

The *Sojourner's* Truth

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"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

June 16, 2021

Celebrating Juneteenth

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NOBODY'S FREE UNTIL EVERYBODY'S FREE

- Fannie Lou Hamer

On the Juneteenth holiday, **educate** yourself and others on the history of this day. **Commemorate** the emancipation of millions of slaves. **Celebrate** our freedom and commit to the continued fight for justice for all people.



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Declared But Not Realized

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, D.Min.
The Truth Contributor



We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in present-day society.

- Black Panther Party Platform

The celebration of Juneteenth resonates with me deeply. An occasion to purposely celebrate our culture, Juneteenth also provides an opportunity to expand the community's collective knowledge of the black experience, a perspective excluded from traditional vehicles of education and learning.

It was a full two years after the Emancipation Proclamation legally abolished slavery on January 1, 1863, until Blacks in Galveston, Texas, received official word and became actually free from subjugation. It took Juneteenth to expose the critical unsolved problem of freedom declared but not yet realized.

In a similar vein, the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education and the federal government's intervention successfully removed segregation, ensuring universal access to public education. Nonetheless, the verdict has yet to deliver excellence and equity in BIPOC students' educational experiences and outcomes.

It is now time to pivot beyond the realization of universal access for students based on gender, race, ethnicity or special needs to pursue excellence and equity for those who "have always been on the margins of how this nation interprets contributions to the construction of our democracy."

Why Education Equity Matters:

College enrollment declined more than two million students in the decade before COVID-19. Since 2017-18, whites no longer represent the majority of the undergraduate population at public colleges, according to the Center for American Progress.

There has been a corresponding decline of 200,000 black students ages 18-24 and an increase in Latinx college enrollment (18 to 24) that exceeds the increase in the general Latinx population.

The impact is seen in two ways.

First, the multicultural activism and protests occurring in light of George Floyd's death cannot be optimized without engaging college campuses. "There is an intellectual perspective to social change that takes understanding through applied knowledge or engagement in coursework," said an esteemed college administrator.

Many of today's generation of students – both white and nonwhite – are demanding diverse faculty and professional development in inclusion topics. These students also call for multicultural coursework offerings such as "critical race theory" and faculty that look like them.

With the strain on university budgets and minorities making up most students

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As we celebrate Juneteenth to commemorate the demise of slavery and the contributions made by courageous African Americans, a quote by writer Richard Wright resonates with me as a member of Toledo City Council:

"We black folk, our history, and our present being are a mirror of all the manifold experiences of America. What we want, what we represent, what we endure is what America is. If we black folk perish, America will perish." – Richard Wright

**Councilwoman
Tiffany Preston Whitman**

Juneteenth ... Meet Your New America!

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq
Guest Column

A time traveler returning from viewing the celebrations of the newly freed slaves in Texas in June of 1865 and which joyous occasions morphed into the Texas holiday of Juneteenth, would probably crash their time machine if they were to now monitor the recent Republican political knifings of voting rights in America.

True enough, the passed and the yet to be passed voter suppression bills in overwhelmingly Republican legislatures will apply to white voters as well. But you are sorely deluded if you believe that the passages of such "earmarked" legislation was without a sordid racial component.

A current undertaking of voter suppression laws that are being concocted and widely promulgated by white GOP politicians whose intentions are to hamstring minority voters for the upcoming and all-important 2022 midterms, is in full bloom.

At the outset, our time traveler would have read and studied the morning after election charts and surveys which have strongly evidenced that there was no voter fraud in the recent national election which turned out to pasture the originator of the BIG LIE, Donald Trump.

Our astute time traveler would have marveled at reading news events which show a divided nation in an uproar over a crafted lie that Donald Trump was the victim of a stolen election. And when the flummoxed time traveler dug deeper into the news, he would have been aghast to learn that

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Perryman... continued from page 3

who attend, many white conservatives fear “minorities getting a leg up on the competitive scale when it comes to jobs that require a degree.”

These factors, including the struggle for power and control, make the debate over “critical race theory” more contentious.

“People are saying that there are those that want to ignore the 1619 Project and disreputable aspects of American History because they don’t want to know the truth. But that’s not enough of a reason to make laws banning teaching what really happened. It’s also about the fact that white kids are not going to college and not wanting minorities to have an edge in the workforce by being the most educated and the most qualified,” the administrator added.

As We Move Forward:

Juneteenth is about black culture and freedom. It is about celebration and education. It is also a call to acknowledge the “progress that has taken place thus far while continuing to work to bring about change at the individual, organization, community, and system levels.”

The black community is currently situated at the cusp of a critical moment where white nationalism has resurged. There is “no consistent, comprehensive, coordinated commitment to formally and appropriately educate and socialize the masses of African Americans for group advancement in a social climate that dehumanizes and devalues them,” says scholar Alan Colon.

Yet our world of alternative facts, conspiracy theories, and a “consistently loose relationship with the truth” continues to push out flawed racialized cultural representations. Media and textbooks continue to present white success while portraying dysfunction, pathology, and failure for black family life.

