

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

February 2023, Issue No.6



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Word of the Month: Progress

to grow or develop, as in complexity, scope, or severity; advance

Dictionary.com

WELCOME BACK

By Ethan C. Brown

Though our newsletters took a short hiatus, we are back and better than ever! This month's newsletter is centered around Black History Month. From our own celebrations on campus, to the history of the historic month. We hope that you enjoy and keep an eye out for the next release!



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION

The theme for this Black History Month is Black Resistance. When we hear the word resistance it often has a militant vibe. Resistance is commonly viewed as violent; or at least anything but peaceful. But in all actuality resistance can be simple and peaceful. As we learned from Dr. King, resistance can be repeatedly showing up for what you believe in.

Whether it be the March on Washington, or in Selma, Dr. King always showed up. "It is estimated that he traveled over 6 million miles sharing his message on equality. (Nobel Prize)" Despite being harassed, brutalized, and arrested countless times, He showed up. He showed up, not for himself but for the greater good of his people and country. He showed up because he had a dream. Dr. King taught us first hand that resistance never had a need for violence. He taught us that the fight for change was not pretty or ultimately fulfilling. But he also taught us to stick true to our own beliefs despite what others say, and that is resistance. Dr. King would have never guessed himself to have a federal holiday, as that is not why he did this work. But even to this day Dr. King is the only African American to have a federal holiday.

At JSU we are always glad to celebrate Dr. King and we did this last month on January 10th. This beautiful celebration was held in the TMB auditorium and greatly attended. Events of the night included a presentation from Shenikia Truss and the students JSU's Child Development Center, as well as a performance from Living by Faith Ministries' Youth Gospel singers. Following that JSU's Makayla Holden gave a fantastic speech and Chloe Buchannon read her mothers poem "A Moment In History." The touching celebration shed light on our youth, as they hold the future in their hands.



COMING UP:

TAKE ME TO CHURCH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2023, 2 - 5PM | Leone Cole

Our celebration will focus on this year's theme for BHM "Black Resistance", and will feature performances by the JSU Gospel Choir, a sermon by Michael Walker, a welcoming introduction by housing director Rochelle Smith, and more!

ADDRESSING BLACK MENTAL HEALTH

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023 | Time: TBD | Leone Cole

ActiveMinds and the BSU are partnering for a panel addressing the stigmas around mental health in the black community. This event is open to the whole community.

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN BLACK RESISTANCE: PANEL

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2023, 2 - 5PM | TMB

in honor of the 2023 Black History Month theme of "Black Resistance," you're invited to a panel discussing music's instrumental role in combatting oppression. Join us for an evening of gospel music, soul food, worship, fellowship, and festivities; the event is open to all!

THE FATHER OF BLACK HISTORY

When writing the newsletter for this Black History Month, I had many questions. It started with the typical who, what, when, where, why, and how. Who started Black History Month? When did they do it, and how? Why is Black History Month in February? At the peak of my curiosity I dove into research and my findings were extraordinary! Black History Month traced back to one man, Carter G. Woodson. This article will shed light on the origin of BHM and introduce our readers to the inspiring story of The Father of Black History.

Born in 1875, Woodson grew up in New Canton, Virginia. "His parents, being formerly enslaved, were poor and illiterate" (NAACP). Due to these circumstances Woodson was not provided opportunities for education in his adolescence. He spent his early years working on farms and in the Virginia coal mines with his family. But Woodson knew that education was important, especially for a young black man. So, despite working long hours, he taught himself how to read and write. Woodson enrolled himself in high school at age 20 and earned his diploma within just two years.

After graduating high school, Woodson taught at a public school until becoming principal in 1900. At this time, he also began taking classes at Berea College and attained a bachelor's degree in Literature. "Thereafter he also spent 4 years in the Philippines, working as a school supervisor for the U.S Government from 1903-1907" (Brittanica). Woodson earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from the University of Chicago in 1908. After this, he went on to earn a PhD in History from Harvard University in 1912. "Carter G. Woodson remains the only person who's parents were enslaved in the United States to obtain a PhD in History" (NPS). Despite his amazing accomplishments, "Woodson still could not get hired by any universities at this time. So he became Principal at the all-black Armstrong Manuel Training school in Washington, D.C. He would later serve as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Howard University and Academic Dean at West Virginia State University" (Brittanica), both of these are Historical Black Colleges.

