

In this issue

- 1-2 Message from the President
- 2 Remembering and Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- 3 Kwame Dawes' Tribute to MLK
- 4 New President of NAACP Omaha Chapter
- 4 Gov. Ricketts and Allies Attack UNL Chancellor's Anti-Racism Plan
- 5 NAACP Chapters Declare Support for UNL Chancellor's Anti-Racism Plan
- 6 Education Activities of the Lincoln NAACP
- 6 Volunteers Needed
- 7 Truth & Reconciliation Update
- 8 Racism, Time, and the Space for Black History in America
- 9-11 First Attempt to Found NAACP Student Chapter at UNL 1948-1949

Adult Chapter Meetings

Monthly, 3rd Thursday, 6PM
Virtual Meeting
(except in December)

Youth Council Meetings

At Lincoln High School

Business Name

Lincoln Branch NAACP
P.O. Box 81322
Lincoln, NE 68501-1322



@LincolnBranchNAACP
Facebook.com/LincolnBranchNAACP

President Dr. Dewayne Mays

Vice President Rebecca Gonzalez

Secretary Jessica Stoner

Treasurer Carrie Banks

Lincoln Chapter Youth Council

Sponsor Mar'la Overstreet

University Chapter Advisor

Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones

President Aleece Barnard

Message from the President

Happy New Year to Lincoln Branch Members and well-wishers, After last year's struggles, we are anxious to see what 2022 has in store for us. With this year's congressional elections ahead of us, as well as state and local elections, we are faced with daunting tasks, including COVID challenges. Through all of these tasks, we want to make sure we and those around us are safe.

Voting continues to be the driving force in our quest to gain political traction in our community. We must step-up our Get-Out-the-Vote efforts. Every vote is important. We have made progress on some issues to get more voters to the polls, only to have these positive efforts met with voter suppression, such as efforts to implement voter ID. Nineteen states have implemented some form of voter suppression since the 2020 election and Nebraska is seeking to become the 21st.

If someone asks you to sign a petition to put an issue on the upcoming election ballot, be sure to examine it carefully. NAACP does not support voter ID's. Voter ID requirements reduce the voter turn-out for people of color.

The petition to raise the Minimum Wage is a worthy cause because people of color are the main recipients of these low wages and many of them are the only support for their families. Therefore, we would support this petition.

Your thoughts on the selection of a new superintendent for Lincoln Public Schools are important. Please take advantage of this opportunity to make sure that your input is received. This is important for our community and for students of color, who have not fared as well as other students.

Important priorities for the Lincoln Branch in 2022 include:

- Continue to support the diversifying of the teaching and administrative staff at Lincoln Public Schools.
- Communicate the ideals of NAACP to newly elected officials.
- Support the selection of a superintendent who will implement diversity throughout LPS.
- Work toward developing/supporting a vigorous effort to improve the low income housing situation in Lincoln.
- Assure police are supportive of community-based policing.
- Address the overpopulation of prisons by poor people and people of color.
- Increase community involvement/participation in NAACP. (continued on page 2)

Message from the president, con't.

- Continue to financially and personally support the Truth & Reconciliation History Project initiated by NAACP and Nebraskans for Peace Lincoln.
- Promote wider community-based support/cooperation for diversity issues.

The selection of the right superintendent to succeed Dr. Steve Joel can go a long way toward improving the diversity problem in Lincoln Public Schools. A diverse group of citizens has met with Dr. Joel, administrators and LPS Board of Education members in two sessions where questions posed by NAACP, Nebraskans for Peace, Let's Talk Alliance and a clergy group were addressed. The discussions covered curriculum, teacher and staff recruitment, diversity plans, student improvement efforts, AP Courses and career academy, and achievement gaps. Example of questions posed: How is pandemic funding being spent? What efforts are being made to increase the number of students of color in AP and other advanced classes? How are derisive biases being handled/ addressed in LPS?

Some of these questions are being addressed in-depth by a community group special task force that will present its findings to Dr. Joel, the administration, and the Lincoln Board of Education.

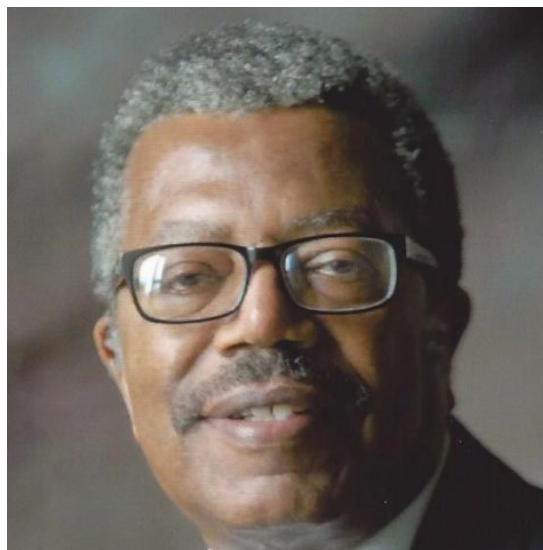
The ultimate goal is to provide all of our students with the best education possible through our public schools. We are thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the solution. Thank-yous are also in order for all of our teachers and collaborators who are working to make our schools a better place for all of our students.

Continue to be that positive force that moves our community forward. And lest I forget, thank you for your financial support of the Lincoln Branch NAACP and its projects.

