



MERRICK WASHINGTON MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2019

News

**'No People Has a Greater
Claim to That Flag Than Us'**

Nikole Hannah-Jones discusses the
1619 Project and how it is reframing
the way we look at American history.

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Duke professor Thavolia
Glymph shines light on
untold stories of black
women in Civil War

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The Most Modest Trailblazer



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The bricks and mortar library services were operated by an all-volunteer board until 1967 when a new integrated public library system was created by merging the colored system into the historically white system.

DCL, Inc. has retained its non-profit status and evolved to focus on managing projects that lift up stories about African Americans, both current and historical, to create a more comprehensive picture of the American experience.

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Thank you!

The Merrick Washington Magazine

The Merrick Washington Magazine is one of DCL, Inc.'s longstanding projects, and was originally called the *Negro Braille Magazine*.



Lyda Moore
Merrick

b. 11/19/1890
d. 02/14/1987)

Founded in 1952 by Lyda Moore Merrick on the encouragement of John Carter Washington. It was the first publication of its kind.

She self-published the magazine for more than 20 years – financing it with her husband, Ed Merrick's contributions.



John Carter
Washington

(b. 02/02/19
d.01/30/2017)

The *Negro Braille Magazine's* name was changed to the *Merrick Washington Magazine* in 1975 when DCL, Inc. adopted the project. Mrs. Merrick continued to consult with the magazine's new editorial staff until 1985.

In 2013 the DCL, Inc. Board expanded the magazine to include a large-print edition for low-vision readers once they learned that most blind readers preferred audio content. Also, the Braille readers addresses were becoming obsolete. DCL, Inc. then discontinued the Braille edition and began to focus on the low vision population and expanding availability of its large-print edition.

Today, the magazine is distributed to 1,000 or more readers twice a year.

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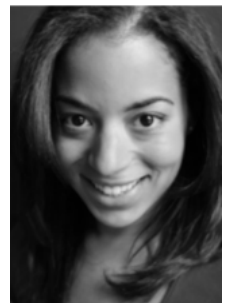
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Marian Anderson, the legendary Black contralto opera singer on this issue's cover, often referred to herself as "we" when she spoke as a nod to her community and ancestors. In her music and activism, she acknowledged the shoulders on which she stood and recognized that progress requires pushing for change while also knowing our history.

As MWM selects articles for its issues, we keep this duality in mind – we feature stories about people advancing change and innovating new ideas, while also celebrating historical heroes who forged pathways and shattered ceilings.

To honor our history, we are excited to feature a story that provides insight into Marian Anderson, who's incomparable voice, brave civil rights activism, and resilient spirit helped break down racial barriers throughout her lifetime. We have also included an article that focuses on the strength that Black women needed to endure the Civil War. And (despite being overdue in my opinion), we're happy to report that youngsters can now get a barbie doll of Rosa Parks as a way to learn about the "mother of the civil rights movement."

The bravery, ingenuity, and selflessness of those women helped open doors for future generations, like Whitney Robinson and Henry Willis, two young entrepreneurs who are addressing the poor quality of maternal health and mental health, respectively, for Black people. Writer Nikole Hannah-Jones is shifting popular historical narratives with her new 1619 Project, which unpacks the deep, still-present systemic impact of slavery on the U.S. far beyond what many of us have been taught. And Haben Girma – a deaf, blind Harvard-trained lawyer – no doubt carries the strength and resilience of her ancestors across the African diaspora. We hope you enjoy reading!



- Brandi Sansom Stewart
MWM Editor

GENERAL NEWS

Rosa Parks Honored with a Barbie Doll on Women's Equality Day

By - Julia Webster

Time Magazine | August 27, 2019 (EXCERPT)



Civil rights activist Rosa Parks is being honored with her own Barbie doll.

The toy company Mattel unveiled the new doll for Women's Equality Day on August 26 as part of a range dedicated to celebrating inspiring women.

Parks became known as "the mother of the civil rights movement" after she refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Alabama. Her arrest in 1955 started the Montgomery Bus Boycott which led to the desegregation of the transport system.

The Rosa Parks doll is part of the Inspiring Women Series, dolls based on historical figures that come with educational information about the contributions each woman made to society, as well as authentic clothing, according to CNN.

The series also includes a doll honoring Sally Ride, the first American woman in space.

Mattel unveiled the Inspiring Women Series to mark International Women's Day last year, with 17 new dolls representing real women to serve as role models that included Olympic snowboarding champion Chloe Kim, artist and activist Frida Kahlo and Wonder Woman filmmaker Patty Jenkins.

"Girls have always been able to play out different roles and careers with Barbie and we are thrilled to shine a light on real life role models to remind them that they can be anything," Lisa McKnight, Senior Vice President And General Manager of Barbie, said in a statement.

The company's decision was based on a global survey of mothers, in which 86% said they were worried about the kind of role models their daughters were exposed to.

Some have criticized the new dolls for maintaining the unrealistic proportions and features of the original Barbie.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2k5hZt4>

She's deaf, blind, and made it to Harvard Law – but Haben Girma doesn't believe in 'grit'. Here's why.

By - Rachel Genevieve Chia Singapore
Business Insider | April 23, 2019 (EXCERPT)

Despite winning numerous awards and honors, Haben Girma, 30, thinks championing 'grit' takes away society's responsibility to remove barriers to success, particularly for the disabled.

Haben Girma doesn't like the word "grit".

When I suggest the word as a descriptor at an interview in Singapore before her talk hosted by the Singapore Committee for UN Women, Girma's fingers pause on the refreshable braille display she uses to take questions, and she frowns.

Her sign language interpreter interrupts to ask what the word means. (Girma knows what grit means, but the interpreter doesn't.)

Popularised by psychologist Angela Duckworth, the term – which is something of a cross between perseverance and passion – is claimed by some to be a better predictor of success than talent or smarts. It has since been attributed liberally among startup CEOs as the reason why some companies take off, while others

don't. If anyone should embody grit, it's 30-year-old Girma, who is black, blind, and deaf, but graduated from Harvard Law School in 2013, and within three years found herself on



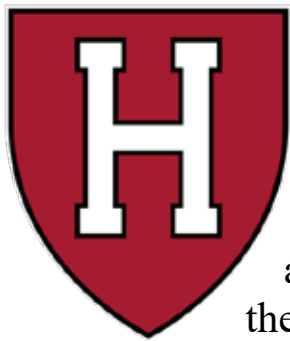
Forbes' 30 under 30 list.

But the lawyer, whose parents are African-American immigrants, doesn't like how the word "puts the burden on the individual to toughen up and work through challenges".

"All my successes have been because people around me, such as my employers, have been very inclusive," she said. Throughout her childhood,

Girma was “fortunate” to attend schools who honoured her requests for disability support. In Harvard, for example, the university provided voice transliteration services, where transliterators described text on the whiteboard, and conversations and lectures in class, into a microphone connected to her earphones.

Girma’s parents were not highly educated. Her father is an Ethiopian living in California, while her mother was a refugee from Eritrea. They only had one piece of advice for their daughter: do well in school. Girma did, graduating the valedictorian of her year at Lewis and Clark College with a Bachelor’s in sociology and anthropology.



The good grades, glowing testimonials and unique personal statement sailed her through Harvard admissions to become the university’s first deaf-blind student.

Girma went on to work as an attorney for US nonprofit Disability Rights Advocates, where she won a landmark lawsuit against popular online library Scribd to make their documents accessible to blind people. (Most legal tasks involve reading and writing, which she can do by connecting the braille display to a computer, she

explained.) Along the way, she collected a slew of awards and honours, including the Alexandrine Medal. Today, she does public speaking to raise awareness about making products and services accessible to the disabled.

Yet Girma insists none of this is grit. She does not like the narrative of a disabled person successfully overcoming disability. Society needs to change, she insists. It needs to remove the barriers it created that make it difficult for people to succeed, particularly those with disabilities such as depression.

She also cautions against burnout. “Lots of people want to achieve everything, but no one can do that, she says. “When I am stressed, I give myself time to pause and relax. I accept my limitations, and that helps me to reduce exhaustion.”

“Instead of trying to do everything, I pick one or two things and try to do them well, and just believe that the other things will get done in their own time.”

Millennials don’t deserve to be labelled “entitled”

Another thing Girma doesn’t like? Hearing millennials – her generation – labelled as technology-dependent and entitled.

“Many people frame technology as the cause of laziness,” she said. “While this stereotype might have emerged because of a grain of truth, most millennials I know defy expectations and use technology to achieve new things.”

In fact, one of Girma’s tech inventions is a keyboard setup that lets people converse with her – the same setup used at our interview.

To address her, a person types a message into a regular wireless keyboard, which is connected to the braille display. The device translates the input into braille, which Girma can read.

As she has a little hearing in the high frequencies, Girma has trained herself to reply in a high speaking tone.

After first discovering the keyboard in 2010 – her first year at Harvard – Girma was able to converse easily with

her classmates for the first time in her life.

“In middle school, I had no friends,” she says. “Things like having a spoken conversation or eye contact, which are the basis of most friendships and relationships, were not accessible to me. I felt really stuck, not having a way to communicate.”

“My own life is enhanced through technology,” she adds. “All my successes have been because people around me, such as my employers, have been very inclusive,”

She adds: “I felt like people were finally ready to converse with me in law school. They were more mature, and less afraid to seem uncool.”

The invention has helped her to participate in many previously-inaccessible situations, such as legal networking sessions (her interpreter will invite attorneys to type a message to start the conversation) – and let her speak to former US President Barack Obama at the White House in 2015.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2L8nBzx>

The 1619 Project

‘No People Has a Greater Claim to That Flag Than Us’
Nikole Hannah-Jones discusses the 1619 Project and how it is reframing the way we look at American history.

