



INTERNATIONAL  
STORYTELLING CENTER

## **The Civil Rights Movement: It Still Remains Transcript**

*(Please note: This transcript was created from live closed captions and as such may have errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics.)*

>> Good afternoon and welcome thank you for joining us for today's freedom stories public discussion. I am Alicestyne Turley director of the International storytelling center freedom stories project. Today our topic is the civil rights movement. Other timely freedom stories to highlight the overlooked aspects of American history in an effort to illuminate how we came to be the American we recognize today. As an NEH funded project freedom stories brings together the folk art of storytelling, with humility scholarship. This approach has the intent of guiding the public, through deeper appreciation of the role of African-Americans in the creation of American culture. The international storytelling center is fortunate to produce this work, through a grant received from the national endowment for the humanities. Which is the major funder of the project.

As always, today's discussion is recorded, along with all prior freedom story discussions, they can be found on YouTube. The international storyteller webpage and Facebook page. It is open to the general public. So if you missed something, you can always access it later. If you have questions or comments for me or the panel please feel free to text us on the Facebook page and we will try to get it to as many questions as we can as time permits. So, we begin today as we always do, with the benefit of a storyteller, to share important aspects from humanities through storytelling.

So today we are fortunate to have join us as our musician, educator, and storyteller Reggie Harris. He is a deeply rooted singer, songwriter, storyteller, and cultural Abbasid are known worldwide for his ability to inspire, hope and create opportunities and building communities and positive change. Reggie you just his strong resonant voice along with an effervescence stage presence. And his vibrant smile to bring history and personal stories to life. As a 12-year liver transplant survivor, and descendent of a slave owner and one of these enslaved women. Reggie is an unique position in engaging in dialogue and activism. His performances and recordings have been read to a growing movement of courageous conversation on race, history, and the interactions of healing across the nation. His latest CDs are ready to go which was produced in 2018. Deeper than the skin, and 2020, and solid ground which is his latest production. Please welcome to our sharing and our music's telling storytelling part of our discussion, storyteller, musician, and educator Reggie -- my Reggie Harris.

>> This Little light of mine I am going to let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine. Everywhere I go, I am going to let it shine. Everywhere I go, I am going to let it shine. Everywhere I go, I am going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. I woke up this morning with my mindset on freedom. I woke up this morning with my mind set on freedom. I woke up this morning with my mind, set on freedom. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around. Turn me around, turn me around. Aunt gonna let nobody turn me around, I'm going to keep walking, keep on talking, marching up to freedom lands.

These are some of these songs that I heard in my youth. I was born in 1952, I was born in Philadelphia Pennsylvania the city of brotherly love. As they refer to it in those days. I don't hear that said very much. Brotherly and sisterly love, well they are in short supply. And yet those songs form the backbone, the freedom, the songs that came out of a people who were struggling for freedom and justice in a nation founded on the principles of freedom. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. Well in my early years of course I realize that growing up in my neighborhood, that was 98% black. That

there were other neighborhoods in Philadelphia. And that we were not equal, the message came early. They came in a variety of ways. One day my mother took me to the hospital after I cut myself. She took me to the hospital Denon when I walked into the building we passed this large board with lots of pictures. I looked up at the board, she had me by the hand she was rushing me to the emergency room.

I saw that board, I wondered? Who are those people? All of those spaces -- my face is the 40-50 of them there with important people for the hospital, the Board of Directors and surgeons and trustees. All of those faces were white. As were most of the faces that we were shown growing up in Philadelphia. In our school, in our neighborhood and in the papers. Any where people were talking about important things, most of the faces were white. We learned early on that having brown skin was not necessarily an asset in America. As a matter of fact we found out later, that it was no less at all. Two but in still, in my church, the Nazarene Baptist Church, that's what they tell us to say of those a space this and say the name of a church like you proud of it and tell people where is it is I want to drop by.

I don't know if anybody drop by the church, because I told her where it was but most of the time I didn't want to be there myself. I was a little boy, Sunday morning was tragic. We thought we could get up and watch cartoons and had from before we had to go back to school on Monday. But my mother Helen Harris, she had other plans. She had plans that were made long before any of us were born. She knew one Sunday morning, we had a gathering with the folks. We had to go to that church and sit and hear those old folks as we call them in those days. Seeing those old songs, and take all day doing it. We were in that church, and we were singing songs that would later be part of the grounding, the grounding that will prepare us for life in America.

Wade in the water, wade in the water children, wade in the water, God's going to trouble the water. Well who are those children dressed in red. God's going to trouble the water. They must be the ones that Moses led. God's going to trouble the water. You better Wade in the water there. You beta wade in the water. We in the water are God's going to trouble the water.

They were singing the spirituals, the songs that stirred the hearts of African-Americans who realized that their bondage could be taken on. They found themselves here brought as a resource to this nation that was fixated on the idea of freedom. And yet by the time of the Civil War, there were over 4 million of us in slavery. Those old folks, they knew that our lives, as young people thinking, we had everything available to us. They knew that our lives are going to be hard. They were singing those songs, they were sharing their testimonies about how life had to be taken on. This joy that I have, the world did not give it to be. This joy that I have, the world did not give it to me. Well this joy that I have, the world did not give it to me. Well the world didn't give it to me, the world can't take it away.

