The only way is through

Whether our blinders were torn off in May or we are bearing the pain of the millionth cut, we will confront racism and its manifestations. There are many, and they are overwhelming and burrowed deeply into the fabric of our society and its institutions. Though Ohio State has a history of integration and initiatives created to diversify our community and to build access to higher education, it also has a history of inequity. Effort does not absolve us. Our shortcomings must not deter us. • No person, organization, business or elected body in the world has the power to reconcile 400 years of systemic racism. Yet we’re not helpless. When we see that the deep, abiding change we seek is out of reach, we’ll search within ourselves to understand how we can be part of solutions. We will sit with our discomfort and flaws. We’ll keep pushing institutions — the businesses we patronize, the cities where we live, the alma mater we love — to do better. We will not turn away. • We can learn a lot from the Ohio State faculty and staff who have dedicated their careers to tugging out rotten threads of our history and replacing them with equity and justice. And from alumni who lift their voices and skills in service to people who have been disenfranchised. And from students who have marched and written and organized. Individual actions do matter. What will you do to create a more equitable and just present and future? We hope the people you meet in these stories will lead you by their examples of grit, intellect and righteous determination. — KRISTEN SCHMIDT

MEET THE ARTIST Read an interview with illustrator Adrian Franks in which he explains the inspiration for and ideas behind his work for this story and what sparks his creativity. go.osu.edu/adrianfranks
Talking about race is not optional

BY ANDREA N. WILLIAMS

ANDREA N. WILLIAMS IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND INTERIM DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN’S PLACE.

WHEN I TEACH THE COURSE Colonial and U.S. Literature to 1865, often a student mentions, “I thought this class was supposed to be about literature. We keep talking about race.” Yes, we cover familiar writers of the period such as Thomas Jefferson, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. But for my slightly disgruntled student, the class had gone a step too far in delving into the world around those authors, beyond their supposed space. But addressing race isn’t simply a matter of repeatedly asking a crucial question: What role has racism played in creating the conditions around me? By doing so, we expose the myths of white superiority — in our traditions, symbols, policies and language (as with metaphors of darkness as evil). Finally, we can talk about race responsively, ready to act. To move beyond conversations to lasting change, we must challenge ourselves to repeatedly ask a crucial question: What role has racism played in creating the conditions around me? By doing so, we expose the myths of white superiority — in our traditions, symbols, policies and language (as with metaphors of darkness as evil).

In pursuing racial justice, we must challenge ourselves to repeatedly ask a crucial question: What role has racism played in creating the conditions around me? By doing so, we expose the myths of white superiority — in our traditions, symbols, policies and language (as with metaphors of darkness as evil). Finally, we can talk about race responsively, ready to act. To move beyond conversations to lasting change, we must implement steps, goals and realistic timelines for transformation. We have to march on. I just hope the candid conversations lead to permanent inequities. When shaping a conversation about race, discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established. Discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established.

When shaping a conversation about race, discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established.

In pursuing racial justice, we must challenge ourselves to repeatedly ask a crucial question: What role has racism played in creating the conditions around me? By doing so, we expose the myths of white superiority — in our traditions, symbols, policies and language (as with metaphors of darkness as evil). Finally, we can talk about race responsively, ready to act. To move beyond conversations to lasting change, we must implement steps, goals and realistic timelines for transformation. We have to march on. I just hope the candid conversations lead to permanent inequities. When shaping a conversation about race, discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established. Discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established.

People of color often are accustomed to a world of racial oppression. Reading, viewing or listening to new perspectives can prepare us to talk honestly with our family, colleagues and neighbors. Whether having spontaneous or planned conversations, think about what you’d like to accomplish with the time and insight you have at the moment. Then introduce new social concepts as the foundation for having more informed ongoing dialogue.

Reading, viewing or listening to new perspectives can prepare us to talk honestly with our family, colleagues and neighbors.

When shaping a conversation about race, discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established. Discussions proceed best when mutual trust is established.

By talking about race in the context of literature, history, science, business, the arts and other fields, we can reveal and challenge structural inequities. For many, meaningful change begins with talking about race reflectively, repeatedly and responsibly.

Beginning with self-reflection, we can think about our individual place within longer histories of racial oppression. Reading, viewing or listening to new perspectives can prepare us to talk honestly with our family, colleagues and neighbors.

By talking about race in the context of literature, history, science, business, the arts and other fields, we can reveal and challenge structural inequities. For many, meaningful change begins with talking about race reflectively, repeatedly and responsibly.

Beginning with self-reflection, we can think about our individual place within longer histories of racial oppression.
Students lead us closer to justice and equity

BY HASAN KWAME JEFFRIES

HASAN KWAME JEFFRIES IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY.

