

# African-American Voice

May 1999 2920 S Grand Blvd. Suite 145 Spokane WA 99203-2579 (509) 455-8274 rlloyd@cet.com Volume 3 Number 12

## NOT TOO LATE TO SAY THANK YOU

March 22, 1965 - March 31, 1999

3/31/99

*To my friends and frat:  
Keep fighting for justice. It's a long  
battle. I'll be fighting with you, but  
from another place. Maybe there, I can  
fight wiser.*

*In Struggle, Freedom, Peace  
Colin Anthony Beckles*

### OBITUARY

The African American Voice has suffered a sad loss with the unexpected death of its editor, Dr. Colin Beckles on March 31 of an apparent suicide only nine days after his 34th birthday. A professor in the Comparative American Cultures Department at Washington State University with a Ph.D. in sociology from UCLA, Colin not only studied and taught about civil rights and social activism, but never stopped

being an activist himself. He encouraged his students, and colleagues on the paper staff to fight for what they believed in as well.

Colin first became known to the Voice about a year ago when he approached the Spokane NAACP for help in his protest at WSU regarding the denial of tenure for Dr. Abdoulaye Saine. The paper produced a special issue about the protest and attended a rally in Pullman. Finding that we were looking for an editor, Colin volunteered. He brought to the paper not only passionate editorials, a focus on regional and state issues, and a call to direct action, but a commitment to encouraging paper staff to do more than they thought they could do. He worked with writers and constantly encouraged them to become involved in the community.

In Pullman Colin's work on the NO! 200 Campaign, the co-founding of the African American faculty and staff organization and the Coalition for Social Justice placed his impact well beyond the classroom. At a memorial service held in Pullman on April 11, students and staff testified to Colin's impact on their lives. "He always used to say he would rather stand in chains than die on his knees. He taught me what it was to



### It's Never Too Late To Say Thank You

Dear Colin,

It's never too late to say thank you.

- Thank you* for your enthusiasm for social justice. You made the NO! 200 campaign a success.
- Thank you* for supporting this newspaper. The staff and the community will never forget your stories.
- Thank you* for your kindness. You told me that I am someone important.
- Thank you* for telling me to get that article in by tomorrow.
- Thank you* for your professionalism.
- Thank you* for keeping me in check.
- Thank you* for overcoming the odds of being young, black, and educated.
- Thank you* for the motivation. We wrote several articles in one night at the office, more than I ever did at home.
- Thank you* for your mentorship.
- Thank you* for understanding. The Martin Luther King speech is behind us and we moved forward.
- Thank you* again for your professional understanding.
- Thank you* for being a part of my life. You have made a difference in my life.
- Thank you* for sharing your dreams.
- Thank you* for sharing your thoughts.
- Thank you* for the helping hand.
- Thank you* for making me laugh. You thought I was so vain. I still laugh about the time you said that if I ever had my own talk show it would be called "It's All About Me."
- Thank you* for keeping my head up high.
- Thank you* for giving me the opportunity to hear you speak at a function. Your words have strong convictions and you were a fighter.
- Thank you* for being a leader. I will follow your footsteps forever.
- Thank you* for the common sense approach. Many of us get lost with our degrees and accomplishments but you never forgot where you came from.
- Thank you* for the legacy that you left behind--because young black men and women need role models to believe in themselves.

I will miss you.

Thank you, Colin, and may God be with you.

It's never too late to say thank you.  
Lorenzo Herman

Continued on page 2

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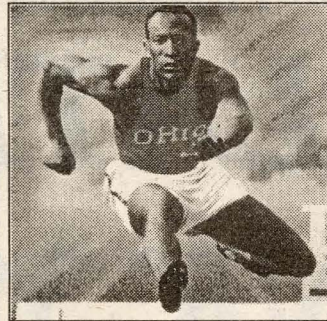
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\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

**CONTEST**

**Leaders we have known and admired**



**Who is this man?**

Ask your parents, ask your teachers, ask a librarian, ask your community leaders. At the end of a year's issues, will you know the name of each leader?

Youth who write a short article for the history page earn \$25 if accepted for publication.

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Monroe Hall
- FAFB African American Club

**OBITUARY**

Continued from page 1

stand up to injustices in this world," said his friend Tom Howard.

"The thing Colin did best for me was to make me uncomfortable. He made me grow" said an office friend.

"Colin badgered me by e-mail. He was always trying to get me to get more education and become a doctor," said Angela Jones, a former colleague and now working at Eastern Washington University.

Even in the letter he left behind at his death, he exhorted and encouraged his wife Maria to finish her doctoral studies.

For Herb Delaney, Director of the Multicultural Student Center, he was an older brother, teasing him, supporting him, planning with him, taking on issues with him.

"He would call you and find your e-mail and ask "What are you doing?" said NAACP President Eileen Thomas. "He

told me to be sure we got an NAACP chapter in Pullman." Colin's family told of his qualities as a child that foreshadowed the leader, teacher and activist he became. His stepfather described him as competitive and not much of a compromiser, but also loving, compassionate and gregarious.

"Driven from the moment of his birth" said his father as he described Colin arriving into the world before his father could even get back to the emergency room after parking the car. He established a superhero as a role model almost before he could talk - he could say "Batman" before he said Mommy or Daddy and was convinced he could fly as he threw himself toward his father down a flight of stairs.

Colin's mother was gladened that his life, though short, was well spent, and grieved that she did not know more about it. "Parents, keep

in close communication with your children for as long as you can," she said.

Colin Beckles leaves to mourn his wife Maria Cuevas; his mother Maria Parker Beckles Jenkins; father Frank N. Beckles, MD; sister Ingrid Beckles and her daughter Kaiesha; stepfather Melvin E. Jenkins, MD; stepsisters Janis Edwards, Carol Tennelle and Lore Wright; half brother Keith Beckles; aunts Althea Parker, Mavis Beckles, and Marjorie Beckles; uncles Neville Parker, Winston Beckles, Aubrey Beckles, Patrick Beckles and Sydney Beckles; many cousins; and a host of friends and well-wishers at Washington State University, among activists all over the state and region, in Spokane, and especially here at the African American Voice. May we all remember him by continuing to fight injustice wherever we see it.

**If you didn't know Colin or Dr. "B" you should ask somebody**

AAV Readers

Empowering, organizing, giving a voice to the voiceless and a catalyst for change is how I will remember the late Dr. Colin Beckles. He appeared to me to be a man on a mission, making many uncomfortable because his focus was about the now - what can we do to make changes now - not later.

In keeping with Dr. Beckles' theme of empowering people, I am certain he would not want me to mourn but to take this situation and learn and grow from it. Between birth and death there is life. You see, all men and women die but not all really live. Make a difference in the world, in your country, in your city, in someone's life, setting an example that all can follow.

Dr. Beckles followed his gift of learning and earned a Ph.D. He followed his gift for caring and passion for justice to become an activist. He would want us all look within ourselves to find our gifts and to develop them and use them to make a difference in the lives of others.

With his "in your face" attitude, I challenge the community not to let the torch fall but let the successor

come through and take it up - to help carry on the struggle for justice now, and not later.

For Colin I say, "No justice, no peace!"

Dwight Cummings

African American Voice:

Glenn and I would like to offer our prayers and sympathy to you, Colin's family, his friends and the community who cares.

Our best,  
Judith Mason

**My Reflection**

Dear Colin, triumphant freedom fighter,

Many days and nights were spent talking about the ills of our community, our people, the eastern region and possible solutions. With each encounter, I came to understand our common visions, dreams, and values. It is my belief that we as a nation of people inherited a cruel dynasty and a forsaken but unique destiny. It is without hesitation, reservation or regret that we walk a fine line between peace and hate. Bound as the gate-keepers of a movement that must not die, we must not disintegrate but push on.

Yes my friend,  
Your words . . .  
"we must organize . . .  
take a stand for justice  
and not for just us"

is one utterance of many ingrained in my thoughts of you. We recognized that each generation of gate-keepers struggle to protect against the inhumanities of one's oppressors and familiar demons. Era after era the shackles become more sophisticated, feverishly multiplying, rendering the strongest soldier weak.