We wondered why these old folks were singing the songs of having a joy that the world want to take away. But we did not know they were grounding us, they were giving us music and stories that would seep into our bones. Because the ancestors those who will come before us, those who came in 1619 and after. They found them selves in bondage, began to sing. And they began to collect their stories. They saw and heard in those stories, that there were read to from the Bible about a man named Moses.

When they saying let my people go, they would not only singing about the Moses of Scripture missing about Harriet Tubman. There were singing about all those who worked on the underground railroad who would indeed help over 200,000 to escape. Of course 4 million versus 200,000. The journey in the work was going to be hard and long. And as one knows, the journey and the work continues today. As I grew up, then I absorb those songs. I have to say we call them ovals. Now in my present incarnation, I have to think about how will those ovals were. Times change, and I find myself being one of those elders sharing the songs of those stories to give a whole new generation of young people a little bit of what I got from those was very

Then it was in 1963, on August 28, I was outside playing with my friends. I heard my mother called, she called Reggie. I did not respond right away, we were having too much fun. We will all the way up the street. But then my mother as she wanted to do, called out Reginald Samuel Harris get your butt down here. That's how she talked to me when she got serious she is my full name.

Is it to my friends I gotta go. I didn't know what you wanted. What she wanted was to come into the house and watch TV. That was an unusual thing in the middle of the day. What she wanted me too see, was an event that was happening in Washington D.C. She wanted me too see the March on Washington.

Sitting in front of the TV set, I have to tell the young people all the time TV that was not like TV now. It was only about that big. It was made of glass, and there were only three stations. And two colors, you can't wrap your brain around that. However, there we were, sitting there watching all of those singers and speakers. 250,000 people, on the Mall in D.C.

I am so honored today, that I know that Chuck Neblett was one of the people we saw in the video. It was on that day that I heard some of those songs for the first time. In my 11-year-old brain I don't remember all of that on that day.

I know, seeing those people and hearing woke up with a mindset on freedom and a gotta let nobody turn me around, it began to see again, that there was a job to do. It was a job that what I would not embrace until years later as I became a musician, and began to also experience on trips around America that having resident without an asset in America. Two there was then that I began to learn those same facts that you saw on your screen. As those panels went by, because that was not shared with us as I grew up in school. Those are not the lessons of history.

And yet history was living all around us. Hearing the words of people like Langston Hughes that said hold fast to dreams. But when dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams, for when dreams go, life is a barren field frozen with snow. With billowing sails, the galleons came, bringing men and dreams and women in trades. Some were free hands, seeking a greater freedom. Some were indentured hands, hoping to find their freedom. Some were slave hands guarding in their hearts the seed of freedom.

But one word was there always, that word was freedom. The man whose picture is on my shirt said today, said the problem of the 20th century is of race. While the problem of every century in America has always been the proper place. We have been struggling, and wading through this water, four over 400 years.

And indeed, the songs in the stories, the stories. My first visit to the Highlander center came in the 1990s. It was there that I discovered the history of that great place. One of my mentors, Pete Seeger, was the reason that I went. Because he had been there so many times. Singing with people from different places in America. People of different colors, black-and-white coming to meet and to figure out how we could make this a more perfect union. So as I went there, and I absorb all that happen, and then years later I had the opportunity to sit in the room with Rosa Parks.

To to hear her give her story and what all those old. Me in those days began to come alive. Certainly as I sit here today, more than a year into the pandemic and social unrest in America, I see clearly, what my mission is. It has been this for over 40 years. But I stand on the shoulders and I follow in the footsteps of many. Some of them here today.

Who have been fighting this fight, who have been tying together the threads that we need, and also sacrificing themselves. All of those great icons, and many who have -- whose names will never hit the history books. Those who were indeed the backbone of civil rights movements which continue today. As I said here in my living room last year, and seeing people flooding into the streets, awakened by the deaths of

George Floyd and Briand attachment embryonic Taylor. And we see hundreds and thousands who have gone before we know that I work is not done.

As I wrote here, as I said here I wrote a song inspired by those spirituals. Written in that form. We will not rest until the storm is over, we will not lay this burden down, we will keep each other strong. We will love and carry on until we stand altogether. On solid ground.

It has been a long hard journey, on a winding road. So many have gone before us they carry heavy load. But they are there singing, as they made their way, now it is in their footsteps we follow as we work today. We will not rest, to the storm is over. We will not rest, we will not display this burden down. We will keep each other strong, we will love and carry on, until we stand altogether on solid ground. I thank you.

>> Wow, thank you so much for that. And as you can see, we always make a great choice when it comes to our storytellers. Thank you, Reggie. It is now my pleasure, to introduce the remainder of our presenters for today. So our first panelist that I'm going to introduce is an American political historian. Dr. Daryl Carter, the associate Dean for equity inclusion for the cause of arts and sciences at East Tennessee State University. Dr. Carter is a public intellectual, scholar in a long time resident of Tennessee.

'S specialties are, American political history, African American history, and modern U.S. history. He also serves as director of black American studies and professor of history at East Tennessee State. Doctors Carter's well-regarded first book, is entitled Brother Bill, President Clinton and the politics of race and class. Published by the University of Arkansas press.

