

The mission of the African -American Affairs Commission is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American communit



Glenn A. Cassis Executive Director

Black History is Important

Since revered author and historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson selected the week between the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass in February to annually observe "Negro History Week" (1926), there has been the lingering debate as to why Black History should be recognized. In some circles Negro History Week has evolved into Black History Month. Frankly, I believe that every day should be a time to reflect on Black History.

The case for recognizing Black History is important to appreciate. It goes back to the old saying "You can never know where you are going, if you don't know where you have been". Only recently has the history of African-Americans been widely acknowledged. No doubt many noted historians have conducted important research to piece together a disjointed story of a people abducted from their mother land, sold into bondage and severely punished for making any reference to the past. Since the arrival of the first slaves to Jamestown, Virginia in 1619, there have been overt and covert efforts to keep the story of African-Americans suppressed. For generations the world had to depend upon the writings of those who dominated and enslaved a people in order to prevent them from achieving freedom. Quite frankly, the oppressor was given the pen, ink, paper and license to tell the story through their lenses. This perspective narrowed African-Americans' understanding of their contributions to America and the world.

The struggle to undue the centuries of misinformation and lies has taken generations to document. The penalties for having the ability to read and write were severe (even death) for many African-Americans. Historical records were often based on oral history or old courthouse records. Often, authentic historic material was suppressed by authorities in power to keep a false narrative alive. Through scholarly efforts and persistence the true history of African-Americans is coming to light.

Why does knowing this history so important? This history can provide a road map for the future. It can offer living proof to the country and the world that despite centuries of brutal enslavement, a people can rise to become inventors, entrepreneurs, doctors, scientists, teachers, builders and even the elected leader of the most powerful nation on earth. Knowing this history provides us with the discernment for why racist jingles sung by college students from America's heartland depicting a period in this nation's history when more than 4,000 African-Americans were publicly lynched and slaughtered is, outrageously offensive. Knowing and never forgetting the past can afford us with better choices for the future. It is imperative that we embrace every opportunity to enrich our understanding of each other through the lessons of the past.

Glenn A. Cassis
AAAC Executive Director

New AAAC Commissioner Appointments



Robert Fields was confirmed as a new commissioner for the African-American Affairs Commission as of February 5, 2015. Fields will be representing Waterbury, CT and will be fulfilling his duties until June 30, 2016.



Regina Vermont was confirmed as a new commissioner for the African-American Affairs Commission as of February 5, 2015. Vermont will be representing Bridgeport, CT and will be fulfilling his duties until June 30, 2016.



Robert W. Ike was confirmed as a new commissioner for the African-American Affairs Commission as of February 5, 2015. Ike will be representing Bloomfield, CT and will be fulfilling his duties until June 30, 2016.



Bill Pearse of WTIC 1080, Dr. Willena K. Price, Director African-American Cultural Center and affiliate faculty, Africana Studies Institute, University of Connecticut; Earl Bloodworth, Info. Officer, African-American Affairs Commission, discussed the importance of Black History Month in the 21st century. The February 15th Interview can be listened to in its entirety at <http://cbsloc.al/1wk9Whk>.

News and events

- **March 4th AAAC Monthly Commissioners meeting** in the LOB 6pm
- **2015 Brown Bag Lecture Series** Stereotypes and Assumptions, March 5th, 12:00pm—2:00pm, ITBD, 185 Main ST, New Britain. CSSD Advisory Committee On Cultural Responsiveness
- **Burning Down the House : The End of Juvenile Prison**
An Evening with Nell Bernstein March 5th at 5:30pm at Mark Twain Museum Center , Hartford, CT
- **2015 Black History Celebration BUSINESS EXPO & Multicultural Marketplace**, Friday , March 6th— 8:00am to 3:00pm Housatonic Community College Beacon Hall Student Center, 999 Lafayette Blvd ., Bridgeport, CT Contact Deborah A. Caviness at 203 576– 8473 Deborah.Caviness @Bridgeport. GOV