By - Pierre-Antoine Louis

The New York Times | September 6, 2019 (EXCERPT)

The headquarters of The New York Times is in a busy area of Manhattan where the sidewalks are always bustling. But on the Thursday before the Labor Day weekend, there were larger-than-usual crowds in front of our entrance. And they were after copies of one of the most exciting pieces of journalism we’ve produced in a while.

We were handing out 2,000 free copies of our 1619 Project, which has caused quite a sensation in the three weeks since it was published.

As a black man born and educated in the United States, I found that the 1619 Project — comprising a special edition of our Sunday magazine, a section of the newspaper, a kids section, a five-part podcast and a curriculum — opened my eyes to the impact slavery has had in America far beyond what I was taught in school. It was conceived by Nikole Hannah-Jones, a staff writer for the Times Magazine. I sat down with Nikole, who is a friend, to discuss the project and the reaction to it.

Who was the audience you had in mind? Americans who are not black, so that

they could understand this history and ongoing legacy and really reckon with our true identity as a country and who we really are. I wanted to reframe the way that we see this history and the way that we see ourselves.

I also did it specifically for black folks. I think my opening essay is really written to black Americans. We have always been treated as a problem here, made to feel as if we are not full citizens of our country, been made to feel ashamed of the fact that our story here starts with enslavement.

I really wanted us to be liberated of that and to understand the pivotal role that we have played in this country, and to believe, as I argue in the piece, that no one has a greater claim to this flag and this country and patriotism than we do, because we have fought for it the hardest.

You begin your essay by talking about your father, who hoisted an American flag in your front lawn for years when you were a child. You described this as being an embarrassment when you were young, but then you realized “no people has a greater claim to that

flag than us” — “us” being black Americans. Is this statement meant to be a patriotic one?

Absolutely — I mean, surprisingly, because I’ve never considered myself a particularly patriotic person. But what



I’m arguing is that our founding ideals were great and powerful. Had we in fact built a country based on those

founding ideals, then we would have the most amazing country the earth has ever seen.

But black people took those ideals very literally, and have fought to make those ideals real. And because of that, I say that we are — as much as the white founders whom we recognize — that we are the founding fathers of this country.

So yes, it is patriotism, but not that type of blind, performative patriotism that is simply about trying to camouflage the nation’s sins and not trying to fight for the true ideals. But the type of patriotism, I think, that says: If you love your country, you

have to fight to make your country the country that it should be.

The project covers a lot of territory, demonstrating how food, traffic, health, culture, music and many other subjects are connected to slavery in America. Is there a particular piece in the project that you feel is especially profound in this regard?

The entire special issue is making an argument, and every essay is just a scope in that argument. So, I wouldn’t call out a particular essay, because I think all of them are necessary.

Two of my favorite aspects of it are the pieces of literary fiction that are throughout the magazine. So much of the issue was just devastating and hard, and about all the ways that this country tried to deprive black Americans of their humanity and their citizenship.

And yet, out of four million enslaved people who are in this country at the end of the Civil War, we have become 40 million descendants. And that is such a powerful testament to the resiliency of our ancestors, our grandparents, our parents. And so, I needed to end on something that showed that we have survived, and we are attempting to thrive.

To read more: <https://nyti.ms/2lYeSUa>

Lego Is Making Braille Bricks. They May Give Blind Literacy a Needed Lift.

By - Sarah Mervosh

The New York Times | April 27, 2019 (EXCERPT)



When Carlton Cook Walker’s young daughter developed health problems that led to near-total blindness, she knew she wanted her to learn Braille. But the family’s school, in rural central Pennsylvania, was resistant. A teacher pointed out that the girl, then in preschool, could still read print — as long as it was in 72-point type and held inches from her face.

“I said, ‘What about when she is in high school? How will she read Dickens like this?’” recalled Ms. Cook Walker, whose daughter, Anna, is now 18. “The teacher’s response was chilling: ‘Oh, she’ll just use audio.’”

So Ms. Cook Walker took matters into her own hands. In addition to successfully advocating Braille in her daughter’s school, she bought used children’s books, embossed Braille dots alongside the text and rebound them, teaching Anna to read through the stories of “The Berenstain Bears” and “Clifford the Big Red Dog.”

Now, a new effort is underway to ease challenges like these and help blind and visually impaired children more naturally learn to read Braille, a system based on different configurations of six small, raised dots that blind people

read with their fingertips. And it is coming in the form of a favorite childhood toy: Lego bricks.

This week, the Lego Foundation, which is funded by the Lego Group, the Danish toy company that makes the blocks, announced a new project that will repurpose the usual knobs atop the bricks as Braille dots. And because the blocks will also be stamped with the corresponding written letter, number or punctuation symbol, they can be played with by blind and sighted children alike. The project, called Lego Braille Bricks, is in a pilot phase and is expected to be released in partnership with schools and associations for the blind in 2020.

“When they get Lego in their hands, it’s intuitive for them,” said Diana Ringe Krogh, who is overseeing the project for the Lego Foundation. “They learn Braille almost without noticing that they are learning. It is really a learning-through-play approach.”

Advocates say the product could transform reading for blind and visually impaired children, making the experience of learning Braille more inclusive and helping to combat what

has been called a “Braille literacy crisis.” Though the research is limited, some estimates suggest that just 10 percent of blind children in the United States learn to read Braille, even though Braille literacy is associated with better job outcomes for adults. In 2017, less than half of American adults with visual impairments were employed, according to a disability report by Cornell University.

Braille, once widely taught in schools for the blind, has fallen by the wayside since the 1970s, when the law began requiring public schools to offer equal education to children with disabilities. Blind students were able to join their sighted peers in the classroom, but traditional schools, biased toward sight and facing a lack of specialized teachers, often pushed children with any sight at all to rely on magnified print. And an explosion of accessible technologies, including audiobooks, apps and screen readers, has strengthened reliance on audio, which advocates say cannot effectively teach critical skills like spelling and grammar, let alone complicated math.

“Audio can give you information, but it can’t give you literacy,” said Chris Danielsen, a spokesman for the National Federation of the Blind, which offers summer programs to teach Braille through hands-on activities.

Paul Parravano, who went blind from retinal cancer as a toddler, said Braille was critical to his job working in government relations at M.I.T. He uses it to write and give speeches, keep track of his calendar and take notes in meetings.

“If I’m sitting in a meeting and my boss asks me a question about a piece of information, I can’t go stick an earphone in my ear and look it up if I’m in a meeting with a senator or member of Congress,” Mr. Parravano said.

He even uses Braille to get dressed for work; a labeling system helps him match clothes that he cannot see. For example, if “a suit is No. 50,” he said, “my file system says that will go with tie No. 46 and shirt No. 32.”

But many children don’t learn Braille, not only because teachers and parents often lack the technical skills to teach it, but also because the experience can be isolating for young children, who must rely on separate books and machines from those used by their classmates.

Mr. Parravano learned Braille on his own in the 1950s. His mother taught him at home, he said, using a homemade block of wood and six marbles, which represented the six dots in the code.

To read more: <https://nyti.ms/2H4GJKu>

HISTORY

Duke Professor shines light on untold stories of black women in Civil War

By - Preetha Ramachandran

Duke Chronicle | September 6, 2019 (EXCERPT)

Thavolia Glymph, professor of history and law, opened a Wednesday talk with an untold story from the Combahee Ferry Raid, in which Harriet Tubman helped rescue hundreds of enslaved people during the Civil War.

The room was nearly silent as Glymph painted a picture of a young black girl who made it within 19 yards of a Union boat to safety, only to be captured by Confederate soldiers.

She recounted many similar stories of enslaved persons trying to escape during the Civil War and focused on the silenced stories of black women in the post-Civil War period at the event entitled “Civil War Refugee Camps: Camp ‘Commandants’ and Black Women and Children.” Safety was not guaranteed, Glymph noted, as those who escaped often faced hardship and abuse in Union refugee camps.

“War-related death and trauma defined the lives of many Americans,” Glymph

said. “But for African

American women, much of this trauma appears as an unspectacular disability and has been invisible in our scholarship.”

Glymph first spoke of our current understanding of the Civil War. She emphasized that the story of the war cannot be reduced to a single statistic, such as the war’s 700,000 casualties.

“The Civil War claimed the lives of black people in large numbers and the lives of black women in larger numbers than white women,” Glymph said. “It claimed the lives of black children in larger numbers than white children. But black children have not figured into the calculation of the price paid during the war or after the war”.

It is for this reason that Glymph’s work aims to amplify and bring to light the stories of trauma that start from the “dilapidated” refugee camps for black



women and children but extend far beyond the end of the war.

Glymph's talk focused on the stories of two black women: Latisha Taylor, a soldier's widow, and Union nurse Ann Stokes. Both women applied for federal government pensions, only to be met with intrusive questioning in Taylor's case and invasive medical examinations in Stokes'.

Northern white women would never have been forced to endure these experiences, Glymph said.

It is for this reason that she considers the lives of Taylor and Stokes cases of



“slow violence,” a reference to the idea of violence and destruction dispersed over time described by Rob Nixon, Currie C. and Thomas A. Barron family professor in the humanities and the environment at Princeton University.

These stories of slow violence are not included in traditional accounts of Civil War history, Glymph said.