He is currently working on a second boat the examination of the said were arid aspect of Senator Edward M Kennedy. Welcome Dr. Carter.

And Ann Grundy is a community organizer and the daughter of Reverend Luc Beard as the pastor of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham Alabama. It was the first child of Reverend Beard born in as her father was the pastor. She is still considered the baby of 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church.

During this time as pastor, the church served as a center of community organizing and civil rights activity even prior to its 1963 bombing. The young activists she became one of many young people to join Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s march from Selma to Montgomery.

Her ongoing community work continues to inspire students on the depth of have Eric in American history culture through her work with young people. Thank you Ann for joining us welcome. Completing our panel today is Charles Neblett, charter member of the freedom singers and a continuing community activist and organizer. As Reggie mentioned you saw a snippet of them at the end of our slide presentation.

Influenced by leadership, Charles began organizing direct action initiatives with a student at the University at the Illinois at Carbondale. In addition to organizing efforts in Charleston Missouri where he met Jim Foreman of other members of SNCC, he was recruited as a SNCC field secretary.

In 1961 he joined them in organizing black voter registration in Mississippi and became a charter member of the freedom singers. This group saying at protest, and marches and picket lines and during sit ins in over 40 states during the civil rights movement.

As an activist Charles is been jailed over 20 times for his organizing efforts. He also joins Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1963 March on Washington, and an Dr. King's march from Selma to Montgomery Alabama. Also welcome Charles thank you for joining us.

>> Thank you.

>> Today there is so many things I would like for us to begin to discuss. Everybody can be on muted now because we want to hear from you in our discussions. We will try to keep the background noise to a minimum. But I want everybody to join in on this discussion. Today, we see very again young people taking

to the streets in protest of what we have seen. I thought to let folks put things in context, I was slide presentation talked about 2015. I think it should be just to bring you updates and George Floyd's death at the hands of police on May 25, 2020. The research group mapping police violence has documented an additional 181 black people who have been killed by police.

While we are focusing on George Floyd, there have been 181 deaths since his. Out of that 966 African, 966 people have been killed by police. All that 966, 18.7% have been African-American. Although we as a people, only make up 13% of the nation's population.

Victims of police killings make up 30%% of all police killings. Although they are 76.3% of the American population. So African-Americans are three times more likely to be killed by police, then others.

African-Americans so 11.7% of police killings are Hispanic victims, 1% is Native American, and 1% are Asian and Pacific Islander's who are victims of police violence. So those are today's statistics. So as we talk about the civil rights movement. Maybe I will start with you Charles, if you are looking at television today.

In your opinion, how does it compare to what was happening during the 1960s when you are out there organizing?

>> The thing is you can see it. It is like Emmett till, it was in-your-face. Everybody can see it. Everybody was affected by it. And now, things haven't changed, people are still getting killed. The point is you can see it now. Back then they did not publicize it. But we are still getting killed, and the issues are still the same.

Nothing has changed. You make concessions, and it never changed. Even like the vote, we were going for voter registration. We were getting killed, shot up and jailed for voting for the vote. Here now, we felt we had it. Without it we had a voting rights bill and everything was okay.

But ugly Jim Crow, opens up his mouth again. Opens up his mouth again, so what have we accomplished? What have we accomplished? The one thing we accomplished I think is more people are aware. More people are aware of this. And the more people who are aware of it, the better we are. As a policymaker I'm sure you can see do you agree with Charles that nothing has changed police reform that people are calling for.

>> Yes briefly I was a thank you Charles into everybody else that helps move the ball forward. On this issue, there is a feeling a lot hasn't change. We are still having these problems. It is almost as if, we have come up with a policy and we have victory, we get that policy, bad actors find new the ways to do the same thing all over again.

We have had nearly 60 years of reforms in law enforcement. Regarding every aspect of law enforcement.

And we are still seeing black Americans die at the hands of police offices disproportionate to the population. Disproportionate to hundreds across the United States.

My sense is that we have a lot of work to do on this. But there are some bright signs or bright lights that I think are encouraging. One is, there is a lot more interest in this now. There is a lot more in terms of white Americans who are angry and disturbed by what they are seeing, and they want it done on their behalf. Much more than what you are is seen in the 1960s.

You also have, a pushback against these things on a broad level that is now including parts of corporate America. Even if it is just for financial reasons, they don't want to be around it. This is not something that was necessarily done. I would say for example, at delta or American Airlines or Coca-Cola making more arguments for voting rights in the 1960s which is not going to happen in that way. But now you're starting to see that. We have a long way to go on these issues. But I am hopeful, that in the years and decades to come, we will get much better on those issues.

This is about treating people with human dignity and respect. They are human beings. The more attention that we can draw to these types of issues. The better I think will be for everything.

>> Ann, I have to come to you on this. The church that you grew up in and played in as a child. Being the center of this organizing effort, before 1963 can you share just a little bit the civil rights monument. It is very much functioning as a church. So my parents moved from.

