INTERNATIONAL
STORYTELLING CENTER

Do Black Lives Matter in Appalachia? Transcript

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

KIRAN: Hello and welcome. Welcome. My name is Kiran Singh Sirah and I'm the President of the International Storytelling Center here in Jonesboro, Tennessee. On behalf of all of us, we welcome you today live from Tennessee's oldest town, the storytelling capital of the world, as part of the first digital freedom stories discussion. We'd like to thank the National Endowment for Humanities for their support for the Freedom Stories Project. Freedom Stories is a series of humanity's conversations to help illuminate the often neglected and neglected aspects of African-Americans experiences and history in Appalachia, and to help us understand that history as part of our nation's history, including the role that the art of storytelling and storytellers have played in the struggle for independence and the shaping of a distinct American tradition and culture that we also celebrate today as part of our nation's story. We want to celebrate these stories not just for educational purposes, but also to honor the unsung heroes and sheroes of African-American history. This project will produce a series of multimedia learning resources that will be made available to national audiences from our website, including this recording, which you can visit at storytellingcenter.net. In 2004, Lonnie Bunch, who at the time was president of the Chicago Historical Society, said something Bender has stayed with me and influenced so much of how I saw the world around me. He said, we cannot even begin to discuss or understand racism today without first grappling with the legacies of slavery. Yet few people actually want to discuss it. Mr Bunch went on to become the first director of the Smithsonian African-American Museum and is now the secretary general of the largest museum and research complex in the world. And we are proud to be a Smithsonian affiliate partner. Mr Bunch, his words are important now, as they were back then, to understand a story of a nation is to understand a myriad of stories which make up our nation. We cannot fully understand who we are, where we come from, where we are going, unless we are willing to engage with all the stories of the whole narrative. Discussions like this one we are having today aimed to lead us to a deeper public appreciation of the idea that each and every one of our stories, complex, nuanced, poignant, difficult, celebrate and unique stories make up the whole of who we are. If you are understanding our past, we get to understand our present. And most importantly, we get to explore through safe dialogue the story of the nation and the world we wish to see. There was no single story that makes up this nation understanding the stories of struggles for freedom, equality and justice, can help us which divides and even strengthen our democracy. Strengthening itself offers a shared experience through which we get to see the breadth of our shared humanity. A key foundation for building a better world. Freedom stories. The project does not just look at our past. To help us understand our present. It also invites us to look at our future. As this nation prepares to commemorate its 250th anniversary in 2026, "Freedom Stories" offers us to examine histories we consider part of our cultural heritage. As my friend and Jonesborough Alderman, Mr Adam Dixon, Director of Historic African-American School, suggests. There is a traceable line from slavery to Jim Crow to what is going on in America right now in the wake of George Floyd's death. It's such a critical piece of our identity, even as Americans. And so when we're able to recognize it, when we're able to address it in its totality, then I think we're able to move forward as a society. The Freedom Stories Project is an attempt to do just that. And so with today's session, I ask you to ask yourselves, how does what I hear today help me experience a fuller narrative of the story of my nation, my humanity? And as you listened today, I invite you also to do so with an open mind. encourage you to put your questions in the chat so we can have a respectful dialogue. So it is my honor to welcome the International Storytelling Center's director of the Freedom Stories Project, Dr Alicestyne Turley. Dr Turley will be facilitating the session. To offer a little bit of

a background for those that have yet to meet and hear from the incomparable Dr Turley. Born in Hazard, Kentucky, and prior to becoming an educator and public historian, Dr Turley has worked in law enforcement as a community organizer and was the first African-American administrator for the city of Toledo's first woman mayor, Donna Owens. She is also the founding director of the Carter G Woodson Center for Interracial Education at Berea College, a longtime scholar of history, political science, sociology and anthropology. She obtained a master's degree from Mississippi State University and public policy, and from the University of Kentucky in American history. But she also graduated as a doctor of philosophy in American history. She describes storytelling is as American, as apple pie, and very much part of the African-American and Appalachian life, culture, and community. We are truly honored to have Dr Turley's experience and expertise as the director of Freedom Stories. I will now hand it over to her and she will begin and introduce the Freedom Story session. with our distinguished speakers. Thank you so much.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you, Kiran, for that wonderful introduction, as well as the soap or lending your support and staff for the International Storytelling Freedom Project and producing today's discussion. I am Alicestyne Turley, currently serving as the project director for the International Storytelling Center Freedom Stories Project. Originally, our planned discussions on various black Appalachian topics was scheduled to be presented to live audiences throughout the region, beginning with this public discussion and ending in September 2021. However, petitions have been moved because of the Covid epidemic. We've been affected by that, just as all others have in the nation. And as we move forward, we will continue to present them in a virtual format here on the International Storytelling Center's website and on a virtual platform, which we hope will be accessible to the general public and everyone will take advantage of in many ways, allowing us to reach a larger audience. This year's high quality performances and discussions will be a model for all the other upcoming storytelling events that we plan to present each month. And it will follow the basic format that we're previewing for you today. So I encourage you to watch the International Storytelling Center website to get dates and times of future public discussions. And I also encourage you to go on Facebook, our Facebook page, and type in any questions that you have. If you would like to direct them to a specific panelist, please do so. If you would like to review today's discussions at a future date or share it with others, please note that the recording of today's discussions are available on the International Storytelling Center website, as well as YouTube. And we do from this point forward, we will be presenting for educators and the general public. A freedom story's tool kit where these resources will remain available to you. Now, here to share her Appalachian Freedom Story is the National Endowment for the Arts 2019 National Heritage fellow Mama Linda Goss, joining us via audio. Mama Linda is the co-founder and former president of the nation's premiere Black Storytelling Association, the National Association of Black Storytellers. Now please listen and enjoy 'A Black Story of Appalachia' as presented by Appalachian storytelling. Mama Linda Goss.