“Women like [Taylor and Stokes] are absent—hardly a book on the Civil War mentions such women or mentions the casualties among black women and children,” she said.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/3237FTc>

How 13 migrations of African-Americans changed the nation

USA Today - Afi-Odelia Scruggs | March 6, 2019

(EXCERPT)

1. Trans-Atlantic slave trade, 1450–1867

More than 12 million Africans were brought to the Americas during this trade. About 500,000 of them were taken to the USA. The bulk went to South America and the Caribbean.

2. Runaway journeys, 1630s–1865

About 50,000 people a year attempted to



escape slavery, but only a few

thousand made it to freedom. Escapees usually came from the upper South. After passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, blacks headed to Canada, to rural areas near Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, and to all-black communities.

3. Domestic slave trade, 1760s–1865

Roughly 1.2 million people were displaced.

Early on, slaves were moved south from northern colonies such as Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts. In later years, slaves were exported from the upper South to the Deep South.

4. Colonization and emigration, 1783–1910s

Blacks seeking freedom from oppression migrated from the USA to Canada, Haiti, Mexico and, most often, Africa. Immigration to Africa peaked between 1848 and 1854.

5. Haitian immigration, 1791–1809

From the 1790s to 1809, thousands of refugees settled in the USA, mostly in formerly French Louisiana, during the Haitian revolution.

The population included Creole whites as well as free blacks, although the

latter's attempts to migrate were met with resistance.

6. Western migration, 1840s–1970s

This migration started before the Civil War, when free blacks left Northern states to homestead in the West.

After emancipation, former slaves fleeing white terrorism in the South homesteaded in Kansas, Oklahoma and often as far as Utah. After World War II, blacks seeking work moved to California, Oregon and Washington.



7. Northern migration, 1840s–1890s

Before and after the Civil War, free blacks left the South for a less oppressive life in the North. The earliest destinations were cities closer to the South, such as Cincinnati, but large numbers also moved to Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and Buffalo.

8. The Great Migration, 1916 -1930

About 1.5 million people left the South for the North, lured by the prospect of

industrial jobs. The movement was a first step in the urbanization of the African-American population.

9. The Second Great Migration, 1940-1970

- An estimated 5 million people left the South for the North and West.
- By the end of the 1970s, the African-American population had almost completely shifted

from rural to urban. More than 80 percent of blacks lived in cities, compared with 70 percent of whites.

10. Caribbean immigration, 1900–present

More than 1.5 million Afro-Caribbeans represent about 5 percent of the black population.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2Ms5TEn>

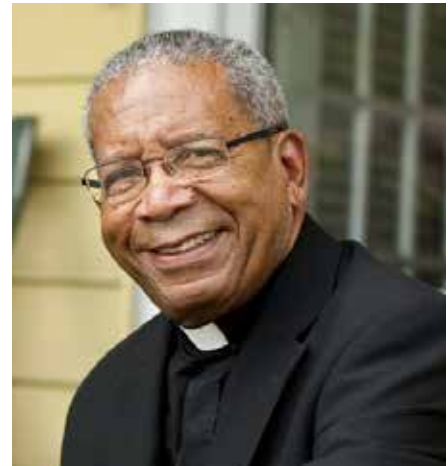
Despite black Catholicism’s rich history, African American priests are hard to find

By - Caitlin Yoshiko Kandil

Angelus News | March 6, 2019 (EXCERPT)

William King knew he wanted to be a priest since he was 4 years old. He traces the decision to one of his childhood priests, Father Greg Chisholm, a Jesuit who once served as pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Church in Jefferson Park. Like King, Chisholm is African American, and seeing him in this role planted the idea that he, too, could become a priest someday.

When King was in high school, another African American priest, Father Allan Roberts, the late pastor of St. Bernadette Church, took him under his wing and nurtured this vocation.



King, 22, aspired to be like them — strong preachers, personable and good caretakers of their parishes — and their presence proved to him that priesthood was a viable path for African Americans. So after graduating high school in 2015, he entered Juan Diego House, a seminary for men aiming to become priests for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

“It made a huge impact to know that black men like myself could be in a role that’s predominantly seen as white

or Latino — and that I could do it well,” he said.

But his experience is not the norm. Many black men in Los Angeles have never known an African American priest, and vocation stories like King’s are becoming increasingly rare.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles — the nation’s most diverse Catholic diocese, where worship and ministry happen in more than 40 languages — has ordained only one U.S.-born African American priest in its 82-year history.

Roberts, King’s mentor, became the first African American priest ordained by the archdiocese in 1980, but since his death in 2016, Los Angeles has had no African American diocesan priests.

While black priests have served in the city as part of religious orders, and African-born priests have headed diocesan parishes, Los Angeles has long been missing African American priests to minister to the estimated 150,000 black Catholics in the area.

“I believe that God has called black men to the priesthood in the Catholic Church, so it’s not about the call. It’s that we have not done our best to recruit them and to sustain that vocation.”

“It’s the reality of many of our dioceses,” said Father Stephen Thorne,

a priest with the National Black Catholic Congress.

The underrepresentation of African Americans in the priesthood is nothing new, said Matthew Cressler, author of the 2017 book, “Authentically Black and Truly Catholic.”

Even though Catholics of African descent have been in the Americas

“for as long as there have been Catholics in the Americas,” he said, the Church has long resisted their presence in the clergy.

The first priests of African descent in the U.S. passed for white, and it wasn’t until 1886 that the U.S. had an openly black priest. Even then, it wasn’t because American Catholics had accepted racial equality in the clergy.

Augustus Tolton — who was born to enslaved parents — applied to seminaries across the country with the help of an Irish priest he had been studying with in Illinois, said Cressler. But no seminary would accept him because he was black, so he instead had to study in Rome, where he was eventually ordained. (Tolton’s cause for sainthood is now in process.)

“The institutional Church for the majority of its history has acted as



most white-dominated institutions did, which is that they barred ordination, education, and even encouraging of black vocations,” said Cressler, who is also an assistant professor of religious studies at the College of Charleston in South Carolina.

It wasn’t until the mid-20th century that black priests were ordained in larger numbers in the U.S., Cressler said. But many black men still faced significant obstacles to get there, including harassment and hostility from fellow seminarians.

Others were diverted away from diocesan seminaries and toward missionary orders that catered specifically to African Americans, such as the Society of the Divine Word and St. Joseph’s Society of the Sacred Heart — a process Cressler called a “siloing of black vocations.” And when the United States faced a priest shortage, Cressler said, many churches brought in priests from the Global South. So, while African American vocations remain low, the number of African-born priests has risen.

Today, of the 3 million African American Catholics living in the United States, only eight are active bishops, 250 are priests, and 75 are

seminarians in formation for the priesthood, according to the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“I believe that God has called black men to the priesthood in the Catholic Church, so it’s not about the call. It’s that we have not done our best to recruit them and to sustain that vocation.”

“We are still reckoning with the inheritances of this long tradition where, for most of its history in the United States — really up until the last half-century or so — the Catholic

Church was recognized to be the providence of the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of European immigrants,” Cressler said.

This history of discrimination is not so easily undone, said Anderson Shaw, director of the African American Catholic Center for Evangelization in Los Angeles, and is one reason that so few African Americans are part of the clergy today.

“There wasn’t a family that didn’t know someone who tried to get into seminary and was turned away by white folks,” he said of the Jim Crow era. “When someone was treated poorly, families developed an attitude that was passed down generations that you don’t want your son to go through that, so they haven’t encouraged them to become priests.”

Even if African Americans do enter seminary, it's not always an easy path. Deacon Mark Race, of Transfiguration Church in Leimert Park, called it a form of culture shock.

When he applied to seminary, he was asked why he wanted to be a deacon. "I remember saying that I wanted to be a deacon so that I could come back to my community, represent the archdiocese and show an African American face as clergy," he said. "And I was told point-blank that you're not being ordained for your community — you're being ordained for the diocese. Initially that was hard to swallow." In addition, he said, the style of worship he had grown up with wasn't taught at seminary.

"They're not singing your songs, they're not praying your prayers, they're not preaching the way you preach, they're not doing anything the way you learned it," he said.

"What you're bringing almost has to be strained out of you so that you can learn what's called the 'proper' way of worshipping, the 'proper' way for liturgy, the 'proper' way for doing things," he went on. "It's a whole new type of learning. So it's difficult, especially for a young man who's been in the African American community his whole life."

King, who entered seminary in 2015, agreed. Several of his fellow seminarians told him



that they didn't like the African American style of worship — singing, dancing, call, and response — or that it was liturgically incorrect.

"If we trace our Christian roots, we know that it started with different people in different villages in their homes, celebrating the Eucharist in different languages," he said. "So why can't African Americans worship and celebrate how they feel comfortable?" Father Samuel Ward, vocations director for the archdiocese, said these types of incidents show "unfamiliarity and ignorance" with African American culture.

"When people say, 'We don't do Gospel here,' it's just because you haven't done it here before," he said. "And that's different from a dogmatic law of 'No, we can't.' "

But for many African American men, these dynamics can be a deterrent to entering the seminary, said King. He was able to endure these challenges with the support of a network of black priests across the country.

His mentor, Roberts, died during his first year at Juan Diego House, so he had to look beyond Los Angeles for guidance from other African American priests who understood what he was going through.

“Having them in my corner really gave me a sense of hope,” he said.