>> My parents moved from Meridian Mississippi, so they already had a lot of children, and they had three more after they got there. Living next door to the church, like that, meant that the community saw the church and the minister as a resource. So living there was not unusual. Anybody who needed food or housing, or their car broke down, it did not matter. It did not matter what the emergency was people always say go walk around to that door. So early on, my brothers and sisters and I, and this is like one a non-academic things. But we learn to do a very well. To take notes, to write down someone's name. How can we reach them what is the problem? We became extensions of the church as a result of living there.

Sixteenth Street is sometimes called the silk stocking church. By that, it is meant by the people who found the church, had big ideas as to what they would be as African-American people. So a number of the people found the church. Were college graduates. Can you imagine? So teachers around the city, doctors, attorneys, whoever, whoever you might call the black middle class. In some way or another there path was crossed with 16th Street. As a result, the children who were in this kind of cocoon and I was one of them. They were early on encouraged to do what ever we needed to do on behalf of the race. Period since my parents constantly reminded us that we represented the finest people in the planet. I could not have been born as awful as things were and continue to be. I could not have had have asked for a better place to be born. Because my daddy was a natural host of the church. There was a women's organization jaw called the club. This is women's like Mrs. AG Gaston. Mr. Gaston was a multimillionaire. She was a member of a church in the club. They took an enormous pride in bringing to the city what I called great men and women of the race. So partnering with my daddy in the church, and the club, I can see myself right now.

I was 6-years-old, sitting on the front row with my siblings as Adam Clayton Powell Junior walked across the stage. These were all men and women that I knew was a child and met as a child. What I did not know, and this is the value with working with children. I always knew it because it happened to me. You never know, what an interaction and an experience, you never know what their will take you. So all of those years, I was sitting there with my parents, and watching these great men of the race, including the Jubilee singers. The Hampton singers, the roadhouse glee club all of those. All watching all of these black men and women on stage I did not know that this was feeding something essential in me. So take your children to programs.

>> That goes perfectly with Reggie's team on reaching out to young people. During the civil rights movement, I am always struck with how actively involved churches were. In this movement. Do you think, and I will start and I'll take this to you. Do you think churches are still the vital connection that they were in the 60s?

>> I can speak personally, the black church has lost me. Somewhere along the way, you know black people, in addition to being freedom loving, and freedom watching all of that. We also, are some of the most conservative people in the world. So you can imagine the 60s. We are coming back home without hair natural, and wearing traditional African close.

Whatever we are doing, the last people to get on board with that where the church people. When we got married down on fourth Avenue the black business district, all the wino brothers and sisters kept hanging out. When they would see has come down the street, they were like open and receptive. I know why, don't get me wrong.

The point I'm trying to make is that I think the black church, lost an enormous opportunity, then to kind of be real if you will. Some churches, some individual churches since then, I have tried to run and play catch

up. But the general experience is that, people like me, are not necessarily inside the church. Or to put it another way, we see the whole community is our church.

>> Charles, what do you think? A lot of your early organize efforts were connected to a lot of the church is what you think?

>> That is true, let me tell you. But we will organizing a lot of times, we had to organize against the church. First of all, the pastors were they would turn us in. There were as scared of getting the church is blown up. They were scared. So we had to organize, the young people going to the church, to get their parents not to put money there. Unless he turned around.

When they had church we would have church two. We had preachers we could preach, we sang.

>> Well?

>> Go ahead

>> No finish please.

>> What would happen is all the kids would come down to our church. We had we had mass meetings right there. We had mass meetings right there with the people of the church. Until a lot of times a minister would shake his head and come to. Because he was not making no money.

>> So the youth brought the older people to the rallies.

>> That is right, that is right, if you notice in all those films, the ones there are facing the dogs and the fire hoses were the kids.

>> Yes that's true.

>> Young people, the children in Birmingham and in Selma Alabama, it was a children's movement. You got to organizing the ones who went to the cotton fields in the cotton fields, and just organize, where the young people.

>> Is that very similar to what we see happen today? Correct, mainly it is the young people who have taken the lead. They're the ones who last summer were in the streets every day.

>> That's right.

>> The unrelenting in their request for change, from that aspect things have not really changed very much. Reggie, you mention being influenced by all of this when you were young. Now, I cannot imagine Charles seeing you perform this music now. How were you, how did Reggie do?

>> He did great, it brought back old memories.

>> Yes.

>> It was very good, it is still going on. I remember he said he was born and where it back in what?

>> 1952.

>> I am a baby. The first time I met Charles, at a retreat center in Rhode Island our friend Bill Harley put together, Charles, Betty Mae fights, and we were sitting across the room from them. All of us newbies and youngsters. We will looking at these icons and going my goodness, we are in the room with royalty.

And then we had the opportunity to sing with them for three days. But it was really instructive, we knew they had come from something. Their singing was informed by what they had come through. We were just beginning to get energized and organized about going out and, most of us were thinking about you know, becoming famous or something. It was the early times when we were beginning to see the power of song

and organizing and also the PowerSong in teaching people and making them aware of something that wasn't being taught.

So, I fully give absolute and total credence to the fact that these things get passed on. That is what is happening now. It is a different time, and we have to use sometimes different ways to energize it. Because we do not all get together and sing like people used to. We do not have mass meetings where people come together and sit with each other for hours and talk about strategy. I will tell you this, I've been working with the living legacy project.

