1965 was a pivotal year in the history of the black freedom struggle in the United States. In August of that year the Voting Rights Act was signed into legislation, Malcolm X was assassinated, the Selma to Montgomery marches took place, and the Watts rebellion erupted in Los Angeles. In our contemporary moment, fifty years later, again resistance and struggle seems to be rising to the forefront.

Speaking alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky in 1967, Muhammad Ali, the great boxing champion and activist said “In your struggle for freedom, justice and equality I am with you. I came to Louisville because I could not remain silent while my own people, many I grew up with, many I went to school with, many my blood relatives, were being beaten, stomped and kicked in the streets simply because they want freedom, justice and equality in housing.” Forty-eight years later we see and hear similar sights and sounds of the black freedom struggle in the streets of Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, Maryland while supporters also take to the streets in their local cities because they too desire justice and equality.

Just as in the black freedom struggle in the 1960s African American artists, athletes and entertainers are using their talents and platforms to critique injustice and to encourage resistance. Perhaps one major difference today is the proliferation of social media which connects people nationally and internationally to events as they are unfolding in real time straight from the ground. It is with all of the above in mind that the Black Cultural Center selected for fall 2015 the theme “The Black Freedom Struggle: Historical Narratives, Contemporary Echoes.”

Our fall calendar features poets, athletes, actors and artists who incorporate the theme in their work and activism. As part of the study of the theme, the Purdue BCC will sponsor a 5-day fall research tour to Birmingham and Selma, Alabama. This trip serves as a vehicle for education and reflection about struggle and equality. The BCC will utilize sites related to Civil Rights events in Birmingham and Selma to trace the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the 20th century. During the tour, we will retrace the steps of Dr. King and other civil rights heroes. Students will relive the bravery of the people who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. This area of the country has an exceptionally rich history that provides a ready-made laboratory for studying the Civil Rights Movement. Through a combination of scholarly lectures, site visits, master class art instruction, and guided tours, research tour participants will come to a comprehensive understanding of the history of a segregated society and the continuing struggle to dismantle it.

By Juanita Crider, Editor
The Black Cultural Center is a vibrant element of University life, offering a wealth of programs and services for the entire campus community. The BCC takes great pride in providing programs and services that enable students to reach their full potential. The BCC brings together the wonderful diversity of the Purdue family by nurturing and presenting the rich heritage of the African American experience through art, history and cultural understanding. The center sponsors outstanding student performing arts ensembles in dance, drama, choral music, photography and creative writing. We also host a scholarly ensemble dedicated to research on the Black experience. I encourage you to actively participate in BCC programs, utilize the BCC library for research and take full advantage of our computer lab. There is a false perception that the BCC is exclusively for the African American community, yet nothing could be further from the truth. Our goal is to engage the entire campus community regardless of ethnic origin to experience the magnificent offerings of the BCC and learn about Black history and culture.

Your involvement in the BCC will promote your personal growth and development. Research demonstrates that students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that expect them to succeed, settings that provide academic and social support and settings that involve students as valued members of the institution. That is exactly the type of setting you will find at the BCC. We empower students and promote cultural and academic excellence.

This fall we have launched a new tag line, for the Purdue BCC – “The Center of It All.” The goal of this marketing campaign is for you to view the BCC as the nucleus of your Purdue experience. We have something for everyone. You can begin your engagement with the BCC by visiting the center, tour the facility, view the art exhibitions, pick up a Cultural Arts Series calendar that promotes our program offerings and join one of our performing arts ensembles. “The Center of It All” is easy to access, we are strategically positioned between the residential and academic community, centrally located at 1100 Third Street. “The Center of It All” provides social, cultural and academic support. We are a place where the African American experience can be explored, celebrated and shared. I look forward to seeing you at the BCC soon!

Renee Thomas, BCC Director
Unearthing Our Roots of Racism

By Javon Walker staff writer

The Black Cultural Center along with co-sponsor Indiana Voices of Women is hosting a series of three films from the “Unearthing Our Roots of Racism” film series. I recently spoke with Jamillah Gabriel, BCC librarian, who was instrumental in bringing the series to the community.