But these and other incidents weighed on King, and a year-and-a-half into his

formation he decided to leave. It was a combination of factors, he said — personal, spiritual, academic — as well as a realization that the seminary was no longer a good fit for his goals. So, in 2016 he withdrew from Juan Diego House.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2nxv7Jd>

Our own ‘Green Book’: How a black Times reporter chronicled his 1964 trip across the South

By - Gabrielle Calise

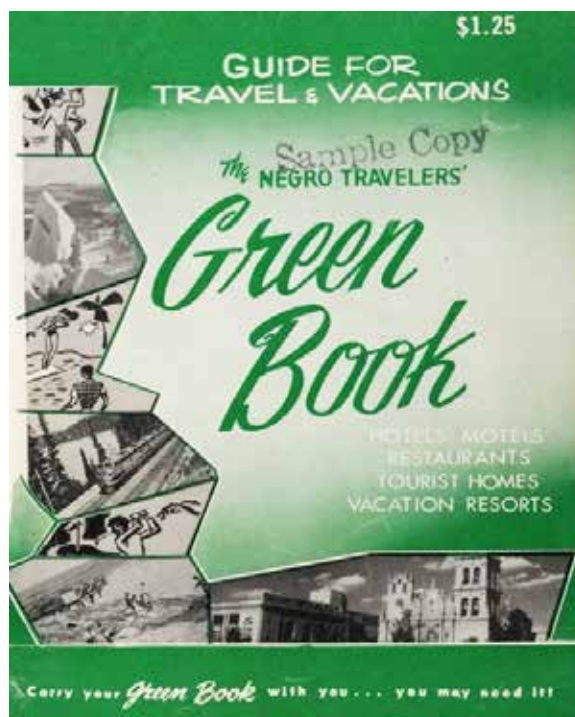
Tampa Bay Times | February 26, 2019 (EXCERPT)

Just a few months after racial segregation was outlawed, the then-St. Petersburg Times sent an African American reporter and his wife on a 4,300-mile journey through 12 southern states.

By now you’ve probably heard about *Green Book*’s controversial Best Picture win at the Oscars Sunday. The biographical drama is based on a true story about the relationship between an African American jazz pianist and the Italian-American bouncer who chauffeured him throughout the Deep South.

Set in 1962, *Green Book* takes place two years before the passage of the Civil Rights Act. The title

of the film refers to a guidebook that was published annually to help African-American travelers find lodging,



restaurants and other accommodations during the Jim Crow era. The books were essential for navigating the South while business owners were still able to turn away patrons on the basis of race, religion or sex.

After this kind of discrimination was

outlawed with the passage of the

Civil Rights Act in 1964, the then-St. Petersburg Times sent an African American reporter on his own trek through the South. Samuel Adams' seven-part series, "Highways to Hope," chronicled a 4,300-mile journey

that he took with his wife Elenora. The couple ventured out in the fall of 1964, just four months after the act passed.

The trip spanned 15 days and took Samuel and Elenora through 12 states: Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama.

At the time, Samuel was 38. He had three degrees and a decade of reporting experience under his belt. He joined the St. Petersburg Times in 1960 and covered the race beat for the paper's "Negro news page," wrote Robert Hooker in "The Times and its times: A history."

Editor's note: The Times used to use language to describe black people that is now outdated or, in certain cases, offensive.

Samuel's wife, Elenora, was 35. She raised two children and attended Spelman College in Atlanta and the

Los Angeles City College.

"We were middle class tourists with no serious money problems who normally would stop at top quality motels and seek out fine restaurants," Samuel wrote. "We were to forget, if we could, our color.



We were to report what happened to us, but to precipitate no trouble." The couple left Florida on a cool October morning. They drove straight into states where thousands of people of color had been harassed, arrested, beaten or lynched. Several friends offered to loan them weapons, but Samuel and Elenora chose to go unarmed.

"I have lived with fear so long I am hardly aware it's there," Samuel wrote. "But Elenora couldn't hide her fears as we drove north from St. Petersburg."

Under the Civil Rights Act, businesses were no longer allowed to refuse service on the basis of race. Samuel's assignment was to travel throughout the 12 states and observe what happened. Early on, he discovered the many loopholes that

Southern businesses found to deter people of color.

Restaurant owners claimed that they were closing as soon as they saw black customers approach, even if it was 3:30 in the afternoon on a Thursday. Others placed a “reserved” sign on every table.

Some business owners would insist it wasn’t personal. “We don’t have a thing for you. This here is a [private] club,” said a clerk at a hotel in Kentucky. If they did find seating, it was often in a hidden room tucked away from the white patrons. Other establishments charged them inflated prices.

The same racist policies were often in place at hotels and other establishments across the South, much to the frustrations of the couple, who were exhausted after long days of driving. In Mobile, Ala., one motel said they only accepted large families. Another claimed that they had no vacancies. Samuel and Elenora were only able to get a room in Mobile by booking one on the phone. When they arrived at the hotel, the clerk placed them in a unit next to a squeaky elevator shaft and noisy heating system.

In Huntsville, Ala., a sharp object from a filet mignon got stuck in Samuel’s throat. He spent three and a half hours waiting to be seen in an integrated emergency room.

Still, the couple also was received with indifference and even kindness in some historically segregated towns. In a honky tonk in Danville, Va., a white man asked politely if he could put his beer on their table while he played shuffleboard. A man named Hagy of Hagy’s Farm Restaurant in Pembroke, Va., was “warm and genuinely glad to serve us.”

Some of the worst moments happened as their trip was dying down. “Negroes have their place in Arkansas,” Sam wrote. “But it’s not in ‘White Only’ restaurants, hotels or rest rooms. Even so, a Negro tourist probably encounters less trouble in Arkansas than in much of Louisiana.”

New Orleans was “an oasis.” The couple enjoyed shopping and dining throughout the French Quarter. “We lived fabulously in that wonderful city, and raised some eyebrows in the process...” Samuel wrote.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2GNChRI>

BUSINESS

Brown Estate: Napa Valley's first black owned winery

By - Sam Mathis

Shope Black | September 3, 2017 (EXCERPT)

Brown Estate Vineyards is the first and only Black-owned estate winery in California's Napa Valley, and is best known as one of that region's most well-regarded zinfandel producers receiving a score of 91 points by Wine Spectator.

In addition to zinfandel, Brown Estate produces cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, and petite sirah.

This two-generation culmination is an investment made by parents Bassett Brown (from Jamaica) and Marcela Brown (from Panama) back in 1980. They acquired 450 acres in the Chiles Valley AVA of the Napa Valley after being informed by local family friends that the property was for sale.

Abandoned for some ten years prior, the land and its two structures – an 1859 stone and redwood barn and an 1885 Queen Anne Victorian home – were derelict.



The senior Browns cut roads and brought in plumbing and electricity, ultimately earning an award from the Napa County Historical Society for their restoration of the residence structure.

They planted zinfandel vines, selling them to established winemakers (including Mike Grgich of Grgich Hills Estate) – for more than ten years.

Founded in 1995 by siblings Deneen, David & Coral Brown, Brown Estate produced its first Napa Valley zinfandel in 1996 and decided to move the winemaking in-house.

As of 2016, the Brown's have bottled their 20th vintage and in April of this year they debuted their Brown Downtown location on the re-emerging First Street corridor in the heart of downtown Napa.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2ydxoLm>

5 things to know about Morehouse donor Robert F. Smith

By - Rachel Siegel

The Washington Post | May 20, 2019 (EXCERPT)

Billionaire Robert F. Smith woke up the crowd at Morehouse College's commencement ceremony Sunday when he veered off script to share a surprise: He'd be wiping out the student loan debt for the Class of 2019's nearly 400 graduates.

There was a moment of stunned silence before the grads and their families burst into a joyous applause. Within minutes, praise for Smith spread beyond the Atlanta college and turned into one of the weekend's most inspiring stories. The billionaire tech executive and philanthropist has stayed under the radar much of his career, even in Austin, where he lives and works. He rarely grants interviews and is so low-profile that when the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture put a call out for major donors in 2013, the museum's directors wondered, "Who is this Robert F. Smith?" They got their answer in spectacular fashion.

Here are five things you need to know about Robert F. Smith:

A knack for computers led to his fortune



As a junior in high school, Smith landed an internship at Bell Labs — by calling the company every week for five months until he got a slot. Smith tinkered with computers during his summer and winter breaks, and went on to

study chemical engineering at Cornell University. He earned an MBA from Columbia University, followed by an investment banking job at Goldman Sachs. After advising billion-dollar mergers for tech companies such as Microsoft and Apple, he left Goldman to found Vista Equity Partners in 2000. He is still the chairman and CEO.

The firm invests in software and data companies and now has more than \$46 billion in assets, according to Forbes. As of Monday, Forbes put Smith's net worth at \$5 billion. He is the nation's richest black man.

Major donor to the National Museum of African American History and Culture

Before the museum opened, Smith pledged a \$20 million gift (behind Oprah Winfrey's \$21 million pledge). In an exclusive interview with The Washington Post in 2016, Smith said he had become afraid of escalating racial tensions that threatened the very opportunities once sought by him and his parents. Smith specifically pointed to protests in Ferguson, Mo., after the 2014 fatal shooting of Michael Brown, and the unrest in Baltimore after Freddie Gray's funeral.

"The vision I was sold as a kid is unraveling. I see the little tears in the fabric of society every day. This cannot be," Smith at the time.

Smith's donation to the African American Museum was earmarked to digitize photographs, videos and music — and help foster an interactive experience for a 21st-century museum. The gift also allows the museum to act as a hub to archive photographs from other institutions, such as museums, funeral homes and personal collections.

"We wanted it to be a living, interactive museum where we tell our

own stories of ourselves our way," Smith said at the time.

Other major donations

Before Sunday's graduation speech, Smith had donated \$1.5 million to Morehouse for scholarships and a new park. In 2016, he and the Fund II Foundation gifted a combined \$50 million to Cornell for its chemical and biomolecular engineering school, and to support black and female engineering students. (Cornell later renamed the school in his honor.) In 2017, Smith put his name on the Giving Pledge — a commitment by the world's wealthiest individuals and families to donate most of their wealth.