We take people young people on pilgrimage. I will tell you the songs the work.

>> The song still work people were using them last summer as they were marching in the streets. Being called the terrorist and what other names were being thrown at them. Dr. Carter, what do you think about this call for more legislation? Do you think that was going to really change where we are? As you mentioned, we've had legislation after legislation.

>> I think it depends on what piece of legislation you're talking about. If we are talking about an approach to law enforcement so you don't have one thing in Tennessee and one thing in South Carolina and something else in California. Then that is probably going to be a good thing. But, there are real limits to the effects of legislation. For example, we can pass a civil right to ask of voting rights act, or fair housing bill.

But what we have found out is that bad actors find around -- might find ways around that. They find ways around integration, they find ways to continue doing bad things. If they are determined. So we do have to change hearts and minds and souls and other things of that nature in order to make progress to go along with legislation.

It is not just one or the other, both have to play a role. I want to go back for a quick session on the issue of the black church. I am in my early 40s, obviously I was not a part of the civil rights movement at that time.

I will tell you that they have some issues that we would recognize which is that, the older that you get, the more you have by stepping out and taking bold positions on a variety of things.

If you are talking about the 1950s An early 1960's, Jim Crow is still in place, the color line is still right in your face.

So you have black doctors, lawyers, preachers, business people who have something to lose number one. If things are a little too successful. That does mean there is a practical side to this.

What happens to the black teacher when the schools integrate? The schools aren't into integrate into black schools they are going to integrate into white schools. What happens to those teachers and countless commuters they lost their jobs. A lot of them lost their jobs.

When black youth who were able to take advantage of those new opportunities, start going into historically white institutions. And start leading black communities, what happens to those commuters over. Time? They begin to wither, they become fractured, there are other issues there.

One of the secrets that we don't like to talk about is how many black people have great anxiety about the civil rights movement at that time. About the direction of it and what is going to mean for the black families, and black communities. If all of those things became successful. So we celebrate civil rights, we celebrate the March on Washington. We celebrate those things and those things are wonderful. We have been struggling for some respects the better part of 60 years. Okay, we won these things, but now we have these other problems that we have to deal with. Now we don't know how to deal with them effectively, and that is what we are seeing for example last summer in the streets.

How do we deal with this? We do not have one unified anymore. We have a leader, and we need multiple leaders in every community. So what I'm saying here is that, the black community if anything, has become



more complex. They become more diverse, social economically et cetera, in the last 60 years than it has ever been.

Now we are struggling for example with the interest of the black professor versus the black custodian, the black preacher and the black businessperson. So as we think about civil rights, I end on this point. We are not a monolithic group. We are diverse, in our own experiences.

We have to appreciate that. I think sometimes we think of all of us is just one group, that is fine but there is a rich tapestry there within individual communities within the black community that we have to appreciate.

We have to celebrate inconsiderate and paid inconsiderate it in the issues.

>> You brought up a question my cause and I discussed so many creations. Was integration good for black America? Did we lose more than we actually gained?

>> Yup, we are still trying to figure that answer out. You know my senses overall, it is a positive. If you are part of that one third of black America that was the most vulnerable, that is not been able to take advantage of all of those things and all of those open doors 50 or 60 years ago it may be a net loss for you.

It may be a net loss for you. Even for those who were able to materially do quite well, in many cases statistically they did not do as well as they are similarly situated black colleagues and peers. So we have to recognize that as well. I think it depends on your viewpoint. Where are you at. The sad thing for example that I see in my own research, it is you have people participating in the civil rights movement, but in the long term were not able to take advantage of the victories. While others, some who were more resistant of what protesters and civil rights people were doing at the time were able to walk to the same doors.

They were originally hesitant to try to blow open. There is no right answer on that. It is a complex one, a lot of us are trying to figure that out.

>> So you have WEB Dubois able to walk through the door, but the majority of African Americans were struggling and still are struggling. Was that you Charles who had a comment?

>> When the integrate of the schools, it was my feeling and what I wanted to do was improve our schools. They should have been improving our schools. They should have been paying our teachers. Because the teachers that I had at the time, were mission minded people.

They were on a mission. They never failed to teach us black history, and tell us to do the best that we could do. This thing will be opened up pretty soon. It'll be opened up after a while. And we were down in Mississippi, in the cotton fields, those people were not doing this for themselves.

They were the only people who were protesting for themselves, wouldn't people could not read and write. They wanted to make it better for their children.

Better for the next generations. Because I know I will never do this but I want my children to go.

>> So losing to schools and losing teachers, I can relate to that during my time in a segregated school system. It made a world of difference from being educated in a black school, and being shipped to predominately white schools. Where people did not hesitate to let you know that they did really did not want you there. They were really not interested in you learning anything.

So if you were a student who could sit quietly, and not create any problems, you are a good student. They would pass you onto the next grade whether you learned anything or not. So I do not think you could get a way with that when you were in a black school. I know none of my black teachers would have ever allowed just to be a vegetable in the classroom. You really did have to demonstrate and learn. So I think from that background, losing teachers and losing schools had a tremendous impact.