What Can We Do?

We can work individually and collectively to achieve educational equity, meaning that each child receives everything needed to develop their full academic and social potential.

The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights’ Education Equity Project is among those fighting in the trenches. This traditional civil rights organization performs equity audits at public universities to determine retention and completion barriers for minority students and help schools develop equitable policies. They also scrutinize the campus climate to determine any racial incidents or issues that contribute to an unwelcome educational environment.

We must also require equally high outcomes for all students and demand that success and failure are no longer determined by racial, cultural, or socioeconomic factors.

We can support the Strength in Diversity Act. This legislation calls for “developing and implementing new strategies in public schools to promote inclusion, which would strengthen the fabric of our nation.”

What are you doing with the children?

However, colleges and universities require a pipeline. The black community must supply more than what the primary, middle, and high schools can provide. Children need more than the rote memorization of facts in the public schools’ bland and deliberately sanitized approach to history.

We need to undertake more than pouring information into children. We also need to draw out of them the gifts and creativity that every child is born with. The misguided distortions taught in mass education strategies result from the tendency to analyze and interpret from a Eurocentric or White middle-class norm rather than through the lenses provided by African Americans’ unique circumstances and experiences.

Therefore, each young person needs to be connected to some more-extensive network where culturally responsive teaching and learning occur. And, where gifts are nurtured and promoted rather than constantly told to sit down and be quiet. The pain of too many adults is that somewhere in growing up, they were talked out of their gifts or devalued so much that the flame was extinguished.

Finally, everyone should find a church or community program that espouses African core values. It will allow our children to escape the danger of becoming spiritual and relational refugees and gradually shape a new consciousness to preserve and promote the community.

Contact Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org

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the former president was using the race card as his means to gin up his rabid base to hoodwink them into thinking that, they too, were victims of a political crime.

If Juneteenth meant the arrival of good news of freedom to slaves in Texas, the time traveler would have noticed that in present day America, the political freedom of the descendants of those former slaves was again in imminent jeopardy.

White America’s preoccupation with the voting rights of African Americans was unabated both then after 1865 and now insofar as this intense assault has a disproportionate impact upon people of color.

Juneteenth was the final freedom declaration to the Texas slaves who were initially prevented from hearing about the Emancipation Proclamation two and half years earlier and the fall of the confederacy and the subsequent end of their tyranny.

Yet, elements of that same confederacy, now cloaked in and under different names, is manifesting its racial vitriolic dogma via the cultural wars of the GOP.

The GOP, now home to discontented groups of white nationalists, white supremacists and other discordant and alienated white people, has become the ideological battering bullhorn to repeat the falsehood that former President Donald Trump was a victim of a political hijacking.

Our astute time traveler, being a voracious reader of American history, would have discovered that throughout the history of this country, lies about people of color regarding their intellect, sexual appetites and supposed inability to form viable communities were constantly propagated in the news media.

The current historical beneficiaries of Juneteenth are suffering the same fates

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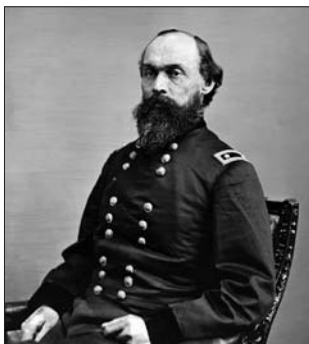
   



What Is Juneteenth? How Did It Start? What Is Its Legacy?

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19 that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free.

Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation – which had become official January 1, 1863 – by which Lincoln proclaimed freedom for all of the enslaved in the Confederate states.



General Gordon Granger

The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops that were needed to enforce the new executive order. However, with the surrender of General Robert E. Lee in April 1865 and the arrival of General Gordon Granger's regiment of Union soldiers, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.

Later attempts to explain the two-and-a-half year delay in the receipt of this important news have yielded several versions that have been handed down over the years.

Often told is the story of a messenger who was murdered on his way to Texas with news of freedom.

Another is that the news was deliberately withheld by the enslavers to maintain the labor force on the plantations. And still another is that federal

Head Quarters District of Texas
Galveston Texas June 19th 1865.
General Orders

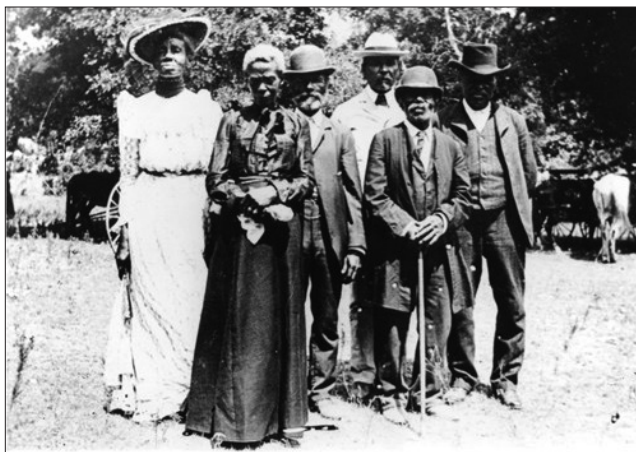
No. 3.