News and events

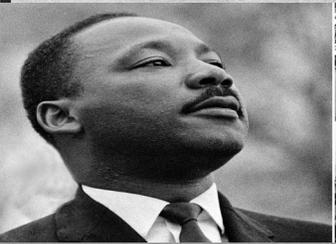
- **CSCU Male Symposium** - Gateway Community College, New Haven, Friday March 6, 2015 Room N-100 9:00am –2:00pm
Register at Gatewayct.edu
- **SCSU-NAACP 1st Annual Juvenile Justice and Youth Service Expo: There is GIANT IN MY CITY**, March 12, 2015 6:00pm – 9:00pm, Michael Adanti Student Center Ball Room, 501 Crescent ST, New Haven, CT 06515, SCSU
- **Hands For Help Presents 1st Annual Black and White Ball** , 3-14– 2015 6pm –11pm Proceeds will go towards scholarship giveaways. Contact Adrian Pate 203-762-6234 or www.handsforhelp.net
- **THE SUMMIT 2015 CT Student Leadership Conference for YOUNG MEN OF COLOR** : Training for the Next Generation of Leaders Go to the CT Assoc. of Schools website: www.casciac.org/register Cost: \$25 per person Location: Trinity College, 300 Summit Street, Hartford, CT Student Eligibility: Open to any young man of color, grades 9-12, in a CT Public or CAS Member
- **PCSHW is hosting its 10th Annual Women's History Month : A Decade of Women Making a Positive Influence on Our City**
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2015 from 6:00-8:00pm Where: City Hall, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06103
RSVP by 3/13/15 to Luz Cruz, Staff Liaison - LMCruz@hartford.gov
- **Annual ACLU Lobby Day** has been scheduled for March 24th from 9:30am-2pm at the state Capitol in Hartford
- **Brownsville song (b-side for tray)** March 25th—April 19, 2015 Long Wharf Theatre, New Haven, CT
- **OVER 5,000 JOBS IN CT AVAILABLE IN ONE LOCATION: CONVERGE CAREER FAIR / Multi Cultural Recruiting Hartford Hilton Hotel** - 315 Trumbull Street, Hartford, CT March 21, 2015 Contact: Deby Gould 860-563-5028 Diversity@cox.net

The mission of the African -American Affairs Commission is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation

All photos below provided courtesy of the Associated Press



African-American Affairs Commission
 Tel: 860 240 8555 Web: www.cga.ct.gov/aaac



Useful links from the AAAC

2015 AAAC Legislative Agenda

<http://aaac.cga.ct.gov/aaac/content-files/File/2015%20Legislative%20Agenda.pdf>

The Black and Puerto Rican Caucus

<http://aaac.cga.ct.gov/aaac/content-files/File/2015%20Black%20%20Puerto%20Rican%20Caucus%20Members.pdf>

A Salute to Black History - Information on Influential African-Americans <http://www.ls.cc.al.us/blackhistory/blackhistory.html>

Foundation for Educational Advancement, Inc. Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention <http://www.feact.org/feacttraining.html> - <http://feact.org/training/help.html>

AAAC scholarship and grants links <http://aaac.cga.ct.gov/aaac/content-files/File/2014-2015%20Scholarship%20Book.pdf>

New Haven Promise Scholarship and grants links <http://newhavenpromise.org/scholarship/other-scholarship-resources/>

COLLEGE GOAL SUNDAY <http://www.collegegoalsundayct.org/>

KNOWHOW2GO <http://www.knowhow2go.org/>

NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CT <http://www.kidney.org/site/index.cfm?ch=102>

Link to your voice matters and how to contact your state official for issues and to testify