I am also curious about I don't think you should ever expose young children to that sort of bias. It would be different if kids were entering school a little older and they could handle things. But when you are young, and being exposed to those sort of sentiments, I think it makes a huge difference.

>> I just wanted to comment on, often times when people hear that I am from Birmingham, are the black people. They will say, aren't you glad to be away from that? And I say my gosh just the opposite. Do you know the quality of teachers that I had? Black teachers didn't have other doors open to them. So if they were musicians or what have you, they ended up teaching school.

I am thinking of one teacher now, Mrs. Murphy, who was Mike counselor at Parker high but she also was a mathematician. She was Spellman graduate and got her Masters in math from Columbia University. The same time as she was going to Columbia every summer, she was getting a Masters in pipe organ.

I do not know, personally, any white teachers, who had that kind of talents in their hands. As frustrated as Mrs. Murphy probably was, dreams deferred, all of that I was the recipient. My friends and I, we were the recipients of having this very bright woman, in our classroom.

They taught us more than math, more than history, more than music. I am just saying we lost a lot when we lost our teachers.

>> And another thing, young people had chance with black full sin charge.

>> Yes, yes, yes.

>> And now, you cannot find them, you can go to school all of your life, and you see very few people in charge.

>> My school had a black principal, and all the teachers were black and worse than that, everybody in the community knew how you did in school.

>> That is right.

>> That is true.

>> I would like to say one of the dynamics for me was that, from junior high on, I was going to mostly white schools. It created a dynamic that I was also living between two communities. So, it really has set me up now for what I largely do in life. Which is live in this space, where I have a strong connection to the black community. But I also have most of my work that I am doing in the white community.

But I will say from the end of junior high on, there were about 15-20 years that were very lonely. There was nobody to talk to, there was no organization, there was no place that I found I found the slaves in my own or few friends I could talk to who doing the same thing. It is a tremendous issue, in terms of negotiating that space. A lot of times I was coming under fire from both communities. I was not black enough, and at the same time I certainly was not white. So that I think is something that also has been just really a challenge, and I know that certainly more and more of the opportunities have opened for African-Americans Inc. is a color.

That places them in the same dilemma.

>> You know it was nothing for black teachers like us arrogant parents must be for real. To be in the classroom in the middle of winter in Lincoln Elementary, and Mrs. Yancey, she was a big woman but pristine and clean all of the time. She would sit there and say somebody didn't get it right this morning.

And she would go, Hubert Schubert Dennis are set by the door. Hubert run down to the gym and see if Mr. Johnson will take the boys for a half hour. And then he would come back and say send the boys on down.

And they will go to the gym and play ball or something. When the boys left the classroom, Miss Cianci will pull out her bottom drawer.

She would take out some sanitary napkins, some newspaper, some alcohol and soap or whatever she needed because she understood that so many of my classmates left home, and their parents had already gone across the mountain to work and why people's families.

So children were leaving home without breakfast, without being properly clothed, without personal hygiene in place. So our teachers did not hesitate, to step in and say come on I will take care I will share.

>> We are starting to get questions from the viewing audience, and the first question has to do with the impact of social media today. The question is, do you believe, that the social media awareness via Facebook, Twitter or other media outlets, either helped or hindered modern civil rights movement?

Based on some of the comments you've already made, you think that having more coverage has helped or hurt? Charles let's start with you and I will give everybody a chance to respond.

>> Well, it depends on the honesty of the media. And the political, some of the media, you get Fox news, but anyway. At least at this time that you can see what is going on.

>> And that's a good thing for people to visually bring that into the living room? Tension that is rights, to visually see and it is good. It is good.

>> Ann do you agree?

>> I am the last person you should ask about social media. I have been slow to kind of gravitate towards that. I am really torn. Because obvious to me I see the value in terms of, you compare all of this with the story of the sister who taught at Alabama State that night that Rosa Parks was arrested and they wanted everybody the next morning to not ride the buses.

This was the first, Joanne Robinson was her name, she grabbed three or four of the best routes at Alabama State, got them in the office, and the humor had enough mimeograph machines. Do you remember that the mimeograph machines.

>> That's right.

>> Don't ride the bus don't ride the bus. And she had students run around all up and down the streets of black neighborhoods and putting these fliers in doors and in car windshields and all of us. The next morning not one black person was on the bus.

I see the value when I think about something like that and getting the word out and communicating and informing and positioning people and all of that. But it also becomes a devil unto itself. I had friends, I know people that is all they do. Come to a meeting help us write some letters help us do this.

That is what they're doing, so I am a torn sister okay.

>> Dr. Connor you deal with young people all the time, and I can only imagine is Anna saying their faces in the media all of the time. So has it helped or hurt?

>> It depends on what it is, many scholars thought 30 years ago as we are starting to embark on the Internet era, it was going to be a thing that further democracy by getting everybody a voice. But the truth is that, you know, it seems like for every social justice issue that comes up on social media, maybe it is to have a protest against police brutality or it's a piece of legislation.

There are literally dozens of others on social media that are there, so that they can figure out how they can more effectively hate other people.

>> Yes.