OUR NATION’S PROGRESS in embracing racial diversity and fairness has been excruciatingly slow and hard-fought. The same can be said of our strides at Ohio State. Yet, throughout our university’s history, we have benefited from the constant and impassioned voices of Black students urging us to be better.

Even when the university began admitting more African Americans, it let injustice in “race prejudice” stand. These groups allowed Black students to be themselves, affirming their lives mattered. The transformation of Ohio State from an institution that practiced racial segregation to one that values diversity and inclusion came haltingly. Change occurs over time, not because of force against African Americans. This whites-only residential practice. Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Summer Olympics. In Adolf Hitler’s Germany, he slept in integrated housing. At Ohio State, he had to sleep off campus. Students’ protests intensified in the mid-1900s, culminating in a dramatic takeover of what is now Bricker Hall on April 26, 1968, by about 60 Black Student Union members. Indictments and expulsions followed, as did more protests.

The students’ courage and conviction led to creation of today’s Department of African American and African Studies and Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Recruitment and retention efforts initiated by Vice Provost for Minority Affairs Frank W. Hale, Jr. in the 1970s and ’80s resulted in gains in Black student enrollment. Ohio State has built on Hale’s vision. Enrollment grew steadily through the 1990s, but waned from 2004 to 2017, in part due to changes in a federal reporting process. Since then, enrollment of Black students has been on a steady rise to a high of about 4,000 students on the Columbus campus last academic year. A staunch determination to continue our university’s evolution endures. In fact, I believe Black students’ commitment to eliminating racial discrimination on and off campus has never been stronger. Following George Floyd’s killing by Minneapolis police in May, Black students joined hundreds on campus, thousands in Columbus and millions around the country in marching for justice for victims of police violence and an end to systemic racism. Many are calling on Ohio State to sever ties with the Columbus Division of Police after numerous accounts of inappropriate use of force against African Americans.

Their demand is not unlike that made by Black students of the 1960s, who called on the university to divest of companies doing business in pro-apartheid South Africa, which it eventually did. As these and other examples illustrate, Black students have been on the right side of history, and they continue to push their university to be the diverse and equitable institution they know it can be.

Black students … continue to push their university to be the diverse and equitable institution they know it can be.

The students’ courage and conviction led to creation of today’s Department of African American and African Studies and Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Students came together in 1932 for a program marking the fourth anniversary of the assassination of human rights activist Malcolm X.

A diverse group led by students gathered in early June to protest the killing of George Floyd and other victims of police brutality.

Our incomplete promise

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES is working to better reflect the experiences of Black students and other underrepresented individuals at Ohio State within its collection. Tanner Chute, university archivist, explains: "Archives are not neutral. Archivists have historically collected the records of upper administration and other privileged members of our society, unintentionally or sometimes purposefully ignoring other records. To address this archival silences, we are pursuing records from underrepresented individuals who can help us fill in gaps in our university’s history." Help archivists ensure the collection is inclusive in its representation of the Ohio State community. Contact University Archives at archives@osu.edu.

Photos: Chemistry Junior, M. McCutty (2020 protest)

University Archivist TAMAR CHUTE contributed research for this story.

WATCH a two-part dialogue on the role of land-grant institutions such as Ohio State in societal conversations and changes around race, justice and equity, go.osu.edu/b.ORDERED

LEARN about unsung minoritized and marginalized alumni in the Carmen Collection, curated by Ohio State archivists. carmencollection.osu.edu

WATCH Malcolm Jenkins ’09, NFL star and Buckeye football alum, answers questions from Black male student athletes. go.osu.edu/JenkinsQA

Our story is missing yours

OUR STORY IS MISSING YOURS — UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES is working to better reflect the experiences of Black students and other underrepresented individuals at Ohio State within its collection. Tanner Chute, university archivist, explains: “Archives are not neutral. Archivists have historically collected the records of upper administration and other privileged members of our society, unintentionally or sometimes purposefully ignoring other records. To address this archival silences, we are pursuing records from underrepresented individuals who can help us fill in gaps in our university’s history.” Help archivists ensure the collection is inclusive in its representation of the Ohio State community. Contact University Archives at archives@osu.edu.

Photos: Chemistry Junior, M. McCutty (2020 protest)

University Archivist TAMAR CHUTE contributed research for this story.