**Walker:** Did you choose the film series?

**Gabriel:** Yes I’m a part of the local organization, Indiana Voices of Women (IVOW). It started through the organization’s desire to do a film series and conversation about the BCC being an ideal partner for the program.

**Walker:** Please tell the readers about the three films.

**Gabriel:** The first film, *Cracking the Codes*, is about racial inequality and the causes and consequences that occur in an effort to disentangle internal beliefs, attitudes and pre-judgements. The second film, *Mirror of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* is about white privilege and bringing attention to it. The last film, *Light in the Shadows: Staying at the Table When the Conversation About Race Gets Hard*, is about women from different backgrounds sharing perspectives on topics people may not generally like to discuss.

**Walker:** What do you hope audiences will get from the film series?

**Gabriel:** The point is for people to talk about issues they don’t really talk about. We want people to dialogue and envision what racial equity means for this community.

**Walker:** Would you suggest people attend 1-2 screenings even if they are unable to complete the entire series?

**Gabriel:** Yes because they all touch on different subjects, but they all fall under the umbrella of racial equity.

**Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible**

*Tuesday, October 20, 2015*

*6-8 pm., MatchBOX Co-Working Studio*

**Light in the Shadows: Staying at the Table When the Conversation About Race Gets Hard**

*Wednesday, November 18, 2015*

*6-8 pm., BCC*

All films are available at the BCC library. Trained facilitators are available to lead discussion groups.

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**“The Movement: 50 Years of Love and Struggle”**

*Tuesday, Oct. 6*

*7 p.m. Fowler Hall Stewart Center*

With a compelling, one-man multimedia performance, Ron Jones will illustrate the vast and complex tapestry of the African American experience.

**Performing Arts Ensemble Showcase**

*Friday-Saturday*

*Oct. 23-24*

*7 p.m., BCC*

BCC ensembles will collaborate to present a performance of powerful actions, words, movement and music.

**John Carlos, Olympian**

*Thursday, Oct. 29*

*7 p.m., Fowler Hall Stewart Center*

John Carlos, former track and field athlete and professional football player, discusses his experiences with racism and controversy. He will deliver a compelling story of courage, bravery and sacrifice.
In August, Purdue announced that three professors in the College of Liberal Arts received a total of $445,000 in National Endowment for the Humanities awards. According to David Reingold, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, “these awards advance opportunities for both higher education scholars and high school educators to focus on black studies while incorporating digital technology. Both projects reflect the particular relevance of the opportunity at Purdue to leverage our liberal arts strengths as enhanced by the evolution of digital technologies to gain better understanding of human behavior. Each of these projects reaches across disciplines to create a greater appreciation for contemporary scholarship in the humanities that has real world application.”

Kim Gallon, Assistant Professor of History, received $245,299 for “Space and Place in Africana/Black Studies: An Institute on Spatial Humanities Theories, Methods and Practice for Africana/Black Studies Scholars.” Gallon will be working along with Purdue’s African American Studies Research Center and GIS Services at Purdue Libraries as hosts of the institute in the summer of 2016. In 2017 there will be a follow-up symposium at Hamilton College, where the co-principal investigator, Angel David Nieves is associate professor of Africana Studies and co-director of the Digital Humanities Initiative.

Dr. Cornelius Bynum, associate professor of history and Dr. Chrystal Johnson, associate professor of social studies education received $200,000 for “From Plessy to Brown: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Twentieth Century.” Both will direct a 4-week summer professional development institute for teachers. According to Johnson, “the current educational landscape provides limited support for in-depth professional development for teachers. We, as a society, cannot expect to have high quality teachers in our children’s classroom without providing these teachers with the tools/development to improve their practice. Our overall goal was to provide professional development opportunity for teachers across the country. Specifically, we sought to empower these teachers’ ability to integrate the humanities, social sciences, and technology through in-depth study of the long Civil Rights struggle.” Additionally research studies will be designed to assess whether or not the institute impacted teachers pedagogical content knowledge. Johnson also states, “I am highly interested in knowing whether this institute impacted the students in each teachers class.”