Yes my reflection,  
Be assured common souls remember  
and reminisce about the fallen,  
and thoughts of you glimmer, shadow  
and provoke promise . . . love . . .  
and wisdom in all of us  
to keep the movement alive.

We will meet again.

Kareem Wilcher with Love

*The Spokane, Pullman African-American Voice*

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## SCC President Williams accepts position in Littleton Colorado

Spokane Community College President James H. Williams has been named president of Arapahoe Community College (ACC) in Denver. He will assume his new position July 1. Arapahoe Community College is part of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. Located in Littleton, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, the college serves approximately 8,000 students a year and offers more than 60 degree and certificate programs. It is recognized nationally for its programs in telecommunications engineering, law enforcement, mortuary science and nursing.

"It has been a great honor and privilege to work for Community Colleges of Spokane in general, and Spokane Community College, in particular," Williams said. "I have had the opportunity to work with an outstanding faculty, staff and administrators. In addition, I was afforded numerous opportunities to get involved in the life of the greater Spokane community."

Dr. Ronald Bell, Community Colleges of Spokane's interim chancellor/chief executive officer, said, "I am happy for Jim. Our loss is Arapahoe Community College's gain."

The loss will also be felt by Spokane's African American community and the African American Voice as well. Jim's advice and support began within months of the beginning of the paper and it was he who brought us the late Larry Tarrer and his Education Voice column. Jim too has contributed articles to the paper and he and his wife have been constant supporters in many other ways.

He will be missed, but perhaps at this time Littleton has a greater need for his ability to listen, to communicate with people of both diverse cultures and diverse beliefs, to be a friend.

## Kelvin's basketball bounces to a classical beat

The president of Gonzaga Prep High School's classical music club is better known, believe it or not, as a great defensive player on the basketball team. Kelvin Bacon, a senior at Prep, likes to think of himself as a well-rounded person, he was quoted in a recent Spokesman-Review article. A good student, he also plays football and participates in track.

Kelvin came to Spokane with his mother, Vonda Hall, when she took a job as a science teacher at Rogers High School. They had most recently lived in Guam, where his mother heard about Gonzaga Prep from a friend. The school is glad she did, because Kelvin was an important ingredient in the basketball team's excellent season this year. There's a fine line, Bacon said, that allows him to be a strong defender. He said he's good at anticipating offensive players but makes sure not to overplay them.

## Soul Food Dinner and Raffle

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Outreach Center is sponsoring a Soul Food Dinner on May 2 beginning at 12 noon at the Center, 845 S. Sherman. So take advantage of the opportunity to end a relaxing weekend with a delicious home cooked meal.

The MLK Center is also selling raffle tickets for 8 Mothers Day baskets. The baskets have an array of gifts, from gift certificates to area stores to memberships to health spas. The proceeds will go to the ECEAP preschool program for graduation. Tickets are currently on sale at the Center.

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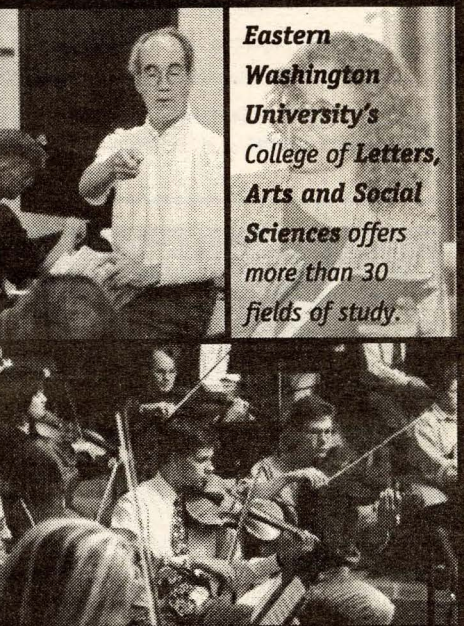
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## Mumia Abu Jamal video available from PJALS

**BEYOND REASON-ABLE DOUBT**, a new one hour documentary on the case of Mumia Abu Jamal, was recently shown by the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) and the Inland Northwest Death Penalty Abolition Group at Gonzaga University School of Law on April 23. The video explains some of the legal reasons that Mumia, on death row in Pennsylvania, is considered a political prisoner by many human rights

activists.

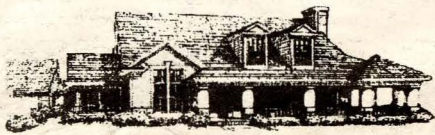
Recently Governor Locke withdrew his acceptance of an invitation to speak at graduation at The Evergreen State College when he learned that a taped message from Jamal, convicted of killing a police officer, would be played.

If you missed the showing of **BEYOND REASON-ABLE DOUBT**, it is available from PJALS at 224 S. Howard St. Spokane 99201. Call 838-7870.

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## The House of Unconditional Love

*Following is a speech given at a rally held April 21 at the East Central Community Center to bring attention to the recent cross burnings in Spokane.*

Hello. I am Cid Williams, Lead Consultant for Ujima Empowerment. I have come before you to share with you an extended metaphor, called "Am I my Brother's Keeper?"

In a town very similar to this one, not very long ago, Hatred and Violence swooped down like a hawk and endangered the lives of the entire community. The town was ethnically diverse and Hatred and Violence planned to devour them all. On the first block, there lived Black, White, Asian, Gay and Lesbian families.

Hatred and Violence approached the homes of the Gay and Lesbian families on the block and said, "We have come to destroy you! Where will you run?" The families called their Asian neighbor and said, "They have come to kill us! Will you help?" Their Asian neighbor said, "Am I my brother's Keeper? My family does not agree with your lifestyle. You will endanger our children. We cannot help you." The Gay and Lesbian families ran to the House of Unconditional Love. "We are our brother's keeper," said the head of the House. "Come in. We will protect you".

Then, Hatred and Violence approached the home of the Asian family on the block and said, "We have come to destroy you! Where will you run?" The Asian families called their White neighbor and said, "They have come to kill us! Will you help?" Their White neighbor said, "Am I my brother's Keeper? My children do not make trouble. Take care of yourself. Your problem is not my responsibility. I will not help you." The Asian family ran to the House of Unconditional Love. "We are our brother's keeper," said the head of the House. "Come in. We will protect you." The Gay, Lesbian and Asian Families saw one another in the House of Unconditional Love, and stared at one another in ignorance and anger.

Next, Hatred and Violence approached the home of the White family on the block and

said, "We have come to destroy you! Where will you run?" The White family called their Black neighbor and said, "They have come to kill us! Will you help?" Their Black neighbor said, "Am I my brother's Keeper? You are the cause of all my problems. You have enslaved my people and stolen all the wealth for yourself. Even now, you oppress the world. We will NEVER help you." The White family ran to the House of Unconditional Love. "We are our brother's keeper," said the head of the House. "Come in. We will protect you". The Gay, Lesbian, Asian and White Families saw one another in the House of Unconditional Love, and stared at one another in ignorance and anger. They all began to bicker and argue. Then, Hatred and Violence approached the home of the Black family on the block and said, "We have come to destroy you! Where will you run?" All the families shouted "They have come to kill us! Who will we call?"

The head of the House of Unconditional Love, a child, who was like a Lamb, stepped forward and said, "There is no one left to call. You have brought ignorance and anger into the house of unconditional love. Because you are not your brother's Keeper, we have no defense, no one can protect us." And so, in that manner, across the whole town, Hatred and Violence destroyed the Gay, Lesbian, Asian White and Black Families in the House of Unconditional Love. There was no one left to stare at in ignorance and anger. There was no one left to argue or fight.

Hate has no face, violence has no friend. Anger divides. Ignorance is the beginning of all our problems. Unless we educate ourselves and respect our differences, we will be the cause of our own demise.

What happens here in Spokane and in Colorado yesterday are Hate crimes. We must decrease our ignorance to reduce our anger by resisting violence produced by hatred. It starts in each one of us one day at a time. With Love and compassion, we can make a difference.

Cid Williams

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# EVENTS

**May is Gay Pride Month**

**Fairytales**  
Apr 28 Wed 11:30 am SFCC Gender Equity program. SUB Senate Chamber. Free. Call 533-4197.

**According to Coyote with Carlotta Kaufman**  
Apr 30 Fri. noon-1 pm. IEL Lodge 3305 W. Ft. Geo. Wright Dr. Free. Call 533-3032.

