadership utilizing the skills they have to help share and demonstrate what it means to have bold, sustainable and transparent leadership."

State Sen. Eddie Melton believes Party leaders should make way for emerging young adults in the Party to gain experience.

"As our state party seeks to rebuild, we should give full consideration to the perspectives and experiences that our emerging leaders have to share with the Party as a whole," Melton said in a statement.

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

PARENTS BRING CHILDREN TO PROTESTS TO 'START THEM YOUNG'

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

As protests happened throughout Indianapolis in response to the death of George Floyd, a younger — much younger — generation also is marching.

Over the summer in Indianapolis, children walked with their parents, participating in demonstrations by carrying signs and following along in chants.

Terry Clayton, 19, participated in a demonstration at Monument Circle on May 29. After event organizer Lamari Edwards, 20, handed him her megaphone, Clayton read a poem describing the Black experience in America. In it, he described police brutality and judgment, and ended the poem by lying face down on the bricks surrounding the Circle with his hands behind his back, as other demonstrators chanted "It's not a crime to be Black."

"It makes me feel scared when I come out of my house," Clayton said in an interview. "I have to worry if I'm safe in my own car, in my own neighborhood ... I might not even be safe in my own home," he added, seemingly referencing Breonna Taylor, 26, who was killed by police in her Louisville home.

Cornelia Anderson, along with her teenage children Mya and Darius, also attended the same demonstration.

"We've lost a lot of Black men," Anderson said, "and we have to do something about it."

As Anderson spoke, Mya, 15, nodded in agreement.

"I'm here to show my support and show I care, too," Mya said. "I know it's not right, and it's not fair. You don't see white people being shot like that."

During one protest organizers urged demonstrators to remain peaceful to protect the children in the crowd after water was thrown on an officer and Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) officers responded by using pepper spray.

"There's a little boy here tonight," Edwards said, gesturing toward a boy of about 5 years old. The police wouldn't hesitate to hurt him, she said.

Quan Addison, a father of five, said he and his wife are often afraid for their sons. He and one of his toddler sons arrived at Monument Circle about 15 minutes after pepper spray was deployed.

"You have to start them young," one protester told Addison as he walked closer to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, nodding toward the boy.

The children and young adults involved in the protests were scared. Not about being at the demonstrations, but about the all too common viral videos of Black men killed by police.

"It hurts my heart," Edwards said. "They could be my brother or my friend. ... It makes me sick to my stomach."

Darryl Lockett, executive director of the Kennedy King Memorial Initiative, said while viral videos are common today, he never wants to get desensitized.

"It is no question traumatic," Lockett said. "But it's something that I want to maintain a sense of shock and awe. I don't want to become numb, because at that point, we become well adjusted to injustice, and we lose that spirit that's needed to fight against the forces that exist in society ... and to resist that which is creating that pain and that frustration."

A teacher in the crowd, who wanted to only be identified as Ms. Felix, said she teaches sixth grade and sees firsthand the effects police brutality have on her students.

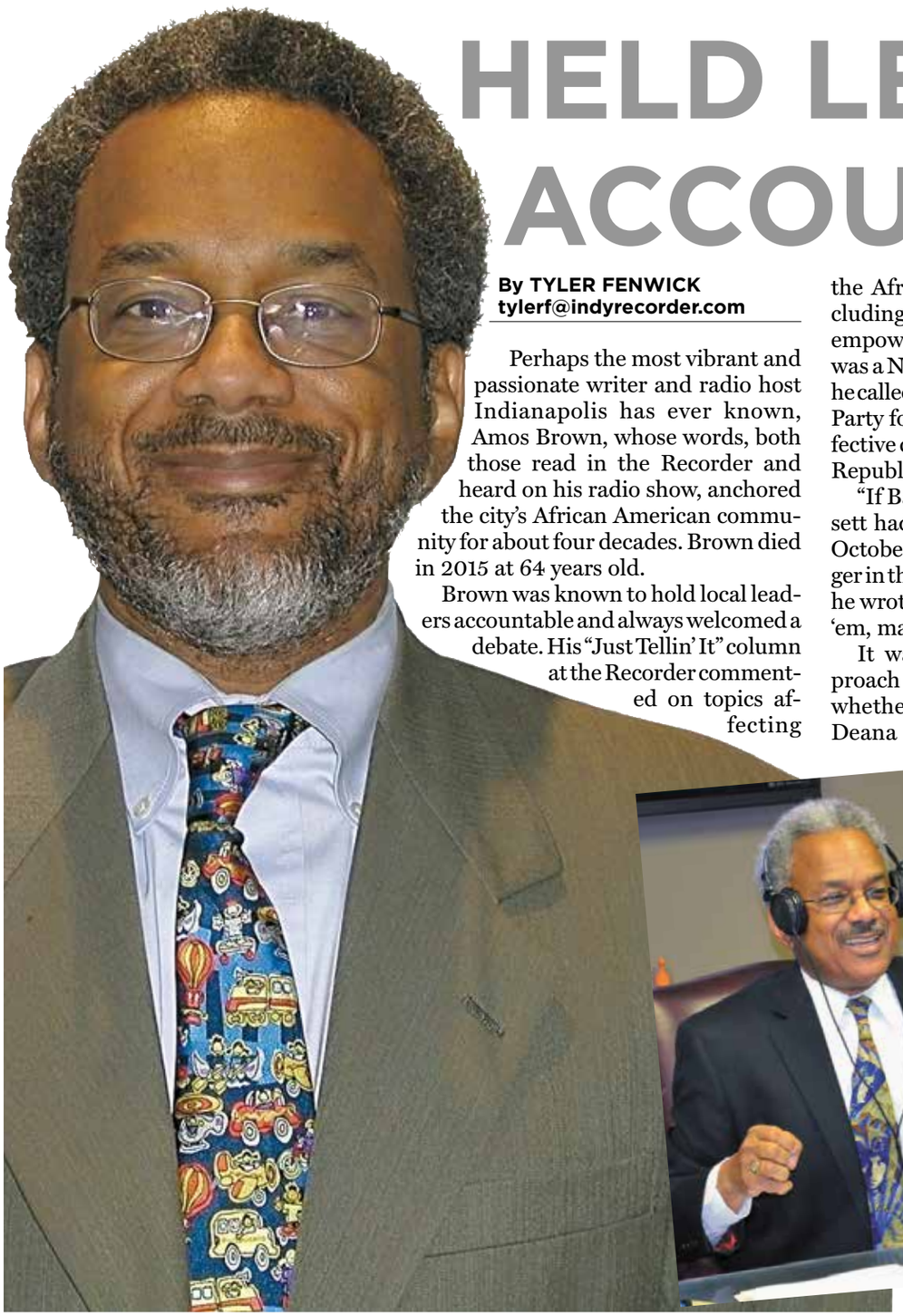
"They're scared," she said. "We have conversations about police brutality, and things they hear in the news makes it hard for them to focus in school, because they're afraid of what is going to happen to them when they leave the school."

Felix said difficulties in academics creates a cyclical process that can lead to young Black men being victimized by police.

"We're messing up the next generation, and we need to fix it," Felix said.

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

LEGENDARY WRITER AND VOICE AMOS BROWN HELD LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE



By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

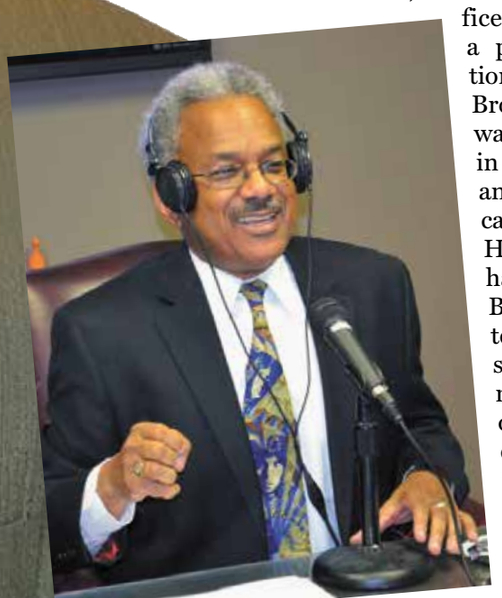
Perhaps the most vibrant and passionate writer and radio host Indianapolis has ever known, Amos Brown, whose words, both those read in the Recorder and heard on his radio show, anchored the city's African American community for about four decades. Brown died in 2015 at 64 years old.

Brown was known to hold local leaders accountable and always welcomed a debate. His "Just Tellin' It" column at the Recorder commented on topics affecting the African American community, including politics, media and community empowerment. One of many examples was a November 1994 column, in which he called out the "inept" local Democratic Party for what he believed was an ineffective campaign strategy that led to big Republican election wins.

"If Bayh, DeLaney, O'Brien or Modisett had read this Recorder column in October, they would have seen the danger in their white, suburban campaigns," he wrote. "Now that the GOP whupped 'em, maybe they'll read this space."

It was that no-punches-pulled approach that drew people to his work, whether they agreed with it or not. Deana Haworth, chief operating officer at Hirons, a public relations firm, said Brown's column was "legendary" in government and communications circles. Hirons now has the Amos Brown Internship every summer for minority students interested in communications.

"The thing I loved most about Amos was his true drive and passion to hold everyone — elected officials, government leaders, the faith community — accountable," Haworth said. "That drive had no match."



Amos Brown

Though many remember Brown for his words in the Recorder's pages, he may be best recognized as the passionate host of his radio show, "Afternoons with Amos," on WTLC-AM 1310. The show ran 1-3 p.m. weekdays and was frequented by guests Brown would invite and debate. He was known for lively discussions with those who disagreed with him.

"At his core, he was that way because he felt passionately about people and being fair and truthful and honest and being held accountable," said Shannon Williams, former president of the Recorder.

Her time at the Recorder overlapped with Brown's, allowing for a deeper knowledge of the provocative writer and radio host. Williams said she misses the personal conversations they had over the years because he understood the city and its problems.

"I miss having someone like him around, who doesn't pull back and says exactly what's on their mind," Williams said. "We need that in Indianapolis, especially for the minority community."

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

JULIA CARSON ADVANCED INDIANAPOLIS' INTEREST IN CONGRESS

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Julia Carson, the first African American and woman to represent Indianapolis in Congress, lived her political life fighting against racism and poverty and spent her career focused on working-class issues. Carson was a Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1997 to 2007. Before then, Carson served in the Indiana House of Representatives and Indiana Senate. Carson died Dec. 15, 2007, after a battle with lung cancer.

During her time in Congress, Carson helped lead the way on a measure awarding Rosa Parks the Congressional Gold Medal and worked with Sen. Richard Lugar on removing bureaucratic obstacles for child health care. Carson, a Congressional Black Caucus member, also worked to advance women's rights and reduce homelessness.

Her grandson, Andre Carson, won his grandmother's vacated House seat in a special election in 2008 and continues to represent the district.

"My grandmother was a devoted mother, grandmother, daughter, cousin and friend to many," Carson said in a statement to the Recorder. "She taught me on a daily basis that true public service means standing up for those in need and fighting for what's right, even if it's not popular."

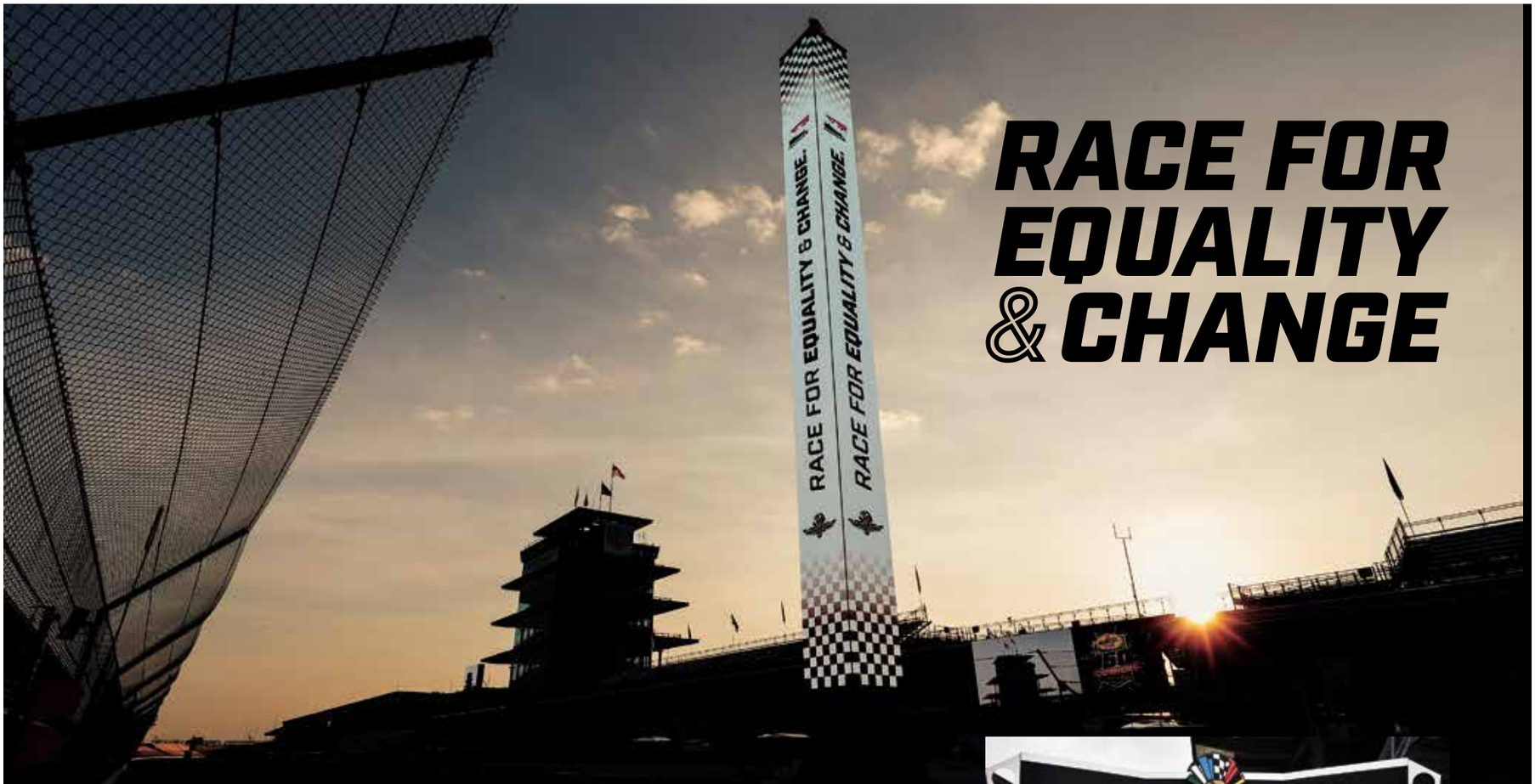
Carson did have a reputation for being somewhat unpredictable, but she also went against the grain of the nation in 2002 by voting against the authorization of the war in Iraq. In an Associated Press story following that decision, she said she felt "some in Washington have not shared my determination to focus on the home front by strengthening our weakening economy and helping all Americans get through these economically challenging times." This was at a time when Carson was facing a serious Republican challenge in the next election.