The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor.

The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.

By order of Major General Granger

F.W. Emery
Major A.A. Genl.



Emancipation Day celebration held on June 19, 1900, in Austin

troops actually waited for the slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

All or none of these stories could be factual. For whatever reasons, conditions in Texas remained status quo well beyond what was statutory.

One of General Granger's first orders of business was to read to the people of Texas, General Order Number 3, which began significantly with:

"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."

The reactions to this profound news ranged from pure shock to immediate jubilation. While many lingered to learn of this new employer to employee relationship, many left before these offers were completely off the lips of their former "masters" – attesting to the varying conditions on the plantations and the realization of freedom.

Even with nowhere to go, many felt that leaving the plantation would be their first grasp of freedom. North was the logical destination and for many it represented true freedom, while the desire to reach family members in neighboring states drove some into Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Settling into these new areas as free men and women brought on new realities and the challenges of establishing a heretofore non-existent status for black people in America. Recounting the memories of that great day in June

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Dr. John W. Williams, Pastor

Juneteenth... continued from page 5

of 1865 and its festivities would serve as motivation as well as release from the growing pressures encountered in their new territory.

The celebration of June 19 was dubbed "Juneteenth" and grew with more participation from descendants. The Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring each other, for praying and for gathering remaining family members.

Juneteenth continued to be a highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date.

Juneteenth Celebration Decline

Economic and cultural forces provided for a decline in Juneteenth activities and participants beginning in the early 1900's. Classroom and textbook education in lieu of traditional family and home-taught practices stifled the interest of youth due to less emphasis and detail on the activities of former slaves.

Classroom textbooks proclaimed Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863 as the date signaling the end of slavery – and little or nothing on the impact of General Granger's arrival in Texas on June 19, 1865.

The Great Depression forced many people off the farms and into cities to find work. In these urban environments, employers were less eager to grant leaves to celebrate this date. Thus, unless June 19 fell on a weekend or holiday, there were very few participants available.

July 4 was the already established Independence holiday and a rise in patriotism steered more towards this celebration.

Resurgence

The Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's yielded both positive and negative results for the Juneteenth celebration.

While it pulled many of the African-American youth away and into the struggle for racial equality, many linked these struggles to the historical struggles of their ancestors. This was evidenced by student demonstrators involved in the Atlanta civil rights campaign in the early 1960's who wore Juneteenth freedom buttons.

Again in 1968, Juneteenth received another strong resurgence through the Poor People's March to Washington, D.C. with Rev. Ralph Abernathy's call for people of all races, creeds, economic levels and professions to come to Washington, to show support for the poor. Many of those attendees returned home and initiated Juneteenth celebrations in areas previously absent of such activity. In fact, two of the largest Juneteenth celebrations founded after this march are now held in the far northern reaches of Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

Texas Blazes the Trail

On January 1, 1980, Juneteenth became an official state holiday through the efforts of Texas State Representative Al Edwards, an African-American legislator. The successful passage of this bill marked Juneteenth as the first emancipation celebration granted official state recognition. Representative Edwards has since actively sought to spread the observance all across America.

Juneteenth in Modern Times

Throughout the 1980's and on into the 21st century, Juneteenth has continued to enjoy a growing and healthy interest from communities and organizations across the nation. Institutions such as the Smithsonian, the Henry Ford Museum, the Toledo Museum of Arts and others have begun sponsoring Juneteenth-centered activities.

In recent years, a number of Juneteenth organizations have arisen to take their place alongside older organizations – all with the mission to promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of African-American history and culture.

Juneteenth today celebrates African-American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. As it takes on a more national and even global perspective, the events of 1865 in Texas are not forgotten, for all of the roots tie back to this fertile soil from which a national day of pride continues to grow.

Interestingly, the orders issued on Juneteenth by General Granger applied only to Texas. Slavery didn't end in states like Kentucky and Delaware, which hadn't seceded and therefore weren't covered by Lincoln's proclamation freeing slaves in the Confederate states, until Dec. 18, 1865, when the 13th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution was adopted.

Forty-six of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have recognized Juneteenth as either a state holiday or ceremonial holiday, a day of observance. The four states that do not recognize Juneteenth are Hawaii, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana.

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Ten Juneteenth Facts

Fact #1: Following the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, not all enslaved people immediately found freedom.

The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in states then in rebellion against the United States. Union troops operating in said states gave teeth to the Proclamation. This, however, did not apply to the border states.

Fact #2: The Civil War ended in the summer of 1865. Union General Gordon Granger and his troops traveled to Galveston, Texas to announce General Orders No. 3 on June 19, 1865. June 19th would go on to be known and celebrated as Juneteenth.

General Orders No. 3 stated: "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor."

