

Diversity Committee News

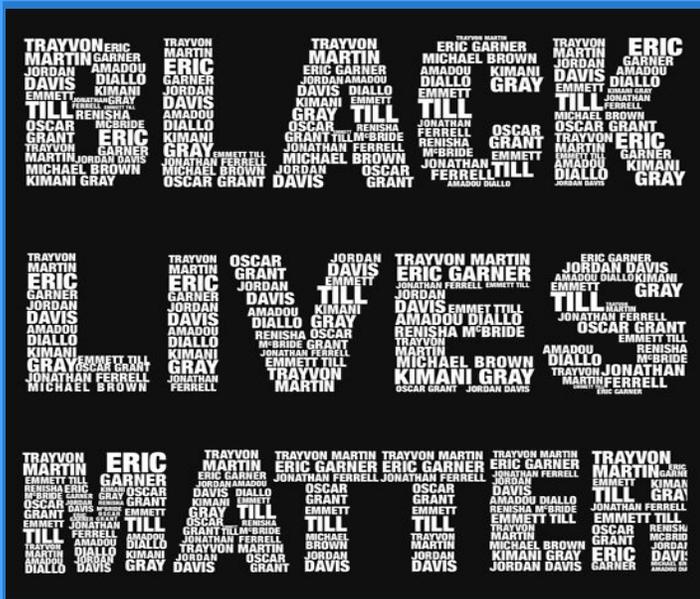
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The time is always right to do what is right.—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In the United States, Black History Month was first organized in 1970 by Black educators and students at Kent State University who were concerned about how Black Americans were portrayed in formal history lessons. It was noted that educators often ignored or minimized the adversity that Black Americans have encountered. In addition, U.S educators focused little to no time on the societal contributions and achievements within the Black community. Black History Month quickly spread to other colleges, universities, cultural centers, and community centers. In 1976, President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month during the United States Bicentennial. Black History Month is also now officially observed in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Republic of Ireland.

Learn more at <https://africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/>



POLICE BRUTALITY

Research has found that Black men are 4X more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than White men (Hetey et al., 2016). Black Americans are also more likely to be subjected to police force including being handcuffed, pepper sprayed, and pushed to the ground (Frye, 2016); plus they are 3.5X more likely to be shot by police than unarmed White Americans (Ross, 2015).

OF NOTE....

- Slavery was legal in the U.S. until **1865**.
- Black men were not granted the right to vote in the U.S. until **1870**.
- The Illinois Crime Survey of 1929 indicated that Blacks made up only 5% of the IL population but were the victims of 30% of police killings.
- The murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till is often cited as one of the catalysts for the Montgomery Bus Boycott which began in 1955.
- Jim Crow laws, which enforced racial segregation in schools, transportation, bathrooms, and other public places, **existed until 1964**.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. **Approximately 30% of Congress voted against it**.
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibited racial discrimination in voting. **Approximately 30% of Congress voted against it**.
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968.

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EMMETT TILL

Emmett Till was a 14-year-old Black child living in Mississippi in 1955. He was falsely accused of harassing a White woman at the grocery store. Two White men abducted Till later that night. He was tortured, mutilated, and shot before his body was later disposed of in a nearby river. Despite overwhelming evidence, the two suspects were acquitted of all charges. Years later, the woman admitted that she fabricated and exaggerated parts of her story about Till harassing her. The suspects also gave a magazine interview in which they admitted to and boasted about the crimes. Unfortunately because of double jeopardy laws, they could not be tried again. His murder and the lack of justice was one of the catalysts for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's and 1960's.

Sadly, there are many stories similar to that of Emmett Till. High profile cases such as the 2014 murder of the unarmed, Black, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, in which his killer was acquitted, demonstrate the danger of institutionalized racism.

The KC area has many events to celebrate Black History Month. To learn more, please visit

<https://www.visitkc.com/2019/01/30/kc-celebrates-2019-black-history-month>

In December 2019, there were at least **nine attacks** against the Jewish community in New York alone. This included a knife attack on five individuals who were celebrating Hanukkah at a rabbi's home. This violence occurred a little over a year after a shooter killed 11 Jewish worshipers within a synagogue in October 2018. To anyone who is impacted by these events either directly or indirectly, the Diversity Committee sends sincere condolences. We care about you.

One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings. —Franklin Thomas

Diversity Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month.

Lunch is provided and all are welcome! RSVP Required: Liz or Micaela
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