Julia Carson

The last name Carson carries weight in Indianapolis today, and not just because her grandson almost immediately assumed her seat in Congress. The city and its leaders have a deep respect for the late Carson, who graduated from Crispus Attucks High School and raised two children as a single mother. She also spent some time at Martin University in Indianapolis, the state's only primarily Black institution of higher education. The Julia M. Carson Government Center and Julia M. Carson Transit Center stand as commemorations to the local leader.

"Whether fighting for affordable housing, supporting veterans or revitalizing our neighborhoods and infrastructure, her commitment made a lasting impact on countless Indianapolis residents," Carson said in his statement. "She set an example of elected service that continues to inspire leaders across our city, state and country."

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



RACE FOR EQUALITY & CHANGE

"As our country has grappled with systemic issues related to race, equality and access to opportunity, we've been doing a lot of listening, learning and reflecting. 'Race for Equality & Change' will create a more diverse and inclusive INDYCAR community that fundamentally transforms our sport."
– Mark Miles
Penske Entertainment Corp. President and CEO

INDYCAR and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway are moving full speed ahead in the "Race for Equality and Change." The past few months have been filled with announcements that have built the engine that will drive fundamental change and support diversity and inclusivity across the INDYCAR industry. But we've just taken the green flag.

Force Indy (top), an African American-led team, announced its intentions to compete in the USF2000 series in 2021, while Paretta Autosport (bottom), a female-led team, announced its plans to enter the 105th Running of the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge.

PENSKE Entertainment INDYCAR INDIANAPOLIS 500 SPEEDWAY IMS PRODUCTIONS

DAVID HAMPTON FINDS WHERE HE CAN USE ALL OF HIS TALENTS

David Hampton

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

David Hampton has a good problem. He has plenty of talents, and he knows it.

The issue for Hampton, a former pastor and deputy mayor, was finding somewhere he could roll them all into one.

The solution: Hampton Innovations.

Hampton started his consulting company in January. He's the president and CEO. Hampton helps people, corporations and nonprofits overcome obstacles to growth or revenue. His clients are individuals, churches, nonprofits, schools and government agencies — five areas where Hampton has experience.

It's not that Hampton didn't enjoy the work he was doing before or that he didn't find it meaningful. He was a pastor from 1996 to 2019, including eight years on his last stop at Light of the World Christian Church. He was also deputy mayor of community engagement for Mayor Joe Hogsett from 2016 to January.

Hampton likes to think of the "Parable of the Talents" in Matthew 25, where a master entrusts large sums of money to three servants while he's away and returns to find only two have used their allotments wisely while the third didn't. The lesson: People should use their God-given abilities.

"I finally realized that I had been operating as the one- or two-talent servant when God had actually given me five talents," Hampton said.

The nature of entrepreneurship, Hampton said, is to build your own table when you can't find a seat at other tables. And with a doctorate degree in ministry from Christian Theological Seminary and business certificate from Harvard Business School, it's not like he was out looking for scrap pieces of pallet boards to build this table.

His table, Hampton Innovations is a one-man show for now, though Hampton said he'd like to be able to hire staff in the future.

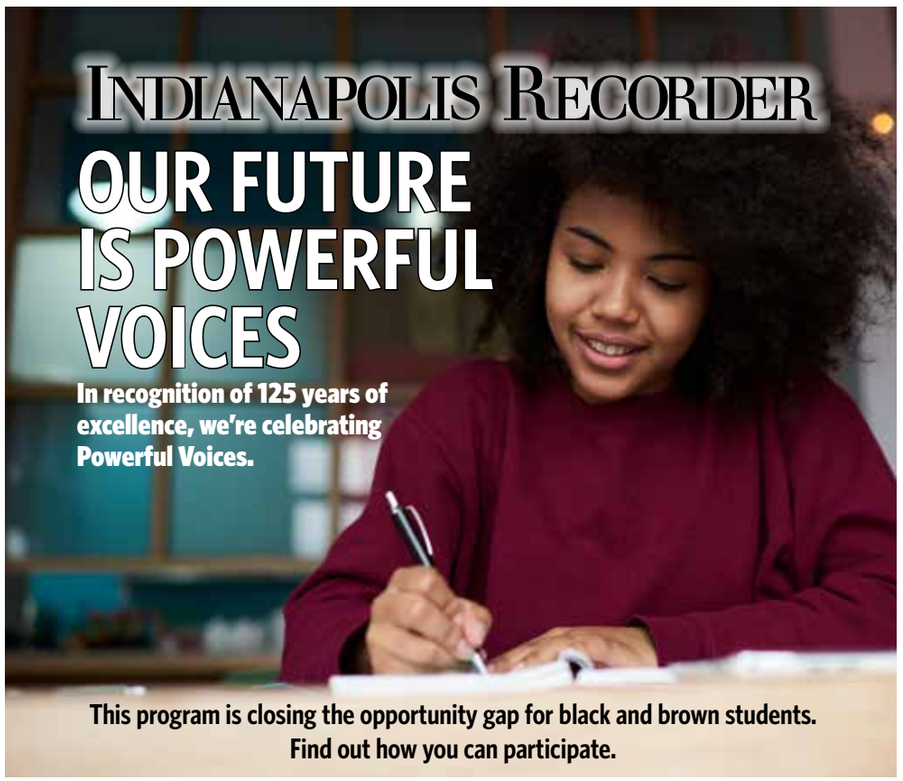
Hampton said he's particularly interested in helping the Black community thrive, work he was already doing as a pastor and deputy mayor.

"I've dedicated my life to that," he said.

One of the best perks of Hampton Innovations, though, is he's the boss.

"It is liberating to be able to work for myself, on my terms, at my own pace, at the full capacity of who God has called me to be," he said.

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



Powerful Voices supports the JAWS program, which helps young students of color begin their career pursuit through all aspects of journalism including mixed media creative arts, broadcast journalism and writing not only with the Indianapolis Recorder, but wherever their careers may take them.

RAISING THE BAR FOR JOURNALISM

JAWS has helped black and brown students for the last 27 years to develop skills, make industry connections and launch their careers from an early age.

We've launched this fundraising effort to reach more young people and to inspire and invest in these students in minority communities, right here in Indianapolis. The future of our work–not just of the Indianapolis Recorder–but the future of journalism itself depends upon these talented young people, and they depend on you.

Investing in children in all forms of broadcast media.

We have already seen that investing in our children makes a difference for minority children, but also for the broadcast and journalism industry as a whole. The journalism and broadcast media industry needs distinct and compelling voices, including voices who bring diversity and perspective to the profession.

SUPPORT FUTURE POWERFUL VOICES.

At Indianapolis Recorder, the last 125 years have been impactful to our whole community, and we want to ensure that we continue on that path of success by investing in youth. The JAWS program develops professional journalism industry skills for children in broadcast media, videography, graphic design, digital media and writing.

Indianapolis Recorder is asking you to join us. Because of mentors, visionaries and donors like you, our future is Powerful Voices.

To donate today please visit:
https://secure.givelively.org/donate/indianapolis-recorder-charities-inc/powerful-voices

INDIANAPOLIS' FIRST BLACK FEMALE TV JOURNALIST

By STAFF

Although she studied broadcast journalism at Columbia University, Barbara Boyd did not start her career as a TV journalist until February 1969 at the age of 40 year when WFBM-TV, later WRTV Channel 6, contacted her school to get footage of a classroom. Boyd worked in the office at the time and answered the call. Boyd joked that she was available if the station ever needed a star. To Boyd's surprise, the station took her offer seriously, and she began a career in TV journalism.

Boyd was the first Black female TV journalist in Indianapolis and the city's second Black TV journalist overall. Over her 25 years in broadcast journalism, Boyd was known as a consumer journalist and anchor but covered a wide variety of subjects.

"She had to learn from whomever she could," Eunice Trotter, former Recorder owner, said. "She didn't have built-in Black mentors, so to speak. As she went about her day-to-day tasks covering her job, she also had a lot of social-political barriers to overcome."

Boyd's most famous piece was her award-winning breast cancer story, which she filmed from her hospital bed a week after having a mastectomy. In the piece, Boyd called for people to become informed about breast cancer and highlighted places that offered screenings and resources to cancer patients. Even during turbulent times, Boyd's passion for her work was palpable.

"I've got to tell you, it's the best job I've ever had, the job I've gotten the most appreciation and good feelings about," Boyd said. "I was there for 25 years. I felt as excited the last day I was there as the first day I was there. I could just hardly wait to get to work. That's how fulfilling my job was for me."

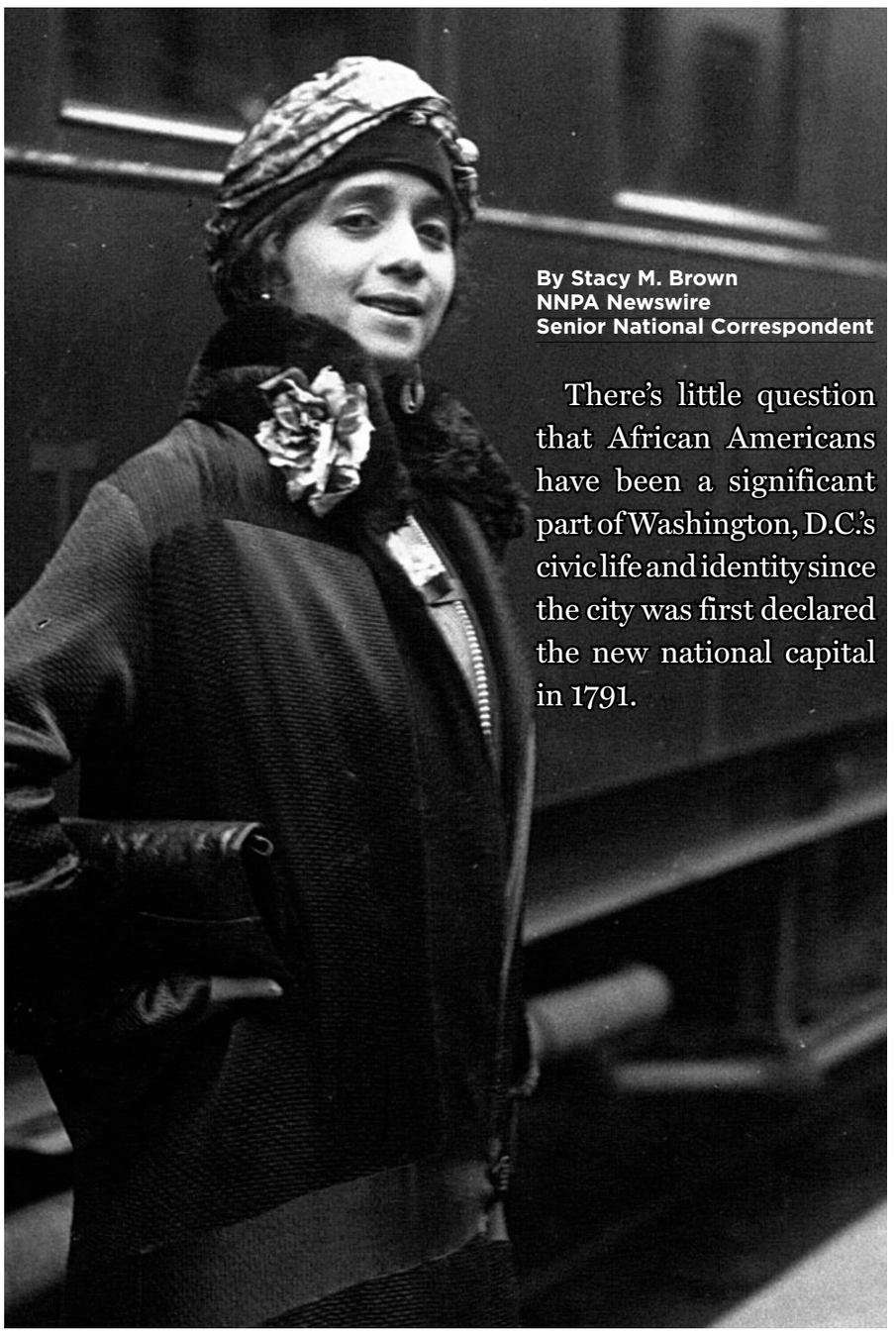
Boyd received accolades for her achievements more than once. She was one of the Indianapolis Star's top Ten Women of the Year for three consecutive years, was featured in Indianapolis Woman magazine and was inducted into the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Richard M. Fairbanks Hall of Fame. Boyd is still involved in the community. She gives time to organizations such as the United Negro College Fund, The Links and National Council of Negro Women.


Barbara Boyd

"A lot of journalists believe that if they are in the media, they cannot be part of their communities in terms of working in organizations, being in boards, that kind of thing in fear of having conflict of interests," Trotter said. "She ignored that and she worked in the community. Barbara was on boards. Barbara did things for groups and individuals. I think that today's journalists, particularly African-American journalists, need to use her model as an example for what they should be doing."

(Above) Erika Haskins, a member of Indy10 BLM, addresses protesters at Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department's northwest precinct. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)
(Below) Poet and performance artist Terry Clayton performs "I Can't Breathe" during a protest. (Photo/Breanna Cooper)

BLACK BROADWAY



By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire
Senior National Correspondent

There's little question that African Americans have been a significant part of Washington, D.C.'s civic life and identity since the city was first declared the new national capital in 1791.

Madame Lillian Evanti in France in 1926 (Photo: Agence de presse Meurisse - Bibliothèque nationale de France / Wikimedia Commons)

MADAME LILLIAN EVANTI AND WASHINGTON, D.C.'S BLACK HISTORY

According to Cultural Tourism D.C., African Americans were 25% of the population in 1800, and most of them were enslaved.

While most were free by 1830, slavery was still in practice.