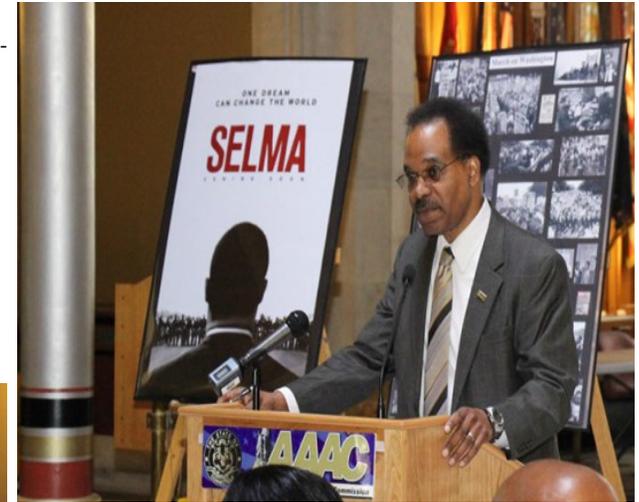
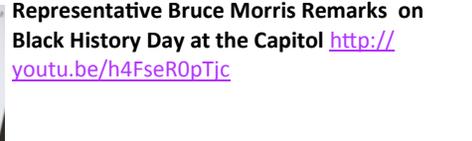
<http://aaac.cga.ct.gov/aaac/content-files/File/YourVoiceMatters.pdf>



Connecticut's African-American Affairs Commission and the Black and Latino Caucus held an observation of Black History at the State Capitol on Wednesday, February 18th in the Hall of Flags. The event was well attended while the General Assembly was in Session. Both State Representatives Brandon McGee and State Representative Bruce Morris gave remarks on the importance of Black History during the Black History Observation in Connecticut's state capitol building. Both discussions can be viewed at links below: **State Representative Brandon McGee Remarks on Black History Day at the Capitol** <http://youtu.be/etGFDI2iCCM> **State Representative Bruce Morris Remarks on Black History Day at the Capitol** <http://youtu.be/h4FseR0pTjc>



Tanya Hughes Executive Director CHRO



Glenn Cassis Executive Director of African-American Affairs Commission



Tanya Hughes Executive Director CHRO; Senator Tony Hwang of the 28th General Assembly District - Easton, Fairfield, Newtown, Weston, Westport; Rep. Bruce Morrison of the 140th General Assembly District - Norwalk; Senator Brandon McGee 5th Assembly District - Hartford and Windsor



February 20, 2015 BLACK HISTORY MONTH CEREMONY AT THE STATE CAPITOL
Sen. Brandon McGee 5th Assembly District - Hartford, Windsor, African American Affairs Commission & Black & Latino Caucus Observe Black History Month.

Additional amazing Photos of

Bill Costen of Costen Cultural Exhibit displayed a portion of his collection of rare photographs, ephemera, memorabilia, fine art and collectibles showing the vast history and great accomplishments of African-Americans here in America. Topics of the exhibit address interests of all age groups and include: slavery, civil rights, politics, government, invention, science, athletics, sports, aviation, military, music, dance, theater, literary arts, religion, radio, film, television and other forms of popular entertainment. This specific portion of the Costen Cultural Exhibit focused on the march in Selma for African-American voting rights. The 50th anniversary of the 50 mile march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery is being observed on the weekend of March 7th. President Barack Obama along with U.S. Congressman John Lewis, an original participant on "Bloody Sunday" will be reacting the march. The 50th anniversary of this march marks the passing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that was recently gutted in the SCOTUS June of 2013. Essentially, the 5-4 majority ruled the coverage formula requiring clearance from the DOJ for states that have a historical record of discrimination and denying minorities access to the vote to change their voting laws to be unconstitutional. The removal of this portion of the historical VRA legislation resulted in the immediate passing of strict, disenfranchising voter ID laws in towns formerly covered by the VRA's section 4 formula!



AAAC Black History Reads

Coretta: The Story of Coretta Scott King Commemorative Edition Octavia Vivian B King V

The Confessions of Nat Turner, The Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Virginia Edited by Thomas R. Gray

Anansi and the Moss-covered Rock retold by Eric A. Kimmel; illustrated by Janet Stevens J-E Kimmel

Marching to the Mountaintop: How Poverty, Labor Fights, and Civil Rights Set the Stage for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Hours Ann Bausum

American Grown: the Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America Michelle Obama

A White House Garden Cookbook: Healthy Ideas from the First Family for Your Family Clara Silverstein

My Hands Sing the Blues : Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey Jeanne Walker Harvey ; illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon.