**African American Graduation**  
May 1 Sat 1-3 pm Cowles Aud. Whitworth College

**Mother's Day Connectors Potluck**

May 1 Sat. 11 am - 1 pm East Central Community Center 500 S. Stone. Call 625-6699.

**Cinco De Mayo Fugaz**  
May 5 Wed 11:30 am - 1 pm. Music by Fugaz, food by Los Laureles. Lunch \$4 per plate.

**Carl Richardson**  
May 7 - June 25 Spotlight Gallery, Eclectic Electric 9 N Washington. Reception May 7 5-8 pm. Call 744-0910.

**National Coalition of Black Women**

May 8 Sat 11:30 am - 5 pm Prince Hall Masonic 2702 E

5th St. Spokane Dinners \$6.50 & \$7.50. Call 927-7462.  
**Los Mocosos**  
SCC Spring Fling Concert  
May 10 Mon 11:30 am The Lair Student Center Auditorium Spokane Community College. Call 533-7090.

**Ocheami West African Drum and Dance**  
May 11 Tues. 12 noon Showalter Auditorium, Eastern Washington Univ., Cheney.

**Cinco De Mayo Celebration**  
May 14 Wed. 12 - 1 pm Speaker: Jerry Garcia, Washington State Univ. Dancing by Primera Generacion: Baille

Folklorico of Eastern Washington Univ. IEL Lodge 3305 W. Ft. Geo Wright Dr. Call 533-3032.

**Cross Cultural Communication and the Gender Gap**  
May 20 There 11:30 am Spokane Community College Lair Student Center.

**Spring Pow Wow Red Nation's Student Assoc.**  
May 22 Sat 1 pm - midnight. Spokane Falls Community College between buildings 15 & 5.

**SFCC Multicultural Club / African American Assoc. Talent Show**  
May 26 Wed. 11:30 am - 1:30 pm. SUB Lounges ABC

Spokane Falls Community College. Free. Call 533-3240.

**Take a Bite Out of Hunger Food Bank Auction**  
May 26 Wed. 6 - 9 pm. Spokane Food Bank benefit at the Spokane Arena. Tickets \$35, \$60 for couples. Call 534-6678.

**Memorial Weekend Pow Wow**  
Third Annual Celebration May 28 - 31 Two Rivers Casino. Host drum: Southern Cree. Call Carol Campbell (509) 258-7038 or Ilene Flett (509) 258-4581.

**An Evening of Ellington**  
June 2 Wed. 7:30 pm at the MET. Spokane Jazz Sextet of the Spokane Jazz Orchestra and the Bedini Flick Grismer Trio.

**Suicide prevention seminar May 5**


Question, Persuade, Refer or QPR is a method of suicide prevention, developed by local psychologist Dr. Paul Quinnett. A two hour workshop taught by certified QPR instructor Robin Mandelas will be held in Spokane at the Northeast Community Center on May 5 from 3:30 - 5:30. This training session is open to anyone interested in learning the basics about suicide prevention. Knowing what to do if you encounter someone you think is suicidal can mean the difference between life and death. Registration is \$20 and covers workshop materials. Call the Spokane Regional Health District (509) 324-1530.



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# NAACP

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**East Central Community Center**  
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# EDITORIAL

Reprinted from the October 1998 issue.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word lynch is a transitive verb which means "to murder an accused person by mob action and without lawful trial". Webster's further states that hanging is only one particular way a lynching can take place. In Lewiston, Idaho on that revealing Friday August 28th night, it appears that the nighttime air was filled with a healthy dose of "mob action" as hundreds of white onlookers cheered on the white attackers who bloodied the young Black men who visited their charming riverside city. In historic old southern fashion, the Black youth were encircled, bludgeoned and beat down to the ground by the good citizens of Lewiston.

If you close your eyes, and let your color blind mind travel, you can almost hear the serene sounds of that memorable evening... the gentle waves of the Snake River, the angelic cry of "Kill those niggers" playfully bouncing across the waves, the staccato echos of clenched white fists ripping young black flesh...cracking young black bones... all nestled between the ebb and flow of Lewiston's "Hot Nights".

Of course those Black youths feared for their lives. They feared the hordes of those savage whites who stalked those young boys, surrounded them, beat them, penned them in, encircled, jumped and pounced on their car windows.

Oh... but let us not forget that according to Webster's Dictionary, there must also be a "missing trial" to accompany the mob action. Enter the Lewiston police, violently...oops, I meant valiantly, riding in to protect and serve the community; to restore order so that all can receive a fair trial - lest a lynching take place.

Alas, 'twas the noble Lewiston police who became constable, judge and executioner. It was the Lewiston police who re-ignited the mob frenzy; it was the Lewiston police who unquestioningly accepted the rabid white mob's indictment of those Black youth; it was the Lewiston police who forced the young men out of their car; the police who threw them to the ground; the police who unjustly handcuffed them; it was the Lewiston police who refused them medical treatment; it was the police who denied those boys their human rights.

The police....to protect and serve... who?

The only thing missing was a rope and a tree. Good thing they were in town, or maybe next time the lamp posts will do just fine...

*Oh yeah...don't forget to vote No! 200.*

Colin A. Beckles

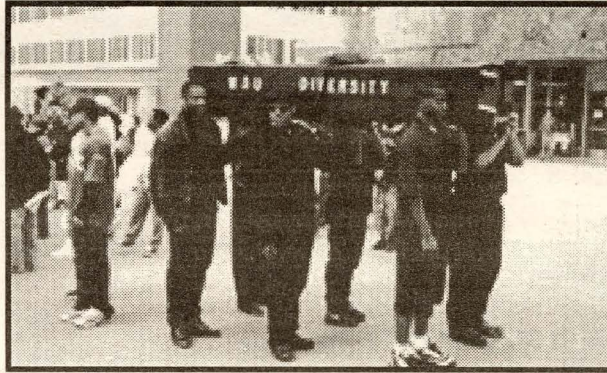
## Publisher's Note

To paraphrase Ishmael Reed, being an activist is like going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. Your colleagues are waiting for you to break your neck, and your friends on the tour bus are always late.

*When you decide to fight dragons, the first thing they do is pressure you. The next thing they try is to co-opt you and the third is to buy you off. When that doesn't work they smear your character. And if you don't commit suicide first, they'll assassinate you.*

If you fight dragons they expect you to walk on water. Sorry we can't. We do the best we can.

Robert Lloyd



**No justice!  
No peace!**

# Opinion

## Beware of the Gatekeepers

By Rick Adams

Often one can hear Black people castigating the "gatekeepers", usually an attack on those of African descent who have obtained positions of importance, authority, or large salaries. It is undeniable that some of the brothers and sisters who occupy these positions have been selected, appointed, and elected by those in power to serve as buffers, blockers, and bafflers. Many are not, but whatever the case there are gatekeepers who are more of a problem to the goals and aspirations of black people.

These overwhelmingly white gatekeepers, there are some non white ones who unflinchingly accept the game plan, are the most effective obstacles to every Black person born and raised in these United States. Forget the Klan, the Aryan Nation, the Skin Heads, and right wing conservative politicians; the real gatekeepers are more destructive to the hopes and dreams of the average Black person by far.

Who are these gatekeepers? They are all around us numbering in the hundreds of thousands. If you live in an integrated community chances are they are the neighbors next door. Many Black people work with, for, and interact with them on a daily basis. Our children are at their mercy every day. These dangerous, ubiquitous foot soldiers of racism and white supremacy are the health care providers, the public school professionals, the college admissions officers, the human/employee relations officers, the bank loan officers, the real estate, and law enforcement/ judiciary professionals. These seven classes of workers have controlled the life chances and quality of life for every person of African descent in this country. From the cradle to the grave, these faceless minions determine our chances of success. Life altering decisions are made at

each step of one's journey from fetus to elder to ancestor.

If obstetricians/ pediatricians are absent, because of a lack of medical coverage and no money; the infant mortality rate is higher, the number of infants with serious health problems that go untreated is increased, and these children enter the public schools with higher rates of learning disabilities, and disciplinary problems. For those Africans with medical coverage a combination of uncaring, racist, and/or incompetent health care providers make medical care of our children problematic.