MAMA LINDA GOSS: Peace and blessings, everyone. Peace and blessings. # My bells are ringing, # Can you hear them? # I am the bell ringer. # I am the play singer. # Do you know that of dwelling? # Doing a love story? # Telling. # Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. # Is storytelling dance? # Now I've been rigging these bells for over 45 years and I ring these bells for a reason. I'll ring these bells to wake up the people. I ring these bells for the homeless, the hopeless, the hungry and the poor. I ring these bells for the voiceless, the helpless. I ring these bells for all living creatures throughout the cosmic universe. Black lives have always mattered because all lives matter. And if all lives matter, then black lives matter. That's philosophy 101. Oh, as Granddaddy Murphy used to say, "that's just common sense." So gather round my people. Gather around and help me sing this welcome song. I want you to clap your hands and jump right in and just do your thing. I've got the tambourines now... and just sing along with live. # Gather round my people. # Well gather 'round my people? # Well, will gather round my people. # Well, well, well, well, well. # Ooh, ah, ooh, ah, come up. # Ooh, ah, ooh, ah, come up, faith. # Gather round my people. # Well, gather round my people. # Well, well gather round my people. # Well, well, well, well, well, well, welcome people. # I was born in the late 40's, 1940s, and I was born and raised in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains and

Alcoa, Tennessee. Now, all I have to do is just close my eyes. And I can see that morning mist on top of those smokies and I can see that shiny Tennessee River. Now, my family and I, my husband and children have lived up and down the East Coast for many years in Washington, DC. Now we live in Baltimore, be more, but we used to live in Philly. And in Philly, I would drive back and forth from Philadelphia to Tennessee that had drives over 640 miles each way. Wow. Now, in 1985, I wrote this praise poem about the drive, about going down home, and it's called 'There Is a Place.' Just close your eyes if you want to. And just listen. And you can imagine your memories, your memories of home. There is a place where I can go when I'm tired and feeling so, so low. It's called Alcoa down into the sea. Where, mom and dad are waiting there for me. Yeah, I don't even have to write. Let them know I'm coming. I'll have to write. Don't even have to phone. All I do is just go back home. Back to our core. Down in Tennessee. Well, mom and dad are waiting there for me. Tennessee mountain green. Morning dew,o Get a , and mom's cooking beef stew. Tennessee, Mountain Green. Morning Dew, how I do love you. Yes, I do. Well, sometime early in the morning, I jump in the car from Philly and I'm heading on 76 West and then on to 81 South. I'm getting tired now, so I stopped because the sheriff's house to get a little bite to eat and a little rest. But the next morning I'm back on 81 South to 240 West. Oh, Lord, I hope I don't get stuck behind a transport truck, huh? That's better. Drive in two rows and rows of trees on top of rows and rows of hills, inhaling the sweet mountain breeze. Oh, I must confess, these magic moments I appreciate the best. Now from 40 West is to Alcoa Highway, 129, I don't have to pack a suitcase. I don't need a bag. I don't need no money when I go home. I don't need a dime. Well, from Alcoa highway on onto road and then pass Creek. Memories of childhood is what I seek. Pass the train tracks. Make a left on bill. Can't wait to see them. Get to see my folks because I got so much to tell. Oh, there's Ol' St Paul church St Paul, George St Paul AME. There it is up there on the hill. Folks call dad, "Junior". Folks call mom . Tennessee Mountain Green Morning, dew, dad is forever smiling mom is forever cooking beef stew. Tennessee. Oh, I love you. Yes, I do. Fried apples, grits and collard greens. Mmm, mm, mmh. Candy, sweet potatoes mac and cheese, woo. And pinto beans. Oh, oh, oh. Hushpuppies, catfish boy collard and cornbread. I can tell you one thing, us youngins' sure was well-fed. Tennessee, morning dew, mountain green. Oh that morning dew, how I love you. Yes I do. Well, dad passed away in 1980, and mama passed away in 2002. She was a beloved school teacher whose motto was "Everybody's got talent, something they can bring to the welcome to a table." Now, daddy work for the Alcoa Aluminum Company of America at the North Plant. And his father, Granddaddy Murphy, worked at the South plant, also known as the pot room. Those big hot pots were the size of huts. They contained melted aluminum. # I ain't gonna let nobody turn me around, turn me around, turn me around # I ain't gonna let nobody turn me around # I'm going to keep working # Keep on working # Heading for the freedom land. # Now, I went to a segregated school, grades 1st through 12th. They have kindergarten back then. My school was Charles Martin Hall, named after the man who invented a cheaper way of processing aluminum. Now, during the 1960s, when I was in high school, my history teacher, Mrs Helen Harris. Oh, she was the best history teacher I ever had. She gave the class a homework assignment. She said, "now go out and interview the oldest person in your family and ask them to tell you a story nd bring that story back to the class." Well, now. First person I thought was Grandaddy Murphy. Grandaddy Murphy . So I went to him right away and asked him about telling me a story. Well, Grandaddy was born in 1890's in Brunswick, Alabama. He came to Alcoa all around 1924 with his wife, my grandmother, Marisa, and his son, my daddy, Willie Magnier. Now, the closest city was because was is a little place is . is on the south and Montgomery and Birmingham are to the northwest. Well, Granddaddy smiles, he kind of chuckled a little bit, he said, "you mean your school teacher wants a story from me?" I could see that he felt so proud he was being asked such a question because Grandaddy mostly never went to school. He couldn't read or write. But I can tell you one thing. He was one of the smartest men I ever knew. Well, now he said, "I'm going to tell you something about your grand pappy. Oh, George." But what does that make him? If he's my granddaddy, what does that make him do? You know, I thought about it. I said, well, he would be my great, great grandfather. That's right. He said, he's your great, great, great grandpappy. Oh, George. But he was born around 1850, I would say. And because, you know, folks didn't keep good records back then on black folks. So we don't