Touch the Sky : Alice Coachman, Olympic High Jumper Ann Malaspina ; illustrations by Eric Velasquez.

I Heard God Talking to Me : William Edmondson and His Stone Carvings Elizabeth Spires.

We Troubled the Waters poems by Ntozake Shange ; paintings by Rod Brown.

Freedom's a-Calling Me poems by Ntozake Shange ; paintings by Rod Brown.

Cornrows Camille Yarbrough ; illustrated by Carole Byard.

Fortune's Bones : the Manumission Requiem Marilyn Nelson ; notes and annotation by Pamela Espeland.

Manchild in the Promised Land Claude Brown.

A Raisin in the Sun Lorraine Hansberry ; with an introduction by Robert Nemiroff.

Blacks in Classical Music : a Personal History Raoul Abdul.he Legends of Hip-Hop Justin Bua.



Artist – Andres Chaparro, a native Hartford, CT had his iconic artwork displayed in the State Capitol / Legislative Office Building Concourse from February 16, 2015 through February 28, 2015. The artist in his own words, "I strive to create art that is honest and true. My work explores the culture of Jazz and celebrates, honors, and communicates the history of America's classical music. Each painting consists of a range of different media. My approach to painting requires a great deal of trust in my instincts as my artwork is spontaneously being inspired by music while I am painting. For me painting is the ideal medium of expression and Jazz, because of its intrinsic freedom naturally inspires a spirit of innovation in each project."



The mission of the African -American Affairs Commission is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut through advocacy, information sharing, cultural awareness, community networking and influencing legislation



Standing on the shoulders of giants it is hard not to be inspired by how far we have come as a people in America. It is easy to stand in awe of the accomplishments of our African /Black predecessors in the face of such great obstacles that we can barely imagine the stark realities of their time. Sadly, it is even easier to forget that only 50 years ago Blacks were being beaten and in some cases, fatally beaten in the streets of America for the right to vote freely. The gains acquired by our people of only a generation ago present much like the fog of war, amnesia of accomplishment. This is why Black History itself is so very important as to not fall prey to the tragedies of our collective past in our present and not too distant future.

AAAC Information Officer Earl L. R. Bloodworth

The question and relevance of Black History is often asked in America given the fact of a sitting, two-term, African-American president. But the question is not a new inquiry as evidenced by the excerpt below from Benjamin L. Hooks, lawyer, reverend, Executive Director and CEO of the NAACP, and board member of the Federal Communications Commission:

“Why Black History Month, or Week, or why any special time set aside to reflect, study or observe what has gone on before us in Black life in this country? To ask the question, of course, is to answer it. For if the history of Black people had been included in our text books in equitable fashion with White history since the beginning of our public school system, there would be no need to set aside time each year, for our citizens Black and White, Red and Yellow, rich and poor, male and female, to observe it.”

Point in fact; Black History is as relevant today as it was when Hooks asked this poignant question 32 years ago in the NAACP's The Crisis Magazine. In the 21st century Blacks have a higher mortality rate for all major causes of death in America, a disproportionately higher percentage of incarceration as compared to their percentage of the population, and an ever widening achievement gap in the areas of education and wealth accumulation! This is not an indictment of the first African-American President of the United States of America in the least; it is a call for continued vigilance and recognition of the fact that despite the many gains of the Civil Rights era, there remains still much to be accomplished.