WATCH a two-part dialogue on the role of land-grant institutions such as Ohio State in societal conversations and changes around race, justice and equity, go.osu.edu/b.ORDERED

LEARN about unsung minoritized and marginalized alumni in the Carmen Collection, curated by Ohio State archivists. carmencollection.osu.edu

WATCH Malcolm Jenkins ’09, NFL star and Buckeye football alum, answers questions from Black male student athletes. go.osu.edu/JenkinsQA

Our story is missing yours

OUR STORY IS MISSING YOURS — UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES is working to better reflect the experiences of Black students and other underrepresented individuals at Ohio State within its collection. Tanner Chute, university archivist, explains: “Archives are not neutral. Archivists have historically collected the records of upper administration and other privileged members of our society, unintentionally or sometimes purposefully ignoring other records. To address this archival silences, we are pursuing records from underrepresented individuals who can help us fill in gaps in our university’s history.” Help archivists ensure the collection is inclusive in its representation of the Ohio State community. Contact University Archives at archives@osu.edu.

Photos: Chemistry Junior, M. McCutty (2020 protest)

University Archivist TAMAR CHUTE contributed research for this story.

WATCH a two-part dialogue on the role of land-grant institutions such as Ohio State in societal conversations and changes around race, justice and equity, go.osu.edu/b.ORDERED

LEARN about unsung minoritized and marginalized alumni in the Carmen Collection, curated by Ohio State archivists. carmencollection.osu.edu

WATCH Malcolm Jenkins ’09, NFL star and Buckeye football alum, answers questions from Black male student athletes. go.osu.edu/JenkinsQA

Our story is missing yours

OUR STORY IS MISSING YOURS — UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES is working to better reflect the experiences of Black students and other underrepresented individuals at Ohio State within its collection. Tanner Chute, university archivist, explains: “Archives are not neutral. Archivists have historically collected the records of upper administration and other privileged members of our society, unintentionally or sometimes purposefully ignoring other records. To address this archival silences, we are pursuing records from underrepresented individuals who can help us fill in gaps in our university’s history.” Help archivists ensure the collection is inclusive in its representation of the Ohio State community. Contact University Archives at archives@osu.edu.

Photos: Chemistry Junior, M. McCutty (2020 protest)

University Archivist TAMAR CHUTE contributed research for this story.

WATCH a two-part dialogue on the role of land-grant institutions such as Ohio State in societal conversations and changes around race, justice and equity, go.osu.edu/b.ORDERED

LEARN about unsung minoritized and marginalized alumni in the Carmen Collection, curated by Ohio State archivists. carmencollection.osu.edu

WATCH Malcolm Jenkins ’09, NFL star and Buckeye football alum, answers questions from Black male student athletes. go.osu.edu/JenkinsQA
RIPE FOR CHANGE

Buckeyes learning by example

A force for the children

DONNA FORD IS A DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECYLOGY.

DONNA FORD WAS BORN A FIGHTER and lives a fighter. On the morning we talk, she is battling an academic journal’s plan to dedicate an issue to Lewis Terman, who was a psychologist and leading proponent of eugenics. Conversely, she also is energized by the previous evening’s meeting of a five-part public course she is co-teaching called Black Minds Matter.

“I started off talking about one of the worst things going on in the field of gifted education, but I also have these bright moments that I can rely on to stay optimistic and faithful,” she says. “That’s what I look for so I don’t just snap, crackle and pop.”

Ford, distinguished professor in the Department of Educational Studies, is a leading expert in gifted education, specifically in closing the gap in access to gifted education for Black and brown children and for youngsters who live in poverty. Reasons they are underrepresented include a lack of teacher referrals and the bias of evaluations to determine giftedness toward white, economically privileged children and districts. Ford has frequently and powerfully spoken about her personal history as a gifted student — and the parent of a gifted child — who defined systemic discrimination to become an advocate for children.

What are some changes in gifted education you’ve seen in your career? When it comes to underrepresentation of minority students, in particular Black and Hispanic, honestly, and sadly, and unfortunately, I don’t see many changes. The underrepresentation has basically stayed the same over my 30 years in gifted education, and I’ve written about and exposed those discrepancies. Black students are usually underrepresented by an average of 60% in the United States. For Hispanic students, it’s around 40%. That is severe, that is inequitable. But I do see individual school districts willing to have professional development, have honest discussions and dialogs and change their policies, procedures and instruments. I see more willingness; I’m just waiting for the results from a national level. I’m not happy with what’s going on thus far.

When people think about gifted education and Black and Hispanic students, as well as those who live in poverty, they think about Donna Ford. I’m not bragging. It relates to me being blunt and direct, it relates to my publications, and it relates to a court case in [Elgin, Illinois] District U-46, where I was able to quantify equity. I am proud to have co-created the Bloom-Banks Matrix, the only matrix that helps teachers promote a rigorous, relevant, multicultural curriculum. Anti-racist education is essential for all students.

“Me, for silence is not the way to address inequities and injustices. I have to speak up.”