really know when he was born, but he was born in Brundidge, Alabama. And the reason why he was called Ol' George, because he was born big. He was a huge baby. As a child, he looked grown and I believe what Grant Eddie Murphy was saying, because granted, it was a big man. He stood at least six feet, five inches and weighed over 250 pounds, and you better not mess with him either. Well, Ol' George was born into slavery times and he hated it. put him to work time he could talk. They had him rolling, pushing, pulling, liftin, sifting, hauling, carrying, shopping, plowing, planting, picking, cleaning, scrubbing, washing and digging and so forth and so on and so forth and so on, from sun up to sundown. And that the overseer didn't like what Ol' George did or how he did it, he would push him. He was punched and he would beat him and he was whipped. He would kick it and he was knocked upside the head and they just hit him all over his body. And the place on that plantation, the place where the enslaved folks lived, it was something terrible. They had to sleep in little huts, but they slept on the damp ground, and Lord have mercy, there was plenty of sickness. Ol' George, said the folks had kinds of fevers and infections. Little children were covered in sores, tetter and ringworm in their heads, folks, and all kinds of rashes all over their bodies. And and they laid somebody who had had gangrene on it. Many babies were born, but they died after a few days. Folks had consumption, what we call TB or the flu. They had whooping cough and measles and rheumatism. And even when Ol' George was sick or had a knee injury, he still had to work or he'd be whipped or smacked around. So one night he just took off. Ol' George ran away. You might say he was a one man underground railroad. A few days before he had hidden a knapsack and a bamboo fishing pole, a fishing pole in the woods, his knee was aching, but he hopped away as fast as he could. In no particular direction, just straight ahead, as far as you could go, as far as he could go from slavery, he wanted to get away. He had to get away. He was only about 11 or 12 years old when he ran away. But old George knew he had to do it. # George, George, George, where did you run? # Oh George, George, George # Where did you run to? Ol' George hopped, ran and ran, hopped as fast as he could. He ran so fast. He came so tight that he fell into a gully. And when he woke up, he jumped up and kept running and running and running and hopping and hopping again, ran to freedom. Well, after many days, he found a cave. He was afraid to to go in that cave because it might be bear cubs in there. So he threw a rock in there and ran, but nothing happened. He threw a larger rock in there and thought, well, if a bear comes out and if it's time for me to die, Lord, I'd rather be mauled to death by a bear than shot in the head by Ol' . So George took a chance. He crawled in that cave. And the cave was much bigger on inside than it was on the outside. George stood up and he could see some light coming through the cracks at the top of the cave. Oh, George looks around and he saw something that made him stumble backwards. He saw a pile of bones. Actually, it was a skeleton, and that was a skull laying in a some long silver white hair. The clothes were tattered with just bits of cloth and a lot of dust. Oh, good heavens. Good heavens, George. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Now near the body was a tomahawk and some baskets, some sticks and stones, tools to make a fire. George reckoned that this had been a Cherokee man or Creek man. But that body had been there for such a long time. For many, many years. Well. Ol' George said well, you know, I don't think it's bloody going to bother me. So I'm just going to spend a night here. And that he did. He stared at the bones, as they say. He kept one eye open, and one eye shut. And he stayed in a cave for some time. And then one day there was a rainfall and the ground was wet enough. So Ol' George went out and got some rocks and dug up a hole and buried the man. He placed and branches and leaves and thick mud and rocks on top of the grave. And that cave was now Ol' George's home. # George, oh George, where did you run to? # George, oh George, where did you run? # I Wanna want to live on my own. # Gonna to live all alone. # Ain't gonna be no slave. # I'd rather live in a cave. # George, oh, George, where did you run to? Now, in order to stay alive. Ol' George had to eat whatever he could get his hands on. He would catch some fish and he would hunt and catch some squirrel, possum, chipmunk, rabbit. Now, he caught mostly rabbits and hares, but he also ate gophers and a snake, raccoon, grasshopper, black berries wild grapes, honeysuckles and he didn't mess with no toads neither. No toadstools. He didn't know too much about mushrooms. Well, Ol' George really didn't keep track of how long he stayed in that cave. But after some time, he thought it was time to move on. In case, you know, people got suspicious in case somebody walked in that cave. Now Ol' George loved trees. He loved to climb them and he

found a favorite tree, tree, with strong branches. And he got some vine and some twine, and he wrapped around himself in that tree and he climbed up that tree. And he stayed there for some time. Now, Ol' George said he never saw any bears or any mountain lions. But during the night, he would hear all kind of animal sounds. Oh, he would hear mountain lions way off in the distance. Thank goodness. He would hear bobcats and owls and and wolves and wild dogs. But he stayed up in that tree and during the day, he could see a plantation from the tree. So one night, he snuck up to that plantation and he set the barn on fire. But he drove the horses out of the barn before he lit the fire. And then he yelled, "Fire, fire!" When folks ran out, Ol' George ran into the kitchen and took as much food as he could. And then he ran off, ran off as quickly as he could because he didn't want to get anybody in trouble, especially himself. # George, oh George, where did you run to? # George oh George, where did you run? # Like an owl I'll find a nest, # The day I'll take my rest. # At night I'll make my rounds. # Don't want to wake up them hounds. # George, oh George, # Where did you run? # George, oh George. # Where did you run to? Well, George, my great, great grandpappy. Lost track of time. Days turn in the months, months turned into years. One day he heard some loud, very loud, strange sounding sounds. It sounded like screaming and shouting and yelling and hollering. and he climbed up a tree to look out. But he couldn't see anything. But he since. That's something. Something. Something had... something great had happened, some kind of great occurrence or some great change had come. So he just started running in the direction where the sounds were coming from. And he ran as fast as he could. He ran a few miles. And once you start running, he realized that he was on the same plantation where he had run away from many years ago. Oh, the black folks were just out in the fields. They were celebrating and singing and shouting and crying and dancing and praying and rejoicing. But little shooters scream, screaming and pointing at George, and he ran away from it. George didn't realize how scary he looked, leaves and twigs and vines hanging from his hair, his clothes in rags. He hadn't spoken to a human being in years. So he didn't say anything. And a woman walked up to him, some of the men, grabbed some rocks and some sticks in case he was crazy. But the old woman looked right into his eyes and she said, it's all right, it's OK. It was Ol' George the Magnier son, the one we all thought was dead. But he's come home now. He's alive. And she said, "Oh, George. Slavery is over. George, we are all free. But, you know, we ain't got no place to go. And old is dead. So some of us have to stay right here and work the land for Ol' missus. She said she would try to give us something. But George, you is free. # George, oh George # Where did you run to? # George, oh George, # Where did you run? # out here all these years. # Don't forget what my name is. # Don't know how old I am, but I know I am a free man. # I am a free man. # I am a free man. # I am a free man. # I am a free man. # I am a free man. # I am a free man. # I am a free man. # Oh. # Oh, I'm free. # May. # George Magnier became a free man, George Magnier. My great, great granddaddy. I've known some judges in my time. George Washington, first president of the United States, George Washington Williams, great black historian and soldier, George Washington Carver, great scientist and inventor, and George Perry Floyd Jr. I mean, a black man who touched the world. # This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, Lord, is this a man? # I'm going to let it shine this little light of mine. # I'm gonna let it shine. # Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. I thank you so much. I hope you have enjoyed what I have shared with you and in storytelling. Whatever you like today, please take it back and share it with someone else. Pass it on down. As my family has passed on stories to me and pass your stories down. That's how we know what happens. Not from necessarily the history books, but from the plain folks, the ordinary folks. Stuff that's in a scrapbook, stuff that has been passed on down from generation to the next generation.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And all of that freedom's story, Appalachian freedom story. I am now pleased to introduce our distinguished panel to continue the discussion about black life in Appalachia today. We are joined by associate professor of history, radio host and executive director of the Office of Community Engagement at University of North Carolina. Asheville, Dr Darin Jay Waters. Welcome, Dr Waters.