The Purdue Black Cultural Center congratulates Dr. Gallon, Dr. Bynum, Dr. Johnson, GIS Services at Purdue Libraries and The African American Studies and Research Center!
When introducing *Turn Me Loose: The Unghosting of Medgar Evers*, Frank X Walker states, “I believe that acknowledging and working to fully understand history can create opportunities to better understand racism” (xxiv). Walker gives his audience a chance to further their knowledge of racism by cultivating a series of poetry dedicated to the life and death of Medgar Evers.

Due to his position as the head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Mississippi, Medgar Evers is an influential individual with an inspiring story to educate those who seek to further their education of racism. As a member of the NAACP, Medgar Evers fought for equality and fought against brutality during the African American Civil Rights Movement. On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was assassinated in his front yard because of his strong role in fighting against racism.

In *Turn Me Loose: The Unghosting of Medgar Evers*, Frank X Walker sets up a series of poetry based around Medgar Evers and his involvement with the African American Civil Rights Movement. To tell the story of Medgar Evers, Walker chooses to use the voices of the people who had a relationship with the protagonist; Walker uses voices such as the wife of Evers; Myrlie, his brother; Charles, and his assassin; Byron De La Beckwith. The various representatives help to reiterate Evers’s life and how it impacts the history of African Americans as a whole.

By viewing the hatred Byron De La Beckwith had for African Americans, the book becomes more realistic. Walker describes Beckwith’s mindset of having a positive view of white power; this fact makes it easy to piece together why Beckwith wanted to assassinate Evers. Evers had a positive and influential role in the African American community; unfortunately, this made him a target for Beckwith. Regardless of the assassination, Medgar Evers is still greatly remembered for being an activist during the Civil Rights Movement.

Currently, Walker is the professor at the University of Kentucky in the English department and of the African American Studies Program; his passion for African American history encouraged him to write *Turn Me Loose: The Unghosting of Medgar Evers*. In 2014, Walker was declared the first African American Poet Laureate in Kentucky. Also, in 2014 the NAACP declared Walker the winner of the Image Award for Outstanding Poetry. As a part of the BCC fall semester theme “The Black Freedom Struggle: Historical Narratives, Contemporary Echoes,” Frank X. Walker hosted a reading of selected poems from the book and also conducted a poetry writing workshop on September 16, 2015. His Purdue visit was co-sponsored by the Dept. of English and The African American Studies and Research Center.

**Recommended Reading**

*God Help the Child*  
By Toni Morrison

*Between The World and Me*  
By Ta-Nehisi Coates
James Dekle: BCC Full Time Artist - In - Residence

By Katherine Boyer, staff writer

The BCC welcomes James Dekle, the new Black Cultural Center full time Artist-in-Residence. Dekle is responsible for conducting weekly master choral classes and preparing BVOI for ensemble engagements. He comes to the BCC from Atlanta, Georgia where he served as Choral Director for the Dekalb Early College Academy and the Atlanta Music Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides intense music education for under served youth. He brings an extensive musical background to the Black Cultural Center. As a performer, he was a member of the “World Renowned” FAMU Marching 100 Band, Concert Choir and The Connection, a performing arts group dedicated to university recruitment. Dekle holds a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Florida A&M University and a Master of Music Education from Winthrop University.

Boyer: Why did you choose this position at Purdue?
Dekle: I chose Purdue because it was an opportunity for me to work in choral music on the collegiate level. It has always been my goal to be a college choir director. Purdue University is a national name, and I feel blessed to have this opportunity.

Boyer: What are your responsibilities at the BCC?
Dekle: As Artist-In-Residence for Black Voices Of Inspiration, my responsibilities include all aspects of planning, conducting, teaching, recruitment and any additional administrative duties for the choir. Also, I provide administrative support to the other ensembles, BCC programming, student employees and BCC staff when needed.