A musical upbringing

Smith grew up in a mostly black neighborhood in Denver. Both of his parents had doctorates in education and insisted that the house be filled with music — be it a live show on the family piano or Leontyne Price's arias on the stereo. Smith brought that early musical influence to his eventual tech career. "A beautifully written software code is a lyrical concerto," he told The Post. In 2016, Smith became the first African American to be named chairman of the renowned Carnegie Hall in New York City.

To read more:

<https://wapo.st/338SWGm>





African American Economics: Real Facts

By - Black Enterprise Editors

Black Enterprise | March 6, 2019 (EXCERPT)

Black families are more confident about achieving the American Dream than the general population. However, African Americans fall short on executing life-changing measures such as accumulating wealth, being better prepared for retirement and building up savings. Here are a few facts (and advice) about African American economics:

Some 84% believe the American Dream means financial security; 78% in not living paycheck-to-paycheck; and 77% in owning a home.

Still, based on a new State of the American Family Study by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. (MassMutual), many African Americans don't have tangible assets needed to make those goals happen now.

The study revealed a disconnect between African Americans' financial situations and their hope toward the future. The report disclosed some pitfalls tied to African Americans'

personal finances including high debt, low savings and a lower likelihood of wide financial product ownership. In turn, the financial disparities and the wealth gap possibly explain why 31% surveyed are convinced the American Dream may be fading away.

Some key findings from the survey:

- Outside of retirement accounts, only 37% of African Americans own wealth-building products such as stocks and mutual funds.
- Only 35% believe they are doing a good job of preparing for retirement.
- 33% have less than one month of funds saved for a crisis and less than 25% have amassed more than six months' of emergency savings.
- 58% are actively involved in educating their children on finances versus 48% of Caucasians. Forty-percent rely on family members for information

"The study shows African Americans want to improve their financial situations and are hopeful about the future," said Evan Taylor, African American market director, MassMutual. "At the same time, it sheds light on the financial struggles

and inequities that the African American community continues to battle. Those contradictions indicate a need for greater financial education and discipline for the whole family to achieve economic success. In fact, the biggest financial regret expressed by respondents was that they wished they had started saving and investing sooner.”

The State of the American Family survey consisted of 3,235 total interviews with Americans, including 482 African American respondents. The vast majority of these interviews (2,730) were conducted with men and women aged 25-64 with incomes equal to or greater than \$50,000 and with dependents under age 26 for whom they are financially responsible. Respondents had to contribute at least 40% to decisions regarding financial matters in their household to qualify.

Shavon Roman, a financial adviser at Atlanta-based The Piedmont Group, shared how she overcame financial havoc. Her journey included becoming an entrepreneur in real estate and franchising, where she ended up

hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. To rebound, she created a debt reduction strategy and lived below her means. The result: Within five years she was debt free.



“You can accomplish anything with a plan,” Roman says.

Her experience with financial challenges—and now on the path to wealth-building—led Roman to help others professionally. Her clients at Piedmont mainly include women in their 30s and 40s, and pre-retirees working in corporate America. Piedmont is affiliated with Mass Mutual. She focuses on helping clients increase their net worth.

To help African Americans get on the right path to financial independence, Roman offers advice on the following:

Financial education: It’s imperative to have a savings and spending plan, allowing you to tell your money where to go and keep track of it. Consider working with banks that have online tools to monitor your spending and create budgets. Also, know your credit score. Roman says a helpful tool to do that is the “Credit Karma” app. If buying a home is an objective, look for a prime rate loan with a nonprofit homeownership organization like the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America.

Financial planning and execution: So what should African Americans do before investing in stocks or other asset classes like real estate or starting a new business? Roman's first suggestion is to do your research. She advises knowing your risk tolerance, asking yourself if you can stomach a financial setback. Monitor the investment and its performance regularly. When it comes to achieving wealth-building goals, eliminate high-interest debt, reduce debt, and establish a savings fund.

a do-it-yourself approach with finances: Seek advice from a financial professional equipped to help you establish and reach your financial goals. When looking for help with investment planning, retirement planning, or insurance purchases, partner with an expert. Check out their background, references, and makes sure they are licensed in the state they work in. A financial professional can guide you to the right solutions to help achieve wealth-building goals.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/33g9rQP>

Professional help as opposed to taking

**The Neighborhood Is Mostly Black.
The Home Buyers Are Mostly White.**
By - Emily Bader and Robert Gebeloff
The New York Times | April 27, 2019 (EXCERPT)



RALEIGH, N.C. — In the African-American neighborhoods near downtown Raleigh, the playfully painted doors signal what's coming. Colored in crimson, in coral, in seafoam, the doors accent newly

Nationwide, the arrival of white homeowners in places they've long avoided is jolting the economics of the land beneath everyone.

renovated craftsman cottages and boxy modern homes that have replaced vacant lots.

To longtime residents, the doors mean higher home prices ahead, more investors knocking, more white neighbors.

Here, and in the center of cities across the United States, a kind of demographic change most often associated with gentrifying parts of New York and Washington has been accelerating. White residents are increasingly moving into nonwhite neighborhoods, largely African-American ones.

In America, racial diversity has much more often come to white neighborhoods. Between 1980 and 2000, more than 98 percent of census tracts that grew more diverse did so in that way, as Hispanic,

Asian-American and African-American families settled in neighborhoods that were once predominantly white.

But since 2000, according to an analysis of demographic and housing data, the arrival of white residents is now changing nonwhite communities in cities of all sizes, affecting about one in six predominantly African-American census tracts. The pattern, though still modest in scope, is playing out with remarkable consistency across the country — in ways that jolt the mortgage market, the architecture, the value of land itself.

In city after city, a map of racial change shows predominantly minority neighborhoods near downtown growing whiter, while suburban

neighborhoods that were once largely white are experiencing an increased share of black, Hispanic and Asian-American residents.

In a country still learning to forge neighborhoods that are racially diverse and durably so, those yellow tracts appear to be on a path that is particularly unstable.

At the start of the 21st century, these neighborhoods were relatively poor, and 80 percent of them were majority African-American. But as revived downtowns attract wealthier residents closer to the center city, recent white home buyers are arriving in these neighborhoods with incomes that are on average twice as high as that of their existing neighbors, and two-thirds higher than existing homeowners. And they are getting a majority of the mortgages.

Such disparities in incomes and mortgage access aren't apparent in suburban neighborhoods with a growing share of Hispanic, black and Asian-American residents. Minority borrowers in those places have

incomes similar to that of their new neighbors. They receive mortgages proportionate to their share of the population.



In some measurable ways besides race, they fit in.

In Many Nonwhite Neighborhoods, New White Home Buyers Wield Outsize Economic Power

To examine these patterns, The New York Times identified every census tract in the country that has grown notably more racially diverse since 2000. We then used millions of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act records to track the differences when white and nonwhite home buyers bring change to a neighborhood. Renters can also alter the fabric of a community, but homeowners bring the economic might.

In South Park, a neighborhood with picturesque views of the Raleigh skyline, the white home buyers who have recently moved in have average incomes more than three times that of the typical household already here. Whites, who were largely absent in the neighborhood in 2000, made up 17 percent of the population by 2012. Since then, they've gotten nearly nine in 10 of the new mortgages.

This map shows comparable data for every census tract in the country — about one in three of them nationwide — that has grown more diverse since 2000.

In neighborhoods like South Park, white residents are changing not only the racial mix of the community; they are also altering the economics of the real estate beneath everyone.



“That’s what finally came to me — it’s not just the fact that the neighborhoods look different, that people behave differently,” said Kia E. Baker, who grew up in southeast Raleigh and now directs a nonprofit, Southeast Raleigh Promise, that serves the community.

Some of that change can be positive, she said. This realization was not: “Our black bodies literally have less economic value than the body of a white person,” she said. “As soon as a white body moves into the same space that I occupied, all of a sudden this place is more valuable.”

The value of place

White flight and white return are not opposite phenomena in American cities, generations apart. Here they are part of the same story.

In the places where white households are moving, reinvestment is possible mainly because of the disinvestment that came before it. Many of these neighborhoods were once segregated by law and redlined by banks. Cities neglected their infrastructure. The federal government built highways that isolated them and housing projects that were concentrated in them. Then banks came peddling predatory loans.

“A single-family detached house with a yard within a mile of downtown in any other part of the world is probably the most expensive place to live,” said Kofi Boone, a professor at North Carolina State University’s College of Design.

Here, because of that history, it’s a bargain. And while that briefly remains true in South Park, the disinvestment and reinvestment are visible side by side on any given street.

To read more:

<https://nyti.ms/2ASPT9d>



ARTS & CULTURE

For Turn-of-the-Century African-Americans, the Camera Was a Tool for Empowerment

By - Jane Recker

Smithsonian.com | March 25, 2019 (EXCERPT)

A new installment in the Smithsonian's "Double Exposure" photo book series depicts black Americans championing their lives through photography

Regal would be the best way to describe the photograph of Mary Church Terrell. Delicately swathed in lace, satin and crystals, the charismatic civil rights activist is seen in profile. The front of her tasteful Gibson pompadour is dappled with light and her face is illuminated as if a single ray of sun had parted the clouds in the sky. It's a highly flattering image of the D.C. activist and suffragist, and Terrell thought so herself.

"In some of the material we got from [Terrell's] family, we know that she had sent to the Chicago Defender for which she was writing a column for a few years," says Michèle Gates Moresi, supervisory curator of collections at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American



History and Culture. "She wrote on the back of it, 'make sure you return this photo.' And I thought that spoke to her understanding of the importance of controlling and owning your image."

Moresi, Laura Coyle and Tanya Sheehan are contributing authors of the new book *Pictures with Purpose*, the seventh installment of the museum's photo book series, "Double Exposure," which shares some of the 25,000 rare photographs held in its collections.

Pictures with Purpose examines the collection's photographs from the turn of the century, when African-Americans were reconciling the painful aftermath of enslavement and forging a new future fighting for equal rights. Coyle, who is the head of cataloguing and

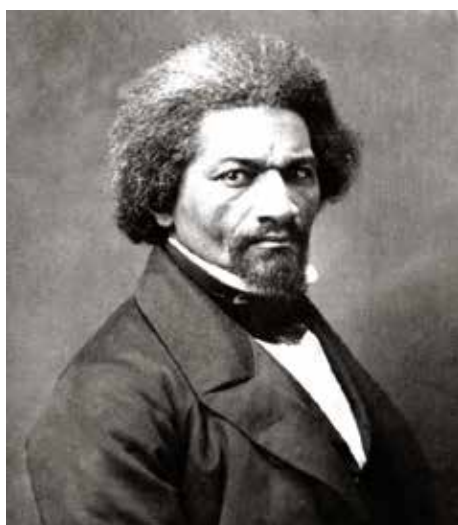
digitization at the museum, says photography was embraced by African-Americans during this period, as it was a means for them to reshape the narrative.

“For the African-American community, photography was particularly important, because when they were in control of the camera, they had a chance to shape their own image for themselves, for their community and for the outside world in a way they normally didn’t have a chance to do in society,” she says. “Often, [African-Americans] were subject to racism and stereotypes and denigrating situations, but in photography, they could portray themselves as they were and as they aspired to be.”

Coyle says Frederick Douglass is best known for his use of photography as a political and social tool. He set out to make himself the most photographed man of the 19th century, surpassing even Abraham Lincoln. Others, like Terrell, followed suit and

distributed images of themselves that showed who they truly were, instead of who society expected them to be.

Terrell, who was one of the first African-American women to earn a college degree, was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as a founder and first president of the



National Association of Colored Women. Living in Washington D.C., she worked to include the voices of black women in suffrage discussions and promoted further education and access to daycare for black women. A fierce civil rights advocate, beginning with

her years at Oberlin College, she fought to end lynching and she continued to participate in picket lines well into her 80s.

Though Terrell was hugely influential in ensuring equal rights for women and minorities, Moresi says she’s largely overlooked outside of academic and D.C. communities. Given that Terrell “doesn’t always get her recognition” during Black and Women’s History Month, Moresi

felt it was important to include Terrell's image in the book.

This particular photo of Terrell was chosen, not only because it was one of Terrell's personal favorites, but also because it was taken by Addison Scurlock.



For 83 years, Scurlock and then his sons ran photography studio in D.C. that became the go-to place for

African-Americans in the city to sit for their portraits. Scurlock was well known for making "complimentary" portraits that highlighted his subjects' skin tones and made them look "beautiful and glamorous," Moresi says.

While Scurlock's work is profound in its own right, it was his prolific nature in taking snapshots of life around him that has proven invaluable to modern historians.

"He documented almost every aspect of people's lives," Coyle says. "Informal portraiture,

wedding photographs and baby photographs, and he photographed everyday life, people having a good time. Through the Scurlock studio, we have a really rich document of middle-class black life from 1911 into the 1970s."

Some of Scurlock's photographs, and many included in the new book, are of unidentified subjects. Though Coyle says most museums shy away from photos of unidentified subjects, the African American History Museum relies heavily on these photographs, as they help to restore the stories and lives of forgotten or marginalized individuals. The majority of the early photographs in the museum's collection are of unidentified subjects.

One such photo, taken by an unknown photographer, is a close up of a woman from the 1890s in a simple striped dress. Wearing plain gold hoops and staring resolutely into the camera with light pooling over the right half of her face, there's a striking energy exuded from the subject that drew Coyle and her cohorts to the picture.

To read more:

<https://bit.ly/31YdF6>



Marian Anderson: The Most Modest Trailblazer

By - Anastasia Tsioulcas

NPR| August 27, 2019 (EXCERPT)

Classical
singer
Marian
Anderson
was one of
the all-time
greats —

both as an artist, and as a cultural figure who broke down racial barriers. She is best known for performing at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939, after she was denied permission to sing for an integrated audience at Washington's DAR Constitution Hall. But she was much more than that — she helped shape American music.

Marian Anderson was so talented as a child that the church she attended took up collections to help pay for music lessons. That was when she first learned how to sing, as Anderson told NPR member station WQXR in 1974

(in a interview that is now part of the Marian Anderson Papers at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania).

"I became aware for the first time

that there were two ways of doing it," Anderson told WQXR. "One was absolutely natural and one was one that I had to think about. But I know if you're going to do anything, you have to know how you're going to do it and why you're doing it that way."

In that radio interview, Anderson's innate modesty comes through: She often refers to herself as "we" or "one" — not out of grandiosity, but because she was keenly aware that she, too, stood on the shoulders of others. When she sang "My Country 'Tis Of Thee" at the Lincoln Memorial, she changed the words "of thee I sing" to "to thee we sing." In later years, she explained: "We cannot live alone. And the thing that made this moment possible for you and for me has been brought about by many people whom we will never know."

Anderson not only sang European classical music, but she presented spirituals as high art as well. Her

parents were born just a few years after the end of the Civil War. Her mother had grown up in Virginia — a former slave state. Singer and multi-instrumentalist Rhiannon Giddens says by performing spirituals in the concert hall, Anderson linked generations of listeners to Black American history.

"It's not just 'Oh, I'm singing Mozart,' Giddens observes. "There's this knowledge of, 'I am actually uplifting my entire race by singing this music' — and there's a lot of that, especially in the early years [of recorded music], where it was still fairly rare to see a Black person singing in a classical manner even though that's been part of African-American culture since the beginning of being here. I think people feel that — they feel there's something else going on. They feel that there's another allegiance there. It's not just an allegiance to Western art music, there's also an allegiance to a lifting of the culture through the art form. And that's a very powerful thing. "Anderson was a contralto; she could go much deeper than most female singers. Giddens says that Anderson used that voice — and

her classical training — to channel intense emotions.

"Some singers are able to tap into the core of their sound in a way so that it feels like there's nothing in the way," Giddens says. "There's no sort of translation going on, there's no doorway."

Certain doors were closed for Marian Anderson in the United

States. So, like so many Black artists and creators, she made much of her career in Europe, where she was welcomed. She even performed for the great Finnish composer Jean Sibelius in his home.

"I remember that Sibelius came over to me,

embraced me and said, 'My roof is too low for you,'" she told WQXR in 1974.

At home, Marian Anderson's performance at the Lincoln Memorial is what has gotten memorialized. But she encountered intense racism in the U.S. long after that famous concert. She didn't make her debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera until 1955, when she was already 57 years old; she was the first African-American soloist to appear at the



Met. Her performance came just months after the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the same year that Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Ala.

Getting into the Met was a hard fight, as her biographer, Allan

Keiler, told NPR in 2000. "There was a tremendous resistance to bringing Black singers to the Met," Keiler said. "The Metropolitan board was against it. It was very difficult to make any inroads."

To read more:

<https://n.pr/2M2wkRW>

Turner Classic Movies hires its first African American host

By - Jake Coyle

Associated Press | September 9, 2019 (EXCERPT)



TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES

NEW YORK (AP) — Jacqueline Stewart has been named host of Turner Classic Movies' silent movie program "Silent Sunday Nights," making her the network's first African American host in its 25 year history.

TCM on Monday announced the hiring of Stewart, a professor of cinema and media studies at the University of Chicago who has specialized in the racial politics of film preservation. She will make her TCM debut on Sunday.

"I hope that as a host at TCM that my presence there will interest a greater diversity of viewers to see

what there is to watch," Stewart said in an interview. "If my presence on TCM gets people interested in film history, especially young people of color, to look at a body of work that they might not think would resonate with them, that's really important."

NEW YORK (AP) — Jacqueline Stewart has been named host of Turner Classic Movies' silent movie program "Silent Sunday Nights," making her the network's first African American host in its 25 year history.

To read more:

<https://bit.ly/2nBs8Q0>

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Black clergy launch first African-American Neuroscience Research Initiative

By - Brianna Rhodes

TheGriot.com | March 20, 2019 (EXCERPT)

The initiative set to provide more genomic research and neuroscience studies to individuals in the African diaspora

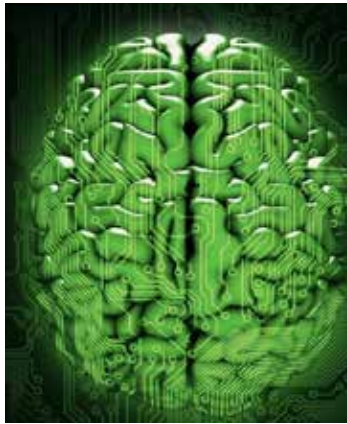
History is made. The country's first African-American Neuroscience Research Initiative

was launched on Wednesday in an effort to provide more genomic research and neuroscience studies to represent diverse individuals all over the world, including those of African ancestry.

According to the Chicago Defender, the initiative will set the blueprint for closing the gap in health disparities. It will also advance study efforts on new treatments for brain disorders.

The African-American Neuroscience Research Initiative will partner with the African-American Clergy Medical Research Initiative and the

Lieber Institute, a “not-for-profit medical research institute.”



Unfortunately, the lack of diversity has hindered progress on research on basic science and clinical trials in neuroscience. For instance, although people of European descent make up less than 16% of the world population, “81 percent of large-scale genomic datasets” are of that particular group.

Since it has been proven that there are differences in genetics between races and ethnicities, it is possible that genomic research has the ability to provide medical treatments that will be more suited for disorders such as heart disease, stroke, asthma, diabetes, amongst other medical

disorders. Now, minority groups are getting closer to receiving the treatments they deserve.

“My clergy colleagues and I have been studying the emerging science behind precision medicine and believe that this technology has potential for finding cures and treatments for diseases that uniquely

affect African Americans,” Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr.,

principal of the African-American Clergy Medical Research Initiative, said.

“This revolution in medicine has largely left behind ethnic minority groups like African Americans, and it is time to change this,” he added, according to Medical News.

To read more:

<https://on.thegrio.com/33gcOr1>

This UX nerd is running hackathons to tackle the POC maternity crisis

By - Courtney Biggs
Fast Company | May 21, 2019
(EXCERPT)

To address the African-American maternal health crisis requires community-generated, black-led solutions, says Whitney Robinson.

The U.S. has the highest maternal death rate of any developed country and it continues to climb. Black mothers are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications.



A spike in media coverage over the last couple of years has seen this crisis hit the national agenda, and 2020 presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Elizabeth Warren both recently announced different approaches to tackling this issue.

It's critical for community-generated, black-led solutions to be part of those efforts, says Whitney Robinson, a product

manager and self-described “UX nerd,” as well as groups like Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA), a prominent organization that focuses on maternal health issues.

Her first experience with health tech was through the MacArthur Foundation as a 3D designer creating avatars for crisis intervention simulations for Duke University School of Medicine. But after being blindsided by her own pregnancy loss, she started to think about how tech could play a role in changing the narrative around maternal mortality for people of color.

The loss came as a devastating shock to Robinson, who initially “had all the checkmarks of a healthy pregnancy.”

“I didn’t even realize I was part of a statistic then...but I remember in delivering her that I immediately I felt shame. It completely caught me off guard and I went into a very dark place,” said Robinson.

“I think there are lots of stories of people like this, out of some very traumatic and hard place.

You have a choice either stay there or use that to catapult you into something else.”



In 2018, during her second pregnancy (which resulted in the healthy birth of her son), Robinson put an informal survey on Facebook asking women about their experiences with pregnancy loss—30 women responded.

“Everyone was on a scale from zero to five, with five being excellent, zero being I’m not functioning well. Everyone, besides one person, was between a zero and two. The main reason was a lack of support, said Robinson.

The results demonstrated to Robinson that there were still very few resources available for women since her own miscarriage seven years ago.

“I was pretty determined at that moment, that I need to work on this,” said Robinson.

Robinson began by spending months consulting with a diverse population, from maternal health academics to indigenous populations to incarcerated pregnant women.

MORE LIKE ‘JAM SESSIONS’ THAN HACKATHONS

This led to the launch of The Renée, (Renée means rebirth) a series of hackathons held across the country. Except these don’t look like any hackathons that you would normally see in Silicon Valley. Robinson prefers to call them “jam sessions,” where women of color from all walks of life can come together, share their experiences, and “hack their pregnancies” in a space that is “joyful and inviting.” All of the rich data obtained from the sessions will eventually inform a tech resource for pregnant women.

“I thought, I can go off my own experiences or make a blanket statement on what women need, based off what happened to me.

Or could be a little more wise, a little more empathetic, and I can allow women to solve these problems,” said Robinson.

Robinson’s approach involves a level of deep community engagement that is typically neglected in the tech world. The “femtech” market is estimated to be worth \$50 billion by 2025, but tech continues to ignore women’s needs. Apple infamously neglected to include a period tracker when it first launched



HealthKit in 2014 and despite repeated customer requests, Fitbit doesn’t have a pregnancy mode. Period tracking apps don’t allow women to record irregular cycle lengths or acknowledge same sex relationships when recording sexual activity.

Monica McLemore is a BMMA advisory committee member and assistant professor in the family health nursing department at the University of California. She is also frustrated by the lack of diversity reflected

in tech resources.

“What bothers me about technology as you currently use it, is it has been developed with a very narrow window of users. What ends up happening is you get machine learning and

different types of apps that have really been normalized on a false pretense.”

“The reason we need makers of color and particularly women of color, is because technology was never built from our unique perspective. It was never built to actually include things like our lived experience.”

To read more:

<https://bit.ly/2Yzd4z8>

UNC grad student develops app for African American youth mental health

By - Nathan Wesley

The Daily Tar Heel | March 4, 2019
(EXCERPT)

Everyone feels anxious or stressed out at times, but people can often overlook their overall mental health. Some UNC grad students think this is especially the case for African Americans.

Technology has become a necessity for many people today, and the App Store is flooded with resources that can help or improve someone's life. Henry



Willis, fourth-year doctoral candidate of psychology and neuroscience in the clinical psychology program, is leading the development of a mental health app that will target African-American young adults. He believes African Americans' mental health is important but is often overlooked.

“The reason I’m targeting toward young Black adults is mostly because this is one of the groups within African Americans that are less likely to receive access to effective mental health treatment,” Willis said. “And it’s also the time period where just a lot of negative mental health symptoms start or get worse for a lot of people.”

This mental health app will cover a broad scope of things, but it is currently in the development stage. The first version will be on a website, but it will function like the final product, which will be a mobile app. Once they have enough data, Willis and the people helping him develop the app plan to do a pilot test and then export it to the Apple Store.

Since many apps and other products on the market aim to help people improve aspects of their lives, including weight management apps, Fitbits and Apple Watches, Willis thought a mental health app for Black people could be useful to many people who may not have thought about their mental health before. Within the app, Willis

hopes to help people get a basic understanding of mental health and some of the things they can do to cope with negative mental health symptoms.

Angelica Villanueva, senior research assistant and psychology and global studies major, works alongside Willis to develop the app. They have done qualitative research and background research into apps to assure they’re making their best product for consumers.

“I heard the idea, and I had to jump on it because it was just like it literally combined my psych major and my entrepreneurship minor, and I just love the idea of it,” Villanueva said. “It could potentially expand to into further populations and really bridge the treatment gap that there is for minority groups.”



To read more:
<https://bit.ly/2J1o71g>

SPORTS

New Statue At U.S. Open Honors African American Tennis Pioneer Althea Gibson

By - Richard Gonzales

NPR | August 26, 2019 (EXCERPT)



In a long overdue tribute to the first African American to break international tennis' color barrier, a new statue of Althea Gibson was unveiled at the opening day of the U.S. Open.

The statue is comprised of five granite blocks and created by American sculptor Eric Goulder. It sits outside Arthur Ashe Stadium at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Queens,

New York.

In 1947, Gibson broke into the elite ranks of the tennis world winning the first 10 consecutive American Tennis Association women's titles. (The ATA was the tennis equivalent of baseball's Negro Leagues.) At the age of 23, Gibson became the first African American player to compete in the U.S. Nationals, the precursor to the U.S. Open, in 1950.

Between 1956 to 1958, Gibson made her mark. She won 11 majors, and was the first black player to win the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Nationals. When she retired in 1958, she was the top-ranked woman in tennis having won more than 50 singles and doubles championships.

Perhaps because she was a star during a period when tennis champs made no real money and because she was a woman, more than a few



people believe Gibson did not get all of the respect she earned as a trailblazer.

"Recognizing for me as an African American woman and recognizing what Althea stood for and understanding that she

truly broke the color barrier for tennis – a lot of people think it's Arthur [Ashe], but it was Althea 11 years before him," said Katrina Adams, former president and CEO of the U.S. Tennis Association.

Adams, along with Billie Jean King, helped lead the campaign for the Gibson statue.

"I said, 'She's our Jackie Robinson of tennis and she needs to be appreciated for it, and she's not,' " King told the *Undeclared* in 2018. "I wanted something there that was permanent. I didn't want just a one-day highlight."

"It's about bloody time," said Angela Buxton of Britain, who won the 1956 French and Wimbledon doubles championships with Gibson, referring to the statue as quoted by the Associated Press.

Buxton, who is Jewish, shared more than doubles titles with Gibson. She knew first hand what Gibson endured as a black competitor in a sport dominated then by white players.

To read more: <https://n.pr/2MIAccy>

Bryce Weiler can't see, but his vision for helping disabled people play sports is limitless

By - Dan Wolken

USA Today | August 11, 2019 (EXCERPT)

CUMMING, Ga. — Just behind home plate, elite teenage softball players from all over the country were lined up to watch one of their own try to play a sport that should have seemed familiar but was, of course, impossible.

One by one, they came to the plate and dug in. One by one, they swung and missed as the pitches that would have otherwise been routine went by them. Standing somewhere beyond third base, Bryce Weiler was enjoying the spectacle, even though he couldn't see any of it. Just like him, in this particular game on this particular night, the players trying to hit a softball were doing so without any vision.

Weiler, 28, has been blind since birth. It has taken a lot of opportunities away from him, including the chance to see the games he grew up loving mostly by the way they sounded.

But Weiler never accepted the notion that he couldn't work in

sports. Or that people with disabilities can't play them.

Through the Beautiful Lives Project, which Weiler co-founded, he travels the country setting up events like this one where high-level athletes and people with disabilities are on the same playing field, learning from and inspiring one another.

“We’re giving them the opportunity to play with some of the best athletes in the country and show them there’s people out there in the world who want to help them overcome the obstacles and challenges in their life,” Weiler said. “Hopefully people’s lives will be changed as much through this as much as mine was.”