Once our children enter the public school system the work of crippling our children continues in earnest. School social workers, psychologists, and counselors participate in a process that results in many of our children being labeled with descriptions that will follow them for the rest of their lives. Terms like slow learner, hyperactive, socially maladjusted, at risk, attention deficient disorder, and of course the catchall "trouble maker" are entered on the permanent record. Just like that a child is done for before they even get out of their formative years!

Today's job market requires some post secondary level education, college or vocational school. College admissions officers and culturally biased entrance exams conspire to keep many Black youngsters from going on after high school. The ravages of poor health care, bad nutrition, the resulting health problems, and the social problems that swirl around low income families team up to make the pressures on those able to go to college near unbearable.

Once out of college there is one class of gatekeepers that affects nearly all of us; the human and employee relations officers. If those with the power to hire, including sole proprietors, are racists, so much for getting a job, or at least a good one anyway. The ability to keep a job or receive promotions rests with these

people along with the always-present supervisor. Since the vast majority of us work for non Black people, if one of these gatekeepers has it in for us, we are through. Given the conservative stacked courts, lawsuits, besides the expense, do not appear to be an inviting option.

After securing a job it is not long before a young person in the work force has to visit the bank and mortgage loan officers. It is well documented the discriminatory loan practices African Americans and other people of color face when trying to access credit. In a society like ours, the failure to acquire credit or credit at preferred rates has a devastating effect on the financial fortunes of Black people.

Real estate brokers and mortgage lenders make it difficult for Black people to become homeowners. The real estate companies still engage in "block busting" and African would be homeowners are denied mortgages at proportionately higher rates or granted financial packages at more costly interest rates.

The law enforcement/judiciary establishment is a major antagonist of Black people. The overwhelming majority of the police officers, lawyers, judges, district attorneys, and legislators who make the laws are white. This fact is brutally reflected in the fact that people of African descent are 12% of the national population, but 55% of the prison population. Black people traveling the nation's highways are routinely stopped at rates five times the proportion of Black motorists frequenting the roadway in question.

As dismal as these observations are I do not suggest that we roll over and surrender, nor necessarily flee these shores. What I do call for is a sophisticated social, economic, and political strategy to combat these legions of gatekeepers. Black people need to learn individual and collective tactics for overcoming these barriers.

*Rick Adams is a 30 year veteran of the Black freedom movement and can be heard on WCXJ in Pittsburgh PA. c. 1999 BlackNews and Information Man, Inc.*

# LETTERS

The Editor welcomes letters. You can respond to articles or write about any topic of your concern. You can also call and dictate a letter. If we are not in, you can narrate your letter in our voice mail. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for language, content and space. Write to: The Editor, The African-American Voice, 2920 S. Grand Blvd., Suite 145, Spokane, WA 99203. Please include your name and day time telephone number for verification.

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Editor:  
If the US ever abides by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, welfare reform would be illegal. Article 25 asserts everyone's right to an adequate standard of living. It emphasizes that "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." Washington's legislature recently debated whether to extend our state's one year exemption for the parent of a newborn from mandatory WorkFirst participation. The federal rule is mandatory work when the child is 3 months old. Wisconsin cuts that in half, beginning required work when the child is 6 weeks old! If the parent doesn't comply, the family's income is cut by sanction. Never mind that infant childcare is scarce and expensive. Don't talk about the value of nurture and bonding necessary at that age. Would such slavefare be demanded of any but poor, often single parents? Surely, this is discrimination due to economic and familial status, such as is referred to in the

mission statement of our own Spokane Human Rights Commission.  
In a cheap job market, where are the jobs worth anything? No matter. NY Mayor Giuliani suggests the poor "start a lemonade stand", I'll never forget hearing a local legislator tell welfare moms, "You have hammers and nails... You can build coffins".  
The WorkFirst ideology is "Any job is a good job!" Message: Wageslavery is OK. Submit to exploitative work, or else! The reductions in income for the time-limited or sanctioned families account for increased hunger, homelessness and child abuse nationally and statewide. On average, out of home placements of children in the US have increased by a third since welfare reform was enacted.  
The poor, as ever, serve as cannon fodder for capitalism's war against workers. The end of the entitlement to public assistance for needy families is immoral. Our culture produces desperate scabs, ready to steal jobs from those who stand up for a decent standard of employment. Welfare repeal feeds this system with throwaway people.  
Morton Alexander

## Spokane Human Rights Commissioner

### African American students need assistance

Editor:  
I received a copy of your publication from a parent of one of our students. I would like to receive a copy of your advertising rates.  
I have also enclosed some information about our school. We currently have two African-American families attending who may not be able to return next year due to financial difficulties. While we do offer financial aid some of our families are in need of additional help. The school would feel a very definite loss if these three children were unable to return. They have been attending Discovery School for several years and have many friends among faculty and students alike. My purpose for conveying the situation to you is in hopes that you may know of an individual or institution that may be interested in sponsoring a scholarship.  
Any help or direction you can lend would be much appreciated.  
Cheri Poole  
Office of Development  
Discovery School

## Editor:

I'm writing to invite you to take part in a crucial effort - one that could improve the health of millions of women and reduce the number of unintended pregnancies in America.  
The event is the Planned Parenthood 1999 Congressional Action Day, which will take place June 10th, 1999 in Washington, DC. On that day, I will join Planned Parenthood Board members, staff, and committed supporters like you to meet face-to-face with members of Congress - to urge them to support increased funding for Title X, America's family planning program.  
This direct contact is essential. One of the most frequent - and most distressing - things that I hear from members of congress is, "Where are the pro-choice people? They don't write, and they don't show up in person. If I didn't know better, I'd think my district is anti-choice."  
In contrast, anti-choice, anti-family planning followers turn out in force. Whenever a key vote approaches, congressional offices are flooded with letters, phone calls,

faxes, and e-mail messages. And make no mistake, these efforts have a major impact. The fight to increase funding for Title X will be difficult, so I hope you can take part in this critical campaign... By supporting the Planned Parenthood fight to increase funding for Title X, you will help to:

- Prevent many of the unintended pregnancies in American - now estimated at three million each year;
- Reduce the need for abortion - simply by reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies;
- Ensure earlier diagnosis and better treatment for sexually transmitted infections - which are contracted by 12 million Americans each year; and
- Prevent infant deaths - which would be reduced by 10 percent if all pregnancies were planned, according to the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality.

That's why it is so important to get in touch with your representatives - and tell them it is time for programs that help, not policies that punish....  
Gloria Feldt, President  
Planned Parenthood  
Federation of America  
810 Seventh Ave., New York NY 10019

## Adolescent suicide prevention focus of SMILE

Christie Toribara and her husband formed Students Mastering Important Lifeskills Education (SMILE) following their son's suicide. They found that many youth are experiencing the same pressures, and that signs for depression/mood disorders in youth differ from adult signs. The organization has developed information pamphlets, donated books to schools, given presentations in the community, and developed an "I Need Your Help" card and accompanying information sheet to educate adults and staff to know what to do if someone hands them the card. More than 18,000 cards have been distrib-

uted, along with copies of the book LONELY, SAD, AND ANGRY by Ingersoll and Goldstein. In addition they have developed a list of resources on grieving and are planning to produce a Christmas musical "Touch of the Child" December 10-12, 1999 as a community project to bring families together.  
*The non-profit organization is in need of funds. An auction, Making a Difference for Youth is planned for November 13, 1999, but contributions of time and/or finances would be welcome.*  
For more information on SMILE and its programs call (509) 448-8886.