Fact #3: Part of General Order No. 3 encouraged the newly freed people to remain with their past owners.

"The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere."

Fact #4: The period after Juneteenth is known as the 'Scatter.'

Undeterred by the recommendation to remain in place, many former slaves left the area during the original reading. In the following weeks formerly enslaved people left Texas in great numbers to find family members and make their way in the postbellum United States.

Fact #5: Juneteenth has been celebrated under many names.

Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, and Cel-Liberation Day, Second Independence Day, and Emancipation Day to name just a few.

Fact #6: Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas was bought specifically to celebrate Juneteenth.

The 10-acre parcel of land was purchased by former slaves, Richard Allen, Richard Brock, Jack Yates, and Elias Dibble for \$800 in 1872.

Fact #7: During the early 20th-century Juneteenth celebrations declined.

The enactment of Jim Crow laws dampened the celebration of freedom. In addition, the Great Depression forced many black farming families away from rural areas and into urban environments to seek work—resulting in difficulty taking the day off to celebrate.

Fact #8: The celebration of Juneteenth was revived during the civil rights movement.

The Poor People's March planned by Martin Luther King Jr. was purposely scheduled to coincide with the date. March participants took the



An African American band at an Emancipation Day celebration in Austin in 1900 celebrations back to their home states and soon the holiday was reborn.

Fact #9: Celebrations of Juneteenth continue today.

Traditions include public readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, singing traditional songs, and reading of works by noted African American writers. Celebrations can also take the form of rodeos, street fairs, cookouts, family reunions, park parties, historical reenactments, and Miss Juneteenth contests.

Fact #10: Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth as either a state holiday or ceremonial holiday, a day of observance.

New Hampshire became the latest state to formally recognize Juneteenth in 2019.

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1979 June 07 - Texas Passes Bill Becoming the First State to Make Juneteenth a Holiday

A celebration that has persisted for over a century receives its first official recognition on June 7, 1979, as the Texas Legislature passes a bill declaring Juneteenth a state holiday. The annual June 19 celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation—not the announcement itself, but the arrival of the news of the proclamation in Texas—is now officially observed in almost all 50 states.

President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation officially freed the enslaved peoples of the rebellious Southern states on New Year's Day of 1863, but the order only applied to territories currently held by the Confederacy. Southerners did not recognize Lincoln's authority, and in many cases slaveowners and whites simply withheld the news from enslaved people.

The wait was especially long in Texas, where news of slavery's demise did not arrive until two months after Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox ended the Civil War. On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas and proclaimed the news to the enslaved people there.

The day instantly became an important one to the African American citizens of Texas, who held annual celebrations and even made pilgrimages to Galveston each Juneteenth.

In 1872, a group of Black ministers and businessmen purchased 10 acres of land in Houston for the occasion, naming it Emancipation Park. Black communities across the nation continued to celebrate Juneteenth for the next century.

The holiday received renewed interest with the rise of the civil rights Movement in the 1960s,

particularly when Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference proclaimed Juneteenth "Solidarity Day" as part of his 1968 Poor People's Campaign.

Another civil rights leader, the recently-elected State Representative Al Edwards of Houston, introduced the bill making Juneteenth a paid holiday in the state of Texas. In the following decades, most of the country either made Juneteenth a holiday or declared it would officially observe the occasion, and parades and public celebrations have attracted larger and larger crowds.



Organizers of the Juneteenth at Wheeler's Grove, 1900

Tolliver... continued from page 4

of their forebears at the hands of defeated Southerners who used the Jim Crow laws to try to recapture black people and place them back in their place, to wit: chronic and debilitating servitude.

The practitioners of Jim Crow laws employed every device known to man to portray the newly freed slave as an imminent danger to the economy of the South, to the purity of the white race and a demonized sexual predator of white women.

The time traveler, reading the newspapers and watching entertainment programming of that time, would have been led to believe that black people were the sole impediments to progress for the South and, as such, they needed to be corralled and politically neutered for their own good.

As it was then, so it is now being attempted by the GOP and their core base, to devise schemes by which the minority voter will be disengaged from the political process and in that vacuum, white politicians with their race-based agendas can step in and

rule the roost.


Jerrymandering and "packing the courts" with marginally qualified white judges does the bidding of the GOP; and if any GOP leader should stray from the provided talking points, that deviator is termed a traitor or a distraction and thus is banned from the party or is pilloried for any statements that question the wisdom of the GOP leadership.

In exasperation, our time traveler would possibly wonder when America, if ever, would live by its lofty words of freedom and liberty for all, or was such jargon, simply sparkling words that tickled the fancy of the uber rich who initially drafted that lofty preamble to the US Constitution?