It was in 1912 that Carter G. Woodson attended a "3-week National Celebration for the 50-year anniversary of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation" (Brittanica). This trip, and being surrounded by other black professionals, sprung an idea upon the now doctor of history. He set out to create a week-long holiday celebrating the historic contributions and accomplishments of black people, calling it "Negro History Week". The weeklong celebration would be in February, as this is the birth month of President Abraham Lincoln and Abolitionist Frederick Douglass. "He hoped that doing so would encourage teachers and historians to participate since they were likely already in on the celebrations of Lincoln and Douglass" (Cosmopolitan). It took a while to get his idea off the ground; years actually. "Woodson founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), in 1915, and this group would help make 'Negro History Week' a reality. It was in 1924 that Woodson's college fraternity 'Omega Psi Phi', introduced 'Negro History and Learning Week' at the University of Chicago" (Brittanica). The first celebration went well, and in 1926 the ASALH wanted to go forward with making the project bigger. Woodson and the ASALH continued to introduce their project to different colleges, universities, and groups. It was not until the 1960s that the celebrations truly started taking off.

"Because of his work, many progressive schools began adding more curricula about Black history, and Black history clubs began popping up across the U.S. Woodson hoped that this weeklong celebration would eventually turn into an ever-present appreciation and education about Black life—not just a week of acknowledgment" (Cosmopolitan). After a long life of activism, journalism, teaching, and mentoring, Carter G Woodson passed away on April 3rd, 1950. In 1976, twenty six years after his death, and 114 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, Dr. Woodson's original dream became a reality. "At the United States 1976 Bicentennial, President Gerald R. Ford Officially recognized Black History Month" (Brittanica). Every president since Ford has also officially addressed the historic month.

Woodson's story is an inspirational tale for all ages. He fought against all odds and embodied true perseverance. I wanted to share this story as I think everyone can lessons away from it. Firstly, we can all do anything that we put our minds too. Secondly, hard work and dedication pay off. And lastly, always believe in yourself. Dr. Carter G. Woodson never got to see the big impact he would have on this world, and honestly, he probably did not know if he would be able to make one or not. But the most inspirational thing about him is that he showed up and fought for what he believed in, whether he would witness it happen or not.

JSU'S FIRST BLACK STUDENT: BARBARA CURRY- STORY

Black resistance and perseverance are a lesson learned well from Dr. King and Dr. Carter Woodson. But also from our own Barbara Curry- Story, who made history as the first black student at Jacksonville State University. Despite the challenges thrown her way, Barbara Curry- Story knew that she was worthy. She knew that hard work and dedication were the only things that would get her ahead in this world; the world which was against her at that time.

It was in 1965 that 23-year-old Curry-Story moved back to Alabama. She had just escaped an abusive marriage in New York. Her and her two year old son moved back with her parents in Ohatchee. Barbara Curry-Story had already been through a lot. She was a survivor of domestic violence, divorced, and left to raise her son alone. Barbara Curry- Story made the brave decision to enroll at JSU in the fall of 1965.

She knew that she would have to face even more challenges after enrolling at JSU. It was just three years before that Alabama Governor George Wallace had tried to halt integration by blocking three black students from entering the University of Alabama. Mrs. Curry also mentioned in a 2006 interview that a black man had been ambushed the September before she enrolled. "I was more fearful of the people on the outside, because of the bus-burning in Anniston, Ala. - violence against the Freedom Riders, and this type of thing. (JSU News Wire)" Curry- Story took an extra long route to school everyday as means to avoid trouble. After all, she just wanted an education.

Luckily she was not met with many problems at JSU. She told JSU News wire that she was thankful for the International House, and felt that it was a contributing factor to her acceptance. While Curry- Story was at Jacksonville State, she made a friend in future JSU president Theron Montgomery. It was Montgomery who not only set Curry- Story up with financial aid, but arranged for her a job at Alabama Power the week following her graduation in 1969. Barbara Curry- Story Graduated with her Bachelors of science with a concentration in vocational home economics. She retired from Alabama Power after 32- years of service in 2001.

Mrs. Curry- Story passed away in 2020, but her legacy shall live on forever at JSU. On February 1st, 2023 Jacksonville State University will be holding a ceremony for Barbara Curry- Story. Dedicating a Plaque to her and recognizing her amazing contribution to this campus. Students, faculty, and visitors will be able to walk past Angle Hall for years to come, knowing the unapologetic story of our first black student.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Preferred Name Request (Registrar's office)

http://www.jsu.edu/registrar/student_forms.html

Counseling Services

<http://www.jsu.edu/ccservices/>

Student Health Center

<http://www.jsu.edu/studenthealth>

JSU Library LGBTQ+ Resource Collection

<http://libguides.jsu.edu/lgbtq>

Title IX

<http://www.jsu.edu/titleix/>

LGBTQ Vocabulary List

<https://thesafezoneproject.com/resources/vocabulary/>

D&I Glossary

<https://www.jsu.edu/diversity/glossary.html>

Diversity Discussion Request

<https://www.jsu.edu/diversity/event-request.html>

Cocky Cares

<https://www.jsu.edu/cockycares/>

JSU Safe Zone is a campus-wide program that works to ensure a welcoming environment for all gender identities and sexual orientations. By establishing an identifiable network of trained individuals committed to fostering an atmosphere of respect and inclusion, the program provides a safe space for members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies on campus.



THANK YOU FOR READING!



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