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**GOT AN OPINION? WRITE TO THE AAV.**

# Every month is Black History Month

## Trailblazer of Freedom

By Victor Buksbazen

The US House of Representatives has just voted 421-1 to award the Congressional Gold Medal to 86-year old Rosa Parks, a pioneer of the civil rights movement. It was in December, 1955, that her refusal to move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama bus sparked the boycott which set the stage for massive protest and acts of civil disobedience which eventu-

ally catapulted Martin Luther King, Jr. into his position of leadership, and catalyzed numerous other events which ultimately broke the back of Jim Crow. Though she was undoubtedly a brave person who deserves credit for her contributions to the movement, how many Americans know about Irene Morgan Kirkaldy, a lady whose actions lay the foundations of racial equality over 10 years earlier? It all started one Sunday afternoon in July, 1944 when the 27 year old airplane factory worker board-

ed a Greyhound bus in Gloucester County, Virginia, headed for Baltimore where her mother and two children were staying. Morgan herself was recovering from recent major surgery. She carefully chose a seat five rows from the front on the right side of the bus. During the 1940's Virginia law dictated that blacks should fill public transportation back to front, while whites were seated from front to back. About 30 minutes later the bus picked up a white couple. Since there were no

seats in the front section for them to sit in, the driver ordered Morgan and her seat mate, who was holding a baby in her arms, to get up. Nobody knows just what she was thinking, but she decided to stay put. She also tried to prevent the woman beside her from relinquishing her seat. "You just respond and react to whatever confronts you," the now-81-year-old retired seamstress declared. "I did what I had to do." The driver warned her that she would be arrested at the next stop if she did not get up. As the bus pulled

into a gas station in Saluda, Virginia, the driver made good on his threat. County Sheriff R. Beverly Sugar boarded the bus and served her with a warrant. "I tore it up and threw it out the window," she explained recently. Her actions angered the sheriff so much that he "began to get red in the face," she said. He took her by the arm and began to twist it. "I then kicked him in a painful spot," she continued. The angry sheriff stormed off the bus and returned with a deputy, who arrested her. At the trial she was found guilty and sentenced to 30 days in jail and a \$10 fine. She contacted the NAACP in Baltimore who assigned her case to a young lawyer named Spottswood W. Robinson, who would later become Senior circuit Court Judge in the District of Columbia. Morgan was again found guilty on appeal in state court. She was sentenced to an additional fine of \$100 for resisting arrest plus \$10 for trespassing. She appealed to the Virginia Supreme Court, but it upheld the lower court ruling. Robinson and Morgan, determined to prove she was not wrong when she refused to give up her seat, took the case to the US Supreme Court. As Robinson had not yet been practicing law long enough to appear before the Supreme Court, William Hastie and Thurgood Marshall argued against the Virginia statute, saying that it was a burden to interstate commerce. The court agreed and ruled in favor of Morgan on June 3, 1946. However, the victory was short-lived. Some bus companies, in defiance of the ruling, tried to re-establish Jim Crow regulations. These were countered legally and peacefully. By 1948, desegregated interstate buses and trains were again the law of the land.

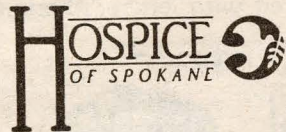
Morgan never met Dr. King or Rosa Parks and, to this day, has never sought the limelight. Because of her modesty and reticence, she is hardly known outside of her community and state. In fact, her civil rights activities ceased with the Supreme Court decision which bears her name. Truly great people do not covet another's acclaim. They only care about the results. But Irene Morgan Kirkaldy, probably more than any other African American, deserves the title "Trailblazer of Freedom."

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and care.

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the same when  
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**Publisher's Note:**  
If "trailblazer" connotes the first, history has given African Americans alot of thises and thats. But if "trailblazing" is the beginning of a journey then my vote is for Rosa Parks, who not only started the journey, but has been an active participant in the African American struggle, not only when she sat on the bus, but until the present time.

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# Building Community

In a community such as Spokane where the African American population is dispersed throughout the city, it is important to build a sense of community. One of the first criterion for developing a community is to know its members. With the encouragement of President Bill Robinson of Whitworth

College and the assistance of Professor Virginia White and her feature writing class, the African American Voice will publish profiles of community members each month.

Stephanie Nobles-Beans, Ken Beason, Deborah Brown, Nathaniel Greene, Roberta Greene, La'Brenda Hill, Leslie McAuley, Rodney McAuley, V. Anne Smith, Peggie Troutt, Gail Vails, • Jann Williams, • Jim Williams, Wallace Williams

## Jim Williams

By Sean Taylor  
Whitworth College

A lack of diversity together with distrust between faculty and administration has created a troubled campus for Spokane Community College. With motivation and a clear vision, President Jim Williams seems to have found the cure by celebrating the differences of both faculty and students.

When he entered the world of college politics, Williams began identifying subtle tensions between different social and ethnic groups at SCC. The campus seemed very segregated because of trust issues, primarily among faculty and staff but between students as well.

Three years later, Williams seeks to create a more diverse campus by encouraging students to celebrate the differences at SCC. He defines diversity as race, gender, class, age, disability and thought. With a wide range of people to reach out to, Williams' mission is clear - "create awareness". Awareness not only of the problems, but with a more specific focus on the differences.

In recognition of students differences, SCC holds an International Day at the annual fall diversity conference. The main theme is "Moving in Harmony Toward the 21st Century". "We can become a civilized society by accepting these things [differences]. And by becoming good listeners." President Williams is striving to model this well by keeping in touch and encouraging communication between different departments.

Being raised in the south in the 1950's, Williams is no stranger to issues of diversity. Because his mother was too young to raise him, Williams went to live with his grandmother for 11 years in Virginia. He went to school in a quaint two-room African American school, being taught to fear white people. When Williams' mother came to take him to Los Angeles at thirteen he entered an integrated junior high school and experienced racial difference first hand.

Williams credits his ability to motivate and relate to others to his grandmother, whom he says gave him the kind of grounding that was critical for his maturity. Dealing with negative racial issues such as segregation in Virginia caused Williams to grow up, but it was his grandmother's influence that caused Williams to grow up with strong moral convictions. As a teenager Williams began working at the African American Episcopal Church which he says instilled in him more leadership skills, such as organization and delegation.

Williams contends that the issue of diversity at SCC has not been conquered but with his insight and experience he feels he is capable of tackling

diversity and moving SCC in harmony toward the 21st century.

Editor's note: Spokane loses two more members of the community due to lack of support. Since this profile was written Dr. Williams has withdrawn his name from consideration for CEO of the Community Colleges of Spokane and accepted a position as president of Arapaho Community College in Littleton, Colorado. How many more will you lose?

## Jann Williams,

By Jenny Neyman  
Whitworth College

Jann Williams, wife, mother of two, grandmother of three, worker at the Training and Education Coordinating Center, and creative writer, has learned throughout life the wisdom of taking nothing for granted. She employs this theme in her relationships, her work at T.E.C.C. and in her writing.

Jann has been an amateur poet and creative writer for most of her life. She describes herself as a person who is very much in touch with her feelings, and uses her writing to express those feelings.

In one poem she uses toast to make an analogy with relationships:

"What if to the plain toast, you add not only butter but you also add jam...Now you have transformed plain bread into a warm delight. Isn't that what relationships and marriage are all about? The adding of simple ingredients to make a quite simple life and existence into something quite wonderful."

Jann knows all about turning simple into wonderful. She attended the University of Washington in the early seventies, graduating with degrees in accounting and business management in 1974. Jann was anything but a typical college student. She held a full time job during the day, attended classes at night, and worked as a bartender on the weekends. Amazingly she managed all this while raising two children. No sorority parties or sleeping through classes for her.

"I felt like a drone. It was really important that if you wanted to go anyplace you had to have a degree. So I was determined to get one, and it was probably one of the smartest things I've ever done. After that doors started opening for me and I've always had a good job."

These degrees gave her a base for her thirty-year career in upper management business positions. She is retired from that type of work now, but doesn't spend her days vacationing to Florida or taking Caribbean cruises. Instead she works as the assistant to the manager of the Training and

Education Coordinating Center in Spokane. T.E.C.C. is a business and community-oriented branch of Community Colleges of Spokane. It offers training programs in many fields, open enrollment programs for anyone interested in receiving training, and worker retraining programs that target people of low-income, the unemployed, or individuals receiving welfare. It is through this area of work, especially with women, that Jann gains the most satisfaction.

"I work with young, single mothers who have never seen a successful woman and never known one who went to college. Some of their mothers are in the same situation they are. For some, Mom's in the class next to theirs. To see a class on the first day, then look five weeks later - the difference is phenomenal," she said.

Jann credits the manager and instructors at the Center for making such a huge difference in these people's lives. As a woman who says she never had anyone to guide or inspire her to succeed in life, she feels it is very important for these women to have mentors.

"Too many children are taught they should be seen and not heard. Children who are not given attention can have a lot of anger in them. They need to be taught accountability and how to construct a voice for their opinions," she said. "If you listen to them, make them feel important and give them self esteem from the start I truly believe they will be mentally and emotionally healthier. How else do they learn this - on the day they turn 18?"

Jann's own children, Gregg and Leslie, are now grown and have kids of their own. She has been married to Jim Williams, President of Spokane Community College, for five years. Both she and her husband Jim are supporters of racial and ethnic diversity in Spokane.

"I certainly support diversity 150 percent, but I don't think Spokane has a lot of diversity. There are a few people of every ethnic group here, but the numbers are so small they're not very visible. I miss having the color in my world that exists in more metropolitan cities," she said.

But achieving greater diversity in Spokane is a task that is more easily said than done, as Jann has discovered in observing SCC's black and Hispanic graduation ceremonies.

"Almost everything you try to do to encourage diversity you almost have to carry the entire way yourself. There are not too many people willing to step up and assist you with it," she said.

SCC's first black graduation was held four years ago. Since then attendance has increased, but is still low. A student's family may attend, but not many other people.

"Because it's the first graduation of this type you would think the black community in its entirety would show up, but that's not the case," Jann said.

In order for the situation to improve, she believes both minority and white communities need to be more active in their efforts to achieve diversity.

Jann strives to give something of herself to the people around her through her writing, her mentoring, and her work at T.E.C.C. She lives her belief that with the help of a little jam and butter the wonderful is possible.


Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

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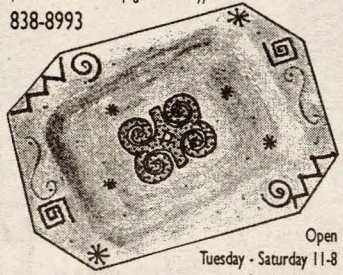
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# Arts and Culture

## where you going?

where you going  
is your journey all  
complete?  
are you going to join  
the light  
now?  
are you coming  
back to the streets?  
how you feelin  
do you have  
a  
piece of mind?  
do you think  
you did just fine  
round here the way  
you spent your time?  
don't you know  
I'm gonna  
miss you?  
don't you know  
how much  
I cared?  
don't you know  
I'm gonna  
miss you?  
times we shared  
just a fleeting  
bit of memory  
of the things  
we did  
jokes  
we played



friends we'll  
always be  
i'm holding you  
here  
deep within my  
heart  
till we find a place  
where we  
can hide and  
never be apart.

time  
it's just an  
illusion  
I know  
about  
time  
space  
it's just  
another form  
i know about  
space  
love  
I can feel  
it from you  
I can feel  
love  
wouldn't you help me  
carry on?  
help me.  
don't you know?  
don't you know?

Levi

*These images by Carl Richardson and the song by his brother Levi are a tribute to their grandmother at the time of her passing. Carl's work will be on exhibit in the Spotlight Gallery at Eclectic Electric 9 N. Washington beginning May 7, reception 5-7 pm..*



## I Am Poem

By Aimee Atkinson,  
Age 12

I am a dreamer who loves  
to read,  
I wonder why there is hate  
and discrimination in our  
world,  
I hear the painful cries of  
soldiers at war,  
I see the crimes and  
tremendous pains,  
I want our world to be full  
of peace and love,  
I am a dreamer who loves  
to read.  
  
I pretend that the world is  
happy,  
I feel that we are all sad

and unhappy,  
I touch the fabrics of time,  
I worry that the hate will  
grow,  
I cry when I hear the pain,  
I am a dreamer who loves  
to read.

I understand that we'll  
never change our ways,  
I say that people have no  
color,  
I dream of a world of  
peace,  
I try to understand why  
there is hate,  
I hope we will be at peace,  
I am a dreamer and love to  
read.

## Special People

By Jann Williams

Some people come into our lives and quickly go...  
Some people move our souls to dance...  
They awaken us to new understanding...  
With their whispered words of wisdom...  
Some make the sky more beautiful to gaze on...  
When you gaze at it from their view...  
They stay in our lives for awhile...  
And leave footprints on our hearts...  
We will never, ever be the same...

## "Fences" Tears down the fence

By Beverley Bumpas

It has not been a secret to the African American community nor to some of the insightful in the Caucasian community that there is a dividing fence between the two races in the City of Spokane. However with the collaboration of the Onyx Theatre Troupe and the Spokane Civic Theatre the Play "FENCES" has begun to tear down that fence. How wonderful it was to see African Americans take the Main stage, and perform a play about African Americans and written by one of the best African American writers in this country at the Spokane Civic Theatre for the first time ever. I must admit that after reading other reviews and

knowing the various trials that this particular production has had. It was hard to enter the theatre trying to remain an objective observer of this evening of theatre. However I was quickly swept away into the story. As the play begins Troy and long time friend Jim Bono entered, surprisingly, from the entrance of the theatre. It was used as an entrance throughout the remainder of the play, which left me feeling like I was encircled by the story - not so much just watching the stage, but actually in the "world" of FENCES. However, the actors lost the energy needed to keep my attention, often during scenes of intensity, leaving a flat and monotone dialogue,

Continued on page 13

### Behavioral Health Northwest

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### Call for art submissions

Out of Our Minds Art Gallery at 318 W. Sprague is hosting an African American Art Show for the month of June. Preference will be given to works directly out of the artist's mind. All mediums are eligible. Send photos to:

Art Show

Out of Our Minds  
318 W. Sprague  
Spokane WA 99201

Or call for an appointment 363-1016. Deadline for submission is Saturday May 22. The show will be hung May 30.

# Community Development Conference scholarships available

Scholarships for community leaders from underrepresented/marginalized communities to participate in the Community Development Society (CDS) Conference to be held in Spokane July 25-28. The scholarship will cover conference registration and if required accommodations.

The Community Development Society, founded in 1969, is a professional organization that provides leadership to practitioners and scholars across the broad spectrum of community development ranging from economic development to health care to telecommunications. The Spokane chapter, New Frontiers, was founded in 1997.

This year's conference will provide an opportunity to learn about community building efforts in the US and interna-

tionally. The conference will also provide an invaluable opportunity to network with people who face similar issues.

Keynote speakers include Ms. Lois Trevino, an educator and consensus facilitator from the Colville Reservation on resolving conflict and reaching consensus in all aspects of community, and Mr. Robert Theobald, a respected futurist who will talk about directions that communities need to take to cope with radical changes that are expected in the 21st century.

Eligible applicants include community leaders/activists, including students, who have provided outstanding service to underrepresented or marginalized groups including, but not limited

to: ethnic minorities, elderly, disabled, homeless, at-risk youth, and low-income communities. You may nominate yourself or someone else.

Applications should be submitted by June 15, 1999 to The New Frontiers Chapter, PO Box 793, Spokane WA 99203-0793.

To apply, provide a 1-2 page description, preferably typed, detailing the applicants community service work and the impact of this work on the community. Mention any awards or special recognition the applicant may have received and include a geographic description of the location of the community/ neighborhood in which the applicant is involved.

For more information call June Martin at (509) 358-7576.

## Town Meeting on Hate Crimes held at E. Central Comm. Center

The Spokane Human Rights Commission held a rally at the East Central Community Center on April 21 to support the victims in the recent series of cross burnings and other hate crimes. Speakers included Mayor John Talbott, who read

from the United Nation Human Rights Declaration; Spokane council person Cherie Rogers and her father; NAACP Spokane Chapter president Eileen Thomas; Human Rights Commissioner Khalil Islam; Police Chief Alan Chertok who announced that two suspects had been arrested in connection with two of the cross burnings.

As a follow up to the rally, the commission will sponsor a town meeting and show the film Not In Our Town, with a discussion to follow, on Wednesday, April 28, 7 pm in the Senior Room at the East Central Community Center 500 S. Stone. Topics will include awareness, prevention and community action against hate crimes and other acts of intolerance in Spokane.

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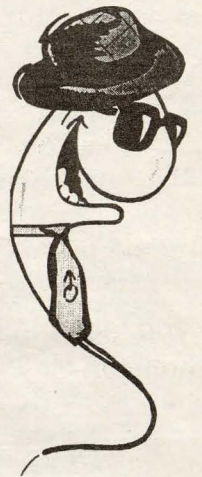
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# Hope for the Prevention of Suicide

Reprinted from June 98

BY PAUL QUINNETT

America's Doctor has spoken: it is now permissible to talk about suicide. On April 16th, Dr. David Satcher, Surgeon General of the United States, delivered a Keynote Address to the 31st Annual Meeting of the American Association of Suicidology, and later gave a news conference in which he called the prevention of suicide a national priority. His announcement comes not a moment too soon.

Recurrent thoughts of death and suicide are not rare. Hundreds of thousands of Americans experience them every day. Most often a symptom, recurrent thoughts of death and suicide help make the diagnosis for the most common of all brain disorders: major depression. While depressed mood, fatigue, insomnia, and a loss of appetite are acceptable symptoms, thoughts of ending your life are not.

Recurring thoughts of death and suicide. Patients hesitate to bring them up. Doctors seldom ask.

Mention feeling suicidal and friends change the subject. Or worse.

"Sometimes I wish I could just go to sleep and never wake up," the sufferer says. "Don't talk like that!" we say.

"I just don't think I can go on any longer," the sufferer says.

"Nonsense! Snap out of it!" we say.

Until Dr. Satcher spoke, few have had the courage to talk about suicide. Most sufferers suffer alone.

For too long our society has shared a tacit, but broadly accepted zero tolerance toward self-destruction. Unless you are talking to your therapist, you may not bring up the ninth symptom of depression. A therapist myself, I can assure you many therapists don't want you to bring it up to them either.

Something is dreadfully wrong here.

The most preventable death, suicide ranks ninth in all causes of death in America, first, second or third if you are a teenager (depending on your gender and where you live) and, just now, suicide has reached epidemic propor-

tions among young African American males.

And yet, until last week, we had no national leadership, despite having a president who not only intervened in his brother's suicidal crisis and perhaps saved his life, but has now survived the suicide of an old friend and cabinet member, as well as his Chief of Naval Operations.



The most common underlying cause for the unendurable, psychological pain that triggers suicidal thoughts and feelings is untreated depressive illness, the most easily treated of all brain disorders. Of the estimated one million completed suicides worldwide each year, more than half were suffering from untreated, or undertreated, depressive illness. Add drugs, alcohol, social rejection and a deafening community

silence, and you have a recipe for tragedy.


Because of our own fear of the word, the act, and the aftermath of suicide, we cover our anxiety with denial, anger, ridicule, resignation and a protective mythology. People who talk about suicide don't do it. Wrong. Once someone decides to kill himself, there is nothing anyone

can do to stop him. Wrong. Only experts can prevent suicide. Wrong. Given this pervasive, national denial and misunderstanding, is it any wonder people considering suicide minimize their symptoms, mask their anguish, and try to look good on the outside while dying on the inside?


Numbers can never be people, but consider that another 83 Americans will die the day you read this, leaving almost 500 devastated relatives behind. Each year, more Americans will die by suicide than by homicide, one every 17 minutes. No one has calculated the costs of the hundreds of thousands of non-fatal suicide attempts resulting in expensive emergency medical care. Now there is a molecule of hope. America's Doctor has spoken. For the first time, the Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network, American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for the Prevention of Suicide, Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Mental Health and others are holding historic meetings to begin mapping a national strategy for the prevention of suicide. A survivor of his father's suicide, Senator Reid (R NV) has broken the silence of his own experience and, thanks in part to his personal courage, a senate resolution passed last year to declare suicide a national problem. A similar resolution awaits your support and passage in the House.

Have you known someone on a first name basis


Continued on page 13




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## Congratulations, Scholarship Recipients!

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# Prevention of Suicide

**Continued From page 12**  
 who died by suicide? If the answer is yes, you, too, are a survivor of this terrible tragedy.

Together we must now follow the example set by our Surgeon General. We must break our conspiracy of silence, conquer our fear of the word suicide, and give sufferers that molecule of hope that someone, somewhere, understands and knows what to do.

We can do this as individuals, in groups, counties and as a country. We can support those organizations devoted to suicide prevention. We can create a national policy for the prevention of suicide and begin the ending of this terrible waste of human life.

We can do these things because we cannot afford to lose another Admiral Brooda or Marilyn Monroe

or Kurt Cobain, or a John, Sally, or Frank. We cannot afford to lose another talent, leader, police officer or loved one. Because he had a friend who had the courage to listen, accept and understand, a suicidal Abraham Lincoln might never have become our most beloved president.

We can do these things.  
 We must do them.  
 We must do them today.

*Author:*  
 Paul Quinnett is a psychologist, suicidologist, author of "Suicide: the Forever Decision" and a board member of the Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network. He is also the Director of Greentree Behavioral Health, a program of Spokane Mental Health. Dr. Quinnett developed QPR, (Question, Persuade, Refer, for suicide prevention) a national suicide prevention program.

## Spokane Voices for Children

The Children's Alliance is holding a dinner fundraiser for members and friends at the Ridpath Hotel, 515 W. Sprague on May 19. Outstanding community advocates will be honored and agencies will be eligible for a \$1,000 drawing to be donated to a participating agency of the winner's choice. The ticket price for the event is \$25.

Underwriting for this event is being made possible by a number of sponsors, including Metropolitan Mortgage, TCI, Group Health NW, and Cavanaugh's. Proceeds will be used to fund Children's Alliance efforts to improve the lives of Washington's children.

Call 747-7205 for more information.

# "Fences"

**Continued from page 10**

and leaving me wishing for something more. Tony Anthony as Troy Maxson did a good job with the endless monologues that August Wilson has created. Many times the audience was warned of a monologue by the script, however Anthony did a wonderful job of keeping my attention as he battled with the imaginary Grim Reaper of death and his own feelings.

Troy Maxson's actions were as scandalous as Bill Clinton's, but Anthony made the character seem understandable, almost justifiable. He clearly had the best performance of the cast, however much respect be given to Gail Betty as she clearly struggled to speak, let alone act. She has been seriously ill and unable to speak. As an actress myself, knowing what Gail was going through on stage, I felt this caliber of dedication was nothing short of professional. During the scene where Troy told Rose that he had had an affair and that the mistress was pregnant, it was Gail who saved the scene. It had been monotone and lifeless until she shoved Troy and with all the energy and voice she had declared that she had

invested 18 years with Troy in this marriage and was not going to walk away.

The rest of the cast gave solid performances including David Casteal as the criminal yet slick son of Troy and Jocelyn Khaiti Hogan (a budding actress) as the love child of Troy. She spoke clearly and loud enough for the audience to hear. Happy Watkins as Jim Bono played a great supporting friend as well as a wonderful supporting role. When Bono approached Troy about his affair and kindly told him it wasn't right, the scene left me wishing that all of our African American Brothers and Sisters would do the same if put in that situation. Happy Watkins did a great character role, I was especially impressed with his physical actions.

Lorenzo Herman as Cory, Troy's son, played a convincing teenager although he was well over teenaged years. His only shortcoming was a tendency to speak so quickly that I could not understand him. And kudos to the novice of the cast, Lindell Reason, who made a believable mentally disabled veteran adding humor and seriousness at the same time.

What bothered me the most during the play was the reoccurring black outs that

happened on the edge of a scene, when just a couple of seconds could have made more of an impact. In the beginning I felt angry that I was deprived of that, after the second one it became annoying.

The director, Jack Bentz, was blessed to have the cast that he did. I only hope that he gave them as much support as they deserved.

To summarize my experience of FENCES I was totally proud to see a Black presentation of life, performed by Blacks and written by a Black man. I wonder how much more FENCES could have been with a Black director. However, I am aware of the shortage of Blacks in the theatre in all areas. And I have to give Jack Bentz the acknowledgment deserved for taking this project on. Hopefully there will be more of us taking responsibility and doing our share of educating through theatre and becoming involved.