>> Or how they can commit crime. The terrorist deck attacked the U.S. Capitol on January, almost every one of them had a smart phone with them, and many of them are using face time live in other things so that they can show people. Now call me old-fashioned, when you're committing crimes in the back of the day, you did not want people to see it.

>> Now they have cameras and say look at me a look at what I'm doing. You have to go with the real investigator, they just have to look at your Facebook feed. Then they are like okay yes, he did it, he did it, E did it. So, I mean, it could be a really good thing. The Arab spring, for example social media was the catalyst. It can be really good thing, all too often we are seeing use for hate, disinformation, and to confuse people and misinformation so distrust crime. Then we have corporate actors like Facebook, which I do use Facebook. But at the same time, corporate actors like Facebook, are basically encouraging the worst people to use the product.

Because the algorithms that they use, are extremely valuable to their net worth. So Facebook is making billions of dollars of advertisers. Tied to how their products are used by the public. I think it is a net negative and away. But on the other hand, I will tell you this you cannot organize the March on Washington over in the same way the social media.

You can do it in a couple of days now. A couple of days now. You can have ten or 12 people, you handled the buses, you handle hotels, you do this and everybody in a social media and be done in a manner few days. You did not need that much time. You wouldn't of had the secret meetings and private meetings between the big six in President Kennedy.

Because each one of them was said Mr. President, we are going to go on Facebook if you don't agree. And the White House would've said yes we are supportive. I think it is a net negative right now. We will see how it goes.

>> Reggie, how about you? You reach out to young people and I know young people are attached to that media has it been effective?

>> It has been I think Dr. Connor hits it dead on. A lot of times when these new things come up you realize in every generation, there is new technology that comes in. The civil rights movement figured out that don't hold your big event at two in the afternoon. Because the news media will not be there.

Go at five so they can put you on and they put you on that dinner time. You have to become technology proficient, and figuring out. The young people that I interact with, they talk about platforms that I have no idea what they are. And where they are going and they had absolutely and totally fluid.

They look at you and like say where are you? And I realize, this is not made for me. And they are not talking to me. So I do my Facebook I do my twitter, what I try to hold in mind is they hold things that we know is true of history they still have value. So we just have to not get all excited about the rush of the new things so we end up talking about important point.

I tell my audiences and folks all the time everybody doesn't want peace and freedom and justice. They are working 24/seven to make sure that you do not get it. You have to remember that all the things that we are doing have to counter side.

So the media and social media and all of the scenes, there is a counter to what it is that we hope to see on them.

If we get ourselves upset and get our shorts and a bunch, and spent so much time trying to tell how bad this thing is, we lose a lot of energy. So I decided years ago, I would not spend my energy there. I will use social media to do exactly what we are talking about, I will let people know things, I will make them aware of these things. I will invite them into the process, so we can have conversations there in other places. And then

with the young people, when I have them on the bus, and have the earbuds in. I don't know if they are really listening to me and singing.

I told them, you may be listening to something else but I want to see if your mouth move when you sand. And they kind of rolled our eyes and do whatever they do. But I tell you, by Wednesday afternoon, the songs have seeped into them. And when we were in Selma, for a day of work and getting out the neighborhood, those same young people three days after I taught them some of the songs, used them when they had an open moment to work with some kids.

This sounds easy to learn, and background of the songs energizes them. Because they said to me, why do we know the stuff about this history? So I said you can go on the Internet and look it all out. And then they did.

>> I have one viewer who wants to rule on OC from the panel. The question is what can white people do, to help continue the modern civil rights movement? They want you to be brutally honest. If you don't think they can do anything they want you to be able to say that. So who wants to start first?

>> Charles will come to you what can white people do to help the modern civil rights? I think white people, one of the best things that they can do, is organize white people.

>> Thank you, thank you.

>> Okay.

>> Thank you.

>> Amen.

>> And I want to add, the very best thing that white people can do, is to have an honest examination of their own history in America.

It is not pretty, and it is the very reason, all of this stuff is structural. What that means as it began back then when the Europeans, the Pilgrims and the good bone against coming here.

We have to ask ourselves a simple question, where are the first people, the native people to this land? What has happened to them? So I always say, white people, do marrow work. Roll out the mirror and tell the truth and then you would know yourself what you do. We will not have to tell you.

>> Dr. Carter, you are there at East Tennessee State, you have made the national news over some issues there. So what would you say to this viewer how would white people help?

>> I think, white Americans can help by number one, not tolerating bad behavior on the part of other white Americans. Okay, all too often we will see people say well, yes so-and-so said the N-word but I don't use it. No you need to be having a conversation with that person. You need to be talking about it with them.

You need to be making it clear that is going to be a frosty environment for you, if you continue this kind of behavior. I like to see, a lot more white Americans, become very active in punishing others who are promoting hate of any kind. So, one of the things that I notice because of the social media thing, is a lot of these bigots are losing their jobs.

Good, good. I hope you lose your job. If you are promoting hate of any kind, I guess any group or any person, then I hope you lose your job. That is part of it. The other thing that I would like to see is for white Americans to stop being so sensitive.