Boyer: What are you looking forward to most about working here?
Dekle: I am excited about the opportunities for performance with BVOI. I hope that we will be a performance ensemble that is in demand on a state and national level. I look forward to working to achieve these goals. Also, I would like to see the choir begin touring to support Purdue University recruitment, as well, the performance experience.

Boyer: What are you passionate about?
Dekle: I am passionate about music and people. My family has always reminded me that whatever I do in life, it is always bigger than me. I believe that our experiences in life affect us in a powerful way. When you experience positive energy, it will provide inspiration, motivation, and courage. Music provides that for me. As a choir director, my job is to create beauty through musical performance with a collection of people and share that beauty with another collection of people, the audience. As a result, both the performers and the listeners will experience the positive energy associated with a superior musical performance. This is the most rewarding aspect of my job. Furthermore, I think many musicians, including myself, are passionate about music because of its effect on the people who are experiencing it. In conclusion, it takes inspired, motivated, and courageous people to move the world forward. Music moves people, and that is the power of music.

Boyer: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
Dekle: I really enjoy spending time with my wife Michele, and my 9 month old son, James III.
BCC Mural Featured in a Quilt

By Alexis Porter, Staff writer

Recently the people of New Orleans, Louisiana and the nation commemorated the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. This anniversary also coincided with the NAACP’s “Our Power Campaign.” This national campaign focuses on encouraging local and state governments to create climate jobs which simultaneously care for natural resources and eco-systems. A quilt consisting of thematic squares was constructed from panels submitted from NAACP chapters across the country. Indiana chose a quilt square which is a replica of a mural created during the 2008 Black Cultural Center Research tour to New Orleans, LA. In this mural, New Orleans realizes that, “Water can wash away material things, but history and culture can never be removed,” as stated by Artisia Green, the director of the mural and former New Directional Players Artist-In-Residence. Under the direction of Artisia Green, New Directional Players members: Devika Gireesh, Precious Heard, and Jonathan Hicks created the mural.

In Memoriam
Jackie Jimerson
October 17, 1941- August 23, 2015

Dedicating over 30 years of service to Purdue University, Jackie Jimerson touched the lives of too many to name. While at Purdue, she was the recipient of numerous awards and certificates, including the Purdue Black Alumni Association to the Purdue Black Caucus of Faculty and Staff. She also won two of the university’s most prestigious awards: One Brick Higher Award in 2005 and the Dreamer Award in 2012. During her memorial service held at the Purdue Black Cultural Center, many came to share fond memories of Mrs. Jimerson and told of how her encouragement was key to their success as a student and beyond.
In August 2015, just three days apart, the African American community lost two statesmen: Louis Stokes and Julian Bond. Stokes, from the city of Cleveland, was the first black elected congressman in the state of Ohio. As an attorney, Stokes argued before the US Supreme Court one of the earliest “stop and frisk” cases in *Terry v. Ohio* in 1968. He served in congress for 30 years before his retirement in 1999. The National Science Foundation’s Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) is named for Stokes. LSAMP is aimed at increasing the number of underrepresented students in undergraduate and graduate STEM programs in the United States. The overall goal is to increase the number of students who earn doctorates and go on to teach in these fields. LSAMP Indiana project is a collaboration among eight university campuses including IUPUI, Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana University Northwest, Purdue University West Lafayette, Purdue University Calumet, Purdue University North Central, Indiana State University, and Ball State University.

Julian Bond was an activist in the Civil Rights Movement as a young man who would go on to be a politician, professor and author. He always remained an activist at heart and helped to establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and served as the first president of the Southern Poverty Law Center. He also served as Chairman of the NAACP from 1998-2010. Besides their families and friends who loved them, both men leave behind them a legacy of dedication and service to humankind. The world is a better place because of them.

By Juanita Crider, Editor