On April 16, 1862, nine months before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, the U.S. Congress passed the District of Columbia Emancipation Act, making the District of Columbia's slaves the first freed in the nation.

African Americans flocked to the District, where the nightlife became famous, and U Street was the thriving center for Black culture and social exchange.

Reportedly, iconic figures like Zora Neale Hurston and Mary McLeod Bethune found refuge in what became known as Black Broadway. Performers like Louis Armstrong and Billie Holliday were regulars.

And so was Madame Lillian Evanti.

Born Lillian Evans in D.C. in 1890, Evanti was the first African American to perform with a major European opera company.

A Howard University graduate, she made her professional debut in Nice, France, in 1924 and adopted the stage name Evanti.

According to whitehousehistory.org, Evanti returned periodically to the District and performed on Lafayette Square several times in the 1920s and 1930s.

At the Belasco Theater, a six-story building that had a soaring facade, Evanti performed before a desegregated audience.

During one 1926 appearance, Marian Anderson joined Evanti for a performance before a football game between Howard and Lincoln universities.

Later, Evanti performed for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt. "She made me feel right at home," Evanti reportedly said after chatting with the first lady.

"That was a time when colored people — as we were known — could feel good, could have some hope that the world wasn't all bad," Cleveland McFadden, a northern Virginia-based art collector and "sometimes historian" noted.

"We hadn't 'made it' by any means, but you could feel D.C. was more home than just about any place in the United States," McFadden offered. "Singers and performers like Madame Evanti helped to take us different places in our minds and spirits. And, because she was from here, from the area, her impact was probably felt deeper than the superstars who visited and performed on Black Broadway."

Whitehousehistory.org historians wrote that, on Aug. 28, 1943, Evanti made her most acclaimed performance in the capital, portraying Violetta in the National Negro Opera Company's "La Traviata," which was staged on a barge floating in the Potomac River.

"Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, she traveled to Latin America as a good-will ambassador on cultural outreach journeys organized by the State Department and received decorations from the governments of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Liberia, and Nigeria," the historians wrote.

"Beginning in the mid-1930s, Evanti was an advocate for the establishment of a national cultural center in Washington for classical and contemporary music, drama and dance — legislation establishing such a center was approved in 1958."

Evanti, a composer and a collector of works by African American artists, died in 1967 in Washington, D.C.

COMBATING FOOD DESERTS ONE BODEGA AT A TIME

Sibeko Jywanza

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

Sibeko Jywanza is working to remedy the issue of food deserts in Indianapolis.

Roughly 208,000 Indianapolis residents live in a food desert, a low-income neighborhood more than a mile away from a grocery store. That's 23% of local residents who lack access to food compared to 10% of Americans.

Since 2016, the number of people residing in a food desert in Indianapolis has risen 21%, due largely to the closure of Marsh supermarkets that year. Black Hoosiers are more likely than any other demographic to live in a food desert.

Following the closure of the Double 8 grocery store a few years ago, Cleo's Bodega opened in June 2019 on Indianapolis' northwest side.

Jywanza, who manages the bodega named for the late Cleo Blackburn, former superintendent of the nonprofit Flanner House, said his shop is the only store with fresh produce within a two-mile radius.

Jywanza said Cleo's honors the memory of Blackburn, who "created a way for people to fend for themselves when it comes to food." The bodega is owned and operated by Flanner House, a nonprofit that promotes personal sustainability.

Cleo's offers local produce, including food grown at Flanner House and other Indianapolis gardens at a reduced price. The shop offers bags of apples and other fresh fruits and vegetables for less than $6.

While eradicating poverty is the only surefire way, experts say, to end food deserts, having access to healthy foods — not just empty calories — is an important step in benefitting the community long-term.

A recent study from the American Heart Association found a link between food insecurity and cardiovascular death. Conducted by Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, the study found for every 1% increase in food insecurity, there was a similar increase in cardiovascular deaths among people younger than 65. The study removed certain variables known to raise cardiovascular risk, such as employment, health insurance and poverty to look specifically at food insecurity's role on overall heart health.

While one small grocery store in the middle of a vast food desert can't solve the hunger problem in Indianapolis, Jywanza and Cleo's Bodega are part of the solution.

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

Cleo's Bodega Grocery and Café sells produce grown by Flanner House, Cleo's parent organization. Since Flanner House owns the farm and the store, Cleo's offers low prices on produce. (Recorder file photo)

FAIR HOUSING CENTER of CENTRAL INDIANA

If you feel you've been a victim of housing discrimination or want to get involved to help the FHCCI promote fair housing, please contact us:

Visit: www.fhcci.org | Call: 317-644-0673 | Email: info@fhcci.org

Funding for this advertisement provided by First Merchants Bank.

THE WILMINGTON TEN, 50 YEARS LATER

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

Wilmington, North Carolina, is known today for its vibrant riverfront with three colorful island beaches and southern hospitality, major contributors to the port city's bustling tourism.

However, Wilmington's past paints a picture of a much different city.

While things may be different in today's Wilmington, it was not that long ago that Wilmington, like too many other Southern cities, still condoned the region's ugly, racist culture and practices.

More than a century after America's Civil War had ended, on Feb. 1, 1971, a young minister named Benjamin Franklin Chavis Jr. arrived in the city.

Chavis was sent to Wilmington by the United Church of Christ from their Commission on Racial Justice. A local pastor of a Black church, Rev. Eugene Templeton, requested help from the United Church of Christ.

Chavis, a disciple of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., helped students organize a more effective boycott, targeted against white high school administrators who were resisting the desegregation of their schools and classrooms and who also refused demands to honor King, who was assassinated just three years earlier.

One year after King's murder, the city had just three high schools. Two of them, New Hanover and Hoggard, were all-white, and the third, Williston Industrial High School, was reserved for the city's Black high schoolers. Williston was a source of community pride and was ranked among the best high schools in North Carolina — Black or white.

Following federally mandated school desegregation in 1969, local administrators changed the status of Williston Industrial High School from a high school to a junior high school. Williston's Black students and teachers would be reassigned to New Hanover and Hoggard.

However, when they arrived at their new schools, African Americans endured name-calling, racially motivated physical attacks and other threats. Incidents of rioting and arson, in protest of the decision to integrate, occurred almost daily.

In response to tensions, members of a Ku Klux Klan chapter and other white supremacist groups began patrolling the streets. They hung an effigy of the white superintendent of the schools and cut his phone lines. Street violence broke out between them and Black men who were Vietnam veterans. Students attempted to boycott the high schools in January 1971.

Chavis and a group that became known as the Wilmington Ten argued for Black history courses, respect for King and all Black people and equality.

Tensions continued to mount, with the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacists firebombing buildings and shooting at Black students.

One incident in particular would become a defining event in this period of Wilmington's history: The firebombing of Mike's Grocery Store, a white-owned

With sentences that ranged from 15 years to 34 years, Benjamin Chavis Jr., Marvin Patrick, and the eight others of the Wilmington Ten were ordered to serve a combined 282 years in prison. (PICTURED L to R): Top Row – Wayne Moore, age 19, 29 years; Ann Sheppard age 28, 15 years; James "Bun" McKoy, age 19, 29 years; Willie Earl Vareen, age 18, 29 years; Marvin "Chilly" Patrick, age 19, 29 years; Reginald Epps, age 18, 28 years; Benjamin Chavis Jr., age 24, 34 years; William "Joe" Wright, age 19; 29 years; Connie Tindal, age 21, 31 years; Jerry Jacobs, age 19, 29 years.

business in the heart of Wilmington's Black community.

On Feb. 6, during an uncharacteristically frigid night for a southern city like Wilmington, the popular neighborhood grocery was firebombed. As police and firefighters arrived on the scene, gun fire could be heard above the siren squeals and activity.

Firefighters responding to the fire alleged that they were shot at from the roof of the nearby Gregory Congregational Church. Chavis and several students had been meeting at the church. Sniper fire, which was intended for the Wilmington Ten's members, struck a police officer.

As the gun fire continued, one of the Wilmington Ten, Marvin "Chilly" Patrick, was shot as he placed himself between the source of the sniper's fire and Chavis, successfully preventing Chavis from being shot.

According to the February 1971 edition of "This Month in North Carolina History — The Wilimington Ten," the North Carolina governor called up the North Carolina National Guard, whose forces entered the church on

See TEN, 38 ►

About MCBEO

Created in 2018 by concerned African American elected officials, Marion County Black Elected Officials (MCBEO) will:

- Work diligently to ensure Blacks hold critical roles within the Marion County Democratic Party Leadership
- Adovcate for equitable representation of Blacks in Elected and Appointed positions
- Advocate for Blacks to have equitable employment and business opportunities
- Recruit Black candidates to run for office
- Fight for Blacks to hold a meaningful place in all aspects of government

Pictured top row (left to right): Vernon Brown, Greg Porter, John Bartlett, Eugene Akers, Jean Breaux, Charles Staples, Claudette Peterson, Ella Hollis

Pictured bottom row (left to right): Robyn Shackleford, Myra Eldridge, Monroe Gray, La Keisha Jackson, Cherrish Pryor

Members not pictured: Vanessa Summers, Greg Taylor

Marion County Black Elected Officials

TEN

► Continued from 37

Feb. 8 and found it empty. The violence resulted in two deaths, six injuries and more than $500,000 (equivalent to $3.2 million in 2019) in property damage.

Chavis and nine others, eight young Black males, who were high school students, and a white female anti-poverty worker, were arrested on charges of arson related to the grocery fire. Based on testimony of three young Black men (who later recanted their testimony), they were tried and convicted in state court of arson and conspiracy in connection with the firebombing of Mike's Grocery.

At trial, all 10 defendants were provided defense counsel by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. However, it was later established that the prosecutors conspired against the defendants by paying witnesses to falsely identify Chavis and the other Wilmington Ten members — who were the actual targets of the white supremacists' sniper's fire — as arsonists, and for the subsequent assault on law enforcement officers.

Additionally, chief prosecutor Jay Stroud feigned sickness following jury selection when it became apparent that 10 African Americans would be seated on the jury, leading to a mistrial. A second trial, whose jury included only two African Americans, resulted in a guilty verdict for all 10 defendants.

With sentences that ranged from 15 years to 34 years, Chavis, Patrick and the eight others were ordered to serve a combined 282 years in prison.

In 1977, Amnesty International cited the Wilmington Ten case as the first official case of political prisoners in the United States. Within a year, the London-based human rights group declared that the Wilmington Ten were "prisoners of conscience who were not arrested for the crimes for which they were charged, but because of their political work."

The New York Times published an article noting that Amnesty International's declaration about the Wilmington Ten outraged some and embarrassed others — especially after Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

"Soon the charge was repeated and amplified by the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, who contended in an interview with a French newspaper that the United States harbored 'hundreds, perhaps thousands' of political prisoners," The Times reported. Young added, "The Wilmington Ten, for example, are innocent."

"Mr. Young later apologized for the remark about hundreds or thousands of political prisoners, but he still says, privately, that the charges against the Ten were 'trumped up,'" noted the Times.

The Wilmington Ten spent nearly a decade in prison before federal appellate courts overturned their convictions in December 1980, citing prosecutorial misconduct.

Timothy Tyson, a North Carolina historian and visiting professor at Duke University, told CNN he was given the Wilmington Ten prosecutor's handwritten notes before 2012 when the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), United Church of Christ and NAACP called again for pardons of innocence for the Wilmington Ten.

Prior to this, the publisher of the Wilmington Journal, Mary Alice Thatch, had petitioned the NNPA to launch a national campaign for a pardon of innocence for the Wilmington Ten.

"It was pretty shocking stuff," Tyson remarked.

He said the names of at least six potential jurors had "KKK Good!!" written next to them. Next to a woman's name, it said, "NO, she associates with Negroes."

On the back of the legal pad, the chief prosecutor, Jay Stroud, had written the advantages and disadvantages of a mistrial, Tyson said. One of the advantages was a fresh start with a new jury.

In 2012, 40 years after they were unjustly convicted, North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue officially pardoned the Wilmington Ten.

"These convictions were tainted by naked racism and represent an ugly stain on North Carolina's criminal justice system that cannot be allowed to stand any longer," Gov. Perdue said at the time. "Justice demands that this stain finally be removed."

FATHER BONIFACE HARDIN ADVANCED EDUCATION AND FOUGHT FOR COMMUNITIES

Father Boniface Hardin

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

The founder and president of Martin University, the state's only primarily Black institution of higher education, Father Boniface Hardin was an ordained Roman Catholic priest who dedicated his life to civil rights in Indianapolis by advocating for the less advantaged and creating channels for citizens to effect change. Hardin died in 2012.

Hardin's most prominent accomplishment was founding what was then Martin Center College, named after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and developing it from a small urban school to an accredited liberal arts university. Martin, now in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood, primarily serves low-income, minority and adult learners. Hardin also started the university as a resource for the community. Concerned with the prominence of sickle cell disease in African-Americans, Hardin made disease screenings available at Martin for residents.

When Martin held cultural events for the community, one of the most popular forms of entertainment was when Hardin did his Frederick Douglass re-enactments. He was said to have a strong resemblance to the abolitionist, and Hardin even saw some of Douglass' characteristics — he called Douglass an "apologist for America" — in himself.

Born in 1933 in Bardstown, Kentucky, Hardin earned a master of divinity degree at Saint Meinrad School of Theology, St. Meinrad, Indiana, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1959. He completed his graduate study at the University of Notre Dame in 1963 and served as an assistant pastor at Holy Angels Parish from 1965 to 1969, when he founded Martin.

Eugene White, Martin University's current president, knew Hardin for about 15 years and called him a "catalyst of change in the community."

"People looked at him and could believe in him," White said. "People trusted his integrity and his commitment to the community."

Hardin was also a leader in social activism. When the government was planning for Interstates 65 and 70 in the 1950s and '60s, Hardin organized whole communities to make sure the various department and their leaders knew their actions were going to have far-reaching consequences in Black neighborhoods. As founder and leader of the Northwest Action Council, Hardin collected over 3,000 signatures from the community supporting a highway system that would be depressed in the ground.

Hardin held numerous other titles, including co-founder of the Negro-Jewish Dialogue, editor of Afro-American Journal, member of the Indiana State Penal Reform Committee and co-chairperson of the Indianapolis Black Coalition Advocate of Reforms in Police Community Relations.

"Father Hardin was something of a renaissance kind of man," White said. "He was extremely intelligent, had a superior educational training and just was an outstanding individual."

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

Father Boniface Hardin

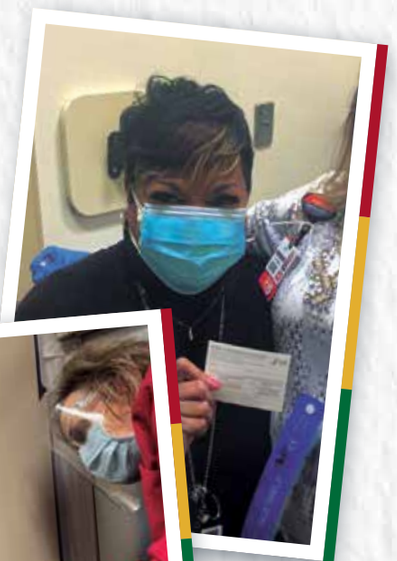
CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

"For the love of your family, and to keep them around for as long as possible, this vaccine is the way forward."

—Nichole C. Wilson, DPT, MBA, FACHE
Vice President of Integrated Primary Care

"Arriving at a decision to share and enjoy precious time with family and friends in 2021, scheduling the vaccine wasn't an option, it was a CHOICE!"

—Diane McDaniel
VP Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer



We've all lost so much as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. But it's the Black community that has seen a disproportionate impact — in loss of life, security of housing and jobs. We hope that you'll strongly consider scheduling a COVID-19 vaccine for you and your loved ones. It's our best hope for moving past the suffering, and towards a more hopeful tomorrow. When it's your time to receive the vaccine, join our caregivers and become a change maker for the community.
Go to ***ourshot.in.gov*** to book an appointment.

Community Health Network

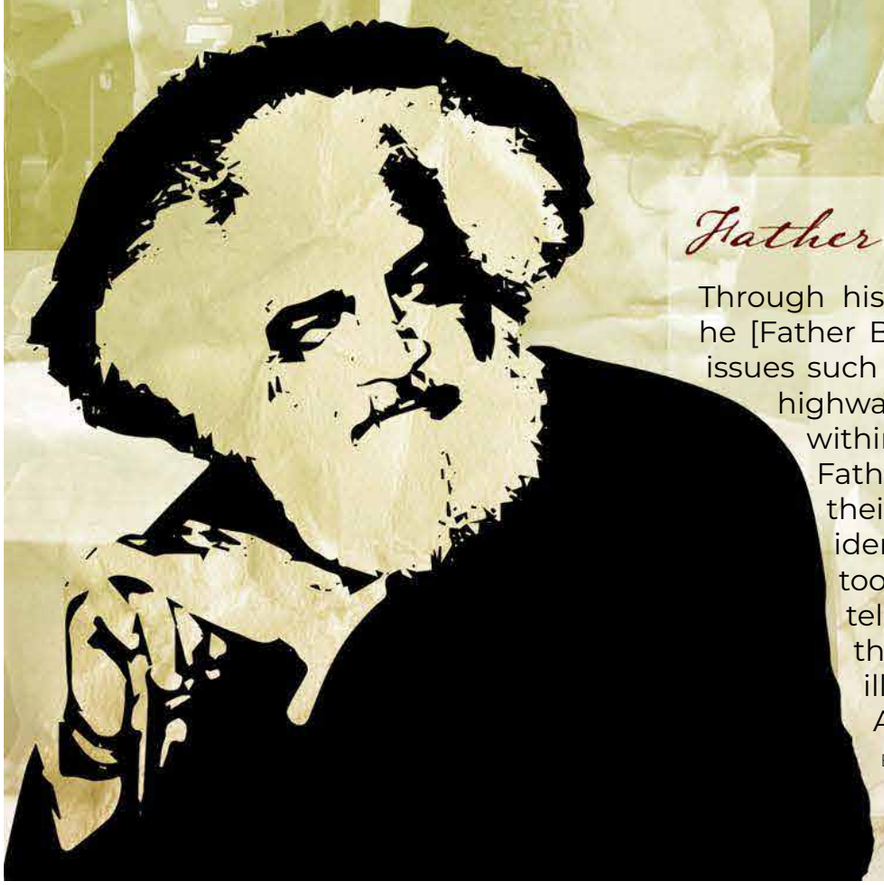
EXCEPTIONAL CARE. SIMPLY DELIVERED.

MARTIN UNIVERSITY

MCMLXXVII

Celebrates

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2021



Father Boniface Hardin, Founder

Through his fiery activism as associate pastor at Holy Angels, he [Father Boniface Hardin] brought to the forefront important issues such as racist police practices, school inequality, harmful highway disruption of neighborhoods, and lack of inclusion within the Catholic Church. During the Martin Center years, Father Hardin and Sister Jane educated civic leaders and their community members on matters of racial pride, identity, and history, creating important communication tools, such as the Afro American Journal and radio and television shows that helped African Americans and the white community alike to learn the truth about the illustrious accomplishments of Africans and African Americans.

Excerpt from: Pickin' Cotton on the Way to Church: The Life and Work of Father Boniface Hardin, Osb; By Nancy Van Note Chism; IHS Press

DR. RALPH BUNCHE: A HERO OF U.S. DIPLOMACY

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche earned the moniker "a hero of U.S. Diplomacy," in part for efforts that led to his becoming the first African American to win the Noble Peace Prize.

The scientist and diplomat earned the award for his role as United Nations mediator in the 1949 peace settlement between Palestinians, Arabs and Jews.

"The objective of any who sincerely believes in peace clearly must be to exhaust every honorable recourse in the effort to save the peace," Bunche said after winning the prestigious honor on Dec. 10, 1950.

Born Aug. 7, 1904, in Detroit, Bunche's father worked as a barber while his mother was a musician. Bunche spent parts of his childhood in New Mexico and in Los Angeles.

His aunt, Lucy Taylor Johnson, raised him.

With parents of different races, Bunche credited his grandmother with teaching him how to respond and deal with racism.

"I recall most vividly high school graduation exercises. After the exercises were completed, the principal of the school came up to me, thinking to be kind," Bunche remarked in a 1955 address to the NAACP.

"He congratulated me on my graduation. Then he said to me in a most friendly way: 'We're sorry to lose you, Ralph. You know we have never thought of you as a Negro here.' This struck me immediately, but I, at that time, did not know just what to reply," Bunche continued.

"I would today, but one of the reasons I would know what to reply today was because I was reared by a grandmother who always knew what to reply in such situations. She happened to be standing beside me when Mr. Fulton, the principal, said this to me.

"She gave Mr. Fulton an education in racial pride and pride of origin, which I am sure he never forgot. She did it in the most polite but in a very firm and pointed way, and when it was over, we both got a very profound apology from him."

A valedictorian at UCLA in 1927, Bunche earned a master's in political science in 1928 and a Ph.D. in govern-

Ralph J. Bunche (far right) greets Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (left) and Coretta Scott King (center). (Photo: ucla.edu)

ment and international relations in 1934 from Harvard University.

He founded and taught classes in the political science department at Howard University in northwest Washington, D.C.

Bunche became the first African American desk officer at the State Department during World War II.

He helped form the United Nations in 1945 and, in 1948, he mediated the hostile Arab-Israeli conflict that led to his Nobel Prize. Later, Bunche served as undersecretary-general for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations.

After winning the Nobel Prize, Bunche remained active stateside in the fight for civil rights.

He also reflected on the plight of Black people in America.

"Like every Negro in America, I've suffered many disillusioning experiences. Inevitably, I've become allergic to prejudice," Dr. Bunche said in 1950.

"On the other hand, from my earliest years, I was taught the virtue of tolerance; militancy in fighting for rights — but not bitterness. And as a social scientist, I've always cultivated a coolness of temper, an attitude of objectivity when dealing with human sensitivities and irrationalities ..."

President Lyndon B. Johnson awarded Dr. Bunche the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963.

Dr. Bunche died in 1971 at age 68.

Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commitment:

The Mind Trust is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in all we do to ensure present and future educational success for all students in Indianapolis. Upholding these principles is critical for our staff, Fellows, community stakeholders, and partners to spark radical systemic change.

We recognize the past and continued existence of institutional racism, discrimination, privilege, and oppression in our education system and society at-large, in particular its adverse effects on students of color.

Our Fellows:

Tariq Al-Nasir
Charter School Fellow

Geoff Fenelus
Innovation School Fellow

Morrise Harbour
Innovation School Fellow

Ontay Johnson
Education Entrepreneur Fellow

Francisco Valdiosera
Innovation School Fellow

RSVP for our upcoming Community Conversation with UNCF

The Mind Trust

UNCF
A mind is a terrible thing to waste®

Imparting Wisdom:

HBCU Lessons for K-12 Education

Tuesday, March 9 from 6-7:30PM • A Free Virtual Community Event

Learn more and RSVP:

TheMindTrust.org/Events

CHURCH CONTINUES FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

Throughout the pandemic, Living Word Baptist Church pastor Reginald Fletcherhad to find new ways to connect with his congregation.

While having virtual servicesisn'tideal, Fletcher said church members continue to financially support Living Word, and he wants to make sure the church is giving back to the community.

Living Word has participated in and held community conversations about race, age and religion.

In November 2020, Living Word Baptist Church hosted a virtual townhall to discuss the church's role in the ongoing conversations on systemic racism and discrimination. The panel, organized by member Sherry Williams, focused on how to balance scripture with political conversations and how predominately white churches can advocate for racial justice and increase diversity in their churches.

The panel, consisting of eight people, discussed the way religion has been used historically to fan the fires of racism as well as possible solutions to advocate for peace in their communities.

Along with attempts to reconcile racial tensions within churches, Williams and Fletcher also want to bridge the gap between young adults and the church.

In 2019, Williams started a mission to bring more young people to church after she received information on the Engaging Young Adults Project from the Center for Congregations.

Before the pandemic, Williams brought groups of young adults together with local pastors to discuss issues and concerns, including why some young people stray from the church.

"The No. 1 thing I hear about is judgment," Williams said. "[Young adults] feel judged, and they don't feel that the older community understands them or their thoughts. If we have an older clergy who can't relate to what is going on in young people's lives, they can't relate the Bible to what these younger people are going through."

Williams said Living Word has taken what they've learned from these conversations and implemented changes to make younger congregants feel more welcome, including changes to the youth curriculum and a Bible study specifically for teenagers.

Both Williams and Fletcher believe these conversations are important to have within churches because a church is often a "safe space" in the community. Fletcher said making changes to how a church operates is key to making sure ministry can reach as many people as possible.

"We're not tied to tradition," Fletcher said. "We're tied to the word of God. We need to understand the difference. The word is the principle. The tradition is the practice. The principle never changes, but the mode and the method of how we practice is always changing."

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

DO YOU KNOW YOUR LOCAL BLACK HISTORY?

By KESHIA MCENTIRE

African Americans have helped shape the city of Indianapolis from the start, and their contributions have paved the way for local leaders of today. Despite the hate and prejudice many of these citizens faced, they opened doors that previous generations thought were impossible for Black Americans to step through. Here is a look back at some local leaders of the past:

Dr. Samuel Elbert: First licensed Black doctor in Indiana

Dr. Samuel Elbert was born in 1832 and attended The Medical College of Indiana to become a doctor. After he paid tuition and attended classes, the school refused to grant him a degree. He won a case against the school and became the first licensed African American physician in Indiana. Elbert served one term as president of the Indianapolis Board of Health. In the late 1800s, he was asked by President Benjamin Harrison to serve as the local pension surgeon. He declined after being threatened by whites.

James T. V. Hill: Prominent local Black attorney

James T. V. Hill graduated from Central Law School and practiced law in Indiana from 1882 to 1928. During that time, injustices toward minorities were common, and Hill was enthusiastically engaging himself in civic affairs. Accounts of his life paint him as a valued member of the Indiana Bar. In 1890, he was appointed to a Marion County grand jury.

Robert Brokenburr: First African American elected to Indiana Senate

Robert Brokenburr moved to Indianapolis in 1909 after receiving a law degree from Howard University. He is famous for his civil rights work as a lawyer and a legislator. He worked as a legal advisor for Madam C.J. Walker and was the first African-American admitted to the Indiana Bar Association. In 1940, he was elected to the Indiana Senate, where he supported many bills that protected the civil rights of Hoosiers.

Charles Wiggins: Famous Black racecar driver and mechanic

Charles Wiggins was born in 1897 in Evansville, Indiana. When white mechanics joined the Army, he was hired at an auto repair shop. He opened his own shop in 1922 and became one of the city's most sought-after mechanics. In his spare time, he designed cars from

parts he found at junk yards and gained an interest in racing. Though he was not allowed to take part in the Indianapolis 500 because of his ethnicity, he formed a racing league with African American drivers called The Gold and Glory Sweepstakes. He fought for African American participation in racing until his death in Indianapolis in 1979 at the age of 82.

Emma Christi Baker: First female police officer in Indianapolis

On June 15, 1918, 53-year-old Emma Baker became both the first woman and the first African American woman to be a police officer for the City of Indianapolis. Before her job as officer, she was well known through Indianapolis as the owner of a laundry business, and she was recruited because of how respected she was in the Black community. During WWI, female officers were not allowed to patrol the streets, and she was one of the first women allowed to work outside the station patrolling public places downtown and arresting shoplifters.

Jim Sears: First Black Indiana state trooper

In 1962, Jim Sears became the first African American Indiana state trooper. During his 30 years of service, troopers would often refuse to speak to him or offer backup. Despite the prejudice he faced, he remained a man of quiet strength and gentleness. In 1976, Sears and other Black troopers settled a racial discrimination lawsuit with the state police, causing them to agree to recruit and promote minorities. Sears retired in 1992 with the rank of captain.

Z. Mae Jimison: First Black female judge in Marion County

Z. Mae Jimison was the first Black woman to serve as a judge in Marion County and the first African American nominated to run for mayor of Indianapolis. Though she did not win, her run for mayor in 1995 was the first time many Hoosiers contemplated the possibility of a Black person becoming mayor of our city, and she opened doors for future Black politicians.

RECORDER MEDIAGROUP

InnoPower, LLC and Recorder Media Group will host the 2021 InnoPower Minority Business Week June 14-18. The expanded format now features five days of in-person and virtual programming that aim to address the societal and economic gaps COVID-19 amplified. Join thousands of other business and community leaders as we discuss:

EDUCATION

For more than a generation, we have focused on improving the education of poor and minority students. Real gains have been made, but many gaps still exist. To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, we need to focus on what really matters: high standards and visionary school leaders. Our education system is ripe for disruption and innovation.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The nature of work is transforming rapidly, while decades of systemic racism and many structural challenges underscore the underlying economic fragility of underrepresented groups. in our ever-changing world. As community leaders and organizations choose the path forward, it is imperative they rethink deeply held orthodoxies in order to shape a more inclusive future of work.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is the key to economic growth for global and local economies. Yet, too many people still face significant, systemic barriers to entrepreneurial opportunity. In a time of changing demographics in the United States, it is important to include diverse communities in all economic development strategies. The local entrepreneurship ecosystem should mirror the diversity in the community that fosters it.

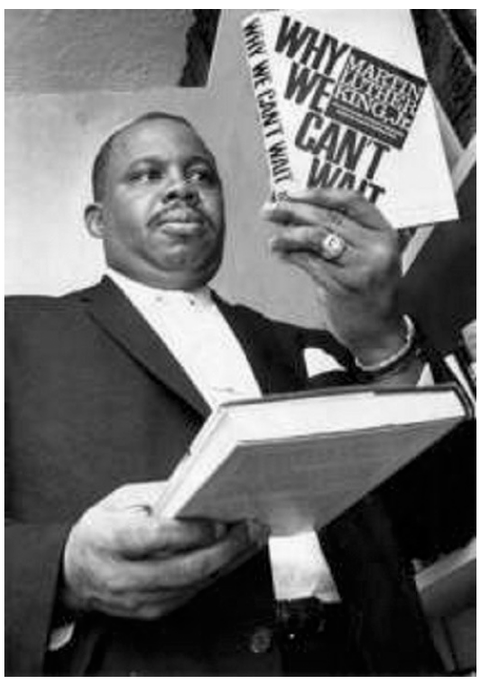
GOING GLOBAL

The old narrative of an Africa disconnected from the global economy is fading. A wave of transformation driven by business and modernization is thrusting the continent from the world's margins to the global mainstream. In many ways, we should stop thinking about how Africa can be more like us. Rather, we should think about how we can be more like Africa.

RSVP FOR FREE at www.INNOPOWERINDY.com

For sponsorship inquiries, please email info@innopowerindy.com.

DR. ANDREW J. BROWN BROUGHT NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS TO INDIANAPOLIS



By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Dr. Andrew J. Brown was a lauded figure and integral part of the civil rights movement in Indianapolis. Among his accomplishments was helping found Indiana Black Expo and starting a Saturday morning radio program on WTLC-AM 1310 to discuss community issues. Brown was also a champion of voting rights, organizing Black voters during the 1963 mayoral election in Indianapolis. Brown died in 1996 at the age of 75 following a battle with Alzheimer's disease.

A native of Mississippi, Brown found his call to justice and the church while serving in World War II as a chaplain, where he noticed how few Blacks served in that role. He served as pastor of St. John's Missionary Baptist Church from 1947 until his retirement in 1990.

Brown's work drew the attention of prominent national civil rights leaders, including Rev. Ralph Abernathy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Brown worked closely with King and his wife Coretta Scott King in the 1950s and '60s. When King was in Indianapolis and needed a place to stay, Brown opened his home. Brown also joined King in civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama. Brown recalled what it was like in Selma in an interview with the Indianapolis News in 1995.

"We could picket in Indianapolis and we weren't going to get beat up on," he said. "You picket in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, you're gonna get knocked down. I didn't realize that the police had so much authority to whip black and white folk whenever they wanted to."

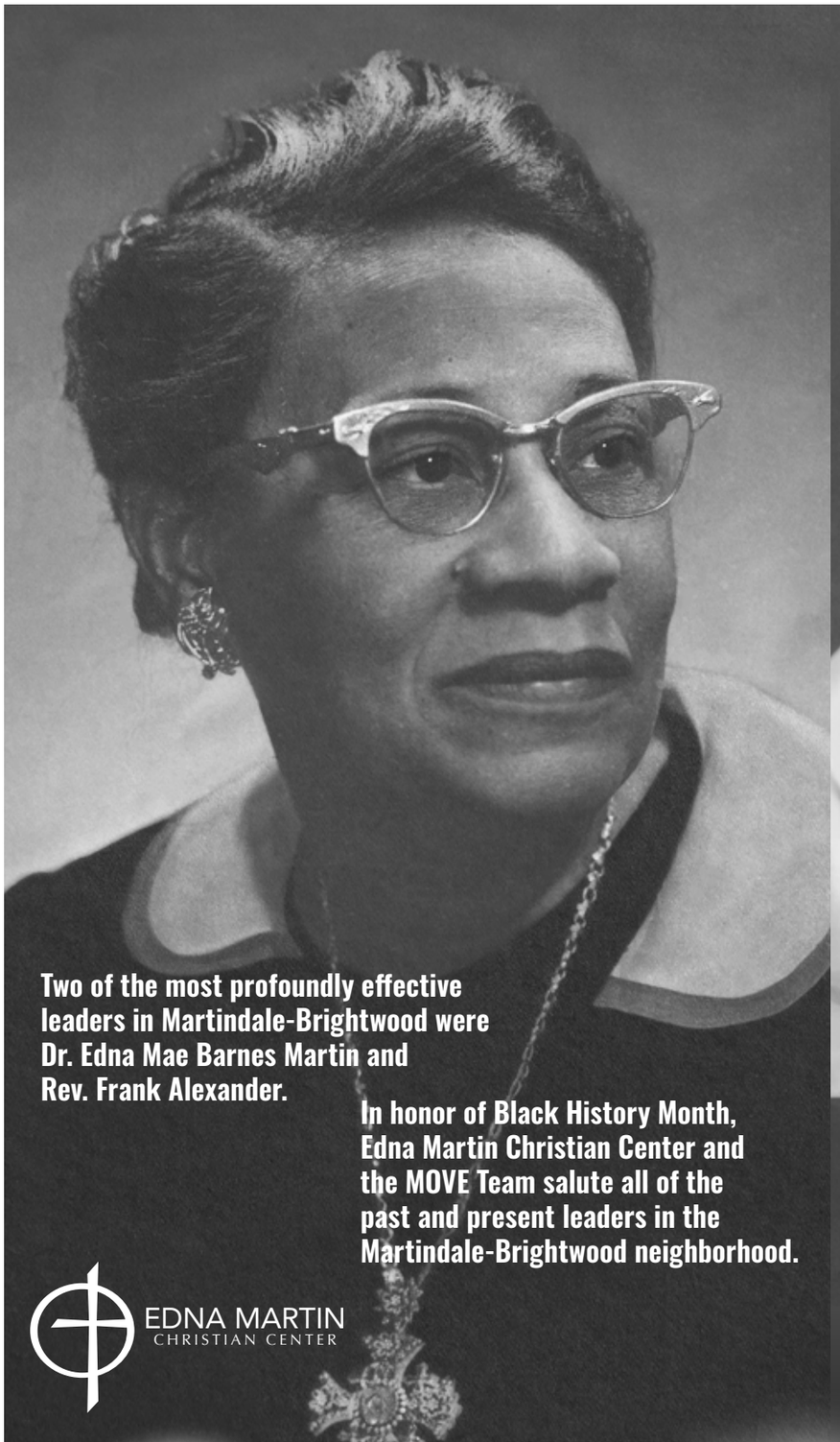
Brown's son, Thomas Brown, came up in his teens with his father and King working side by side in Indianapolis and across the country.

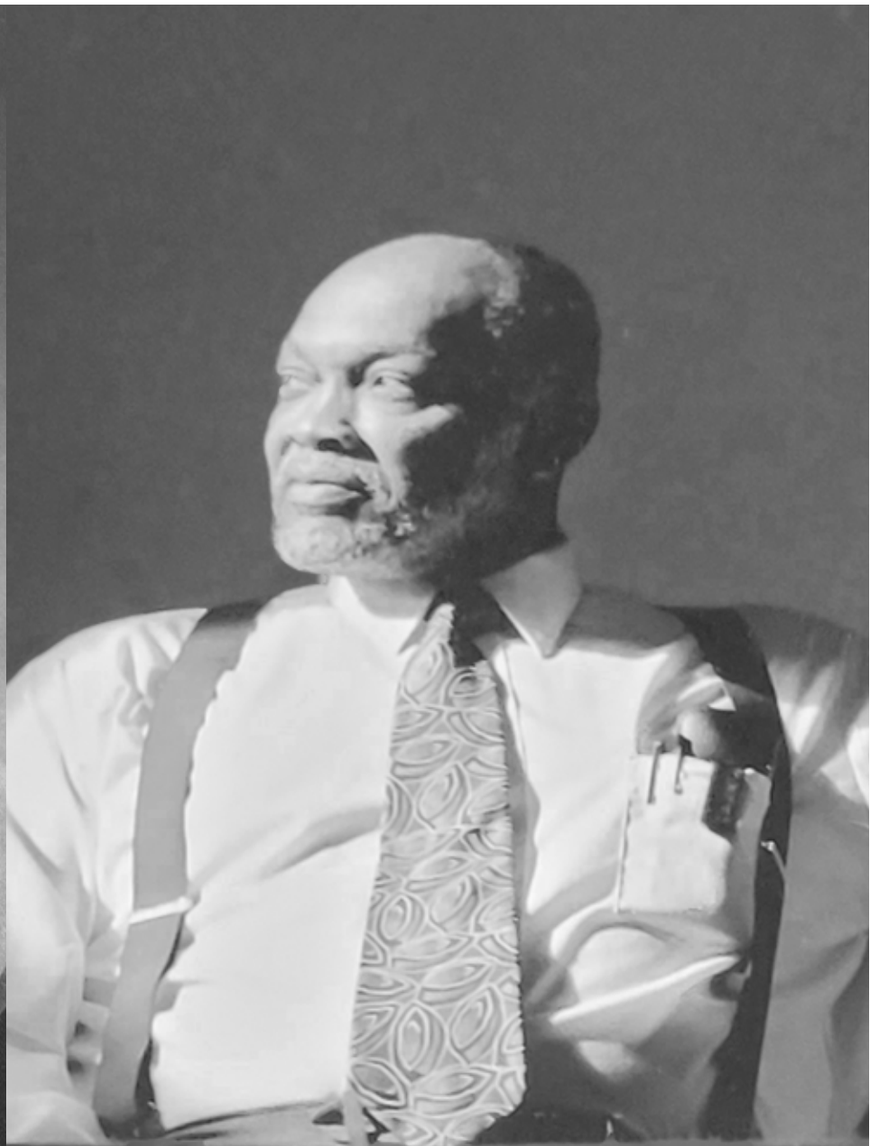
"It was like a family thing," Brown said. "... These were guys who were young, in their 20s and 30s. They were sociable."

Brown remembered his father as a leader who tried to broaden the reach of the civil rights movement at a time when whites and elites were toning down the rhetoric. For example, a month after King's assassination, Brown was in Washington, D.C., for the Poor People's March, which King helped organize before his death.

"His legacy was that of being a revolutionary for justice and equality," Brown said, drawing a parallel between his father's work and King's.

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





Two of the most profoundly effective leaders in Martindale-Brightwood were Dr. Edna Mae Barnes Martin and Rev. Frank Alexander.

In honor of Black History Month, Edna Martin Christian Center and the MOVE Team salute all of the past and present leaders in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood.

The next round of Greatriarch portraits will commemorate the lives and stories of these two community giants. See all of the Greatriarchs at www.harrisoncenter.org/greatriarchs

Will you be one of the next leaders? Come to the One Voice community council to see how you can contribute! One Voice Martindale-Brightwood meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 6 PM. For more information or zoom link, contact charlestonyknight@yahoo.com

EDNA MARTIN CHRISTIAN CENTER

60TH ANNIVERSARY PACE PUBLIC ADVOCATES IN COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY

MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD Community Development Corporation

KIPP INDY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

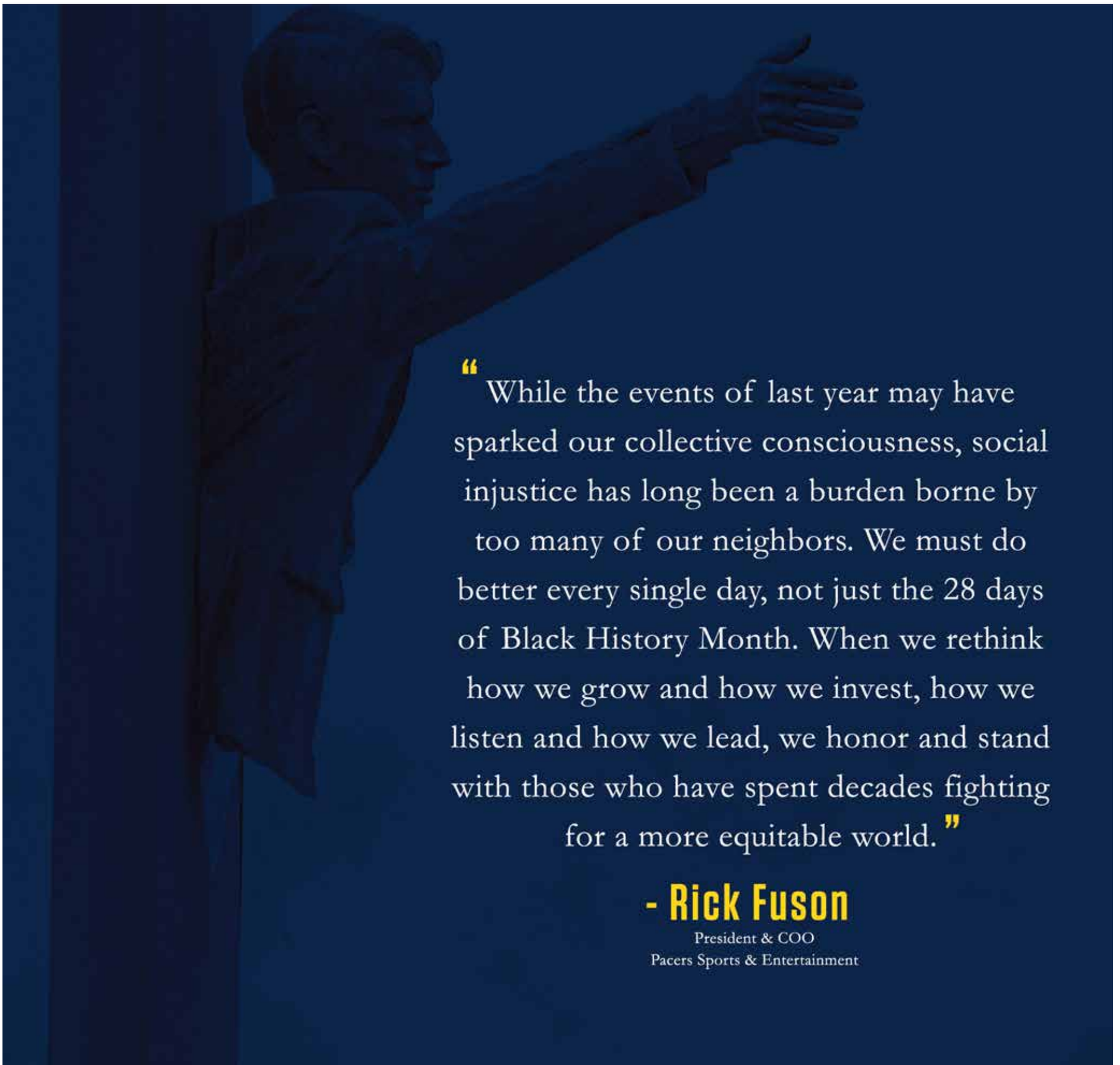
MB7

Bridging Humanity & Hope Oasis Christian Community Development Corporation

OneVoice MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD

ROBIN SHACKLEFORD STATE REPRESENTATIVE

HARRISON CENTER


"While the events of last year may have sparked our collective consciousness, social injustice has long been a burden borne by too many of our neighbors. We must do better every single day, not just the 28 days of Black History Month. When we rethink how we grow and how we invest, how we listen and how we lead, we honor and stand with those who have spent decades fighting for a more equitable world."
- Rick Fuson
President & COO
Pacers Sports & Entertainment


PACERS
SPORTS &
ENTERTAINMENT
MAD ANTS
BANKERS LIFE FIELDHOUSE
Landmark for Peace Memorial
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park

ALLEN PUSHED TO CREATE CHANGE FOR BLACK MALES

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Kenneth Allen deserves as much credit as anyone for Indianapolis reestablishing a local commission on African American males.

Allen spent four years as chairman of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males and made it one of the organization's priorities to reactivate the Indianapolis commission, which was originally established shortly before the state-level commission.

Indiana has other local commissions in Gary, Fort Wayne and other cities. Some cities technically have a commission, but it isn't active.

Local commissions are the "boots on the ground," Allen said, and he saw the importance of making sure Indianapolis has one.

Allen said state commissioners first reached out to Mayor Joe Hogsett in 2016 to ask him to reestablish the commission by executive order. That didn't happen, even amid calls during the mayoral race in 2019 to do so.


Kenneth Allen

Instead, the Indianapolis City-County Council passed an ordinance in August 2020 to reestablish the Indianapolis Commission on African American Males. The council also appointed Allen to serve on the commission.

In the end, going through the city-county council took longer, but it also was the route that offered the most security. The local commissions that go silent were often established through executive order, so future mayors could let it go to the wayside.

Allen, who is still a member of the state commission, also recently joined the Indianapolis Public Schools Board of Commissioners as an at-large member.

It was his first time running for office, Allen said, and he was inspired to do so because of his work with the state commission, which provides a report to the General Assembly and governor's office. The report includes education data.

"When I saw the data, particularly for our children of color, I just felt that I had too much experience serving youth to just sit there on the sidelines and do nothing," he said.

Allen, 37, founded the Kenneth Allen Foundation for Entrepreneurship and taught entrepreneurship skills to youth around the country and around the world.

Allen grew up in Gary with a single mother. He often tells the story of his first business, a candy shop he opened when he was 12 to get some of his own money and help his mother.

Entrepreneurship, Allen said, is about changing the financial future for youth.

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

FORMER IUPUI RESEARCH ANALYST MOVES EQUITY PUSH TO STATE GOVERNMENT

Breanca Merritt

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

After more than five years of establishing herself as one of the great local authorities on social policy and equity, Breanca Merritt followed her passion into government.

Merritt recently became the chief health equity and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) officer at the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA).

Merritt said she's always had a passion for how government works, which is part of the reason she pursued a career in research and community engagement. Part of her job was to inform policy decisions, and now she gets to do that from the inside.

"To be on the side that actually makes a lot of decisions has always been a professional goal of mine," Merritt said.

Merritt's role involves understanding gaps in policy for the FSSA and where the administration can be more equitable. Some examples: Is Medicaid policy causing disparate outcomes? Are there any issues with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)?

Merritt is the first chief health equity and ADA officer for the FSSA.

"Dr. Merritt has a long history as an academic and practitioner with real-world experience working among marginalized populations to understand racial and ethnic disparities and encouraging policies that promote equity," FSSA Secretary Jennifer Sullivan said when the administration announced Merritt's arrival.

This is a natural extension of what Merritt, 33, did as one of the most prominent voices at the Public Policy Institute at IUPUI, where she was a senior research analyst and founding director of the Center for Research on Inclusion and Social Policy (CRISP).

Under Merritt's leadership, CRISP produced data and analysis on issues such as poverty, Black homeownership rates, homelessness and child care.

Career decisions like this are never 100% clear, Merritt said, but she saw an opportunity at FSSA and took it.

"When you build something from scratch, it's kind of your baby," she said of CRISP, "and it's hard to leave something behind that you put a lot of passion into."

Merritt is still involved at IUPUI as a community scholar, meaning she has access to the university's resources to continue doing research. She can also be an adjunct professor as part of the position. When that happens, Merritt teaches a class called African-Americans, Power, and Public Policy, which teaches students about systemic racism through the perspective of Black Americans' experience with government decisions.

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

Diversity makes businesses and communities stronger

At the opening of her inaugural poem, poet Amanda Gorman asked, "Where can we find light in this never-ending shade?"

As we celebrate Black History Month, these are powerful words to reflect upon. The past year has heightened our nation's awareness of social injustice and racial inequity. At KeyBank, it has also sparked a lot of conversation about how we, as an organization, can mindfully and effectively take action.

The truth is, today's workforce spans generations and communities are more diverse than ever. People of all backgrounds and skills are working and living together unlike any other time in American history.

For organizations, this diversity represents opportunity. According to a 2018 McKinsey report, companies in the top quartile for diversity are 21 percent more likely to achieve above-average profitability than companies in the bottom quartile. For communities, diversity brings cultural vibrancy and the opportunity for sustainable economic growth.

Opportunity needs to be inclusive

In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about the power of placemaking. It is the idea that a region can plan, design and manage public and private spaces to support economy and culture and ultimately promote regional growth and community transformation.

The question is, how do we create a sense of place—a place where

Juan Gonzalez
KeyBank

people are proud to live, work and play? Where a community's young and talented graduates want to stay and build a career? Where skilled trade professionals and businesses want to establish roots and integrate into the community?

These are not easy questions to answer. Differences in ideas and perspective can divide. But if we're going to make progress, communities, businesses and the public sector must work together. And the answers need to penetrate all neighborhoods and advance opportunity for all—no matter how challenging the conversations.

Be a torch bearer

We're all leaders. What determines our capacity to act on it is the strength of our commitment to be our best selves and willingness to help others do the same.

At KeyBank, we're reaching out to the community and asking hard questions. We're listening and learning. We're making efforts to improve how we retain, promote and attract people of color to KeyBank so we can continue to effectively serve our minority communities. We're working hard to identify the gaps in the communities where we can make an impact.

We're ensuring our COVID relief efforts reach all businesses—with an emphasis on minority-owned small businesses.

However, what we do collectively as individuals across Central Indiana is equally important. Engagement is a powerful agent of change. Your voice can advance progress. Your actions can leverage your skills and talents for the benefit of the community. More important, engagement connects you with diverse people from your community—helping you build bridges that make a difference while bridging differences.

Desmond Tutu once said, "We can only be human together." If we can work together to make our communities places that have a sense of character and shared values, where opportunity is inclusive to all, and where everyone has the resources and support needed to tap into that opportunity, all can win and step out of the shade. All can find light.

Juan Gonzalez is president of KeyBank in Central Indiana. He can be reached by phone, 317-464-8060, or email at juan_f_gonzalez@keybank.com.

KeyCorp is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer Min/Fem/Vet Disabled.

IU HEALTH DOCTOR CHOSE MEDICINE TO HELP PEOPLE

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Lauren Nephew

Lauren Nephew decided in third grade she wanted to become a physician. Not because it's what she grew up around — there were no doctors in the family — but because she knew she wanted to help people.

Prior to third grade, Nephew thought she might want to be a waitress. There's a lot of interaction in that job, right?

What probably nudged her in the direction of medicine, she realized later, was having a good pediatrician. So, medicine it was.

"I really had a desire to serve and help people," Nephew said, "and I thought it was the best way to do that."

It's Dr. Nephew now and has been for about 10 years. She earned her doctorate in medicine from Case Western Reserve University and has been at Indiana University Health since 2017. She's also an assistant professor of medicine at the IU School of Medicine.

Nephew is a hepatologist, so she works with people who have liver disease.

Getting to hepatology was a journey in itself. Nephew went to medical school thinking she wanted to do neuroscience. Then she spent her first two years of school thinking women's health — maybe reproductive medicine — was the right path.

True to her third-grade self, Nephew kept coming back to people. That's where her passion was. She wanted to help people who have a lot of medical problems, and liver disease can lead to issues with the heart, kidneys and more.

"I actually like sick people," she said.

Nephew, 40, said she finds fulfillment in helping other Black people and those whose socioeconomic status creates even more obstacles.

"I like being able to help people navigate a complicated health care system and help them get through medicine despite all of the social issues," she said.

Nephew, who has a master's degree in ethics, is also part of the transplant committee, which includes a variety of other professionals who help patients through the transplant process.

Nephew doesn't work directly with COVID-19 patients but is nonetheless still at ground zero for the pandemic in a hospital. The world will always need doctors, she said, but right now the need is unlike ever before.

"It's an honor to be able to treat patients at a time when you're really needed," she said.

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

A RICH HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE

The Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper is the fourth oldest surviving African-American newspaper in the country. What began in 1895 as a two-page church bulletin created by co-founders George P. Stewart and Will Porter now hails as one of the top African-American publications in the United States. In 1897, the newspaper's co-founders expanded their successful news-sheet into a weekly newspaper. The earliest existing issues of the Recorder date back to 1899 – the same year that Porter sold his share of the paper to Stewart.

William G. Mays, an astute entrepreneur purchased the Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper in 1990. As publisher, Mays entrusted his niece, Carolene Mays-Medley to serve as president and general manager of the newspaper. Mays-Medley gave the paper new direction and a blueprint for success for more than 13 years before returning to community service in local government.

Experienced journalist and longtime Recorder employee, Shannon Williams succeeded Mays-Medley as president and general manager in 2010. One of the initial things Williams did in her role as president was form the Recorder Media Group which houses the Recorder, its sister publication the Indiana Minority Business Magazine and serves as an in-house marketing/communications firm.

After 18 years at the Recorder, including the last eight at the helm, Williams left the historic paper to serve in non-profit leadership where she specifically advocates for education equity.

Robert Shegog is the current president and CEO of the Recorder Media Group. Shegog has been instrumental in building continuity across all of the company's products and amplifying community engagement strategies. He and his team continue to usher a new era of leadership with the charge to extend the rich legacies of the newspaper and magazine for generations to come.

RECORDER CELEBRATED 125 YEARS IN 2020, COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY REMAINS THE SAME

By BREANNA COOPER
BreannaC@indyrecorder.com

When George P. Stewart and Will Porter started a two-page church bulletin in 1895, they set in motion what would eventually become one of the oldest African American newspapers in the country.

"It's so important for the community," Barbara Turner, great-great-granddaughter of George Stewart, said at the unveiling of a mural to celebrate the Recorder's 125th anniversary. "And it means a lot to me and the family that it's kept going this long."

Like the newspaper industry itself, the Recorder has undergone many changes throughout the years. However, the sense of family and community have stayed the same

"I was a teenager when I started at the Recorder, when it was located at 518 Indiana Ave. in a raggedy old building," Eunice Trotter, a former reporter and publisher, said. "I always had an interest in writing, and I would hang around the Recorder to see if they would let me write, and eventually they let me do some things."

During her time as a high school student and student at IUPUI, Trotter wrote for the "Teen Talk" column and eventually started an entertainment column called "Party People." When Trotter started writing for the paper, it was still under the ownership of the Stewart family.

"It's so important to have representation, to give the community a voice," Trotter said. "I'm still a regular reader of the Recorder, and it's nice to see real, important issues being discussed."

Trotter became the owner of the Recorder in 1988 after a stint at the Indianapolis Star. After she sold the

See 125, 62 ►

125

► Continued from 61

company to William "Bill" Mays, Trotter eventually became editor-in-chief of the paper.

Throughout its history, the Recorder frequently discussed issues — nationally and locally — important to the African American community. Late historian and friend of the Recorder, Wilma L. Gibbs Moore, wrote the newspaper "commented through news stories and editorials on the socio-economic and political climate that affected the daily lives of its community. ... It remains as a useful chronicle of national and local Black history."

Current president and CEO Robert Shegog has continued to bring the important issues to a larger audience by expanding the digital presence of the outlet and forming several partnerships within the community.

"Since being at the Recorder, I have been intentional about engaging the Indianapolis community about the importance of the Indianapolis Recorder in Indianapolis," Shegog said. "We have created strategic corporate and philanthropic partners to assist with relaying this message to the broader community."

Shegog believes communities ought to have representation in local and national media, and that's where the Recorder comes in. According to the Pew Research Center, the majority of American newsrooms are predominately white and male.

"The underrepresentation leads to an overdependence on white sources and a general prevalence of white perspectives in news reporting," Shegog said. "... The messenger matters, especially in the Black community where they may lack trust in authority figures."

Moore noted the paper covered the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s diligently and brought opportunities for Black reporters and students in Indianapolis throughout the years.

One of those opportunities, the Journalism and Writing Seminars (JAWS), was created by Trotter to help young, aspiring journalists get experience in the field. Trotter balanced the program alongside her responsibilities as editor and called the program her proudest accomplishment while at the Recorder.

When Bill Mays bought the paper in 1990, he did so, Trotter said, to keep the paper going. Mays incorporated voices from the community, including a column from esteemed broadcaster Amos Brown, to raise readership and increase the Recorder's presence in the community.

"Mr. Mays was a tremendous influence for the paper being around today," Shannon Williams, former editor and president of the Recorder, said. "When he purchased it, it was in the red, and he put his own money into it and thought, 'I might as well just buy the paper.' He purchased it to save a legacy because he knew the African American community needed an independent newspaper."