What helps you keep the faith? I just refuse to give up on the children. If I give up on our children, the situations get worse. I believe there are good teachers out there — not enough, I have to say — and administrators and leaders out there. For me, silence is not the way to address inequities and injustices. I have to speak up. I think about the late Congressman John Lewis saying get in “good trouble.” It was only recently that I heard he had said that. I’m willing to take on any and everyone, including the field, to do what is right for children who need advocates. When we work together, we won’t have these injustices. Yes, we have to work more for those who have the heart. That’s what I do, and that’s what keeps me going.

Heeding an outcry for change

GIVEN RECENT CIVIL UNREST, Columbus City Council members announced we would embark on a path to intentionally explore criminal justice reform. This idea of reimagining public safety in Columbus has started with exploring police militarization, potential hate-group affiliation by police officers, no-knock warrants and the implementation of a civilian review board.

The real work of criminal justice reform should not and does not happen overnight. But we’ve accelerated some of these issues because of the outcry from residents and to further demonstrate our commitment to reform. This is one of the most important issues we’re tackled since I’ve been a member of council. We have received thousands of emails, not just from Columbus residents but from our suburban communities and from around the country, calling for change — all different types of change, but all on the subject of public safety and our police department.

This is not a new movement. These are battles that members of the African American community have been fighting forever. But now it has gotten the attention of the masses, and it’s important that we as a council don’t let this moment pass us by. People are very uncomfortable with having conversations about race, but I welcome that uncomfortable conversation. That means minds are being changed, hearts are being changed, priorities are being shifted. That’s when things start to move. — AS TOLD TO SHEILEY MANN ’85
It’s time to change policing

JUDSON JEFFRIES IS A PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES.

WHEN PEOPLE OF COLOR encounter a police officer, your goal is: “Let me see if I can navigate this situation in such a way where I’m able to drive away safely or walk away.”

You can’t have a true democracy when those who are sworn to serve and protect us are seen as the enemy and are murdering us with impunity.

My older brother was a police officer. I understand it’s a very stressful, tough job. Expecting them to be a Swiss Army knife for every societal issue is a burden that shouldn’t be placed on them. At the same time, police officers should be held to a very high standard.

Americans encounter them frequently, and in many instances, their job involves preservation of life. The folks who broached this idea of defunding or abolishing the police weren’t entirely clear about what they meant. Wholesale defunding? That’s absurd. Abolishing the police? That’s not meaningful. What do they mean? I believe it is my responsibility to understand the needs of the communities we serve and where the greatest vulnerabilities are. For example, some of the early testing sites were not in communities of color, so it was hard for people to get tested. Fortunately, Ohio State already was focused on community engagement and community health. Longstanding relationships with trusted partners were able to be leveraged for action. It wasn’t like we were trying to create this network once COVID-19 hit. But there is a long road ahead. We didn’t get here quickly, and we won’t eliminate these problems quickly.

Can you tell us about the medical center’s new anti-racism action plan?

I am so proud to be part of this work. We felt it was essential to apply anti-racist thinking and action in policies, education, training and activity. We need to continue educating people that racism is a public health crisis and work to create a culture of accountability and safety for all Ohio State leaders, students, trainees and employees. This plan moves us from rhetoric to action. Fortunately, a lot of people want to do the work; they are asking to be involved. We are building something at Ohio State that can truly be useful well beyond our environment and our state. I am so happy I came back to be here in this moment. — JOSHUA WRIGHT

Our race shouldn’t determine our health

DR. J. NWANDO OLAYIWOLA IS CHAIR AND PROFESSOR IN THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER’S DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE.

Within your own practice, are you seeing disparities among COVID-19 patients?

We’ve seen in central Ohio is not far off from what we’ve been seeing across the country — higher rates of both infection and more severe illness in African American populations than in white populations. Additionally, we have housing insecurity, homelessness, food insecurity, chronic disease, poverty, congested living conditions, economic injustice and many other derivatives of racism and structural oppression that perpetuate health risks for Black and minority populations and make them more vulnerable. If you combine these and then layer on a pandemic, it should not surprise us when we see magnified health disparities. But we cannot resign and blame the vulnerabilities — we must act.

How can we address these obstacles?

It’s important that we understand the needs of the communities we serve and where the greatest vulnerabilities are. For example, some of the early testing sites were not in communities of color, so it was hard for people to get tested. Fortunately, Ohio State already was focused on community engagement and community health. Longstanding relationships with trusted partners were able to be leveraged for action. It wasn’t like we were trying to create this network once COVID-19 hit. But there is a long road ahead. We didn’t get here quickly, and we won’t eliminate these problems quickly.

Use privilege in service to others

NIKKI BĄSZYNKI ‘13 JD IS SENIOR ADVISOR FOR THE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE, A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION WORKING TO END DEHUMANIZATION AND EXTREME VULNERABILITY.