DR DARIN WATERS: Thank you.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: We are also joined by Harlan, Kentucky native, retired Berea College, distinguished professor of Black and Appalachian Studies, Dr William H Turner. And although he lists himself as retired, Dr. Turner continues to consult for nonprofit serving marginalized communities, as well as the director of education for the Appalachian African-American Cultural Center in Pennington Gap, Virginia. Welcome, Dr Turner. Professor of sociology, internationally recognized scholar in the areas of inequality and violence as an author, a lecturer and world traveler from Southern Illinois University. We're pleased to welcome Edwardsville. We're pleased to welcome Dr Sandra Weissinger.

DR SANDRA WEISSINGER: Thanks so much.

DR ALICESYNE TURLEY: 2023 graduate alumni Alona Norwood. Alona is Berea College Peace and Social Justice major community activist and board member of the New Generation of Freedom Fighters based in Johnson City, Tennessee. Currently, Miss Norwood is actively engaged on the front line of protest in the tri city region. Welcome, Miss Norwood. We are joined also by professor of history, gender studies and African-American studies at East Tennessee State University, Dr Elwood Watson. Dr Watson is an author, public commentator for such organizations as Diverse Education, Huffington Post, Goodmans Project, and a commenter on a blackpast.org Welcome, Dr Watson. So to begin the conversation, I would like to ask each of you, beginning with Dr Waters, of your view of our primary question from your perspective. Black lives matter in Appalachia.

DR DARIN WATERS: Well, first, thank you, Dr Turley. And and I want to thank you for the work that you're doing through the International Storytelling Center, you know, and thank the International Storytelling Center for this project. And I also want to acknowledge I'm very honored to be here with my colleagues on this panel to discuss this. Mama Linda's story was a very powerful story. I have had the great privilege of being able to listen to powerful stories all my life. One of the things that I would mention here is that from my mentors, beginning with my grandfather, Mr Isaiah Rice, all the way down to include John Hope Franklin and Dr William Turner, who is on this panel. I have been taught that, you know, one of the things that we need to do is to take the time to listen to other people's stories. And you learn something of value from that experience. But to your question about black lives and to Black Lives Matter and southern Appalachia, a native of this region, having been born and raised here in Asheville, North Carolina. I you know, the answer to that question is, yes, absolutely. Black lives matter in southern Appalachia. But as I think about that, the thing that comes to mind is but whether or not others have been willing to recognize that is another question altogether. However, I want to say that I believe that it is important to note and say that while some have not always been willing to recognize the value of a black life or the black experience in this region, and I think here of some of the people who laid the groundwork for Appalachian studies like John Campbell, John Belcher, who who were essentially dismiss the African-American experience in this region in their earlier works on the region. And while they have may not have seen the value of the black experience here, the one thing that I have recognized from the people who taught me and I think here primarily at not only of my own parents, but my grandparents in particular in my two grandfathers, Isaiah Rice and Edgar A Water Senior. Waters senior, that the one thing that I get and I gained from them was that while others may not have recognized the value of black life in their lives, they always recognized the value and they imparted that to me and is something that I am very grateful that I've been able to impart to my own sons. I would also say that as a professional historian, I believe that the challenge that has been before us is really to tell that story, to incorporate it into the narrative, the larger narrative not only of southern Appalachia, but of the country in general. It has been too long unrecorded. That contribution to that history has been too long unrecognized. And I think that is incumbent upon me here, too, to acknowledge the work of people like Dr Turner and his colleague from years ago, Ed Campbell, who really, I believe, laid the groundwork for the work that I've been able to do on the history of African-Americans in southern Appalachia in particular, specifically looking at western North Carolina. I think that work was absolutely important at staked a claim in the intellectual framework of of southern Appalachia, studies about the black presence. And so we have to acknowledge the

work that they have done. That work has been foundational to the work of so many others. As as I have acknowledged here, we've been able to uncover so much of what the African-American experience has been here. And I could tell many, many stories that are similar to the stories that Mama Linda told. So in closing. And not to take up too much time here. I would say absolutely. Absolutely. Black lives do matter here in southern Appalachia. And we need to continue to do the work to actually tell that story and incorporate it into the not the larger narrative of this region. And that work is being done.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you so much for those comments. Dr Turner, you could not have had a better set up from your many years of experience teaching and being involved in the community, Black Lives Matter in Appalachia.

DR WILLIAM H TURNER: Thank you very much. I was. Well, as for me to ask the question, do black lives matter? You know, it gets to a real fundamental. Almost like existential, should we exist or do we exist? And, you know, I don't want to argue that too much, because I think we've been here, we've done this. So I was turning 20 years old when black people not only said they mattered, they said they were beautiful. And black is beautiful was something that's ingrained in my head in the sixties. And like Mama Goss mentioned, I was born in Harlan County, Kentucky, at the end of the Second World War. And it was a very autonomous community, was one of those situations where segregation was how you were nourished. So I never had a problem thinking that I didn't mattered to anybody. Didn't worry too much. I knew I mattered. We knew that the religion that we most attached to taught us to have a long time ago, and nobody could take that. But personally, I'm just delighted because I see this uptick, uptick in the interests of black people in Appalachia. So much so. For example, in the last 25, 30 years, I've seen people who are not even from the region, but how you identify so much so that they become a brand of that region. So now, after all these years, we've been looking at this, we see people who have not lived experiences in Appalachia, but their writing is called Appalachia. And there's one fellow there in Asheville, he calls himself 'Black Appalachian'. And then we have some others who labeled themselves as 'Afro-lappchians'. And there are people who are 'Asia-lachians' and there are people who are - lappchians, and you'd go on and on. And I'm just glad after all these years, you see it because if you go back to Carter G Woodson, the father of black history, he is an Appalachian. And even before him, going back to the presence with Africans, amidst the Spanish explorers who came into the region of southern Appalachia 100 years before blacks came to Port of Virginia in the 1500's, there were blacks in Appalachia. The first blacks in Appalachia lived with the Cherokees, and they lived with the Creek. And they were right there near where you guys are in Jonesville, right over the hill in Maggette Valley and in Cherokee, and in that part of the world. And so there were all these emancipation, these abolitionists who started out in East Tennessee, right there in Jonesville, and they influenced Frederick Douglass. So Appalachia is large, it's a black presence, and how much you . Go back to what the first real black nationalist was, his name was Martin Delaney. Martin Delaney, I recommend people read about Martin Delaney, West Virginia. Booker T Washington, Carter G Woodson. All of these people. So when you look at the entertainment industry and education and whatever, black people always been very large in Appalachia. And I'm glad to see a lot of people begin to realize that. Alex Haley, who ended up writing about Roots, that got us all on that trail, was laid to rest in Appalachia because he moved into East Tennessee, he loved it so much. And so I'm just glad to see things they are right now in terms of the accumulation of interest in black people in Appalachia. And these stories, oh Lord, and I could never tell the stories I heard because my grandma was . And so in Harlan County, where I grew up, they wouldn't call the story, tell them, they'll just straight out lie sometimes. But there were also part of the culture, and I appreciate it very much, it nourished me in a way that I would never want to try any other way.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you so much for those comments. We definitely need to talk about the bootlegging aspect.