Respectfully,

Dewayne Mays

President, Lincoln Branch NAACP



M. Dewayne Mays, PhD
President

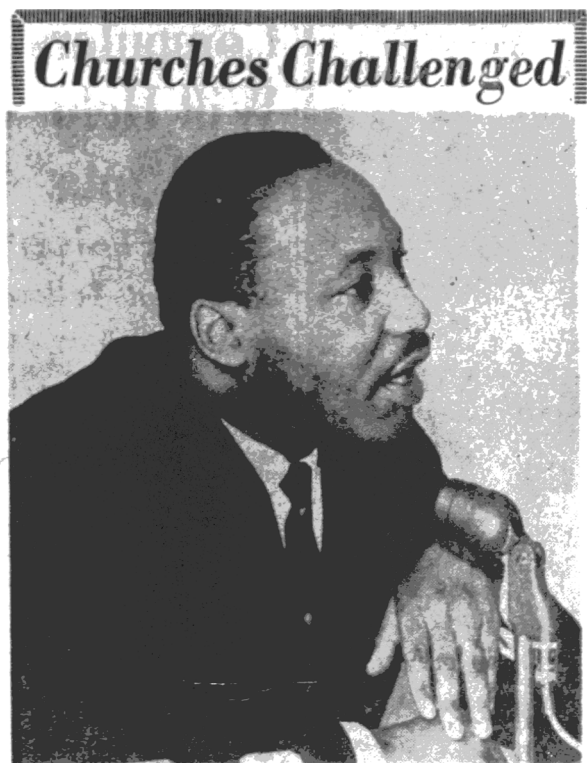
*Continue to be that positive force
that moves our community forward.*

-Dewayne Mays

Remembering and Honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on His Birthday (January 15) and Federal Holiday (January 17)

This photograph and article appeared in the Lincoln Evening Journal on December 31, 1964, the day after Dr. King gave a speech in Lincoln at the Pershing Auditorium before an audience of 5,000 people.

*His speech is available on Tumblr at the following UNL address:
<https://unladmissions.tumblr.com/post/137689744948/mlk-jr-in-lincoln>*



Dr. Martin Luther King issues challenge to Christians to become involved in civil rights.

King: Go and Get Involved In Racial Equality Struggle

By HAROLD SIMMONS
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. challenged more than 5,000 people at Pershing Auditorium Wednesday night "not to be spectators, but involved participants" in the struggle for racial equality.

Speaking to an audience composed of college students, campus ministers and visitors, Dr. King said: "We as

Christians must reaffirm that segregation is sinful and immoral wherever it may be."

In his formal address to the Eighth Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Student Movement, the Nobel Prize winner declared that the church "must first remove the yoke of segregation from its own body."

"Eleven o'clock Sunday

morning is still the most segregated hour in our nation," he said. "And the Sunday school is still the most segregated school in our nation."

Dr. King told the group that Christian responsibility to get rid of racial discrimination and segregation was not simply in the realm of ideas, but in the realm of actions too.

Kwame Dawes on Remembering in the "Belly of the Whale"

This year, I have been thinking a great deal about the deep challenges and disappointments that come in the midst of struggle, and while we find a great deal of value in celebrating the triumphs, I am reminded of how important it is to extract from the deep places of struggle—the uncertainty in the "belly of the whale", the troughs of our journey—something affirming that speaks to perseverance and persistence. I have had moments this year, when I felt that what progress was being made in the work against racism in our state, was being deeply and successfully challenged. In the face of this, I have found myself returning to old poems of mine, poems shaped by the lessons taught to me by those elders who struggled, elders my father liked to call "old campaigners". One such elder of the African Diasporic struggle was African American artist, Tom Feelings. It is his art in his monumental book, *Black Skin White Ships*, that gave me the gumption and the urge to make this poem. I share it now here as an expression of affirmation during these reflective days celebrating the legacy of all the strugglers for equality and justice for African Americans in this country that we contain inside the person and symbol of Martin Luther King Jr. The poem is called "Land Ho":

KWAME DAWES is the author of twenty-two books of poetry and numerous other books of fiction, criticism, and essays. His collection, *Nebraska*, was published in 2019. He is Glenna Luschei Editor of *Prairie Schooner* and George W. Holmes University Professor at the University of Nebraska. He teaches in the Pacific MFA Program. He is Director of the African Poetry Book Fund and Artistic Director of the Calabash International Literary Festival. Dawes is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. His awards include an Emmy, the Forward Poetry Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the PEN/Nora Magid Award and the prestigious Windham Campbell Prize for Poetry. In 2021, Kwame Dawes was named editor of *American Life in Poetry*. In 2021, Dawes was nominated for the Neustadt Prize.

From *Requiem*. Copyright © 1996 by Kwame Dawes. Used with the permission of Peepal Tree Press.

Land Ho

I cannot speak the languages
spoken in that vessel,
cannot read the beads
promising salvation.
I know this only,
that when the green of land
appeared like light
after the horror of this crossing,
we straightened our backs
and faced the simplicity
of new days with flame.
I know I have the blood of survivors
coursing through my veins;
I know the lament of our loss
must warm us again and again
down in the belly of the whale,
here in the belly of the whale
where we are still searching for homes.
We sing laments so old, so true,
then straighten our backs again.



Kwame Dawes

Rev. T. Michael Williams Installed as New President of NAACP Omaha Chapter

The Omaha Chapter of the NAACP installed its new president as well as newly elected officers on Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021, at 11:30 a.m. at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church. The outgoing president who served for eleven years was Vickie R. Young. Rev. T. Michael Williams, the new president, thanked Young for her leadership and underscored his goal “of bringing equality to our community.”