Williams, who began working at the newspaper in 2000, said there were many ups and downs during her 18-year tenure. However, she said she reflected on the sacrifices and courage of those who came before her, and that inspired her to keep going.

"We all stand on other people's shoulders, and I never lose sight of that," Williams said. "I had to remember how scared those early reporters must have been. They got death threats, the KKK [Ku Klux Klan] tried to intimidate reporters, but they kept going. Just to be able to build upon that legacy makes me so proud, and it fueled me when things got tough."

Both Williams and Trotter agree being at the Recorder always felt like being with family. While many things have changed at newspapers across the country, Trotter hopes the paper's presence in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood is the same as it was when she started working on Indiana Avenue.

"When I was at the Recorder, as a teen and adult, it was really a community place," Trotter said. "People would come to the building and hang out, get the news of the day and just talk. That's what a newspaper should be, and I hope it's heading in that direction again. I'm excited to see what will happen in years to come."

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

Committed to Community

Motivated by the words, legacy and service of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Citizens Energy Group is committed to community.

Sharing the Dream is our annual service project that brings Citizens employees together to give back. Over the last decade, Citizens has collaborated with Indy Parks to refurbish 15 facilities. Through Sharing the Dream and other volunteer events, Citizens is championing the communities in which our customers and employees live, work and play.

Learn more about our community engagement at CitizensEnergyGroup.com/Community.

citizens energy group™

We're all citizens.

This ad was not paid for by customer rates.

YES YOU CAN AND YES YOU SHOULD

HAVE THE AMERICAN DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP!

BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP MATTERS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE BROKERS®

Sponsored by the

ihcda
Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority

DIANA RICE-WILKERSON

JANIS BRADLEY

FAIRWAY INDEPENDENT MORTGAGE CORPORATION
SENIOR LOAN OFFICER & CERTIFIED REVERSE MORTGAGE SPECIALIST
317-402-5555
NMLS #367923

JB REAL ESTATE CONSULTANTS
BROKER/OWNER
317-590-7348
MIBOR #5675

Home & Finance
with Janis and Diana

TUESDAYS AT 9:00 A.M. WHMB-TV40 • SATURDAYS AT 1:00-2:00 P.M. THE LIGHT 1310 AM/92.7

INDIANA AVENUE: THE GRAND OL' STREET

Clarke F. "Deacon" Hampton organized his children into Deacon Hampton's Family Band while they lived in Ohio. In 1938 the Hamptons settled back in Indianapolis. They later became the Duke Hampton Band and played swing-style music. They disbanded in the late 1940s and formed their own groups or did solo acts. Slide Hampton, playing the trombone, had a prolific career as a composer, arranger and performer. Sisters Virtue, Aletra and Carmalita formed a trio. (Information taken from the Encyclopedia of Indianapolis) Bicentennial Train image. (Digital image © 2005 Indiana Historical Society. All Rights Reserved.)

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

In its heyday in the 1930s and '40s, Indiana Avenue was called by many names. There was The Yellow Brick Road, Funky Broadway, The Grand Ol' Street. There was also a simpler name, one that has survived the years and is still recognized by many: The Avenue.

As Indianapolis' hub for African Americans, Indiana Avenue was a city within a city. Shops, restaurants, clubs and theaters lined the street, giving African Americans and other minorities locked out of housing in the larger city a sense of home and belonging. Indiana Avenue was also a haven for African American jazz musicians and fans.

Some of the era's best jazz singers and musicians got their starts on Indiana Avenue. They included The Hamptons, Wes Montgomery, Leroy Vinegar, Jimmy Coe, J.J. Johnson and Earl Walker. In April, Resonance Records released "Back on Indiana Avenue: The Carroll DeCamp Recordings," a collection of early unheard work from Montgomery. The collection features 22 songs.

Some of the great ones — Duke Ellington, Dinah Washington, Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie, to name a few — also came to Indianapolis to perform. Indiana Avenue was known to have the best jazz in the city. At one time there were more than 30 jazz clubs.

One of the most famous icons of Indiana Avenue, the Madam C.J. Walker Building on the corner of Indiana Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, dedicated some of its space to jazz performances. The building is the only jazz venue from the era still standing. It's also one of the only remaining monuments to what Indiana Avenue once was.

Few of the original buildings from Indiana Avenue's glory days remain. Historic communities such as Ransom Place have been almost completely uprooted by commercial development, highway expansion and gentrification. The Avenue began to change by the 1950s, when some neighborhoods started to fall to commercial development and the IUPUI campus began creeping in from the west.

But Indiana Avenue — the people and musicians who blessed the street's culture in the early 20th century and continued to fight for its survival — cemented a legacy long ago that no amount of butchery or invasion can wipe away.

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

ART KEPT HER 'ABOVE WATER.' NOW IT'S HER FULL-TIME JOB

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Shaunt'e Lewis was the student in school who would rather doodle on everything than actually do the assigned work. She was always the creative and artistic type and took every art class she could in middle school and high school.

Lewis is now a visual artist and illustrator. She lives in Fishers, where she works out of a home studio.

Lewis, 36, started taking her art more seriously about five years ago. She presented at different venues and cafes to get her name out there.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and Lewis saw an opportunity to turn art into her full-time job. She was a hair stylist for 15 years, but the business she worked at had to shut down. It was a difficult time, but there was more work available through art.

"Art really kept me above water," said Lewis, who went full time in January.

She joined other artists in helping the city promote its mask-up campaign in 2020.

Lewis mostly does portraits of African American women. She initially wasn't sure why she was drawn to those specific portraits but thinks it had to do with the influence of her mother and grandmother.

"Just trying to convey self-love and self-identify and acceptance of one's self," Lewis said of her work. "The strength of a woman. Just embracing all the things that make up a woman."

Lewis' portraits are vibrant with lots of reds and yellows. She also does murals and original paintings for private collectors and commercial clients.

Lewis has had her art featured at Meet the Artists, Mass Ave Wine, Haven Yoga Studio, Fishers City Hall and many other places over the last few years.

Her first bit of success was back in fourth grade, when Lewis won an art contest at school and had her work displayed on a billboard. She told the Recorder in a Q&A in 2018 that was when she knew she was meant to be a creator.

"As far as I can remember, I've always been allowed to express myself through my art," Lewis said. "My mother would let me paint on my walls and even cut up and make new clothes out of my old ones. ... So, I would say that many adults in my life made sure that I was able to express my creativity and create art in all forms without limitation."

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

Shaunt'e Lewis

ARMY'S 1ST BLACK RANGER INSTRUCTOR FOUGHT CRIME IN COLUMBUS

Milton 'Davey' Lockett, Jr. enlisted in the Army when he was 17 years old. Lockett was selected to demonstrate his hand-to-hand combat skills to President John F. Kennedy during a Rangers-in-Action demonstration at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Lockett was a member of the first, now famous, "Rangers-in-Action". PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM.

By TIM CHITWOOD
Ledger-Enquirer

COLUMBUS, Ga. (AP) — Columbus drug dealers couldn't scare an old Army Ranger who'd done two tours of combat duty in Vietnam, so they gave up.

That's how Milton "Davey" Lockett Jr. became a local hero at least twice in his life:

At Fort Benning, he became the Army's first Black Ranger instructor, in 1959.

In the Columbus neighborhood where he retired, he led a front-line attack on crime in the 1990s, helping start Carver Heights Against Drugs.

He was inducted into the Rangers' Hall of Fame in 2001. After he died at his Schaul Street home from prostate cancer in 2018, the Columbus Police Department named its community room for him. It's where police sometimes coordinate strategy with Neighborhood Watch leaders.

Lockett may not be as well known to outsiders, but within the area he chose to defend, he is a legend.

"Even some of the new people who have moved in, they have heard of him, from Wynnton Road to Eighth Street, and all the streets between," said Lockett's only son, Milton Lockett III. "Everybody knew him. Everybody."

That's because they knew this: "If they had a problem, they knew he could help," the son said, recalling his father would not back down against what he knew was wrong. "He would stand up and proudly show that, 'I'm here. We can make this better if we work together.'"

That approach worked because the retired master sergeant did not pull rank to enforce his moral code, the son said. He was open, direct and respectful with others.

"Dad taught me to be honest and upright. He was always very honest with everybody. He was just one of them. He talked to people like that. He was an everyday guy."

A HUMBLE START

Born Feb. 5, 1935, Milton Lockett Jr. was among seven children whose father worked as a concrete finisher, with a touch for smoothing and

See RANGER, 70 ►

RANGER

► Continued from 69

leveling the mix after it's poured into a frame to harden.

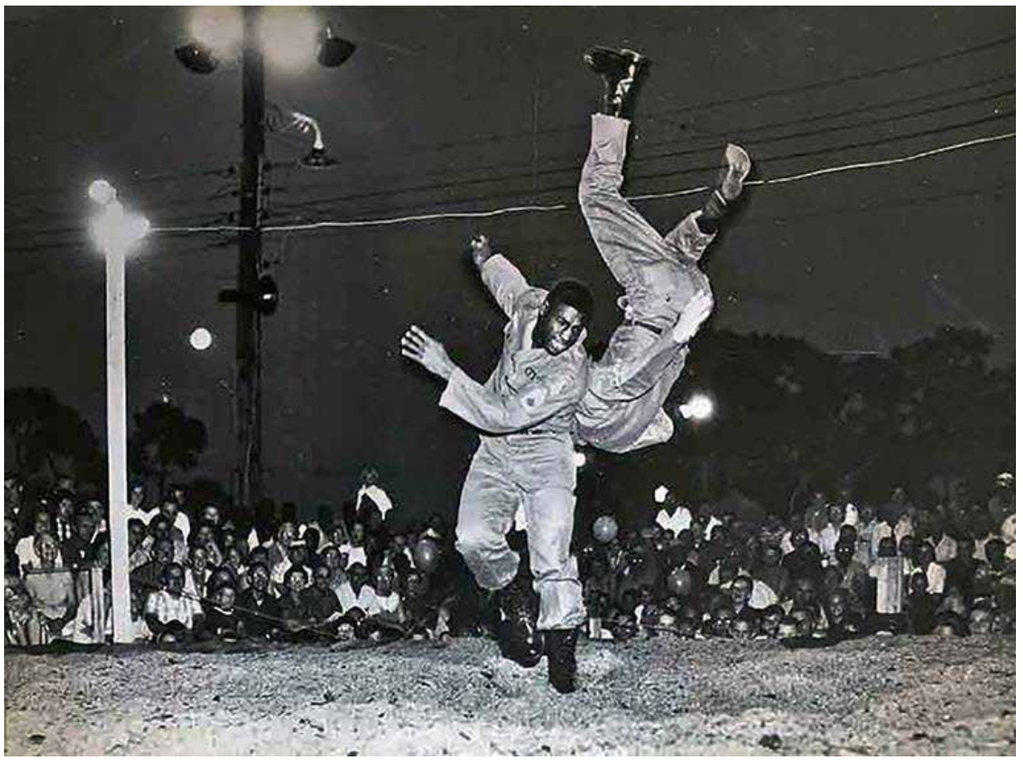
Working at Atlanta's expanding airport, the father later rose to supervise crews doing that work and offered his son a job.

But Milton Lockett Jr. chose a different course, joining the Army at 17 in 1952, and finding the uniform fit his character. After two years, he came home and told the high school girlfriend he later would marry that he was going back, for six years.

For about a year he served in Korea, returning to marry Ida Clay in 1955, and moving to a post in Arkansas before the Army sent him to Fort Benning, where he signed up for Ranger School.

"He did so well in Ranger School, they offered him a job to become a Ranger instructor," recalled his son, who was born in 1956.

See RANGER, 72 ►



Milton 'Davey' Lockett, Jr. enlisted in the Army when he was 17 years old. Lockett was selected to demonstrate his hand-to-hand combat skills to President John F. Kennedy during a Rangers-in-Action demonstration at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Lockett was a member of the first, now famous, "Rangers-in-Action". PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM

RANGER

► Continued from 70

He was not only an instructor, but a "Ranger Demonstrator," joining the team that promoted the specialty by exhibiting its skills around the country, with hand-to-hand combat, ziplining, rappelling and running headlong across timbers suspended high overhead.

He was among those who performed for President John F. Kennedy in 1963. Before that, the Army sent him to a demonstration at the segregated University of Alabama, where the white Rangers afterward were treated to a picnic, his son said. The Black Rangers ate on the bus that brought them there.

He got the nickname "Davey" because they did a skit in which he played Davey Crockett, traveling the wilderness with a backpack bearing his lunch — an assortment of live snakes Rangers were taught to kill and eat, to live off the land.

Then came Vietnam.

TWO TOURS, AND HOME AGAIN

He did his first tour in 1965 and '66. He was in a LRRP, pronounced "lurp," a long-range reconnaissance patrol, scouting behind enemy lines.

Asked for a combat story, his son recalls one his father did not find funny for years afterward: He and a buddy got cut off and pinned down on their way back from a mission. Under intense enemy fire, they huddled behind a fallen tree that had an upright tree beside it.

When the other Ranger unpinned a grenade and lobbed it, it hit the limbs overhead, and bounced right back at them. They braved enemy bullets to get up and run for their lives. Davey Lockett was wounded by the shrapnel.

He spent about a year back at Benning before the Army sent him back to Vietnam in 1968.

"The second tour of Vietnam, it really took something out of him," his son said. After a few years' more service with the Rangers here at Benning, he retired from the Army in 1972, and took a civilian job, from which he retired in 1999.

Meanwhile the house on Schaul Street became a gathering spot for neighborhood kids. Some came to get Lockett to teach them Judo and other hand-to-hand fighting skills.

Around 1991, the kids told him about a neighbor in her 80s who couldn't leave her home, because drug dealers outside were hiding their stash in her yard.

The former Ranger didn't walk over and order them to leave. He went over and escorted the woman to the store, and anywhere else she needed to go. He did that again and again, until the dealers moved on.

Lockett didn't have to threaten them, his son said: "If you watched his body language and his intensity, you would get the message, 'I'm not the one to mess with.'"

THE LAST BATTLE

After he helped form Carver Heights Against Drugs, he kept up that pressure, staking out the places dealers set up and staring them down. "You couldn't sell drugs if someone was out in the street watching you," his son recalled.

They couldn't intimidate a man who'd faced death so many times before.

He faced it again, when first he was diagnosed with cancer. He got treatment, and for 11 years the cancer went into remission.