When last seen, our time traveler was heading into the Capitol to watch the craftiness of GOP senate leaders bob and weave at their attempts to show their frail allegiance to the flag while still holding out pieces of political cheese for the former president to continue to nibble on and find support for his egregious conduct.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com





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National Network of Black Museums to Release Their Second Virtual Juneteenth: Lift Every Voice and Sing

BLKFreedom Continues the Tradition of Exploring Freedom, Justice, and Democracy in America

On June 18 at 11:00 a.m. CDT, the National Civil Rights Museum will virtually join nine leading Black museums and historical institutions from coast to coast for BLK-FREEDOM.org to commemorate Juneteenth, the day that the Emancipation Proclamation was officially enforced, ending enslavement in Texas. The annual collaboration has produced a film documenting the national exploration of the deep-rooted anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" through the eyes of historic museums and anthropologists from across the United States. The film will premiere on partnering sites starting June 15 at 12:00 PM EDT / 11:00 AM CDT.

BLKFREEDOM.org will commemorate the anniversary of Juneteenth. Juneteenth dates back to June 19, 1865, when union soldier, Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with the news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. This announcement was more than two and half years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

The virtual event will explore the historical influences

on the evolution of being black in America using the context of the national anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing". Streaming audiences globally will explore the pride of over 200 years of Gullah culture, perseverance of Little Africa through Black Laws, tenacity through industry and pop culture in Detroit, and resiliency during the COVID Era. Additional performances will feature the African American Cultural Ensemble (ACE), West African Dance, and poetry.

BLKFREEDOM.org is a combined effort between America's Black Holocaust Museum (Milwaukee, WI), Amistad Research Center of Tulane University (New Orleans, Louisiana), August Wilson African American Cultural Center (Pittsburgh, PA), California African American Museum (Los Angeles, CA), Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (Detroit, MI), Harvey Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture (Charlotte, NC), Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park (Hilton Head Island, SC), National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis TN), Northwest African American Museum (Seattle, WA), and National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (Cincinnati, OH). This collaborative program will explore the meaning and relevance of "freedom", "justice" and "democracy". For more information about collaborative partners, visit blkfreedom.org.

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The Toledo Black Artist Coalition's mission is centered around creating avenues of artistic agency through advocacy, education, and activism. Throughout history, the African American perspective in the arts has been omitted, leaving a void within many mainstream cultural institutions. In reality, Toledo, Ohio has a rich legacy of African American artists who formed collectives to provide resources and education within the greater community. The Toledo Black Artists Coalition is a new wave formed within the context of the current national and international movement to heal a nation traumatized by the effects of white supremacy embedded within every facet of society. It is our ongoing goal to create pathways for artists of color and combat racial inequality as it continues to manifest within and in relation to Toledo institutions of culture.



IMAGE: Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917–2000), *Barber Shop*, gouache on paper, 21 3/4 x 29 3/4 inches (53.6 x 74.6 cm), Toledo Museum of Art (Toledo, Ohio), Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1975.15.
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Toledo's Juneteenth Events – Saturday, June 19

The **Junction Coalition's** Community Celebration Pop Up Shop. From 11 am to 6 pm at 1500 Dorr Street. Featuring music by DJ V Nyce, food and dozens of vendors.

The **African American Sports Legends of Northwest Ohio** will honor the heritage, the indelible human spirit, as well as the incredible will and determination of a group of men who played the game of baseball which ultimately became the perfect platform to teach important life lessons to all of us. A permanent historical marker celebrating the 100th anniversary [1920] of the old Negro League will be installed on one of the busiest gateways in our community [Collingwood and Dorr Streets], just in time for the Solheim Cup – 11 a.m.

The **Frederick Douglass Community Association** Parade and Festival. Starting at 1 pm

Toledo Museum of Art – “Out of the Dark” – A historic Journey curated by the Toledo Black Artist Coalition. Opens on Juneteenth

And a Virtual One:

12th Annual **Juneteenth NYC Festival**. This event has gained more attention after New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio made Juneteenth an official holiday in NYC.

The date's significance has grown these past years amid the Black Lives Matter movement, and as a result, there is a push to declare it a national holiday in all 50 states.



This year Juneteenth NY adds *Community Reinvestment Coalition - Englewood SW*, Toledo, Lucas County, Ohio as a new partner, and shapes up to be like no other with a weekend summit celebration that starts on Friday with professionals and residents talking about health and wellness; *Saturday our virtual festival* and ends highlighting aspiring youth entrepreneurs on Sunday. This year our event will be held on June 18-20, 2021, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm each day. Visit our website to learn more <https://www.juneteenthny.com/>.

25 Books for Kids and Adults to Celebrate Juneteenth and Reflect on History of Slavery

As America celebrates Juneteenth this year amid protests against racism and police brutality against Black people, the story of Saturday's holiday emerges as one to brush up on.

Whether you're a longtime celebrator or seeking to learn more, reading books about the history and legacy of Juneteenth can help commemorate

the 156th anniversary of the day enslaved people in Texas were read the Emancipation Proclamation, over two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed emancipation into law.

This year the celebration stands especially prominent as the United States confronts its deep-rooted history of systemic racism amid protests calling out the deaths of Black Americans George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Riah Mil-

... continued on page 14

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On Juneteenth by Annette Gordon-Reed

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

It's a party!