THE LIMITS OF THE LAW TO DELIVER CHANGE should by now be readily apparent. Justice, freedom, equality — these are not realities achieved through legal briefs or bestowed through court orders. Certainly, small strides can be made using the law, but those steps will never be enough to get us to a future that people across the country have taken to the streets to demand.

White supremacy is the root of our problems. I believe it is my responsibility as a white person and a white lawyer to work to dismantle systems of white supremacy. It is work that cannot — should not — be done alone. We must work in partnership with and in service of the movement.

People are organizing together and pushing for change in ways that I’ve never seen in my lifetime, to defund the police, to empty our prisons, to reimagine public safety. Volunteering with the National Lawyers Guild has given me opportunities to support those efforts. For me, supporting the movement means being in relationship to others, listening and following the lead of those directly impacted. It means figuring out what tools can help those pushing for change navigate an intentionally opaque legal system and doing what I can to provide those tools and resources.

Studying the problem and learning our history helps me do my best — though I’m sure I fail — not to unintentionally harm or undermine community efforts. I hear people say this work will make you uncomfortable. But if you’re really reckoning with our history of racial oppression and violence, it won’t just make you uncomfortable — understanding why we need to do the work will devastate you. — AS TOLD TO TODD JONES

READ
the essay “How Defund and Disband Became the Demands” by Anna Akbar, associate professor in the Moritz College of Law.
go.osu.edu/sbdefense

WATCH
a music video for “Constitution Song,” created by Peter Shane, professor in the Moritz College of Law.
go.osu.edu/constitutionsong
Give cities tools to change and heal

LAWYER CARL SMALLWOOD ’77, ’80 JD AND JOSEPH “JOSH” STULBERG, EMERITUS PROFESSOR IN MORITZ COLLEGE OF LAW, ARE CO-DIRECTORS OF THE DIVIDED COMMUNITY PROJECT.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF CIVIL UNREST following the 2014 death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, lawyers and mediators met to discuss how they might be able to support local leaders and community stakeholders in addressing conflict in their communities.

What emerged from the conversation was ideas on how to address and resolve differences outside of a courtroom. Those ideas grew into the Divided Community Project, now co-directed by Joseph “Josh” Stulberg and Carl Smallwood ’77, ’80 JD.

“A government leader from Sanford [Florida, where Trayvon Martin was killed in 2012] said: ‘You know, we think about the surface. But they are a part of the everyday life of the citizens in the community, and they divide those communities quite clearly. If not addressed, they have the potential to turn into unrest.’

What is a successful outcome?

Stulberg: If there are sustained collaborations, we would view that as a very positive sign — not just in a one-off, we’re past that incident kind of thing, but an initiative that in a tangible way is trying to make the community resilient.

What are some of the biggest lessons learned?

Stulberg: One thing we’ve learned is that when the person who communicates the initial message, the leader, responds promptly — even without “full information” — it’s a positive contributor to the people who are experiencing harm. Contrast that with, “We’re still in the process of gathering information.” That response, in these situations, has an adverse impact.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF CIVIL UNREST

Following the 2014 death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, lawyers and mediators met to discuss how they might be able to support local leaders and community stakeholders in addressing conflict in their communities.

What emerged from the conversation were ideas on how to address and resolve differences outside of a courtroom. Those ideas grew into the Divided Community Project, now co-directed by Joseph “Josh” Stulberg and Carl Smallwood ’77, ’80 JD.

“A government leader from Sanford [Florida, where Trayvon Martin was killed in 2012] said: ‘You know, we think about the surface. But they are a part of the everyday life of the citizens in the community, and they divide those communities quite clearly. If not addressed, they have the potential to turn into unrest.’

What is a successful outcome?

Stulberg: If there are sustained collaborations, we would view that as a very positive sign — not just in a one-off, we’re past that incident kind of thing, but an initiative that in a tangible way is trying to make the community resilient.

What are some of the biggest lessons learned?

Stulberg: One thing we’ve learned is that when the person who communicates the initial message, the leader, responds promptly — even without “full information” — it’s a positive contributor to the people who are experiencing harm. Contrast that with, “We’re still in the process of gathering information.” That response, in these situations, has an adverse impact.

Why is your work vital at this moment?

Stulberg: We have avoided a conversation about issues that divide us and our differences for too long — and it has now given rise to pain along so many fractures in our communities.

All art is political

JARED THORNE IS A PHOTOGRAPHER AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ART.

JARED THORNE PHOTOGRAPHS mainly with what he calls an “antiquated 4x5 view camera that slows everything down.” Straightforwardly as his images appear, they dissect dominant white ideas about whom art is for, by and about.

How did living in post-apartheid South Africa inform your work?