But it bounced back, eventually, and left him in hospice care, for his final days.

Still he did not fear, as death came for him on June 27, 2018, when he was 86.

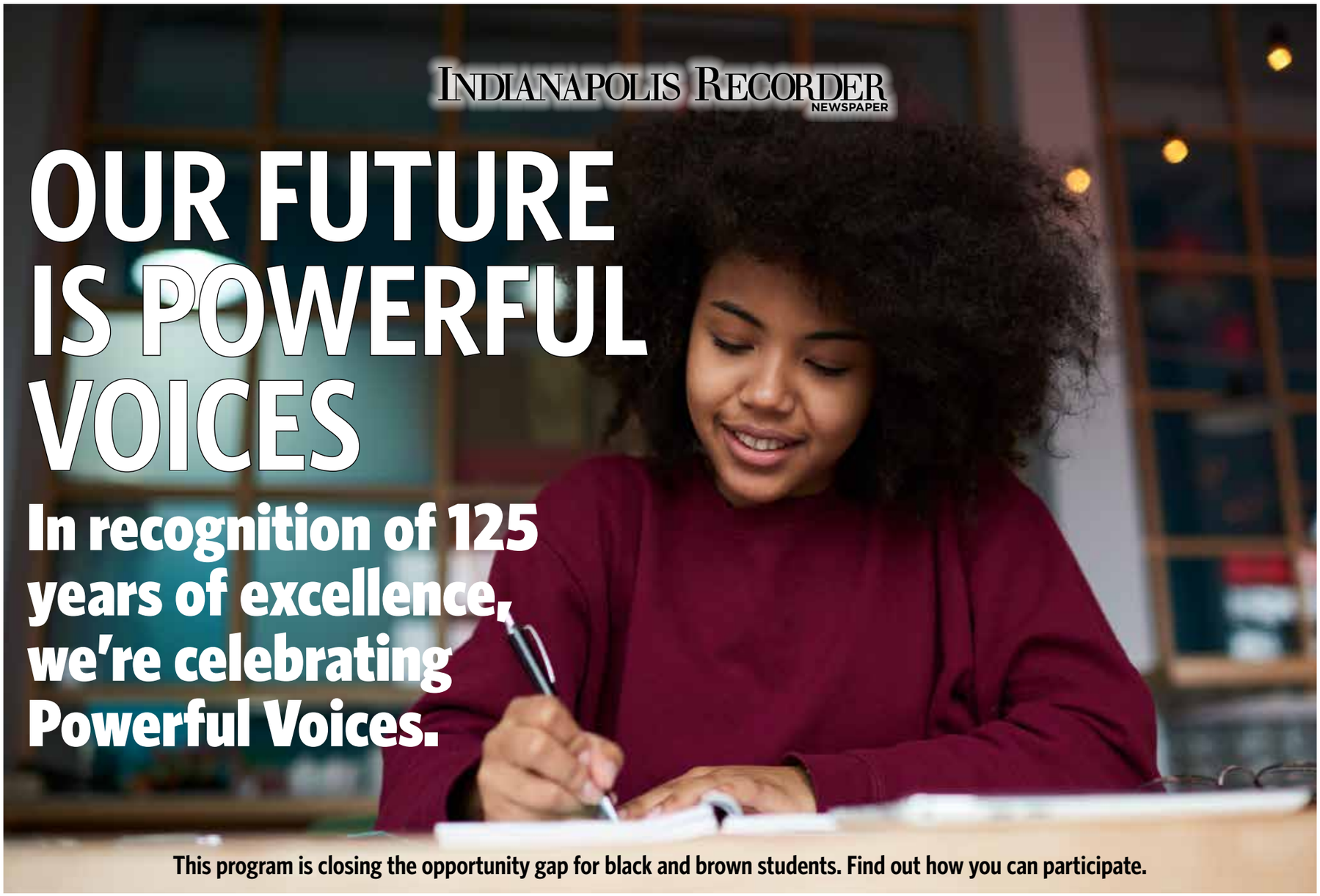
His son remembers some of his father's last words:

"I know that me being placed in hospice means that I've come to the end of my life," he told his family. "I know that this is going to kill me. But it doesn't worry me, because I've faced death so many times before. Maybe this time, I won't be able to beat it."

He left behind his memory, his honors and his influence.

"He always tried to fight things he thought were wrong," said his son, to whom Davey Lockett remains a hero.

"I've always wanted to be like my father."



RAISING THE BAR FOR JOURNALISM

JAWS has helped black and brown students for the last 27 years to develop skills, make industry connections and launch their careers from an early age.

We've launched this fundraising effort to reach more young people and to inspire and invest in these students in minority communities, right here in Indianapolis. The future of our work–not just of the Indianapolis Recorder–but the future of journalism itself depends upon these talented young people, and they depend on you.

Investing in children in all forms of broadcast media.

We have already seen that investing in our children makes a difference for minority children, but also for the broadcast and journalism industry as a whole. The journalism and broadcast media industry needs distinct and compelling voices, including voices who bring diversity and perspective to the profession.

SUPPORT FUTURE POWERFUL VOICES.

At Indianapolis Recorder, the last 125 years have been impactful to our whole community, and we want to ensure that we continue on that path of success by investing in youth. The JAWS program develops professional journalism industry skills for children in broadcast media, videography, graphic design, digital media and writing.

Indianapolis Recorder is asking you to join us. Because of mentors, visionaries and donors like you, our future is Powerful Voices.

To donate today please visit:
https://secure.givelively.org/donate/indianapolis-recorder-charities-inc/powerful-voices

KELLI JONES WANTS TECH TO WORK FOR BLACK PEOPLE, TOO

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Kelli Jones sees a two-sided problem when it comes to making sure Black business owners can take advantage of the opportunities in technology.

First, many Black business owners just don't have the necessary access to capital for technology, which Jones refers to as more like a business model than an industry.

"The way we've seen the technology field erupt, historically Black people have not had the same ability to access those fields," she said.

Then there's the perception of what a Black-owned business is: usually a small mom-and-pop that provides a service and relies mostly on word-of-mouth advertising.

"That's not all we are and all we do," Jones said, while adding there's still a tendency for new Black business owners to "shy away" from being a tech-based business. That has made life especially difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic, when there's much less traditional interaction than normal.

Jones wants to help solve these problems, and she's developed a few ways to do it.

Jones is co-founder of Be Nimble, which launched in 2016. The nonprofit trains people in technology and then helps place them in tech careers ranging from coding to sales. The organization also guides start-up entrepreneurs through business accelerators, workshops and pitch competitions.

Be Nimble's venture capital arm, Sixty8 Capital, focuses on investing in Black, brown, women, LGBTQ and disabled founders. (Numerous studies show most venture capital funds go to college-educated white male founders.)

There is also an annual fundraiser, Pardi Gras, which raises money for coding camps and other programs, and

Kelli Jones

founders working in the accelerator can pitch their business in a competition to win money.

Jones has been doing this work for a while. She was previously director of sales and marketing at HipHopDX and worked in business development and partnerships at Blavity.

Technology is exciting and useful, and Jones wants to make sure Black business owners can take full advantage of it. But training people and helping them find jobs in tech can also be a path to generational wealth, something Black people haven't even been allowed to accumulate for much of America's history.

"They are jobs that pay significantly more than a lot of the jobs that are currently out there," Jones said.

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

DECADES LATER, LEWIS' WORDS STILL RING TRUE

STAFF REPORT

In this Feb. 3, 1979, article that was printed on the Recorder's Editorials and Opinions page, civil rights advocate John Lewis urged his fellow African Americans to volunteer their time and talents to help one another.

"In the war on hunger, poverty, and disease, there can be no conscientious objectors, no waiting for a better time to become involved," he writes.

Roughly seven years after penning this editorial, Lewis was elected to Congress; he served as U.S. Representative of Georgia's Fifth Congressional District until his death in 2020.

Though this piece was written through Lewis' perspective as director of federal volunteer agency ACTION (he was appointed to the post by President Jimmy Carter in 1977), its sentiment is as relevant as ever: "As black Americans, we are not home free in our own struggle, but we can afford to reach out and lend a helping hand to others."

BLACK HISTORY: A TRADITION OF CARING

By JOHN LEWIS

(Editors note: John Lewis, longtime civil rights advocate and former director of the Voter Education Project (VEP) now serves as Associate Director of ACTION, the federal volunteer agency whose programs include Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and the Peace Corps.)

February is Black History Month — a time to look at the past and plan for the future — an appropriate time for black people to consider committing a year or two of their lives in helping others, either through VISTA or the Peace Corps.

February is also Peace Corps/VISTA Month, a time to salute over 132,000 men and women who have shared their skills, experience, and dedication as Peace Corps or VISTA volunteers over the years.

Black people have a tradition of struggle, a sense of caring for others, and history of involvement in the movement for human dignity. I see many parallels between serving as a Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer and participation in the civil rights movement which was so effective in the past two decades.

It takes a special kind of person, an unusual person, to be a Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer, just as it took the initiative of a special few to spark the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Black history records that our revolutionary movements were sparked, not by the majority of students on any college campus or the general population of any neighborhood or town, but by the audacity of a courageous, committed, caring few.

John Lewis

Being a Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer requires the same kind of courage and commitment as the sit-ins or the Freedom Rides of the early 1960s. It takes an individual who believes change is possible — one who is willing to invest time, energy and love work which uplifts others.

VISTA and the Peace Corps comprise an army of volunteers in much the same sense as did the civil rights movement. This is a nonviolent army, a movement to help people help themselves, a movement to enhance the quality of life for people on a sugar cane plantation in the South, in the ghettos of our nation's urban areas, on Indian reservations, in the barrios of the Southwest, and in 63 nations around the world.

It is a movement to help those who are forgotten in a sea of poverty, those left out and left behind, the underclasses of the world.

No one can help a community organization deal with problems created by poverty like someone who has been there. VISTA volunteers work in rural and urban areas, in projects such as organizing nutrition and health programs, assisting farmer and consumer cooperatives, bringing together tenant and neighborhood groups to rehabilitate housing, or setting up centers for battered spouses, to name only a few.

More than half of the 4,000 VISTAs today serve in their own communities. About 15 percent are low-income men and women who are building their own skills and leadership capacities through volunteer service. Twelve percent of all VISTAs are over 60.

The Peace Corps needs volunteers of all ages and backgrounds. Some of the 7,000 current volunteers are just out of college, while 15 percent are over the age of 55. Developing countries request volunteers with experience in farming, technical and blue collar skills and involvement in a variety of health fields.

The struggle in which black people are involved is a human struggle, a universal struggle. Whether you're in Mississippi, Maine, the Philippines, or Tanzania, the struggle is one of the men and women striving to realize their own potential. In the war on hunger, poverty, and disease, there can be no conscientious objectors, no waiting for a better time to become involved. As Martin Luther King. Jr. taught us: "The time is always right to do right."

As black Americans, we are not home free in our own struggle, but we can afford to reach out and lend a helping hand to others. We have riches to share — perhaps not financial resources, but we have abilities, skills, training, education, and, most of all, that tradition of caring which extends to the entire human family.

During Black History Month and Peace Corps VISTA Month, it is my hope that black Americans of all ages will make or renew a commitment to the struggle for human dignity by volunteering to serve. It is written, "As you give, so shall you receive."

The NAACP, the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized civil rights organization, is working to eliminate racial hatred and discrimination in Central Indiana. If you've been targeted by police in Hamilton County because of your race, we want to hear from you. Scan the code above or go to indynaacp.org to share your story.

In 2020, the NAACP worked to improve voter turnout, voter education and voter protection. We worked to reform the criminal justice system. We investigated discrimination complaints. We worked for equity in education and sought to reduce childhood lead poisoning. We educated the African-American community about COVID-19. These are just some of our accomplishments.

Are you with us? Stand up for equality in 2021.

Learn more and become a member of the Greater Indianapolis NAACP at indynaacp.org.

WHITLEY YATES IS 'UNBOUGHT AND UNBOTHERED'

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

Whitley Yates couldn't understand as a 12-year-old why her grandfather would send her to live at a children's home. It didn't make sense for years.

Yates' grandparents adopted her because her parents weren't ready to take care of a child. Living with her grandparents was "one of the biggest blessings," Yates said, but then her grandmother died, and her grandfather said he was getting too old to take care of her on his own.

"I felt abandoned," Yates said of going to the children's home in Knightstown, "like it was the worst thing that could ever happen to me."

What she didn't realize then was living in that home with 20 other girls laid the foundation for everything to come. It's where Yates learned how to hunt and fish. She joined the rifle team at Camp Atterbury in Edinburgh. Her views on the Second Amendment, the military — itallstarted at the children's home.

Yates is now director of diversity and engagement for the Indiana Republican Party. Her job is to develop relationships with diverse communities across Indiana and help the GOP become more diverse.

Yates, 31, has been back in Indiana since 2017 following stays in Memphis, Tennessee, and California. She has a 6-year-old daughter, Monroe, whom Yates said is already interested in politics.

Yates wanted to get involved in politics and joined Republican Jim Merritt's campaign for mayor of Indianapolis in 2019. She was one of the key players in Merritt's Black agenda.

Whitley Yates

It was a win-winfor Black people, she said, because even if Merritt lost — he did — it's not like he could go back to the Statehouse, where he was a senator until he retired in November 2020,and shy away from what he'd been talking about as a candidate for mayor.

Yates prefers to work in the background of politics, in part because it's easier to say what she needs to say and not have to worry about getting people's votes.

"I'm able to be unbought and unbothered," she said.

Plus, Yates gets a firsthand look at how the public dissects political candidates' lives.

"Your life is on display and up for interpretation," she said. "It's rather time consuming, and sometimes it can be an energy drain."

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

HISTORIC PLACES IN INDIANAPOLIS YOU CAN VISIT TODAY

Crispus Attucks High School

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and named after the first man to die in the Boston Massacre, Attucks was built in 1927 as a segregated high school for Blacks. The high school was a leader in sports, music, debate and science. In 1970, the school integrated.

(L-R) Madam C.J. Walker, Booker T. Washington and (back) Freeman Ransom

Ransom Place Historic District

This legendary district was named after Freeman Ransom, manager and attorney for Madam C.J. Walker. It was home to many prominent African Americans during the 1800s and early 1900s.

Madam Walker Theatre

The Walker was built in 1927 by the daughter of America's first Black millionaire, Madam C.J. Walker. Walker, an entrepreneur and philanthropist, made her fortune selling beauty products designed for African Americans.