DR WILLIAM H TURNER: That's what story's for…

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Dr Weissinger and you're joining us from out of from Illinois. But I know that you teach and write on these topics. So have you, from your perspective, living outside the region, do black do you think black lives matter in Appalachia?

DR SANDRA WEISSINGER: Firstly, I just want to thank you for having me with this panel of esteemed colleagues. Writing from Illinois, I also have the lived experience of living in other regions of the United States. But to your question, do black lives matter specifically in Appalachia? I'd like to perhaps ask a different question. So when I think of black lives and the mattering, I go back to Miss Patrisse, who is a co-founder for Black Lives Matters. And I remember that when she penned that or wrote it and typed it up on the Internet, it was not a question, it was a statement. It was an affirmation. It was a rallying call. She was writing to her co-founder Ms Garza, and she was saying, Black Lives Matter, sis. I absolutely do. And so this affirmation to me is what we always have to look back to and keep in the front of our mind. It is a statement of our humanity in times that are inhumane. She said this when we saw Trayvon Martin murdered and his murderer left to walk out. This murderer went on to sign Skittles bags at gun shops and to do so for fame and fortune. So I want to say, I don't think the question should be, do black lives matter? No disrespect, of course. I'd rather talk about. To what extent do black lives matter? Or, my humanist friends are going to hate me for this, what value is placed on black life? Right now, if we want to think about it that way, there's no question, Black lives have always mattered. They mattered when they were put on those ships and take them through the Middle Passage, They mattered when they were sold for child slavery, They mattered when it came time for who could have wealth in this country, who could own property. They matter today when we look at the wage and the wealth gaps that still persist in this day and age. And certainly they matter regardless of what institutions and companies want to co-sign on them matter. For me right now, it's very interesting to see all the corporations and companies that are now signing on to say that Black Lives Matter, when they did not sign on when we saw what was happening with Trayvon Martin, they did not sign on when we saw what was happening in Ferguson, to the extent that even the work of the Ferguson Commission has not yet fully been carried out. So this question about do black lives matter? Oh, wow. It's amazing how three minutes passed. But let me go ahead and get to my ending because I wanted to make sure I put this back in Appalachia. I love the Internet because it introduces me to young folks who are doing amazing things. And I'm trying to give a good introduction to you, my friend, who's coming up next. I found a group called Black Appalachian Young and Rising Group, and I think that they answer this question very well. So for the original question, do black lives matter? They say our lives involve a history and current reality of brilliance and struggle. The complexities are many, the connections guide our celebration of blackness and also our strategy for change. Our beautiful existence intersects with state violence and erasures amongst systems of racism and economic injustice. Yes, they have.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you so much. And again, Miss Norwood. Good set up for young lives and what you're doing on the ground. So as a young scholar, community activist and in your opinion and lived experience in today's Appalachia, are you feeling about Black Lives Matter where you are from?

ALONA NORWOOD: So it's very similar to what the other panelists have said, of course, Black Lives Matter. I mean, I am a black life and I value myself. But when you look at the world around you, it's really hard to say black lives matter when black people are three times as likely to be arrested than their white counterparts for the same crime. And there's a clear lack of representation in the public school systems. I mean, my first black formal educator was in undergrad, freshman year, and to have a black educator literally changed my whole perspective on education. So for me, yeah, black lives do matter in Appalachia. It's just hard to feel like they matter as a black person at times because there's just so many forms of oppression that we're experiencing. But for me, proclaiming Black Lives Matter in Appalachia is important because you don't usually correlate black folk with the Appalachian region. And so in my own experience, you know, I've been questioned like you're from Appalachia and it's like I'm just as country as you. Why do you not hear that in my voice? I do not hear the twang. And, you know, I've heard people just be really confused whenever I say

I'm from Carter County and it's a little tiny town in the mountains. But, you know, as a biracial woman, I'll never be black enough and I'll never, ever be white. So I've had to kind of grapple with my existence as half black and half white. And it's it's been difficult because whenever you share your personal experiences of blackness, that lived experience becomes the epitome of what it means to be black to those white peers that you're sharing yourself with. And so by being biracial, I'm able to like coat switch and be in this unique position to relate to my white friends and family, but then also be able to learn more about the black experience. And so, simply put, and get black lives do matter. Not just in Appalachia, but in society as a whole. And I'm proclaiming that my black life matters because I'm a living, breathing human being who deserves respect and fair treatment. In this critical conversation that we're having right now and all across the country, quite frankly, is really important to break through those stereotypes of there not being black people in the Appalachian region and our lives not mattering. As I stated before, blackness is not a monolith. And they are brown and black people that have always lived in the Appalachian Mountains, and there are going to be more people to come. So we must normalize diversity amongst ourselves and then maybe the world around us will begin to understand why black lives matter.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: All right. Thank you so much. And last but certainly not least, Dr Watson, as a scholar and a teacher of young minds like Miss Norwood at East Tennessee State University, what is your perspective on Black Lives Matter?