People forget or refuse to acknowledge the United States was founded on state-sanctioned racism and segregation, so living in South Africa felt eerily familiar. At least in South Africa, the people in power admit these atrocities transpired. In the global south, references are less Eurocentric. If the history of art doesn’t begin and end in Europe, new ideas can be cultivated. It was refreshing to walk into galleries where the blue-chip artists are men and women of color. I brought back different sets of references on how to address issues of subjectivity and identity.

Toni Morrison talked about art free of the white gaze. How do you bring this approach to your work?

For too far, those questions are asked only to people of color. It would be interesting to ask more white artists about the role that white supremacy plays in their work. I’m interested in the complexity of Black subjectivity. Blackness not as a response to whiteness, but Blackness in all of its inherent nuances and complications.

How can art dismantle racism?

All art is political. Art is something that’s deeply personal and sometimes the politics will be displayed more overtly. People need to put their work out in the world and see what happens. You can’t control how people will respond to your art, but you can control your output.

FOLLOW composer Mark Lomax II ’07, ’10 MM, ’13 DMA on YouTube, where he leads Drumversations — thought-provoking conversations about racism and injustice punctuated by his incredible musicianship. youtube.com/cfgmultimedia

All art

is political
This is everybody’s business

EBONY IGWEBUIKE-TYE ’93 IS A SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR AND REALTOR IN COLUMBUS.

FOR A BUSINESS, STANDING AGAINST RACISM now is not risky because other companies are doing it. Companies need to do more than make commercials showing support with the new buzzword. “They need to ask, ‘Not only do we care about you as a consumer, but we also care about you as a population group. How can we help identify and fix some of these issues that are affecting you?’”

For this business, meaningful change starts internally with tolerance policies, diversity training and continuing education requirements on diversity. Have external people come in and do an actual internal analysis of your process. Is the company’s culture conducive to people of color? Do they feel like there are opportunities for advancement — the same for them as other people? Companies must make sure that people of color are around the tables at the board and upper-management levels. Tie senior executives’ pay to measurable progress on diversity goals. That would force meaningful action. The playing field is not level. The system keeps African American businesses from being able to grow their companies. Financial institutions need to champion African American businesses.

Everybody’s business is literally trying to hang on by a thread because of this pandemic. But when you lead an African American business, you don’t have the same access to capital. You don’t have the same access to loans. It’s so important to keep the momentum going. It’ll take people saying, “Listen, I’m not just worried about this right now, but I’m worried about this until it gets resolved.” Then it’ll feel like it’s not just African Americans who are concerned, but it’s Americans concerned about fellow Americans. I’m optimistic, but I’m also realistic. — AS TOLD TO TODD JONES

Finding truths in data

TREVON LOGAN IS THE HAZEL C. YOUNGBERG DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AND ASSOCIATE DEAN IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES.

AROUND 10 YEARS AGO, economist Trevon Logan began investigating the effects of segregation — the degree to which people sort themselves spatially according to racial identity. Logan writes and researches at the intersection of history, economics and geospatial mapping, work that has revealed segregation’s relationship to lynching and other violence, health outcomes, access to wealth and homeownership.

His findings appear intuitive: You can understand how segregation could create conditions for discrimination that bridge generations. “But it ends up being novel,” Logan says. “It has strong practical import for people who think about historical context and what that might mean today. It’s important historically, and we think it’ll be important today. It turns out that it is.”

Segregation, Logan’s work shows, is a predictor of many aspects of a Black or white person’s life in a given community — and concurrently an indicator of the attitudes and beliefs of white people in the same place. This work has pushed past old measurements and assumptions. Studies of racial harmony or discord in the past might be examined through the proportions of white and Black people in a given Census tract, for example, not through a close investigation of who lived next to whom. Logan’s work demonstrates the identity of your neighbor matters. In the context of nationwide calls for justice, his research has broader meaning. “We would not be able to draw these links between segregation, political participation and police shootings without diverse perspectives, which are predominantly African American,” he says. “We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities and we’re thinking about the mechanisms.”

For Logan, the intensified relevance of his work tells a story about why it’s crucial for universities to invest in faculty and researchers. He considers the work of researchers who have dedicated careers to studying coronaviruses. “You really do need those virologists and those public health researchers. You want a community of scholars thinking deeply about [these issues] because you’ll need their expertise and their perspective,” he says. “These things really do lend themselves to the reason, the justification, for why we study these topics and why we have research universities.”