But we try to bring up the stuff, just a math on it, on how often black people get pulled over by police across the country. How often black people get the death penalty compared to whites for similar crimes and actions. There is the sensitivity thing, well you know, golly gee I do not do anything. No I did not accuse you of doing anything, you just have to recognize this exist. There is a problem here, and then we can take steps

to move forward on all of this. At the end of the day, I tell students this. It is not just black Americans or Native Americans or Latino Americans are suffering. White people themselves are suffering and dying because of their own bigotry.

One scholar went off instead of dying of whiteness. They are killing themselves, we are seeing for example, in the last 12 years, for the most opposed to Barack Obama and the most in support of Donald Trump are disproportionately suffering, a variety of issues. Because of whiteness.

They are so committed to it, they can see the force of the trees. There is a self interest here, that white Americans need to recognize. That they hate that they think is so valuable, is actually killing him.

>> One of the things that white American thing.

>> And one of the viewers want you to back away from the camera so they could see all of you.

>> One of the things that white Americans can do is start to share the wealth, you have made off the backs of black people, brown people read people. Find a black college, Talladega, Alabama State, Morehouse, Spelman, we are everywhere. And begin to give your wealth to these schools.

That is a group way that we can lift up the race.

>> I have a question directly for Dr. Koller. About that Eastern Tennessee University basketball team kneeling event. Do you think things got better in the following weeks, and would you consider this part of the modern civil rights movement?

>> I think it is part of the modern civil rights movement. If we are going to be honest, and I will tell the public, I am a two-time graduate of ETSU, I came back as a faculty member. I love the institution I met my wife here, my kids have grown up on the campus. But we have had problems. Every year we got some damn issue on this campus.

From people wearing gorilla mask, to the basketball issue, too you know more isolated events that don't get public dissemination. Yes we do have our problems. I do have confidence in the administration. And President Nolan looked administration made some's mistakes and we recognize that.

I think the president has done a good job in terms of approaching various groups on this campus. In the weeks after with two things. One, an acknowledgment that they screwed up. And secondly, an honest searching for answers of how they can be better.

As a faculty member, as a tenured professor here, as a middle manager in the college, I felt really good about the discussions I had about the ministrations specifically with the present about the institution going forward. Finally, I can't help but love this place. I have been around here a long time a quarter-century altogether.

I have seen a lot of progress on this campus on that time. We are better campus than what we were 25 years ago when I was a freshman. But we still have issues, and we have to work on those issues. We have a lot of people on the campus who are eager to help with solving those issues.

That does not mean everything is perfect, I am proud of the institution, even though like anyone else, they disappoint me from time to time. But this is a great place to be, even though we do have issues, so I would encourage people to take a real good look at us. Come to the campus come see us, and things of that nature.

But it is incumbent upon the administration to drop the hammer on bad actors when they pop up.

>> Can I tag into that last question?

>> Sure.

>> I thought the panel had amazing answers of what white people can do. I just want to say, as a summation on that, white people, when you hear something from a person of color. That just makes you either crazy or confuses you, or stirs up some think that you have an answer for, don't give it write it down, and go do some research on it.

Stop being so quick to give an answer that you think addresses the problem. I had a white person say to me. She just realized that white people need to come sit down and shut up more. Can't shut up, shut up.

>> As you heard from our panelist, do some work on your end, before asking a black person the question. Charles, I will direct this question to you. We have about 5 minutes left. So we will try to get as many as possible. As Black Lives Matter, having that # and using that, has it been helpful or do you think it is been more detrimental to allowing other people to join in?

>> I think that it is fruitful. People came out with a blanket statement; Black Lives Matter I am black. Black Lives Matter. Remind me the time of when black is beautiful. That white people got into a hissy about it.

>> I saw buses where it says yellow is beautiful brown is beautiful, white is beautiful. It was like an attack on my people. When you say Black Lives Matter, how can you not understand that? And I am really suspicious of people who get into an hissy fit about that title.

>> So not anything people should fear, this is where they might want to do some research as Reggie suggests on why that statement happed to be made.

>> That is right.

>> Certainly if you watch today's PowerPoint you can see a long history of why we feel that way.

>> White people need to really understand, that that you are right, we are not talking about you, we are affirming ourselves. And that there is something that hits raw nerve in this country. When black, brown, red people start to stand up and assert themselves.

I think whiteness has a lot of homework to do.

>> A lot of it is nothing but fear.

>> Yes, you are right.

>> Guilt and fear.

>> Guilt and fear.

>> Get riddled some of the guilt by giving to some of the H BC use. Historically black college and universities.

>> Support those black schools.

>> Believe it or not we have come to the end of the time with this wonderful panel. And I want to thank each of you for agreeing to talk to the public today on civil rights and sharing your experiences.

This is our 11th public discussion. And next month, June 12 is our last public discussion. I was tasked with developing 12. June will be our 12 public discussion. And then you can revisit these incidents on Facebook, YouTube, International storytelling center.

This is been a wonderful project and I want to express my gratitude from each of you for agreeing to join and. Hopefully, if you missed anything today, you are going to replay it and do some research, on your own and some reading. We have a toolkit that goes along with this freedom stories.

It is available online at the international storytelling center. So to all of our guest thank you for joining us and I hope to see you in June for our final freedom stories public discussion. Please enjoy the rest of your afternoon. Thank you to our panelist.