DR ELWOOD WATSON: Well, first of all, I'd like to say I was very, very impressed when I heard with everybody today such eloquent commentary and very, very passionate and sincere, authentic commentary and... I'm glad to be a part of this. certainly our panel and symposium. That being said, do black lives matter? Yes and no. Yes. To those of us who are African-American or of African descent and believe that our lives are worth our humanity as well. But I would have to say, for some people, particularly many who are not black and particularly those who are white, are a segment of white America or a segment of white people in general internationally, no. It is clear that black lives do not have the same value as some of these individuals, as we saw with the recent murder of George Floyd, Brianna Taylor, Ammad Aubrey, and the list could go on and on and on. No, to these individuals, black lives do not matter. And I don't think black people, quite frankly, in the minds of certain whites, to be blunt, are seen as fully human. That is largely due to the historical devaluations, dehumanization and denigration of black people of black African descent. We were born to this country against our will largely and slave labor. We were not compensated for it. We were exploited, mistreated. In some cases, men and women sexually violated, women raped, denied all of us denied of our human dignity, robbed of our religion, our diet, our culture, our language, our name, and then basically our entire humanity. This has been going on and it has been modified and altered in different ways since the 17th century. So these values and I use that term values loosely that have been passed on to many other whites from generation to generation, have all been less than human to people of African descent. So I would say for some people, no, black lives do not matter. Black lives are seen as pretty much indifferent for black people. Of course, we see black lives that matter. We realize we're human beings. We're fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers, children, adults, and many, many other things that other people of all races are. And the Appalachian region I've been here for since 1997 and I've been here for pretty much almost a quarter of a century, I came to Appalachia, and Appalachia itself is a very unique area. I consider Tennessee to part, this part of Tennessee, not necessarily the South, it is the south geographically. But as far as the culture, the music and others, is it a Memphis? No. Is it the Deep South? No. But it does have its own unique flavor. And like anywhere else, racism does exist.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: So let's talk about that if we can if we can stay on that subject, particularly with the experience of Dr Turner and the experience of a younger new generation of protestor because protest is not new to the region of Appalachia, first of all, I think it's important to state that that it always has been seen as an area of protests and division on many levels, whether it's labor, whether it's this issue of slavery, Dr Turner, from having worked and lived and fought and lectured in the region, and looking at what you see

happening with young people today in the region, do you think the region is improving? Do you think people are getting the message that change is coming and is here? Or are we still struggling with historic issues?

DR WILLIAM H TURNER: I think we all agree that, Malcolm X was right a long time ago. That's why I don't want us to pull Appalachia out as though it's some other part of America. Malcolm X is once asked about the difference between racism and prejudice and the manifestations of white privilege, whether you were in the north or the south. And Malcolm used to say, "Don't talk about south. Anywhere south of the Canadian border is south." So in the sense that that really is a true state that people didn't like to hear, but it was always just a matter of did you have a little more human treatment in California as opposed to Arkansas, as opposed to Florida, as opposed to Nova Scotia? Everybody knew it is best to go across the border. So as long as you're in the United States, the nature of racism, they used to say that slavery was benevolent in Appalachia vis a vis slavery. And now what is benevolent slavery? Slavery is slavery. Though Appalachia just have fewer slaves. And the part where I grew up in eastern Kentucky and Harlan County is a prime example of how there are so many different parts of Appalachia. Darren grew up in Asheville, Buncombe County. The people who built the Biltmore states and on the other side of the mountain, so to speak, as the crow flies, the people that I came from. Many of whom came out of central Alabama, around Jefferson County, Alabama. They moved into central Appalachia because there was no great number of slaves already in there. And so after the Industrial Revolution, 1880's, lots and lots of blacks came. But, you know, we talked a little about the place. Was this a hotbed for labor strife, as you mentioned, and West Virginia? Did John Henry is all about where we're going to have a machine replace the men and the men replace that have been sort of black coal miners. And then there was the Highlander Center in East Tennessee, people who came in there, Rosa Parks, Dr King's, everybody came to East Tennessee to the height of the Senate in the 50s. The whites have always engaged out in the streets like they did in Black Lives Matter. Most of all, white people in the mountains of the south remember John Henry, John Henry, for example, in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, John Brown and Brown. That was a white man who said we need to take a militant approach to this slavery. And he enlisted some black folks. So you see a struggle, different levels of it, from one end of the extreme to what would the method be, to the other end of extreme, another type of method. It all manifested in the Appalachia region. In the words of the Appalachian Regional Commission in Birmingham is in Alabama, right? I'm sorry, in Appalachia.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Appalachia. People overlook Birmingham as part of that coal mining and iron industry chain, but Alona, as a young or new state, the new generation freedom fighter.

DR WILLIAM H TURNER: Right.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Have what has been productive from you for you looking at the history of it? And what do you think the young people are now willing to shed for the sake of the new generation of folk?

ALONA NORWOOD: So the first thing I want to comment on is just the way that we have been organizing in general, it's been very like I don't want to say spur of the moment for a lack of sounding unorganized, but in this digital age of 2020, like if you post too much stuff ahead of time, things can be interfered with and stuff like that. There's always a camera rolling. No matter where you go, like even if you're filming yourself, like there's so much documentation versus like how the old school organizers were going about it. I feel like media attention. It was very like strategic. And you had to like really put in an effort to document what was going on. But now there's like almost this higher level of accountability because someone, somewhere is going to be feeling like I've seen so many pictures of myself and videos and I had no idea I was being filmed or a picture being taken of me. And so I guess to go back to your question of like, what are we willing to shed? I think for a lot of us, if our privacy and a lot of it has to really be our pride because we want to act a certain way. And, you know, we want to be loud and get a little wild at times. But the more that we're organizing, we're having to learn that like sometimes you do have to play the game because a lot of the decision makers that we're speaking with are from an older generation. And so whenever we're coming out of, loud mouth,

harsh words, no filter, it could be a little off-putting. And people may not want to listen to that. So we're having to kind of go back to the drawing board and articulate a little bit better. And it's hard for me, even as a college educated person, but I've had to be really patient and understanding that I've been very privileged to have a first class education from Berea and not everybody has that opportunity. And so I've had to kind of balance and figure out what my place is, whenever people are expressing their trauma and their oppression in ways that I'm not familiar with, because their experience as a black person and their experience in Appalachia has been so different from my own. So I think we're kind of shedding our own personal identities and kind of trying to come together in like a form of solidarity and blackness.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And so and I want to come back to that. I see that we have a few questions coming in, but I'm curious to know, Kiran, being there and Jonesborough with the International Storytelling Center, have you received any adverse reaction to your adoption of the Black Freedom Stories Project? How is Jonesville reacting to, number one, the protest? And number two, the fact that the storytelling center is launching this new concept of culture in Appalachia?

KIRAN: Well, I think to be up front and two years ago, when we kind of came up with the idea to approach the National Endowment for the Humanities, I reached out to a past board member, Dr , who was one of the chief curators for the African-American Museum in Washington, DC, and a former board member and storyteller. And he approached me a question. It says, "It's important before I support this project, you need to ask the community, do we want it?" And I did. And we were inundated with letters of support. But I would say those letters support came from the black white dialogue that came from the town of Jonesville. It came from northeast Tennessee tourism when East Tennessee State University and the people. So in a sense, I think it's... I think people are wholly supportive of the idea of the Freedom Stories Project aims to do. Has it met with some resistance? Yes, there's an element of that. I also say, you know, impart is you know, a couple of years ago, a few years ago, when Dr Bernice King was here in our region, you know, Dr King and she said something that kind of stayed and she said the same thing that Donald Trump and Black Lives Matter have in common, bth have woken up this country to the great disparities that already exist, regardless of political beliefs. I think that's true. But one thing I have noticed when I was in Baton Rouge when Alton Sterling was killed. And one thing I notice as a new Appalachian that claims that brand Dr Turner talks about is that I've seen the systemic demonization of a legitimate movement, which I believe is actually embedded in integral to the storytelling movement. It is why, as a president of the International Storytelling Center, the National Storytelling Festival, the Freedom Stories Project is our first earmark project towards marking the 50th anniversary of the national storytelling renaissance. And so even if people don't agree, I'm afraid they're going to have to. In the sense that it's integral to the storytelling movement and it's important. Remember, this is an American tradition and it's an African-American tradition, but it's an American tradition.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you for that. And Dr Waters, I'm going to pose this next question to you. Is one of our questions from the audience is please speak to the evolution of the recognition of the diversity that has existed in Appalachia, particularly in the Black Lives Matter movement and connecting Appalachia to the growing Latinx population in places like Morristown, Tennessee, LBGTQ and white working class. How would you connect Black Lives Matter and our push for diversity with this movement?

DR DARIN WATERS: It's an interesting question, Dr Turley. I mean, this is connected. You know, I don't have to try to make that connection. I mean, the the racial demographics of this country and this region are changing whether we like it or not and whether some like it or not, it is going to change. And I think that it is incumbent upon us to to understand the contributions that each of these groups are making to continue to develop and build this region. I think I'm listening to the comments of my my colleagues on the panel. And what I'm getting here is a really good lesson of southern Appalachia writ large. I'm here, as Bill pointed out, in western North Carolina. And as you know, Asheville is a very, very different place. And that last question that you asked about whether or not people are beginning to accept and realize that change is occurring, you

can really see that that is very palpable here in Asheville. People are very accepting of that. What I am very proud to see in this work, I think it's been greatly enhanced by the work that we've been able to do through USC Asheville and to support the institution of higher education, is that there is a greater recognition there, as I said earlier, about the historical experiences of people of color in this region where that was once ignored. It is now being recognized in a very, I think, a very rich and powerful way. And that's important to me as a historian is is that our identity is fundamentally connected to that past experience, and it shapes us. And that's one of the things that I'm constantly saying. I'm I'm known to constantly are to often quote the 18th century of English Irish political philosopher Edmund Burke, who once said "That the world belongs to the living, the dead, and those yet to come." And I do believe that we inherit something from those who came before us. We will shape it, and then we will pass something on to the next generation. And we need to see that great historical continuity that exists there. And as the region change, I think it will become especially with the racial demographics, as they change, it will become even more richer in the what we will pass on will be even richer. So that is the way I would respond to that question.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you so much. We are getting a lot of questions that are being filtered to me. So this next question I'm going to direct to Dr Watson, and there's a question about our curriculum in Appalachia from an educator. And I know you've written about teaching and how we need to improve our educational formats, especially for students attending predominantly black students attending predominantly white institutions. So the educator is asking that he is saying that I firmly believe curriculum changes are paramount to educate all students on the real history of the United States, not the whitewashed version that currently exist. Have any of you and all open this up after Dr Watson's comments, or have any of you had any experience with policy change in the State Departments of Education since this movement began after the death of George Floyd, or I would say at any point along this spring? Have you had any success in changing the Department of Education curriculum?

DR ELWOOD WATSON: Well, I know as far as changing the Department of Education's curriculum as college professors, for the most part, we are at least at my institution, we're given a certain degree of academic freedom. So primarily the courses that I teach. And I do do a course on American ethnic and cultural history every now and then. But I also do a courses in African-American studies as history, because I'm also a professor of history, African-American studies and gender and sexuality studies. That being said, I pretty much, you know, certainly include, you know, blacks in Appalachia in my whenever I talk about African-American history in Africa study because I'm here in the region. So I do include that, incorporate that in my curriculum. But as far as, you know, interacting with the State Department of Education, if I'm hearing the question correctly, the Tennessee State Department of Education, they're not usually too involved, but with post-secondary education. So I think they would probably be more inclined to be involved with K through 12 education, because higher education would be a different dynamic. So I really can't answer that question at any effect, because, I mean, as far as I can tell you what I do. And as far as my teaching, yes, I do include, you know, African-Americans in Appalachia, in my curriculum, as well as blacks throughout all regions of the country as well.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: So how have any of the other panelists? Have any of the Departments of Education's asked you and your work to help them construct something that's a little more inclusive of Appalachian history? Have you had those requests?

DR DARIN WATERS: Dr Turley, I will say here through the work that we've done here at UC Asheville, when I came back to Asheville, I think back in 2010, we hosted a symposium that we thought would be a one and done symposium, it's turned into a seven year annual conference that we do on the history of African-Americans in western North Carolina and southern Appalachia. That we had the good fortune of having that project funded by the Mellon Foundation three years ago, and a piece of that work is to develop curriculum from the work that is presented at that conference each year. So that work is being going on here in Asheville

and in North Carolina for the past, at least as far as southern Appalachia is concerned. It's been ongoing here for the past four, for the past three to four years. And so, yeah, we are seeing that. And I would also reference that early on, back in 2009, I think a number of states, Tennessee has a commission that focuses specifically on the history of African-Americans in that state. North Carolina created such a commission back in 2009 called the North Carolina African-American Heritage Commission is run out of Raleigh and it has done significant work. I was on that commission, was one of the initial members of that commission back in 2009. And one of the first things that we did with in conjunction with the State Department of Education was to see to it that a study of the Wilmington race riot in in in in 1898 was actually published in looking for ways to incorporate that into the curriculum in our schools. So I'm proud of the fact that North Carolina, I think, is making that effort to see to it that these stories and this experience is incorporated into into the curriculum.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you so much. I'm gonna direct this. That is a question for you along on this from a person who wants to know how critical is it that we invest in our black youth after listening to your comments and they want to know what ways can people help uplift and support you and your work in the community, in your community and in the region?

ALONA NORWOOD: Well, that's a really good question. OK, so the first part of the question, how critical is it for education for the youth? Very critical. I don't really know how to even articulate how important it is. Just a quick little story, like whenever I realized I wanted to be a peace and social justice major, it was at a moment when the professor and the rest of the class were discussing. OK, so what do we do about all of this, like all of these systematic issues? How do we fix it? Right. And the only comprehensive answer that we could give as a class like 15 of us was education for the youth and for the old people. Anybody willing to listen and learn? Really? So it's for me personally, education, a comprehensive education is the key to fixing or not really fixing, but beginning to mend a lot of the issues that we do have in this country, because a lot of it is really just a lack of understanding.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: How can they help what you're doing now?

ALONA NORWOOD: Exactly. So if they're in the area, you know, white bodies are always welcome to protect black bodies. It's part of a power dynamic to keep each other safe. White people are just less likely to encounter violence at the hands of counter protestors or police officers. If you're not willing or able to come out to a protest, wrds of encouragement, resources. We have Facebook pages and things like that you guys can get connected on under a new generation Freedom fighters are closely working with and supporting the New Panther initiative, and they are more of a direct action kind of group, whereas my new generation freedom fighters are more based on policies. So if you guys wanted to make donations of any type of like nonperishable goods, cash donations through a GoFund me is acceptable...

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Anything that you could think of would be to act here, that that your website, New Generation Freedom Fighters, can be found on International Storytelling Center website. And I would encourage people to log on, check out your work site, the website and your work. And I , can you believe our time is is almost gone? And one of the last questions I will get to is the idea of how can we leverage the political moment? And I'll leave this open for anyone. How can we leverage this political moment to encourage the kind of real political and economic changes that the nation needs and move beyond symbolic victories?

DR SANDRA WEISSINGER: I would love to speak to that. I would love to. A couple of things. First, we have to support those young leaders who want to learn, who want support. And so certainly we've got Ms Norwood's group that we're speaking to, and in Appalachia, we also have the state project. These are young folks who want to stay in Appalachia and they want to Appalachia, and they want to make sure that they are leaders in their communities. They want to bring back jobs. They want to make sure that their voices are heard. And a project that they do that, I find and I'm not part of them, I get nothing for saying this.

ALONA NORWOOD: I am.

DR SANDRA WEISSINGER: OK, good. So a project that they do that I really appreciate is their storytelling initiative. It's the love stories. What do you love about this region? I want to tie this into the earlier question about curriculum. How do we keep this going and not let this just be some kind of slogan fair where we come back to it again and again because more and more people are being shot and murdered? Well, the way I see it is we start at home and we build up for you know, we are not necessarily changing policies for the Board of Education and Illinois. However, at our schools, we are changing our curriculum so that it is teaching folks about bias. It's teaching them about what revolutionary matters are. It's teaching them why equity matters. So for the question that you're asking, when we train young folks to be leaders and when we make sure that they are leaders that are speaking into our institutions and going to work in those institutions, that's how we have everlasting change. But for all of you all who are listening, who want to do something, keep asking questions. If your favorite coffee company decides that they want to say that black lives matter, Hld them to that, don't ask them to talk. Look for what they're doing. Right. I think we've got to back away from all of this talking and look at what people are doing and institutions are doing.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you. Dr Watson, I see you're you're are you wanting to respond?

DR ELWOOD WATSON: Yes, I would say primarily that I think it's a very, very important to take off without, you know, Dr Weissinger said, we have to be more concerned about, you know, substance as opposed to symbolic messages. Yes, I'm well aware of the power of symbols. And I know what symbols, symbols should not totally be discounted. But a lot of times, I think we get sometimes get distracted about, you know, symbols and statues and things of that nature as opposed to real substance, which is going to really be the difference. Like, for example, recently Mars and, you know, Quaker Oats have taken you know, they're going to get ready to answer Obama's, you know, picture off the all the pancake box and Uncle Ben's the cream of wheat. And while that is laudable, I think that is a good thing to do, because as far as I'm concerned, you know, Aunt Jemima and local bands, those terms are very, very, you know, you know, condescending on many levels. You know, as far as I'm concerned, Jemima's pancakes and Ben's rice would be just fine. But I think as far as that goes, we don't want to just get sidetracked on those type of issues. Corporations need to invest in the communities, you know, serious talk about reparations. I feel as far as I'm concerned, you know, I think reparations in the black community need to be a serious, serious talk. I think we need a Marshall Plan for our inner cities and our urban areas. I feel we need to look at, you know, free college tuition, you know, our total student loan forgiveness for people of color. I think we need to have mandatory training. Put it back on earlier question about the history of indigenous people and people of color in this country. So I think there are many, many ways where we could get corporations to go. Donating money is very, very good, but that is peanuts for Pepsi, Mars, Hershey, for what they make probably in a week to get twenty million, three or four million dollars to any kind of foundation, which is good. I'm not saying that's not a that's not a bad thing, but if that's the only gesture, that is a drop in the bucket for those companies for what they make. OK, so that's not that's not going to, you know, do too much financially to them as all as well. So many that make that much in a day in some cases, or even certainly within two days. So anyway, my point is we have to look at, you know, substance and reparations. I'm a big fan of that. And also, you know, real, real substantive issues, employing blacks in areas. You know, it's one thing to say stamens, the agile stigma that comes out is this is not the policy of our company. These are not the values of our company and all of that. Well, that's good. And we know that is good. That is the case. But what are you doing beyond that? OK. You know, employing blacks, it's in Hollywood studios, employing blacks in corporations like Pepsi, where you are decision makers and things of that nature. That's what we have to look at, employment. And also bring in black people from the marginalization of economic society and from the economics economics of our nation and into the mainstream, that where black people are at the table, are in Decision-Making, and that in and of itself, I feel, is going to be far, far more important. They just, you know, rallying around symbols and things of that nature. Now, that's another whole topic within itself. Yes. I don't believe, you know, Confederate statues

and things like that should be in the public square. They should be at museums where they belong. But we need to use them as a teaching method. But let's not get too distracted about symbols alone like that, as opposed to missing the real mark, which I think has to be more subtest issues, as I've just mentioned.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And with that, our time is up. So as an example of storytelling and the power of it, you can see I've got many questions here. We will not get too but feel free to continue to pose the questions. And we will encourage our scholars, if they wish to respond, will make that possible for them to respond to you. And I also want to thank Mama Linda, our storyteller for the black Appalachian story, our wonderful panelists for making time in their very busy schedules to join us in the discussion, and for our listeners and viewers for tuning in to this first story public discussion. We encourage you to join us for future public discussions. If you like this one, just think we've got 11 more to go. So I hope all of you have been inspired and can appreciate the power of storytelling and plan to join us for future stories. And until next time, we'll continue to connect communities one story at a time. Stay safe. Have a great holiday weekend. Thank you all for joining in.

DR ELWOOD WATSON: Thank you.

DR ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank everybody.