Thank you to the Spokane civic Theatre for pushing to see the integration of theatre I Spokane. Thank you to the Onyx Theatre Troupe for pursuing this much-needed education for both Black and white communities in Spokane. And to you both, thank you for realizing that it takes both communities to make this happen.

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These positions require coordinating and scheduling either the procurement of raw materials (printed circuit boards or components) or the build of printed circuit assemblies to support the master production plan or new prototype orders for new product release. Responsibilities include order management, associated inventory objectives, and supplier or customer management activities.

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*To ensure consideration, apply by closing date indicated. Must request official application (resumes will not substitute for official application). Additional information available by contacting: Human Resources Office, Community Colleges of Spokane, 2000 N. Greene Street, Spokane, WA 99217-5499. Phone: (509) 533-7429; For specific information contact La'Brenda Hill (509) 533-7485; for TDD: (509) 533-7466. Website: <http://ccs.spokane.cc.wa.us> AA/EOE*

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# If you didn't know Colin or Dr. "B" you should ask somebody

**African American Voice:**

Although many of us here in Seattle had only begun to know and work with Colin, Colin left us with many memorable discussions about the state of political activism for people of color in the United States. These discussions were always followed by ideas for important projects such as the need for a freedom school that would help edu-

cate our young people on the history and need for social change. Colin always impressed on us that it was our duty to mentor those young people just as he asked us to mentor him.

Colin will be remembered for his intellect, his sense of humor, his love of using the word radical, his disdain for the for the word "progressive," his idealism that led him to be impatient with the movement and the

world, his writing skills and his love of food, especially meat! However, most of all, Colin will be remembered for his willingness and courage to lead the good fight for the many injustices that he saw in the world.

Cindy Domingo,  
Board Member  
NW Labor and  
Employment Law Office  
(LELO)  
Seattle, WA

**Remembrance**

I remember the first time I met Colin, his tall slender body moved with such confidence, I was immediately drawn to this magnetic force, and once he spoke, I knew that this was an individual I wanted to be friends with for a long time. Colin was the kind of person that made you go deep within yourself, and sometimes that was good and sometimes it wasn't, but Colin never left you hanging out there by yourself, comfort always followed. In a past conversation, we

shared our feelings about the movement and where was it really going? He truly was dedicated to the struggle, but little did I know he was struggling from within. I sit here at my computer feeling numb, sad, confused, and betrayed ... but most of all, a great feeling of loss has gripped my soul with such a force, I had to leave work early. On my way home, I thought of all the people who had lost out in meeting Colin. I thought of myself, feeling selfish, wanting him back. Simply wanting to wake up from this very bad dream. Like

Colin, we live in a very real world, a world with struggles of homelessness, abuse, hate crimes and the destruction of self ... unfortunately for those of us left behind, we feel the loss of the warrior.

I will miss you, Colin. I will miss moving on with the struggle, without you. Forever leaving a heart-print.

Con carino te beso, Adios.  
Sonya Rosario, Field  
Coordinator  
Following the Money Trail  
Boise, Idaho

**Dear Colin:**

I remember our last encounter. It was only two weeks before your death. We met while you were in the pursuit of an article for the African American Voice. We began our conversation with a brief exchange of well greetings. We quickly moved on to the interview. As I look back upon that brief moment I am plagued with questions. Could I have exchanged words with you that would have made a difference? Could I have

taken a moment for a deeper reflection? Should I have exchanged words with you that would have affirmed your intrinsic worth?

I wonder what it must have been like to feel such an emptiness, to carry such a deep sadness, a psychological isolation that resides in the pit of your stomach, to find life so unbearable that death was deemed the only way out?

Your death has come as a shocking reminder that I must take the time to listen beyond words, to look

beyond the exterior, to be willing to participate in another one's issues, to carry my brother's burden, to reach out to others and to share their pain.

While alive you were viewed as a role model to many as you worked to improve the quality of life for the Spokane community. In death you will be remembered as a heroic African American willing to engage in the struggle for racial equality.

Rest easy my brother!

Karen Boone

**Flashlight**

Colin Beckles. His name reminded me, I swear, of candy sprinkles on a cupcake. Sweet, forever endearing, timeless, someone we would always be nostalgic for. I thought of you last week, mentally penned a note that I needed to call you, invite you on my show again. I'd say Colin, what are you up to? You'd laugh,

like you always did, and then tell me about the latest important thing you knew. I would have told you that I went out and bought a Disco Funk tape. Flashlight is on it. You liked Parliament, didn't you?

Horace the Elder says our thoughts must always be on the one who has left us, that you'll need our help getting to your home place. Horace believes our grief,

though strong as a riptide, is not the point. Our first duty is to you. He says "we're gonna make a bundle with these thoughts and words and songs." There's going to be singing from this world to the next, each note a step toward home. We're going to sing you home, Colin.

Margo Aragon  
Pullman

**African American Voice:**

I remember Colin as brave and assertive and very clear. I remember things he said and things he wrote. He had a strong impact on

me. The world suffers his loss. He was dear to you - I'm sorry for the loss you're suffering.

Marilyn De Coster

**Angel of Mine**

When I hear the song by Monica "Angel of Mine" I think of Colin. That song reminds me of how Colin touched my heart. When I first meet Colin I immediately liked him because he was nice and funny.

I could remember when I was sick he made me feel better by making me laugh. Colin seemed to make me feel like I was very special because when I was around him he made me feel com-

fortable. I always looked forward to seeing him because he would say "Hello, **precious** come here and give me a hug." Colin always gave people nicknames and **precious** was the name that he gave me. He told me that I was precious to him and to call him Uncle Colin.

I love you Colin and I will always have you in my heart **angel of mine**.

Tiffany Reed  
11 years old

**AAV Readers**

We have lost more than an editor at the African American Voice, we have lost a friend. On an all volunteer staffed newspaper, people come and go as they respond to their life's demands. Colin, too, came and went, but you always knew he was off working another activist project. He always had another issue to add to the pile.

Now that he is gone, it is not that the pile will stop growing, but Colin not only recognized the issues, he understood their historic significance. Many people come to the paper with issues as the result of their immediate personal pain, but they often lack the broader perspective necessary to help come up with a solution.

These are the projects Colin has left behind for us to work on.

**An Activists of Color Summit**

Colin was organizing a northwest summit of activists of color where people of color could gather together to strategize.

**A Colin Beckles Memorial Speaker Series**

Colin brought speakers like Tim Wise, author of Little White Lies, myths about affirmative action, and Eric Ward of the Northwest Coalition Against Harassment, speakers who work implementing and promoting a philosophy of

activism similar to Colin's. Colin's father, Dr. Frank N. Beckles will be co-founding such a speaker's series in Colin's memory.

Colin was continuing a family tradition of activism. His grandfather, Winslow A. Beckles of Guyana, South America, was one of the founders of the Brotherhood Movement there which struggled against colonial rule. In 1929 he became the first Black editor of the weekend paper of the Barbados. He was the leading court reporter in Guyana, and a fiery speaker who drew large crowds, especially in his work with Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement movement.

Colin's father Dr. Beckles continued the tradition of social concern, albeit from inside the system, as a physician, as the head of a major federal program for family planning and health care with the authority and the budget to respond to community needs and concerns, his work in international health politics, and finally in psychiatry. Thus it seems a fitting tribute to Colin and this tradition of concern and activism to bring speakers to our region who can inspire us to take action to make our society more just.

**A Dr. Colin Beckles Young Writers' Grant**

Colin also believed in the importance of working with young people and developing in them the belief that

Continued on page 16

# Know Colin aka "Dr.B"

they can take action to change what is wrong in the world and that writing is an important method of doing so. The African American Voice is developing a fund to encourage young writers who are working toward these ideals.

Robert Lloyd

Those interested in continuing the work of Colin Beckles may contact the African American Voice at 2920 S. Grand Blvd. Ste. 145, Spokane WA 99203, 509-455-8274.

The following poem was read by Colin's friend, Herb Delaney, at the memorial service at Washington State University on April 12. He said it was like their fight song as they built the Coalition for Social Justice, and they would recite whole stanzas together to keep up their energy and spirit.

## If we must die

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursed lot.

If we must die, O let us nobly die  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
in vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!

O Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe!  
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

From Harlem Shadows by Claude McKay

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