And you know what that means: fireworks, good food, family and friends gathered around. You have something to fête, to mark happily or solemnly or importantly. It's something you want your kids to remember. It's a party, but read *On Juneteenth* by Annette

Gordon-Reed, and ask yourself if you really know what you're celebrating.

When she learned a few years ago that the marking of Juneteenth was slowly making its way around the rest of the country, Annette Gordon-Reed was a little upset. That was a Texas thing, she believed, and so it should stay. She was a bit protective of it all.

But then she began to realize that sharing the holiday everywhere was a good thing. Juneteenth, she says, or June 19, 1865, "was the day that enslaved African Americans in Texas were told that slavery had ended, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed..." It was "shocking" on two levels: that slavery was over, and that Black Texans were suddenly "on an equal plane of humanity with whites..." That, she says, "was of enough consequence to the entire nation that it should be celebrated nationwide."

Sometimes, she says, Texas itself is an enigma to much of the rest of America, and mythology replaces facts in peoples' minds. Texas, for instance, is not all desert and sagebrush. It's more than longhorn cattle, Stetsons, cowboys, oil rigs, and Native Americans. There's more to the people of the Lone Star State than what old westerns will teach you, and that includes a history of African people in Texas, the first of whom floated on a raft to the Galveston area well over 300 years before Juneteenth.

Still, it wasn't until 1872 that four Black Houstonians decided to throw together some money for land they set aside for celebrating. The park they es-

c.2021
Liveright
\$15.95 / \$21.95 Canada
149 pages



tablished still exists; so does Juneteenth and its traditions, thanks to "so much Texas history brought together for this one special day."

And now you know – or at least you will, completely, once you've read "*On Juneteenth*."

In that, you'll get a quick, 149-page lesson in history that seems initially to meander – not a bad thing, since Pulitzer Prize-winning author Annette Gordon-Reed uses the journey to educate readers on such varied subjects as language differences, misunderstandings, movies, *The Yellow Rose of Texas*, hidden references to slavery, and other things that white history's often glossed over. Yes, that may seem like a lot to pack into such a slim volume, but you won't feel rushed or overwhelmed here; instead, and because Gordon-Reed takes readers to her grandparents' farm between lessons, this book is a treat, rather like summer vacation with a museum trip or an informational tour and ice cream at the end.

Absolutely, look for this book. You can use *On Juneteenth* as a good refresher course, if you've already ordered the fireworks and meats for the barbecue. If you're new to the celebration, grab the book, tuck it in your pocket, and won't it be a party?



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The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

From September, 2019

You can't breathe.

There's really no describing the panic when that happens. Your ribs struggle to rise, your chest feels like it's being stomped, you're on fire, and your brain screams. Your arms flail. Your hands grasp at nothing, and then — ahhhhh, you gasp. And in the new novel, *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, nothing's better than the first breath of freedom's air.

Hiram was drowning.

One minute, he was in the carriage and the next, he and the horse were struggling in the water. Oddly, though, the lack of breath, seeing his half-brother float away, tasting mud on the riverbanks, none of that bothered him. He thought he saw his mother dancing on the bridge, but she was sold away years ago; the water felt familiar but everything did, all the time. Hi grew up knowing he had a gift that allowed him to see his ancestors and to remember everything, and this drowning was one of those things.

He woke up in a bed wearing fresh clothes that belonged to his half-brother, Maynard. Hi's father — the man who owned him — was weeping because Maynard was lost, and Hi realized then that whatever relationship he'd had with his white father was over.

His life at the great house on Virginia's Lockless Plantation, over. That his father looked the other way when Hiram showed interest in Sophia, a housegirl Hi delivered every weekend to his father's brother for reasons Hi preferred not to think about... done. His whole life was spent as a Tasker for people who owned him, toiling for Quality folk and thinking that if he did the right things, he'd be rewarded with some sort of equality or freedom or....

Or he'd been fooling himself.

He'd never be equal to the Quality. He'd never love who he wanted to love, or know for certain that he'd never be sold Natchez-way. And that meant just one thing.

It was time to run.

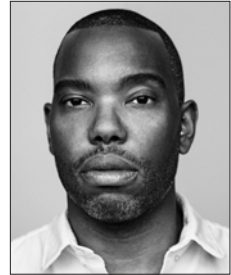
Hunched over. That's what you'll be with *The Water Dancer*: hunched over as you read, to protect your heart from this story and because the anticipation of what's to come is too much to handle if you're upright.

Using a little magic, the full meaning of which may not become totally clear until nearly the end of this tale, author Ta-Nehisi Coates captivates readers with language rich and reminiscent of poetry or song. The beauty

c.2019
One World
\$28.00 / \$37.00 Canada
416 pages

of those words is calming-not-calming, like lying on a fresh-smelling, springy bed of moss on the edge of quiet woods, waiting to hear heavy footsteps you know are coming. Cue the ominous music, but don't think that this is a horror novel. No, it's more of an escape-novel-thriller-love-story-drama-history with a cast of characters that couldn't seem more real.