Other new officers and executive committee members who were installed on Saturday included First Vice President, Preston Love Jr.; Second Vice President, Chris Carithers; Secretary, Deb Shaw; Assistant Secretary, Krystal Fox; Treasurer, Ellery Hogan; and Assistant Treasurer, Tamara Bailey. Executive committee: Gwen Breakfield, Victoria Corbin, Marita Franklin, Steve Jackson, Sean McGhee, Alberta Nelson, Eddie Nelson, Arnitria Smith, and Barry Thomas.

The Omaha Chapter of the NAACP was organized in July of 1918 when Mary White Ovington, acting chair of the board of directors of the NAACP, gave talks both in Omaha and Lincoln. Rev. John Albert Williams was the first president of the Omaha Chapter.



T. Michael Williams is second from the left. Vickie R. Young is next to him.

Governor Ricketts and Republican Allies Attack UNL Chancellor Ronnie Green's Anti-Racism Plan

On November 17, 2021, UNL Chancellor Ronnie Green along with Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion Marco Barker released the initial steps in the university's plan toward achieving anti-racism and racial equality. The Chancellor decided to make good on a courageous promise after the death of George Floyd that the university would not simply continue with business as usual. Almost immediately, it was attacked by the Republican Governor of Nebraska and his allies.

KMTV 3 News Now reported on November 19 that Governor Ricketts said the university was bent on “ideological indoctrination” simply because the university was taking steps to be more inclusive and equitable. University Regent Jim Pillen made blatantly false statements about Chancellor Green accusing him of calling “Nebraska students and staff racist” and of giving “preferential treatment in hiring based on race.”

“... every student matters as an integral part of the university community and is committed to providing students with the skills and tools they need to succeed.”

Pillen, a Republican candidate for governor, had introduced a resolution to the Board of Regents in the spring in an attempt to ban critical race theory from the university. Governor Ricketts supported the resolution, but the Board of Regents rejected it in August by a vote of five to three.

After NU President Ted Carter published an Open Letter to

the People of Nebraska in support of Chancellor Green's plan, the Governor held a news conference on November 22 in which he stated he had lost all faith in the Chancellor and that he “could not be more disgusted with what just happened.” He slammed the university program and said the university should scrap the Chancellor's plan and start all over again.

Because of the emphasis on sound bites, it's difficult to discern why the Governor was criticizing the plan. Rather than aiming for equity, he seems to think that “what we should be striving for and what America is about, is equal opportunity. Making sure we're getting individuals opportunities to succeed. We cannot guarantee equal outcomes. That's Marxism. That's Communism” (<https://www.klknv.com/ricketts-carter-react-to-unls-diversity-plan/>). The university, of course, would like to see every student graduate, but it does not guarantee that every student will do so. The university does believe that every student matters as an integral part of the university community and is committed to providing students with the skills and tools they need to succeed. Ricketts has taken that university aspiration and perverted it so that it sounds like Marxism and Communism.

On November 24 the assault on the university continued. Two Republican state senators weighed in and demanded that Chancellor Green resign.

In one of his “Weekly Columns” on November 30 entitled “Choosing Educational Excellence Over Ideology,” the Governor published a diatribe against Chancellor Green that began with the following sentence: “Chancellor Ronnie Green believes the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) is racist.” This was a false accusation. In addition, his statement that “the [university] plan would inject Critical Race Theory (CRT) into every corner of campus” was also false. (<https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/choosing-educational-excellence-over-ideology>).

A major pushback, however, against these exaggerated and, at times, false verbal attacks by the Governor and his Republican allies did not occur until December 1. On that date the Omaha Chapter of the NAACP called a news conference and both Omaha and Lincoln branches of the NAACP gave their full support to Chancellor Green's plan for diversity and anti-racism (please see the article following this one for a report on the December 1 NAACP news conference).

Omaha and Lincoln NAACP Chapters Declare Full Support for UNL Chancellor's Plan to Address Racism and Racial Inequality

After nearly two weeks of criticism bordering on harassment by Governor Ricketts and his allies, Chancellor Ronnie Green received some welcome support from the NAACP for the university's plan to address racism and racial inequality. Rev. T. Michael Williams, the newly elected president of the Omaha Chapter of the NAACP, held a news conference in Omaha on December 1, 2021. Frustrated and exasperated over the hyperbolic and, at times, false accusations made by the Governor not only about critical race theory, but also about the Chancellor's plan, Williams stated that he and the Omaha NAACP had no choice but to give their complete support to the University's plan and defend the Chancellor.

Dewayne Mays, president of the Lincoln Chapter of the NAACP who was in attendance at the press conference, pledged the Lincoln Chapter in full support of the plan. He hopes that a thoughtful dialogue can yet be had. "I'm concerned about the sound bites that we're getting that I think are divisive," Mays said. "We need to sit down, talk about it and help our governor to understand (our) position. Once he walks a mile in our shoes, I think he'll have a different understanding."

Williams went on to say that rather than attacking the Chancellor's plan, the Governor "should not only follow the lead that UNL has courageously adopted, but he should take the lead.

"This is not political correctness. It is the right thing to do," Williams said and criticized the Governor's false use of critical race theory as a way to condemn the Chancellor's efforts: "I think it's important to see this [the diversity plan] is not about critical race theory. This is not about projecting a particular negativity on people. This is about pursuing equality and filling gaps and blanks where they have existed in the past."

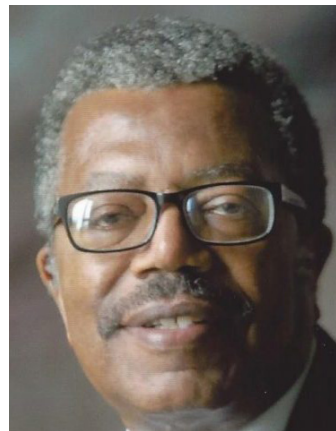
After a failed attempt last summer to ban critical race theory from the University of Nebraska, Governor Ricketts and his Republican allies mounted another verbal attack in November. This time

"We need to sit down, talk about it and help our governor to understand (our) position. Once he walks a mile in our shoes, I think he'll have a different understanding"

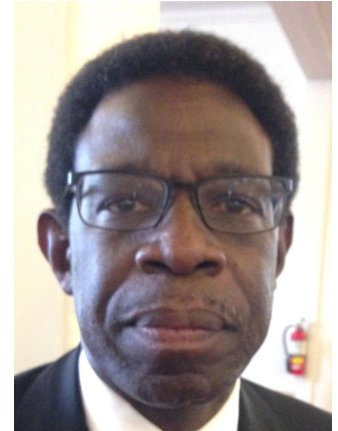
-Dwayne Mays

it was aimed at UNL Chancellor Ronnie Green and the university's plan to address diversity and inclusiveness (see the previous article for more information on that attack). This second attack began after the Chancellor announced the plan, "Commitment to Action," on November 17.

The Governor, still stung perhaps by the fact that the Board of Regents had rejected the ban on critical race theory by a five-to-three vote in August, accused the Chancellor of believing the university was racist and charged that the diversity plan "would inject Critical Race Theory (CRT) into every corner of campus."



M. Dewayne Mays



Rev. T. Michael Williams

Lincoln NAACP Committee Members

Chair of Education Committee

Thomas Christie

Chair of Legal Redress Committee

Catherine Wilson

Chair of Political Action Committee

Currently Open

Advisory Committee

Chassidy S. Jackson-Goodwin

Newsletter Editor

Frank Edler

Assistant Editors

Kathleen Rutledge, Mary K. Stillwell, and Micaela Fikar

Education Activities of the Lincoln NAACP

Thomas Christie

The Lincoln NAACP has been collaborating with Let's Talk Alliance and Nebraskans for Peace on educational concerns relating to students of color. Educational concerns have included such issues as diversifying the workforce, closing achievement gaps, and eliminating bias in athletics and activities. The NAACP collaborating group monitors education boards by attending board meetings and advocating sessions with the education leadership.

The focus in November was on bias in athletics and activities and establishing a protocol to address bullying and racial issues in school. After researching the issue, the concerns were narrowed down to the following:

1. What are the barriers to instituting such a protocol?
2. Does the Nebraska School Athletic Activities (NSAA) collect and analyze data on such incidents to identify situations and places in which they tend to occur?
3. What guidelines or principles does NSAA follow on sanctions for such incidents? Who has the power to impose and enforce sanctions? Do sanctions work? Could restorative justice work?
4. What training in cultural competency and anti-bullying do coaches and students receive? Does it work? Are you aware of successful programs elsewhere to encourage civil behavior by parents and fans? Is NSAA familiar with the online training offered by the Iowa Athletic Association?
5. Does NSAA have jurisdiction over parochial and private schools? If not, who does?
6. Can the Anti-Bullying legislation (passed 2008, 2011 review 2017) apply to incidents of bias?
7. How can our Collaboration help you with the next steps? What other outside entities need to be included by NSAA in developing standards and protocols?

As the Education Chair, I facilitated the discussion. The following group members participated: Bill Arfmann, Carrie Banks, Nancy Comer, John Goldrich, Catherine Wilson, Dewayne Mays, Carol McClain, Paul Olson, Kathleen Rutledge, and Dick and Eileen Vautravers. We met with the Executive directors from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), Dr. Bloomstedt and his staff, and Nebraska School Athletic Activities directors, Jay Bellar on November 17 to discuss the success and challenges of addressing the racial and other school biases.

The NAACP will continue to monitor the Nebraska Education Department and the Lincoln Public Schools boards. Also, we will participate in the hiring of the new LPS superintendent to advocate for a person who has a diversity and inclusion track record and is willing to support the coalition's concerns. We need to remember the words of Abraham Lincoln; "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves."

The Lincoln NAACP chapter is collaborating with the Omaha Chapter, Let's Talk Alliance, and Nebraskans for Peace to oppose efforts to eliminate the Nebraska Department of Education. Also, we are supporting the University (UNL) Diversity plan because it is what the NAACP believes will prepare the students for our diverse society!

These challenges will be the focus of the NAACP through advocacy and education for the coming year. The collaboration group is sending letters of support and we encourage you to do the same. This attack on public education must be taken seriously because it is a step against our democratic system.

As Malcolm X said; "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today." The NAACP will continue to advocate for improving our educational institutions and closing the learning and teaching gaps!

***We need your help. Observers needed.**

Our Collaboration Needs Volunteers to Observe Board Meetings

Jackie Egan and Jessica Stoner

The Collaboration of advocates who want to improve education for student of color as a civil right (made up of members from NAACP, Let's Talk Alliance and Nebraskans for Peace) is looking for Observers for the NDE School Board meetings at 9:00 AM the first Friday of each month and for the LPS Board meetings at 6:00 PM on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

As an Observer, you will be asked to write up a brief synopsis of the meeting you observe. As an Observer, you will be asked to especially listen for references to or implications impacting these 6 focus areas (revised 7/5/2021):

1. Recruiting more teachers, administrators and other staff of color
2. Providing resources for parents of students of color, in understandable language, to be able to better assess, monitor and support their children's school progress
3. Advocating for the use of federal pandemic funds for

teaching and learning to regain lost learning in historically marginalized students

4. Addressing the achievement gap caused by an opportunity gap, low graduation rates and low test scores, especially in reading, for students of color. The goal should be that all students learn to read accurately, fluently and with good comprehension.

5. Reducing the disproportionality of expulsions and suspensions for students of color, and addressing the disproportionality in Special Education for students of color

6. Eliminating derisive expressions of bias (including racial, sexist and homophobic) at all school events, activities and sporting events.

To volunteer: Please contact Jessica Stoner (Jessica.c.stoner@gmail.com) or Jackie Egan (egan@neb.rr.com) as soon as you can. We especially need Observers for these dates:

NDE Feb 4, 2022 and March 4, 2022

LPS Feb 8, 2022

LPS Feb 22, 2022

LPS March 8, 2022

Thank you.

Truth & Reconciliation Update (December 31, 2021)

Kathleen Rutledge

Two eminent writers have signed on to write sections of "Roots of Justice," the Historical Truth & Reconciliation project initiated by the Lincoln NAACP and Nebraskans for Peace chapters. They are Kevin Abourezk of Lincoln and Preston Love Jr. of Omaha.

Kevin Abourezk, who was a reporter and editor at the Lincoln Journal Star, will be the editor for this history of race and racism in the state. He also will write the Native American section. He is a citizen of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, managing editor of Indianz.com and the vice chair of the Lincoln Indian Center Board of Directors. In his 18 years at the Journal Star, Kevin covered a variety of topics such as local and state governments, higher education, business and federal Native policy. He oversaw the work of reporters and freelancers and guided coverage of controversial topics, including beer sales in the border town of White Clay.

"I truly believe this book has the chance to educate readers, young and old, about chapters in our state's history that have contributed to the numerous social and health disparities we see today among our minority populations," he wrote in applying to be the editor. "To understand these truths is to understand paths toward true reconciliation and healing for Nebraska's citizens of color . . ."

Preston Love Jr., an editorial page columnist for the Omaha World-Herald, will write the African American section. He is first vice president of the Omaha NAACP, an adjunct professor in the Black Studies Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha

"To understand these truths is to understand paths toward true reconciliation and healing for Nebraska's citizens of color ..."

-Kevin Abourezk

and executive director of the nonprofit Institute for Urban Development (4urban.org). He leads annual Black history tours to the South for high school students to give them a firsthand experience of the Civil Rights Movement. He is the author of "Economic Cataracts" and other books and for 14 years was an IBM marketing executive.

In applying for the position, he wrote: "I have a track record in writing, speaking and educating others to understand the in-

justices and victories of the past to be better prepared to make a difference, make history even, today and tomorrow."

In addition to these two men, the Roots of Justice steering committee is talking with a distinguished scholar of Latinos in the Midwest about the possibility of joining the history project.

Committee members also are working to raise the money to hire writers for two other sections: on Asian Americans and on recent refugees in Nebraska. They are applying for grants from foundations, as well as seeking matching funds from individuals and community organizations to meet a \$10,000 challenge grant.

The Roots of Justice history is meant to tell the truth about parts of our history not often mentioned in the story of Nebraska. The hope is that this history can enrich school curriculums and help educate us all. It can show how the past in many ways is still present and how it affects people's health, education, housing, net worth and so much more. Completion of the history in the form of a public digital archive is slated for late 2023.

Meanwhile, the project already has produced tangible results in the form of a bibliography of more than 800 primary and secondary sources. This work was supported by a grant from the Lincoln Community Foundation and by other donors. Veronica Nohemi Duran, who is completing her PhD in history at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, served as the main researcher for the bibliography. It was completed in October and posted for public use on Digital Commons, an online UNL repository.

Dr. Dewayne Mays, president of the Lincoln NAACP, serves as chair of the Roots of Justice steering committee. Members are:

- Dr. Takako Olson, Lincoln Public Schools curriculum director
- Dr. Marty Ramirez, retired UNL counseling psychologist
- Dr. Gregory E. Rutledge, UNL English and Ethnic Studies associate professor
- Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones, UNL History and Ethnic Studies associate professor
- Dr. Paul Olson of Nebraskans for Peace
- Bill Arfmann of Nebraskans for Peace
- Kathleen Rutledge, retired Lincoln Journal Star editor

The committee welcomes donations of any size in hope of showing a broad range of community support for this history. Nebraska Appleseed serves as the fiscal sponsor. If you are able to help, here's how to donate:

Online:

Go to appleseed.org/trhp

By mail:

Write a check to Nebraska Appleseed, with "Roots of Justice" in the memo line.

Mail to:

Nebraska Appleseed

P.O. Box 83613

Lincoln NE 68501-3613

Attn: Truth & Reconciliation History Fund

Racism, Time, and the Space for Black History in America

Frank H. W. Edler

Can you understand why Black people would feel pain when they see the Confederate flag? One White Mississippi state legislator could not.

"I don't see the pain in the symbol," William Shirley told a documentary filmmaker.

Another question asked of Shirley: is slavery still a major issue? "It's a major issue if the minority keeps rubbing it in," he said.

These appalling statements, part of director Rachel Boynton's "Civil War: A Documentary about the Roots of Division," remind me of something a founder of critical race theory (CRT) said about that theory. According to Kimberlé Crenshaw, critical race theory does not share the same view of historical time accepted by many White conservatives, nationalists, and supremacists. CRT presents "an approach to grappling with a history of White supremacy that rejects the belief that what's in the past is in the past, and that the laws and systems that grow from that past are detached from it" (Time, Sept. 29, 2020).

Shirley's response is a vivid example of Crenshaw's views. He asserted that slavery is in the past and should stay in the past. For him the catastrophic evil of slavery has been overcome and no longer has any connection to the present unless Blacks bring it up repeatedly. The purpose of this limited way of looking at American history is to foster the preservation of American innocence.

But how does this view preserve American innocence as a guiltless nation? The impact of keeping the past in the past and disconnecting it from the present is to keep Black suffering in the past and not allow it to be felt and understood. This erasure of Black suffering preserves the myth of America as a wholly innocent nation. Sometimes, though, the long history of suffering breaks through into the national consciousness as it did when the racial brutality of state police cracking the skulls of peaceful protestors on the Edmund Pettus Bridge was televised for all to see.

This view of past and present is applied not only to the history of Black suffering but also to the near extermination of Native Americans, the discrimination and abuse of Latinos, and the forced confinement into camps of Japanese Americans during World War II. Indeed, it is applied to the history of any group that threatens the view that America is completely guiltless. As historian Richard T. Hughes puts it, "[o]ur refusal to tell the negative side of American history sustains our sense of innocence."

The temporal perversion at play here is the attempt to stop questioning and repress the negative history of America. This perversion is a refusal to accept the whole truth of American history; however, it involves more than just the past and the present. It also involves another aspect of time that is rarely mentioned – the future. The future plays a critical role in historical research and is crucial in leading to a more complete account of history as more knowledge becomes available.

For example, imagine you are the first historian to ask whether Thomas Jefferson had sexual relations with his slave Sally Hemings and whether she had children by him. When you question the past, you produce new possible ways of thinking about it in the future. The two-fold question provides a new lens or framework for viewing what we know about their relationship and opens their history to re-examination and reinterpretation. You have to think towards the future about how to shape the investigation. What texts and accounts and materials will you read (future)? How will you organize the results of your research (future)? What impact will your research have (future) on the accepted version of the relationship between Hemings and Jefferson? More importantly, if the evidence shows that Hemings and Jefferson did have offspring, how will this change the traditional view of Jefferson and Hemings? All of this involves the possibility (future) of a major revision of our sense of a slave's life and a slave owner's notion of "ownership." Questioning the past is one way to keep the



"Critical Race Theory" by Jonathan Harris

future open for new possibilities of interpretation. This is what we mean when we say that the past is alive.

However, when Black history is repressed so that new possibilities of feeling and understanding about the past cannot show themselves in the future, then it remains muted. Without the future, no new knowledge is possible. In addition, if racism is whitewashed in the present, then the need and incentive to ask questions about racism in the past is severely reduced.

The example above of re-examining the history of the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings is today writ large in the controversy regarding The 1619 Project. Slavery was a significant issue in the American Revolution, but did the founding fathers think that protecting slavery was one of the primary reasons for fighting a war with England? Many people are not aware of the Somerset v Stewart case that was tried in the Court of King's Bench in 1772 and put an end to slavery in England and Wales. Nor are many aware that in November of 1775 the royal governor of Virginia, the Earl of Dunmore, issued a proclamation that granted freedom to any enslaved African in the colonies who was willing to join Dunbar's Ethiopian Regiment. No doubt this proclamation may have encouraged a number of Virginia enslavers to vote for independence.

Simply because battles such as Lexington and Concord as well as Bunker Hill had already been fought prior to Dunbar's proclamation -- as George Will has pointed out in his piece entitled "The malicious, historically illiterate 1619 Project keeps rolling along" -- does not mean that slavery was not an important issue in the decision to revolt against Britain. All Americans should welcome a reexamination of the role of slavery in the American Revolution.

(My thanks to Kathleen Rutledge and Mary K. Stillwell for suggested revisions.)

***The Voice* Reveals the First Attempt to Found a Student Chapter of the NAACP at the University of Nebraska in 1948-1949**

The discovery of *The Voice*, the African American newspaper that served Lincoln from 1946 to 1953, has opened a huge window onto the lives of Black Americans living in Lincoln during that period. This is the third interview featured in the Lincoln NAACP Newsletter that relates to aspects of Black life in Lincoln as reported in *The Voice*. The subject of this interview is the first attempt to establish a student chapter of the NAACP at the University of Nebraska in 1948 and 1949.

Mary K. Stillwell: Do we know who was instrumental in attempting to form the first college chapter of the NAACP at the University of Nebraska and when that took place?

Frank Edler: Let me start with a bit of background. After World War II, small but significant steps were being taken in Lincoln to chip away at the injustice of segregation. For example, in 1946 the municipal swimming pool was finally integrated. Joseph Ishikawa, a Japanese American graduate of UCLA who had been confined in an internment camp during the war, came to Lincoln to do graduate work at the University of Nebraska. He deplored the fact that African Americans were barred from using the municipal swimming pool and organized a group that included Lynnwood Parker and Trag



JOSEPH ISHIKAWA

McWilliams. Together they successfully challenged the city council to open the pool to all races. The pool was desegregated in August of 1946.

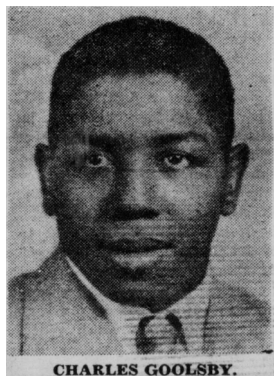
Parker had entered the university in 1945 after serving in the U.S. Army for five years. He was a speech and social science major who would graduate in the summer of 1948 with a bachelor of science degree in education. By 1948, he was the secretary of the Lincoln chapter of the NAACP. Parker along with his friend, Charles Goolsby, another remarkable African American



LYNNWOOD PARKER.

who was a pre-med student majoring in zoology and later got his doctorate at Harvard, were the first African Americans to break the color line by rooming together over the summer of 1948 in the formerly all-White university dormitories.

The attempt to start a university chapter of the NAACP at the University of Nebraska began with Parker's letter to the editor of the *Daily Nebraskan* on April 14, 1948. The purpose of his letter



CHARLES GOOLSBY.

was to acquaint students with the NAACP and to inform them that a "college chapter of the NAACP will be organized at the University of Nebraska Wednesday evening [April 15], room 316 in the Union at 7 p.m. to which all students are welcome."

He stated in the letter that the aim of the university chapter was to reach students and "to stimulate in them an awareness and understanding of the political, social, educational and economic problems which confront the American Negro." He hoped they would be able to build "a strong student organization" that would function as "a center of education and action" in the struggle for full constitutional rights for all Black Americans.

MKS: Do we know how that first meeting went?

FE: About twenty students showed up on April 15. John White, a university librarian, was elected temporary chairman, Phyllis Maurer was chosen secretary, and Nina Kaswiner, a first-year journalism student from Buenos Aires, Argentina, was named treasurer. Kathy Hollingsworth and Paul Rogers were also elected as head of publicity and membership, respectively. A second meeting was called for April 20 at the campus YMCA lounge. A week later on April 27, the chapter adopted a constitution, drew up a list of possible faculty advisors, and announced that permanent officers would be elected in May (Lincoln Evening Journal, "N.A.A.C.P. Group Organized at N.U.," April 28, 1948, p. 10).

MKS: Sounds like they were off to a good start. What do we know about student interests? What were they hoping to achieve?

FE: From the last meeting of the summer, held July 20 at the university student union, we know that the chapter members had been very active and that there was a full slate of reports listed on the agenda. Don Morrow, a delegate to the Democratic Party's national convention, reported on the civil rights plank adopted at that convention. Rev. Robert L. Moody, president of the Lincoln branch of the NAACP, gave a report on the NAACP's national convention in Kansas City. John O'Hare reviewed the activities of the NAACP nationally (Nebraska State Journal, "Young Demo Raps Terry's Rights Stand," July 21, 1948, p. 1).

Some of the more pressing student concerns were segregated restaurants and unfair employment practices. These issues were also taken up by the Lincoln Social Action Council that grew out of the protest over the segregated municipal swimming pool and in conjunction with the NAACP and the Lincoln Urban League as well as the university YMCA race relations committee and liberal church organizations, became the focal point for social action in 1948 and 1949.

Ted Sorensen, an NU law student, was head of the council's committee pushing to get a fair employment practices act passed in the legislature. He was later elected president of the council. The council's stated aims at the end of 1948 were "to wipe out racial discrimination in public places in Lincoln and to get a fair employment practices act" through the legislature (Lincoln Star, December 9, 1948, p. 10). The university chapter of the NAACP no doubt saw itself working to promote these very same goals, but this degree of political activity may have been too much of a threat for the university administration.

(continued on page 11)

The Voice, con't.

MKS: You mentioned that Lynnwood Parker graduated that summer. Did the University of Nebraska chapter continue its work?

FE: It did. After Parker graduated he left for active duty in the army in August of 1948. Goolsby, however, continued as a member of the university chapter of the NAACP and was elected its president in 1949. He was also deeply involved with the Lincoln Social Action Council. The first meeting of the chapter that fall was held on October 1 at the Lincoln Urban League center and included a banquet for chapter members hosted by the League. The theme of the evening was politics and civil rights and, according to the announcement "speakers will present republican, democratic and progressive points of view."

On October 6, the University of Nebraska student council met and approved the constitution of three student organizations, including the university chapter of the NAACP (Nebraska State Journal, "N.U. Student Council Drops Plan for Own Traffic Court," October 7, 1948, p. 1).

The university chapter opened the New Year (1949) by cosponsoring (along with the YMCA and the University Hillel Foundation) a forum on the topic of "Minority Group Contributions to Culture." The forum, in honor of Brotherhood Week, took place on February 23 in the Love Library auditorium. After a panel discussion moderated by John White, who was still president of the university chapter, the discussion was opened to the floor. Panelists included Rabbi Joel Zion of Temple Emanuel in Denver; Willard Gaeddert, physics instructor and newly elected president of the Lincoln Social Action Council; Joseph Ishikawa, curator of the university art galleries, and Gerhard Krebs, visiting professor of political science (Daily Nebraskan, "Forum Planned In Observance of Brotherhood," February, 23, 1949, p. 1).

Ominous administrative clouds, however, were gathering on the horizon.

Although the university chapter's constitution was approved by the student council, the chapter also required the approval of the Faculty Committee on Student Organizations. On March 10, 1949, *The Voice* reported that the faculty committee had delayed approval of the university chapter "pending certain changes in the group's constitution."

One of the articles that the faculty committee objected to in the student constitution was the provision for establishing a city committee "to seek ways and means of improving the status of colored people in the vicinity of the university." The biggest objection and perhaps the greatest fear was that the NAACP national board of directors would find a way to dominate the university chapter. As stated in *The Voice*, "the [faculty] committee expressed fear that the group would be 'dominated' from the outside." This notion of outside domination was also associated in many cases with a fear of communism as well as a fear of Black activism. During the late 1940s the broad brush of communism was applied to any organization even vaguely considered "radical." This accusation of being a "communist front organization" also provided a convenient cover for racism and White supremacy. The accusation was also leveled at the NAACP.

MKS: This sounds related to the Red Scare running rampant at the time. Can you tell us something about the Red Scare and how it related to racism and the NAACP here in Lincoln?

FE: During the second Red Scare (the first Red Scare involved the hysteria against communism and socialism immediately after WW I) many Southern racists and others were convinced that the civil rights movement was funded and controlled by communists. J. Edgar Hoover began an illegal FBI counter intelligence program in 1956 in an attempt to discredit the civil rights movement and branded Martin Luther King, Jr., as a communist sympathizer. This persisted through the 1960s and even into the early 1970s. As late as 1983, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina tried unsuccessfully to smear King as a Communist in order to block a senate vote to make King's birthday into a national holiday.

President Truman was responsible for stoking much of the anti-communist craze. He signed an executive order in March 22, 1947 creating the Federal Loyalty Program that had the power of denying federal employment to any applicant who was suspected of disloyalty by being affiliated in any way with communist or subversive organizations

Governor Kim Sigler of Michigan, testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee in the latter part of March 1947, publicly accused the leaders of the CIO United Auto Workers union of being communists and identified the Detroit branch of the NAACP as a "Communist-front group" (Detroit Free Press, "Two Groups Cleared of Red Charge," April 4, 1947, p. 13). Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, "demanded an immediate and public retraction" by the governor. White went on to state in no uncertain terms that the NAACP since its founding in 1909 was "most unqualifiedly non-communist and non-political" and "has unremittingly worked as a non-political organization for enforcement U.S. Constitution irrespective of race or color" (The Omaha Guide, April 12, 1947, p. 1).

In October of 1947 the House Un-American Activities Committee began a series of hearings about whether communists were infiltrating the film industry, and film executives then put out a joint statement that prohibited anyone who was a communist sympathizer or a member of the Communist Party to work in the film industry. By early December of the same year, Attorney General Tom Clark produced the first official list of eighty-two groups of subversive organizations that included the International Labor Defense and the National Negro Congress. Many state and local governments immediately used it as a blacklist.

The Red Scare had the unfortunate effect of keeping the NAACP focused more narrowly on civil rights rather than institutional racism. As Gerald Horne says in his book on the Associated Negro Press, "the 'fangs of racial reform' were extracted [during the McCarthy period] as the radical left shrank..." (p. 88).

Public attention was so taken up with communist conspiracies that it overshadowed the injustice of systemic racial discrimination. Rather than focusing on Paul Robeson's cry for racial justice in 1948, the public was more interested in whether he was a member of the communist party. When Mrs. Rosa B. Johnson, president of the Iowa state NAACP, came to address the members of the Lincoln chapter of the NAACP on the fortieth anniversary of the national organization, she too expressed frustration over the communist hysteria by saying "let us stop talking about the iron curtain, which has closed on Russia, when we have a black curtain in America" (Lincoln Journal Star, "N.A.A.C.P. Future Good, Meeting Told," April 23, 1949, p. 2).

(continued on page 12)

The Voice, con't.

MKS: What happened with the faculty committee and the approval of the university chapter at the University of Nebraska?

FE: As I mentioned earlier, the faculty committee had issues with some of the articles in the university chapter's constitution. Members of the university chapter met on March 15 (Charles Goolsby was now president) to respond to the faculty committee's demands. The students found out that the faculty committee did not simply want an adjustment to the constitution. The Voice reported the faculty committee wanted the university chapter to "forsake title and ties with the National Association in order that it might be more closely supervised by the school." The article went on to explain this egregious demand: "No other national organization of the Nebraska campus has been so challenged recently although it is common for national offices to exercise some control of local chapters" (The Voice, "Student NAACP Meets to Vote Fate of Rules," March 17, 1949, p. 1).

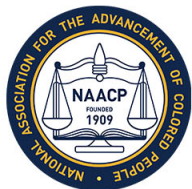
The final meeting between the university chapter representatives and Dean T. J. Thompson, chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Student Affairs took place sometime in late May or early June of 1949. The NAACP representatives rejected the faculty committee's demands and refused to disaffiliate itself from the national NAACP to become an independent organization. Al-

though chapters had been established in other universities at that time such as the University of California, Berkeley, Cornell University, and the University of Wisconsin, the University of Nebraska did not give its approval to the establishment of a university chapter of the NAACP.

The university's decision to exclude a university chapter of the NAACP on campus may not have been explicitly motivated by racism, but by caving in to the fear of possible anti-communist retribution or White backlash to Black activism, the decision had the same consequence. The NAACP was barred from forming a university chapter on campus.

MKS: Did students ever establish a university branch of the NAACP at UNL? If they did, when was it established?

FE: Although there were a number of attempts after 1949 to establish either a university chapter at UNL or a chapter that included students from UNL, Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Union College, none of them succeeded until 2011. In January of that year, Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones, professor of history and ethnic studies at the University of Nebraska -- who would become the 2017-2018 president of the Lincoln chapter of the NAACP -- helped establish the first university chapter of the NAACP at UNL. She was also the first faculty advisor of the chapter and remains so to the present.



NAACP JOIN OR RENEW

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Telephone Number _____

Branch Affiliation: Circle One ADULT YOUTH UNL COLLEGE

New Member: Yes ____ **OR** Renewal: Yes ____

Types of Membership:

Regular Annual Memberships

Regular Adult	\$30
Youth with Crisis (20 and under)	\$15
Annual Corporate	\$50
College (25 and under)	\$15

Lifetime Memberships

Junior Life	\$100
Bronze Life	\$400
Silver Life	\$750
Gold Life	\$1500
Diamond Life	\$2500

Please make checks payable to the NAACP and mail to:
Lincoln Branch NAACP, P.O. Box 81322, Lincoln, NE 68501-1322