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”

READ “Challenging Race as Risk,” a report by Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity researchers on the effect of implicit bias on housing opportunity and suggested next steps. go.osu.edu/housingbias

WATCH economist Trevon Logan’s 2018 Masterminds series talk “Finding Meaning Economic Narratives.” go.osu.edu/logomasterminds

“This is everybody’s business. Safety is a huge motivator for them. The extraordinary stress they live under is bad for their health and their kids’ health. They don’t have a choice really, because of their credit scores, and their income, and a housing history that is bad for their health and their kids’ health. Everybody’s business is literally trying to hang on by a thread because of this pandemic. But when you lead an African American business, you don’t have the same access to capital. You don’t have the same access to loans. It’s so important to keep the momentum going. It’ll take people saying, ‘Listen, I’m not just worried about this right now, but I’m worried about this until it gets resolved.’ Then it’ll feel like it’s not just African Americans who are concerned, but it’s Americans concerned about fellow Americans. I’m optimistic, but I’m also realistic. — AS TOLD TO TODD JONES

MOVE TO PROSPER is a program that blends housing support with comprehensive coaching to free families of the cycle of housing instability. Rachel Garshick Kleit serves as its steering committee chair. “These folks are working full time, trying to build a good life for their kids. Safety is a huge motivator for them. The extraordinary stress they live under is bad for their health and their kids’ health. They don’t have a choice really, because of their credit scores, and their income, and a housing history that is bad for their health and their kids’ health. Everybody’s business is literally trying to hang on by a thread because of this pandemic. But when you lead an African American business, you don’t have the same access to capital. You don’t have the same access to loans. It’s so important to keep the momentum going. It’ll take people saying, ‘Listen, I’m not just worried about this right now, but I’m worried about this until it gets resolved.’ Then it’ll feel like it’s not just African Americans who are concerned, but it’s Americans concerned about fellow Americans. I’m optimistic, but I’m also realistic. — AS TOLD TO TODD JONES

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”

“We are able to speak to issues that are pertinent today because we come from these communities.”
The Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 50

It was a sunny day during the tumultuous spring of 1968. Hunger for change was in the air, and so when four Black students were ordered off an Ohio State shuttle bus by a white driver, Black Student Union leaders went into action. They mounted a day-long occupation of Ohio State’s Administration Building — now Bricker Hall — demanding simple but powerful demands: Establish a Black studies department, recuit more Black students, hire more Black faculty. The day ended in controversy when 34 students were arrested. Eventually, eight were acquitted. By 1970, the university had established a Black studies department and created the Office of Minority Affairs, headed by Frank W. Hale Jr., to recruit Black graduates and undergraduate students.

Known today as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, this structure built from thousands of students with scholarship, tutoring and enrichment programs. It’s at the heart of the university’s renewed sense of urgency to address persistent racial injustice and inequity. — Aaron Marshall

Addressing deep-rooted inequity

James L. Moore III and Inequity.

How do you right the wrongs of systemic racial inequity? That’s the challenge issued to the 17-member Task Force on Racism and Racial Inequities. We spoke to co-chairs James L. Moore III and Tom Gregoire about the long road forward.

How is this conversation going so far? Gregoire: We’ve seen more compassion and more courage in the last few months from my colleagues than ever before. People who might have seen themselves as bystanders are contemplating the possibility that isn’t helpful anymore and really never was.

What can alumni do? Gregoire: All of our alumni could begin by being curious. We’ve all been taught a particular way of thinking about race. How else could I view this and what are the implications if I do?

Moore: The greatest ambassadors for our university are our alumni. They need to continue to be leaders and carry forward this banner of multiculturalism and inclusion. I would hope our alumni to be there for our Black and minority students, faculty and other members of the campus community by addressing these demands.

JOSEPH OTENG
SECOND-YEAR LUNK STUDENT
CREATOR OF YOUTHFUL LUNK WORKSHOPS, INSTAGRAMS AT @JOE-JOTENG45

“This summer, I spent a lot of time building a series of workshops and videos and infographics to educate people on anti-racism, allyship and social justice. How can I welcome people to a conversation that they’ve always been invited to in ways that are accessible, with grace and kindness, and provides them the space and time to cultivate that sense of racial literacy?”

ROAYA HIGAZI
SECOND-YEAR STUDYING CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING
CHAIR OF THE NEWLY FORMED UNDERGRADUATE BLACK CAUCUS

“A lot of the students who are on the front lines organizing on Ohio State’s campus, we’re not just Black, we’re queer Black students, or we’re Black students with disabilities or we’re Black students who have mental health issues. We all hold multiple identities.

I think that when we’re talking about justice, it really is important to acknowledge that we’re talking about justice for all.”

JESSICA KAVINSKY
FOURTH-YEAR STUDYING GERMAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
ACTIVIST, ORGANIZER AND CURATOR OF TONING-WITH-OUT-LYING

“That first Thursday night was the first time I’ve ever been face-to-face with someone who wanted to do violence to me. I was looking in the cop’s eyes and it was the first time I’ve ever feared like that. That was a privilege, to never have experienced that before. Since that night, it’s just been on my mind, trying to do just my part that I can as a white person, to use my privilege to help the movement.”