Changing attitudes

On this particular night in July, Weiler had taken the Amtrak by himself from Connecticut to Atlanta so that he could host an event before the Triple Crown USA National fastpitch softball

tournament where hundreds of elite high school and middle school players had gathered. Across three fields, local organizations brought groups of adults with various disabilities to hit and run and field against the tournament participants. The cheering and the laughing was echoing through the park, but on Weiler's field, it's quiet. In fact, silence is essential because this is a game guided by sound.

Weiler set up a demonstration of Beep Baseball, a form of softball that has been modified for people who are visually impaired, with a team from nearby Athens led by Roger Keeney, 74, who got involved with the sport as a college student in the 1970s before he was blinded years later in a farming accident.

"I always say God has a sense of humor," Keeney said. Keeney's team, which has six blind players and annually travels to the Beep Baseball World



Series, is full of inspiring stories. There's Jamie, who suffered a stroke as an infant and whose

involvement with the sport gave her the confidence to get a job and live on her own. There's Cody, who grew up playing sports but lost nearly all of his vision at age 16 from a rare virus and found this as his athletic outlet at age 23. Then there's Justin, a bodybuilder who went blind in college due to a genetic disease and now travels three hours from his home outside of Charlotte every week to practice with the team.

"The model of our entire agency is making the impossible possible through adapted sports," said Keeney, who got his Ph.D. in Adapted Physical Education at Georgia and now runs the Athens Inclusive Recreation and Sports nonprofit.

To read more: <https://bit.ly/2Mcbe5d>

The controversy surrounding Jay-Z's partnership with the NFL, explained

By - P.R. Lockhart

Vox | September 9, 2019



Hip-hop's first billionaire is helping with the NFL's social justice efforts. But the partnership's first few weeks have been riddled with controversy It was supposed to be good news, the joining of a beloved but beleaguered sports corporation and a heralded rapper in the name of entertainment and social justice.

Instead, it added fuel to an ongoing controversy.

On August 13, the NFL announced that it was entering a partnership with Roc Nation, the entertainment company founded and led by rapper and mogul Jay-Z. The deal, which has reportedly been in the works for several months, means that Roc Nation will now help “advise on selecting artists for major NFL performances like the Super Bowl.”

While the deal effectively gives Jay-Z a major role in developing one of the most-watched concerts

in the country, it also includes a social justice partnership between the rapper and the NFL. Roc Nation, the NFL adds, will play an important role in the NFL's recently launched “Inspire Change” initiative, a collaboration between the NFL and the Players Coalition, a group of NFL players seeking to advance social and racial justice. The initiative focuses on three causes in particular: “education and economic advancement; police and community relations; and criminal justice reform.”

Both parties say the deal is an important step forward in indicating the NFL's strong commitment to helping marginalized communities. “With its global reach, the National Football League has the platform and opportunity to inspire change across the country,” Jay-Z said in an August 13 statement. “This partnership is an opportunity to strengthen the

fabric of communities across America.”

August 30 brought the first glimpses of what the partnership will look like, with Roc Nation announcing that three musical artists — rappers Meek Mill and Rapsody, and singer Meghan Trainor — had been named the first “Inspire Change” advocates.

The artists will perform in a free September 5 pregame concert at Chicago’s Grant Park. The

announcement also included details about an Inspire Change apparel line and details on “Songs of the Season,” a season-long effort where artists will create songs for NFL programming. The proceeds from the songs will be used to fund the Inspire Change initiative.

The announcement didn’t go over well.

In an alternate universe where the NFL had long been seen as dedicated to social justice causes, this partnership might have attracted some praise, or at least open support. But since the initial announcement and press conference with NFL



Commissioner Roger Goodell and Jay-Z, it has faced criticism for giving the league a way around the years-long controversy it has been embroiled in following its treatment of Colin Kaepernick. The former San Francisco 49ers quarterback has not played in the NFL since becoming a free agent

in 2017; the year before, he sparked a league-wide protest by kneeling during the national anthem to call attention to racial injustice and police

brutality.

Kaepernick has argued that he was effectively blackballed and exiled from the league for his protest and filed a formal grievance against the league in October 2017, saying that NFL owners had colluded to keep him off the field. That grievance was settled this past February for an undisclosed sum (though Kaepernick and Carolina Panthers safety Eric Reid, a former teammate and partner in the grievance, reportedly settled for less than \$10 million).

The NFL has faced criticism for owners’ refusal to hire

Kaepernick as well as its attempt to end the player-kneeling protest that continued without him. In May 2018, the league announced it would implement a policy barring players from kneeling on the field during the anthem, requiring them to either stand on the field or remain in the locker room, or potentially face a fine. (It later walked that policy back after facing fierce criticism.)

And the fact that several NFL owners are prominent donors and supporters of President Donald Trump — who has repeatedly attacked Kaepernick and other kneeling NFL players, framing their protest against injustice as unpatriotic — has led to arguments that the league cares more about pleasing the president and his supporters than the predominantly black group of players who sought to highlight injustice.

All of these issues predate the new NFL/Roc Nation partnership (which was perhaps not coincidentally discussed in detail at a press conference held on the third anniversary of Kaepernick's first protest). But these issues have still led to backlash against and criticism of the new deal,

with critics focusing most of their ire on Jay-Z.

They argue that the rapper, who has long funded impactful social justice causes and has used his platform to praise Kaepernick's protest, is disregarding the fact that the NFL has still not signed Kaepernick to a team. And in



Jay-Z becoming the new face of the NFL's social change initiative, critics claim he is also disingenuously capitalizing on Kaepernick's protest, calling attention to recently unearthed January comments the rapper made at a press event to argue that he is using the NFL's desire to move past the former quarterback to make more money for himself.

Supporters, meanwhile, claim Jay-Z is playing the long game, pointing to the rapper's prior work and still-unconfirmed reports that he is seeking an ownership stake of an NFL team

as evidence that the deal will somehow lead to something bigger.

As different observers disagree over what Jay-Z's intent might be, it is clear that the partnership has drawn considerable attention and sparked a debate that shows no signs of ending. And with the backlash to the first announcement of the partnership's efforts, one thing the Roc Nation/NFL deal isn't generating is the universally positive press all parties involved were probably hoping for.

Jay-Z has supported numerous social justice causes. That's part of why his NFL deal is being scrutinized.

To understand why Jay-Z in particular is getting so much criticism for the deal, it's probably helpful to understand the image he has built in the past decade, particularly when it comes to social justice issues.

As he has ascended to his current status as hip-hop's first billionaire, Jay-Z has also promoted a number of social justice causes and directly funded projects aimed at calling attention to racial injustice,

ranging from offering financial support to the families of victims of police violence to donating to charities.

In recent years, he has been particularly involved in using film and television to highlight specific stories of injustice. In 2017, he executive produced a documentary miniseries about Kalief Browder, a young black man who died by suicide more than a year after his release from New York's Rikers Island jail, where he had been detained without a trial for three years. In 2018, he executive produced another documentary series, this one about Trayvon Martin, the black teenager killed by a Florida neighborhood watchman in 2012.

In August, Amazon released *Free Meek*, a five-part docuseries co-produced by Roc Nation that focuses on the decade-long legal fight for rapper (and Roc Nation artist) Meek Mill to be freed from America's notoriously punitive probation system. Meek and Jay have also partnered as founding members of the REFORM Alliance, a group that seeks to limit the number of people serving unfair probation and parole sentences.

Jay-Z has also spoken publicly about other causes he supports, one of which has been Kaepernick's protest. During a 2017 appearance on Saturday Night Live, he wore a custom Colin Kaepernick jersey. That same year, he dedicated a New York performance of his song

"The Story of O.J." to Kaepernick. During a January 2018 CNN interview, he called Kaepernick an "iconic figure," adding that the player's focus on civil rights issues made him comparable to civil rights icon and famed boxer Muhammad Ali.

All of this has made it clear that Jay-Z sides with Kaepernick's protest and the issues it sought to highlight. And that has left questions about why he is now partnering with the NFL, a sports league that has worked very hard to make that protest disappear.

The NFL wants to present itself as a fighter for social change — while ignoring the catalyst for its image revamp

For some critics, the deal is easily summed up as Jay-Z selling out Kaepernick's protest,



effectively allowing him to benefit from the former player's actions even as Kaepernick continues to go without a job. "Jay-Z doesn't need the NFL's help 2 address social injustices. It was a money move 4 him & his music business," Reid, Kaepernick's former 49ers teammate, tweeted in August. "The NFL gets 2 hide behind his black face 2 try to cover up blackballing Colin."

Nessa Diab, a radio and TV host and Kaepernick's longtime girlfriend, added that she was angered that Jay-Z was seeking to position his deal as the continuation of Kaepernick's protest despite not involving the former quarterback in the partnership. "I don't mind you doing a business deal — but I do mind you wrapping it in social justice when you're working with an organization that denies someone an opportunity," she said on Hot 97 radio last month.

To read more:

<https://bit.ly/2oiV8wk>

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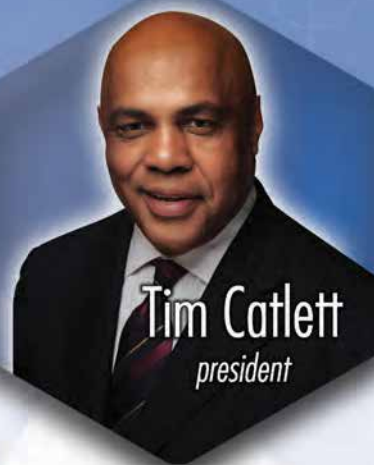


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