One of them, in fact, was real so look for her and don't worry if the plot of this book doesn't make sense at first; it will soon enough. Just settle, let the words wash in, and *The Water Dancer* will knock the breath out of you.



Ta-Nehisi Coates

25 Books... continued from page 12

ton, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks and more.

For those looking for ways to do just that, these are some of the books experts recommend checking out.

Learning more about the ways systemic racism is rooted in the country's history is the way to help heal the future, experts say.

For a better understanding, start with these reads recommended by various experts and on best-seller lists about Juneteenth, slavery and Black history:

- "The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism" by Edward E. Baptist
- "Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution in America" by W. Caleb McDaniel
- "Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America" by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
- "Stony the Road" by Henry Louis Gates Jr.
- "The Water Dancer" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- "The Underground Railroad" by Colson Whitehead
- "My Vanishing Country" by Bakari Sellers
- "We Were Eight Years in Power" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- "Black Pain" by Terrie Williams
- "The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin
- "Here I Stand" by Paul Robeson
- "The Warmth of Other Suns" by Isabel Wilkerson
- "The Strange Career of Jim Crow" by C. Vann Woodward
- "Mirror to America" by John Hope Franklin

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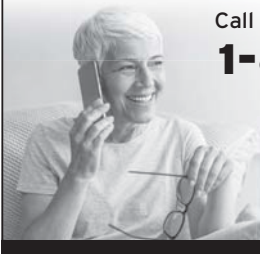
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Sorority... continued from page 20

21-year Toledo Public School educator. The chapter dean of pledges is Clara Brank and chapter president is Jacqueline Quinn.

"This has been an incredible experience. We as teachers have dealt with virtual and hybrid learning, and as a group focused on work life balance. We leaned on each other and helped each other through difficult times. It's been natural, learning and supporting each other through this process and teaching," explained Capeles.

Immediately following the presentation and induction, the sorority mem-

bers fellowshiped during dinner and presented the new members with gifts.

The National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. was founded in 1923 by eight young educators with high ideals for the teaching profession and wanted to form a sisterhood for African American teachers. The sorority is dedicated to the task of training and mentoring youth of the community to cope satisfactorily and effectively with today's problems. The sorority believes that education is key to becoming productive citizens. The sorority's focus is Youth, Education and Service, which is referred to as Y.E.S. The local chapter of Beta Gamma Chapter was founded on May 23, 1952 and 12 members were initiated on May 24, 1952.

Dream's Masterpiece... continued from page 20

Touch a Dream, now in its 13th year, is truly a family affair. The partners and co-owners are mother and daughter Terri and Tanisha Shelmon. The studio is sponsored by Terri's husband/Tanisha's father, Theodis Shelmon, owner of The Shelmon Group, LLC, concrete specialists.

Both mother and daughter have vast training and experience in a variety of dance styles.

Terri started in ballet as a child and continued in ballet through her college years, gradually expanding her repertoire into other forms, particularly tap.

Tanisha also started dancing at an early age and during her college years was chosen to become part of the WNBA Detroit Shock Women's Basketball dance team – the "Shockwave." She eventually was selected to be part of the Detroit Pistons Dance Team, "Automation."

Touch a Dream Dance Studio has grown over the years to include five instructors and approximately 60 students. The studio's program includes both a recreational portion, which is open to all comers, and a competitive group that prospective dancers audition for. About 35 dancers are in the competitive group.

Over the years Touch a Dream has introduced a variety of dance styles to its students and audiences – ballet, tap, hip hop, jazz and lyrical, says Tanisha.

Additionally, the studio has added a modeling class under the direction of model Sharlyn Rodela.

The Masterpiece performance was just that – according to a thrilled audience. "What an amazing recital tonight! I have watched you help develop my daughter into the powerful dancer and model that she has blossomed into," said one pleased parent after the show.



Touch a Dream Instructor Brandon Allen and Tanisha Shelmon



Terri Shelmon and Modeling Instructor Sharlyn Rodela



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CLASSIFIEDS

June 16, 2021

Page 17

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Walk Through Location: University Medical Center, Main Lobby, 3000 Arlington Ave., Toledo Ohio, 43606

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Dr. Donald Baker Student Resource Room Opens at UT

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

University of Toledo administrators, staff and faculty joined the family members of the late Dr. Donald Baker, MD, a distinguished alumnus, to dedicate the Dr. Donald Baker Student Resource Room on Thursday, June 10. The ceremony was held at the entrance to the room – University Hall Room 2380.

"This is a continuation of a process that started on the heels of the George Floyd [incident] last year," said Willie McKether, PhD, vice president of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the master of ceremonies for the dedication event. McKether noted that the room is part of a process that will "help our students develop and hone their social resources consciousness."

The resource room is a result of a partnership between the university's Center for Racial Equity and Black Student Excellence and its Africana Studies Program.

UToledo President Gregory Postel, PhD, also attended the ceremony and spoke of the two missions that the Student Resource Room will undertake.

"The first mission is to foster a culture that is welcoming and inclusive," he said. "The second mission is to look specifically at black students and promote academic excellence." The importance of the second mission, he said, is rooted in the "achievement gap" between black students and their classmates. It is a gap which closed dramatically during the 2020-21 academic year but still has a long way to go, said Postel.

The driving forces behind the creation of the Student Resource Room, a place for students to study and hang out between classes, are Tiffany Preston Whitman, PhD, director Student Success Initiatives, and Gentry Willis, ODI Program Manager.

Last week's dedication was not just a university event, it was also a family

affair. Speaking of the impact of Dr. Baker on the university and community were his brother, Al Baker, who serves as the UToledo Board of Trustees chairman, and his son, Aaron Baker, who was on the UToledo staff for about a half dozen years. Both related stories and anecdotes highlighting Dr. Baker's concern for others.

There were significant contributions.

Dr. Baker, an orthopedic surgeon, was a standout football player at Scott High School and at UToledo, playing offense and defense from 1962 to 1942 for the Rockets. After graduation he was a teacher at Scott and Macomber before enrolling at the former Medical College of Ohio.

After earning his medical degree, Dr. Baker opened a practice on Jefferson Avenue and would use his skills as an orthopedic surgeon as a team doctor for Scott and Macomber high schools and the Toledo Storm hockey team through the years.

Al Baker mentioned the Dorr Secor Walk-In Clinic that his brother opened in 1983 as a critically important community asset – a clinic that anyone could go to, said Al Baker.

The Center for Racial Equity focuses primarily on services and programming for Black students to graduate and excel in their careers but is also inclusive of all underrepresented minority students.



Tiffany Preston Whitman, PhD, and Gentry Willis



Al Baker in the Dr. Donald Baker Student Resource Center




Willie McKether, PhD



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Touch a Dream's Masterpiece

Sojourner's Truth Staff

The Touch a Dream Studio presented their annual dance recital on Sunday, June 13 at the Stranahan Theatre aptly titled "Masterpiece." And after a year's absence from the live stage because of the pandemic, the instructors and dancers of Touch a Dream had much more time to prepare their masterpiece and they used it wisely.

Because of the lingering impact of the pandemic and the social distancing requirements in the Stranahan Theatre, the studio presented two shows on Sunday, at 2 and 6 p.m., rather than the usual one show. And both shows were sold out!

...continued on page 15



Sorority Inducts Four Local Educators

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., Beta Gamma Chapter of Toledo, conducted the Krinon Initiation of The Golden Phoenix and welcomed four local educators into the sisterhood on June 12, 2021.

"Today is the induction into our illustrious organization, we as educators take an oath to serve the community. Our sorority focuses on big things both locally and on a national level. We're educators during the day and take our mark on society through our work," shared Midwest Regional Director Tiffany M. Pritchett of Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, Inc.

The new members delivered a presentation that opened with self-introductions, reciting of the sorority's national history, presentation of gifts to current sorority members, and update on a donation report to Achieve Academy's closet which provides clothing for students in need.

The initiated members were: Laurel Capeles, McKinley STEMM Academy educator, Toledo Opera and church volunteer; Audrey Johnson, Achieve Career Preparatory Academy educator and Arts Commission volunteer; Lavada Griswold-Smith, McTigue school educator, Freedom School director and member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc; and Feama Williams, a

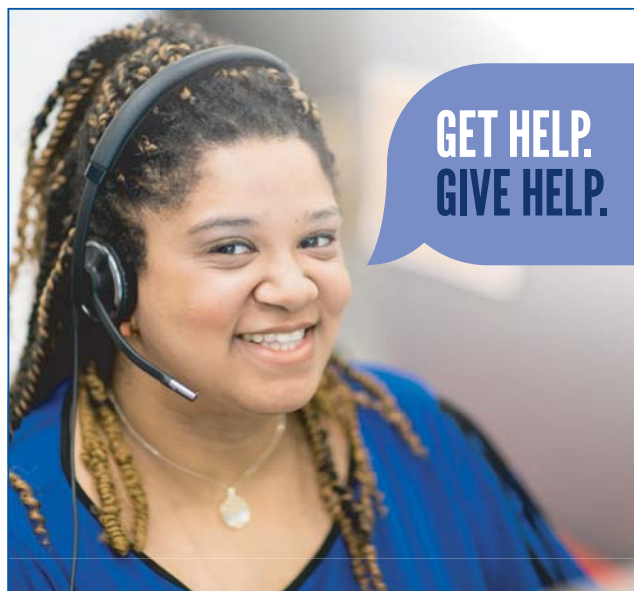
...continued on page 15



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Phi Delta Kappa, Toledo Chapter



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Se habla Español.



Celebrating Juneteenth

The emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."
Nelson Mandela

"KEEP" Cerssandra McPherson

For City Council At-Large

Endorsed Democrat

Paid for by McPherson for Council