KEI LATIO
THIRD-YEAR STUDYING RESPIRATORY THERAPY
VICE CHAIR OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE, UNDERGRADUATE BLACK CAUCUS

“People must move me for my bakery. It’s been a hobby, but then a kind of turned into a community commitment thing when I realized I have this talent and when I share it with other people, they really enjoy it. We were able to raise $4,000 for the Louisville Community Bail Fund in about nine days. (It) was exciting to see how one hobby can make a lot of change.”

PHOTO BY: Mehdi Ahmadi

ROBEY HOGAN
FOURTH-YEAR STUDYING POLITICAL SCIENCE
ACTIVIST AND ORGANIZER

“The first protest I went to — a little crazy but it felt really good, it got me really motivated knowing that there are tons of people who are willing to be active in this movement. I’ve been spending the last couple weeks organizing an event that celebrates the voices of Black women and members of the LGBTQ plus community. My parents have always told me, ‘Use your voice.’ What’s the worst that could happen? Someone says no?”

Jasmin Chakravarty
Morgan McDonald
THIRD-YEAR STUDYING ART EDUCATION
ACTIVIST AND ORGANIZER

“I’ve been doing a lot of educating myself and putting that back into art. I just want people to waste for a moment: Where people look at it and kind of stop and they’re like, ‘Oh, maybe I really need to reconsider that view I have.’ Because if you have someone, or if you don’t know someone, and you don’t have that feeling then you’re just going to continue acting on that hate.”

University students assume a unique role in movements for civil rights and social justice. While protests across the United States this year have been remarkable for their diversity — embraced by several generations and people who claim diverse identities — students remain critical voices in leadership. Meet eight Ohio State students taking action for justice, peace, and equality. — Jasmine Hilton

How do you see the movement growing? Gregoire: It’s happening in different ways — some of it is through actions on Ohio State’s campus, some of it is through actions in the community, some of it is through organizing on Ohio State’s campus, some of it is through organizing in the community. It’s happening in a lot of different ways.

Moore: People who might have seen themselves as bystanders are contemplating the possibility that isn’t helpful anymore and really never was.
Our promise — and invitation

THIS ISSUE MARKS THREE YEARS since Ohio State Alumni Magazine received a makeover in body and spirit. Readers tend to notice the body part — the contemporary look of the magazine, the beautiful photography and design. Speaking as a member of the team that brings you this magazine every quarter, that’s the relatively easy part. There are rules, hard and fast, down to the amount of space between lines of text. The part we pour love and labor into, what we nurture and worry about, is the spirit.

With each issue, are we meeting the promise we made to you — to make this publication a gathering place for Ohio State’s vast alumni family? Are we honoring our pledge to create space to celebrate achievements and engage in important dialogues, just as we might with our own family members?

With a 16-page package of stories about racism in this issue, we unequivocally recognize systemic racism, a plain fact that is bewilderingly divisive. We state this plainly and without reservation: Racism is not only alive in America. It is thriving and breaking bodies and hearts. It will not be legislated or marched or wished away. Racism — the created notion that skin color denotes human value and privilege — is inextricably rooted in American life.

We can debate and disagree on so many things. What does “defund the police” really mean? What are the best ways to create access to quality education for all children? How can every American receive state-of-the-art health care? How will we ensure the treasures of our culture — our works of art and creative expression — reflect our entire culture? But we will not debate the truth at the heart of those questions: Our nation is rife with inequities, and those inequities must not stand.

With this collection of stories about racism — including acknowledgement that Ohio State must work harder in its quest for equity — we are inviting you to conversations that make some people squirm. We can’t make this easy or comfortable. But we have made our best effort to make it constructive and thought-provoking. We, an all-white magazine staff, could not have done this work without the advice and input of a team of advisors from many areas of the university, including the people who appear on these pages. We have blind spots, and these alumni, faculty, staff and students helped us recognize them. We have relied on the constructive and refreshingly pointed feedback of colleagues who are Black, Indigenous and people of color who have questioned our assumptions, led us toward knowledge and served as full partners in delivering these stories to you. We could not — and should not — have done it without them.

In the same vein, this magazine is nothing without you and your voices. We hope never to become a monolith speaking at you from a faceless institution. We hope to both reflect and shape Ohio State through the voices in this gathering place. We always invite your letters and reactions to this magazine, and we redouble that invitation now. As we say in the message that opens our stories about racism, the only way is through. We can’t sit out this conversation or wait for it to pass. It will not pass. It will continue to fester and destroy lives and generations of our neighbors. Let’s do the hard work together. Let’s talk about it and act on it. ✫