The deaths of Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and Michael Brown echo the history of injustice visited upon the likes of Emmett Till. Black History Month is a specific time set aside for all citizens of the United States and the world to reflect upon the accomplishments of a nation and its people and in reflection be reinvigorated. And with a rejuvenated vigor comes a fire in the belly for the completion of the work that yet remains to be done in the areas of socioeconomic equality, educational achievement, health equity, and equitable political representation and protection under the law. Black lives matter! Black History definitely does matter! Thomas Edison said it best, “We shall have no better conditions in the future if we are satisfied with all those which we have at present.” The article by Benjamin Hooks that inspired this writing can be viewed in its entirety to the right and at https://books.google.com/books?id=MCsEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA56&pg=PA56&dq=Why+black+history+month+,+or+week,+or+why+any+special+time+set+aside&source=bl&ots=4Ebq9t9H9m&sig=ri5HUq5nRk8j4i_vBXmPfdR43j0&hl=en&sa=X&ei=jXTuVn_kKsGrNv6thKAB#v=onepage&q&f=true

Publisher's Foreword ...

Why Black History Month?

Why Black History Month, or Week, or, indeed, why any special time set aside to reflect, study or observe what has gone on before in Black Life in this country?

Why not White History Week, then, or Month? This is a democracy, isn't it? So if you're going to set aside a special time of the year in our lives for Black History observance, why not White History?

To ask the question, of course, is to answer it. For if the history of black people had been included in our textbooks in equitable fashion with White History since the beginning of our public school system, there would be no need to set aside time now each year for our citizens, black and white, red and yellow, rich and poor, male and female, to observe it.

Nevertheless, I am tempted from time to time to query family friends and associates, not rhetorically, but in a real sense to test again the validity of the assumption and in so doing gauge once more how much or little we blacks have narrowed the yawning gap of equity, justice and opportunity in this home of the brave and land of the free, and to attempt to drum up needed energy to continue the struggle.

However, to look critically at our history once a year is to invite pain as well as comfort. For so much of our history is awash with blood, agony, shattered lives and dreams, of chains of chattel slavery, some of the worst the world has ever seen. But it is also to see hope, and heroic courage and determination of a people who not only survived the lash and the whip, but in the end are prevailing.

So to look back, to poke around in our past, is to invite unpleasant sensations of shame, to feel the uncomfortable twinges of agony; but it is also to experience hope, to assess once more the positives that give us courage and strength to continue this long, bone-weary struggle for equality.

As I walk the streets of America—in New York, Chicago, Memphis, Los Angeles, Atlanta, San Francisco, Denver, Washington, D.C., or ride the subways in D.C. and New York, I see so many of our young folks, particularly young black men, some still in or just emerging from their teens (some even younger) swearing loud and obscenely; acting coarse and vulgar in public places. I see them



Carter G. Woodson

swagging around huge music boxes with deafening music emanating. Many appear menacing, obstructive, threateningly obtrusive on the privacy of others. Their behavior is certainly not what even the most indifferent of parents would hope they would exhibit.

But I know this behavior is a cry of pain and rage. It is their way of shouting: “Look at me. I am flesh and blood, a real live human being. I exist!” to a demonstratively unfeeling public, a hostile system reinforced by an unseeing President and his unfeeling, icy assistants. The latter can triumphantly proclaim that the recession has bottomed out by trumpeting a jobless figure down point four percentage points, overall, for the month of January while black unemployment remains at murderously high of 20.8, and for these prickly young blacks in our urban centers, at more than fifty percent!

Where is hope for these black youths? What good is it to trot out old pictures and texts once a year commemorating black heroes (and heroines) past and present, role models all, if you will, if they can't find jobs, can't count a future of self support, of dignity and worth? If we do not find an answer to this question and find it fast another generation of young blacks will go down the drain and our country as a whole teeter closer to the brink of chaos and disaster.

A black educator, historian, editor, Carter G. Woodson, one of nine children born to slaves in the nineteenth century, understood this well. He was born to times much less attractive for blacks than those of today. Blacks,

newly freed, were naked to their former slaveholders, so stripped by the Hayes-Tilden compromise in the 1870's. Blacks were lynched daily, physically driven from the polls, the voting franchise, the very foundation of citizenship denied them. Those were fearful times. But Woodson, who worked in the coal mines in the Virginia and West Virginia of his youth, to help his poor family with his slender paycheck, refused to be cowed. By sheer determination, he finished high school, going part-time and in a one-and-half year struggle, he received a college degree from the University of Chicago, and finally a Ph.D. from Harvard, a bright testimony to a will that would not be denied. In 1915, he organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and in order to popularize the study of Negro History, in 1926, inaugurated Negro History Week which encompassed Abraham Lincoln's birthday and that of Frederick Douglass (Douglass' birthday was uncertain, but because his mother called him “my little valentine,” he took the date of February 14, 1817).

Black History Week grew because of need and by popular demand it has now expanded to Black History Month, losing the “Negro” designation as times changed. Woodson knew that blacks needed to understand their history in order to walk straight and proud as free men and women. He also knew that white people needed, even more, to know Black History in order to come to equitable terms with this minority in their midst.

Despite those young blacks who seem to be wallowing in a sense of hopelessness, there is a larger number who refuse to be beaten by the oppressive system. They are taking, as the saying goes, a pig's ear and making a silk purse. They are enrolled in our community and four-year colleges, in trade and technical schools. They are building on hope and dreams.

And Black History Month is here as a constant reminder to them and us of what we have done, are doing and must do that is positive and uplifting.

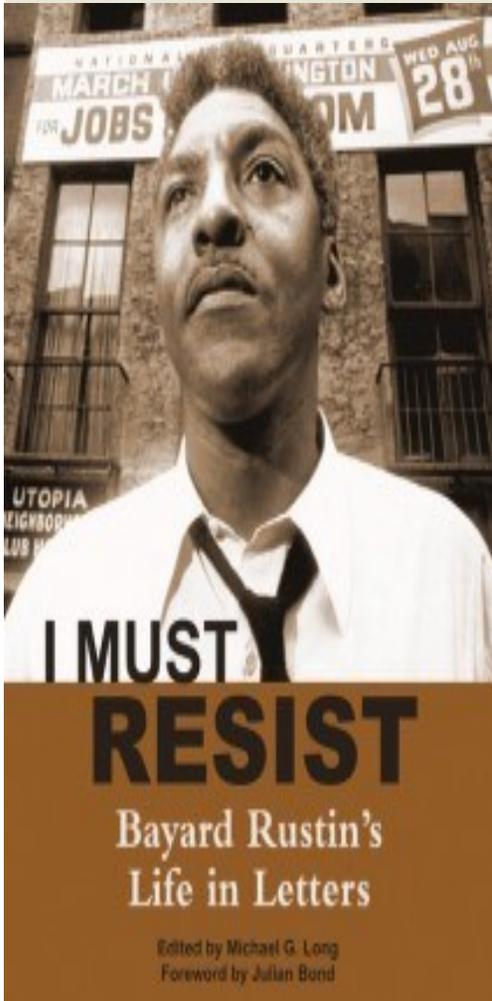
So let us keep studying Black History and, in so doing, prepare ourselves for the future.

—Benjamin L. Hooks

A Must Read

Another great read on an UNSUNG pioneer in the annals of Black History and the Civil Rights Movement. Bayard Rustin is the unknown architect of the extraordinary 1963 march on the mall in D.C. that provided the platform for Dr. Martin Luther King's historical "I Have A Dream" speech.

AAAC
African-American Affairs Commission
 Tel: 860 240 8555 Web: www.cga.ct.gov/aaac



Featuring:
 Some of New Haven's Finest Youth Service Providers and Youth Organizations, some of S.C.S.U organizations that provide youth services that are essential to the quality of life for students and faculty alike on the University's Campus.

~Performance's By~
 Nation's Drumline & Fusion's Drill Team

SCSU-NAACP
 There Is A
GIANT
 IN MY CITY!
 March 12, 2015
 6:00-9:00PM

1st Annual Juvenile Justice and Youth Service Expo
 Bringing Awareness To Youth Violence
 Key Note Speaker:
 Reverend William Mathis, Former Project Manager of Project Longevity.

Location: Michael Adanti Student Center Ball Room
 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT. 06515

TRAYVON MARTIN

FEB. 5, 1995 – FEB. 26, 2012
 GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN