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The **Black Gwinnett Magazine** informs, empower and speaks out for and to Black communities of Gwinnett County, Georgia.

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#### BLACKGWINNETT M A G A Z I N E

Lawrenceville, Georgia USA | July • August • September 2023

#### A Taste of Black Gwinnett Week

Friday-Saturday, August 18-19, 2023

by Cheryle Renee Moses

The Gwinnett County Black Chamber of Commerce is proud to present A Taste of Black Gwinnett Week 2023, a week-long celebration of the rich cultural heritage and entrepreneurial spirit of the Black community in the county. The series of events will take place from August 14th to August 20th, 2023, at various locations throughout Gwinnett County.

A Taste of Black Gwinnett
Week aims to promote
and support Black-owned
businesses, restaurants,
and entertainment venues
in the area. The week's
festivities will kick off with a
unique culinary experience,
allowing attendees to
explore and savor the
flavors of Gwinnett
County's diverse Blackowned restaurants and
entertainment venues.

The highlight of the week will be the "A Taste of Black Gwinnett Celebration Event," which will take place on Friday, August 18th, at the Norcross Cultural Arts and Community Center. This event promises an evening of delectable food samples

from various restaurants, food trucks, and caterers, alongside captivating poetry and comedy performances, plus a game night for the entire family.

The grand finale of the week will be the "Gwinnett Black Business Expo," held on Saturday, August 19th, at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Northeast Hotel in Norcross. GA. The expo will showcase a wide array of Black-owned businesses in Gwinnett County, offering products and services that embody innovation, quality, and entrepreneurship. Attendees can also participate in a health fair, enjoy a family activity area, a technology zone, and listen to inspiring quest speakers.

The week is a testament to the economic and cultural contributions made by the Black community in Gwinnett County. We invite everyone to come and experience the warmth, creativity, and spirit of unity that this event embodies." Tickets and more information about the events of A Taste of Black Gwinnett Week 2023 can be found on the official website, gwinnettblackchamber.com.



#### **10th Anniversary - July 2023 #BlackLivesMatter**

by Rita Ragsdale

As we proudly commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the powerful #BlackLivesMatter movement, it's important to reflect on the journey that this powerful movement has undertaken and the challenges it continues to face. America – the constitution – is a system that was never designed to protect Black people. While the summer of 2020 saw an unprecedented surge in global support for racial justice and equity, recent developments have

shown that the fight against anti-Blackness and systemic racism is far from over. The movement has evolved into a catalyst for change, inspiring conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across sectors. However, as we stand in 2023, it's evident that the journey towards equality is witness the white backlash now happening.

The summer of 2020 marked a turning point in the fight against

racial injustice. The tragic murder of George Floyd ignited a firestorm of protests that spread across the United States and beyond. People of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds took to the streets to voice their solidarity with the Black community and to condemn the deep-seated racism that has plagued society for centuries. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter became a rallying cry for justice and equality.

The summer of 2020 wasn't just about protests; it also spurred a wave of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within various organizations. Corporations and entities recognized the need to address systemic racism within their structures and pledged their commitment to fostering inclusive environments. High-dollar commercials, conferences, and public statements expressed solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter movement. It appeared that the narrative of unity, diversity, equity, and inclusion was gaining traction and reshaping societal norms.

However, the passage of time has revealed the complexity of sustaining long-term commitment to DEI efforts. The initial surge of support often wanes, and organizations make promises but those promises never turn into tangible actions. Reports indicate that some DEI professionals who were initially hired with enthusiasm have faced obstacles in effecting meaningful change within their organizations. These same DEI professionals are now being removed from their positions. The uphill battle they face serves as a reminder that overcoming systemic racism requires a continuous, unwavering effort.

The year 2023 has brought about significant shifts in the realm of civil rights. The elimination of affirmative action in college admissions has sparked debates about equality and opportunity. Critics argue that this move hampers progress by limiting access to education for marginalized communities. These changes highlight the importance of vigilance in protecting the gains made in the fight for civil rights. The history of discrimination and inequality necessitates ongoing efforts to ensure that marginalized voices are heard and included.

The fight for racial equality has also faced counteraction from white supremacist ideologies and actions. Individuals like Blum, who seek to undermine civil rights, remind us that the struggle against systemic racism is far from over. Their attempts to dismantle the progress made by movements like #BlackLivesMatter underscore the urgency of maintaining a united front against bigotry and hate.

It must be emphasized that the #BlackLivesMatter movement is not tied to a single organization; it represents a broader call for justice, equity, and an end to anti-Blackness. The movement's strength lies in its decentralized nature, which allows for a multitude

of voices to join the chorus of change. This decentralized approach has helped the movement remain resilient in the face of challenges and attempts to silence the Black amplified voice.

The struggle for racial equality is not limited to a single moment or event; it's a movement that demands continued action.

To ensure that the progress made since 2020 is not in vain, it's important that individuals, organizations, and society as a whole push for values of justice, equality, and inclusion.

The 10th anniversary of the #BlackLivesMatter movement is a time to both celebrate the progress that has been made and acknowledge that white supremacy is baked into the fabric of the nation and world. The movement's ability to inspire global solidarity and foster discussions about DEI has been a significant achievement. However, recent developments such as the elimination of affirmative action and attempts by white supremacists to undermine progress remind us that the journey towards racial equality remains. The true power of #BlackLivesMatter lies in its ability to remain a movement, not just a fleeting moment, until Black lives genuinely matter in every corner of America and the world.



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#### Finessing Whiteness: Life Duality of Being Black

by Cheryle Renee Moses

As an African American, the duality of existence is a constant companion. A world that simultaneously cherishes diversity and succumbs to discrimination has shaped our lives in profound ways. The complexity of being both African American and Black presents an intricate tapestry of experiences, wherein the struggle against anti-Blackness is an ever-present reality. From microaggressions to systemic inequities, racism manifests

itself daily in the lives of African Americans and other Black individuals.

Microaggressions, those seemingly harmless remarks or actions that perpetuate stereotypes and marginalize, are an insidious form of racism that African Americans face daily. The all too familiar phrases like, "You're so articulate for a Black person," or "Can I touch your hair?" not only underscore prejudiced assumptions but also

highlight the pervasive nature of anti-Blackness. These seemingly small encounters chip away at one's self-esteem, subtly reminding us that our identity is perceived through the lens of bias.

Institutional racism, deeply ingrained in societal structures, rears its head through coded language and discriminatory policies. From redlining in housing to discriminatory sentencing in the justice system, African

Americans confront these biases at every turn. The disproportionate incarceration rates and the glaring racial wealth gap are a testament to the systematic oppression that continues to plague our communities. These daily struggles, invisible to some, have far-reaching consequences that echo through generations.

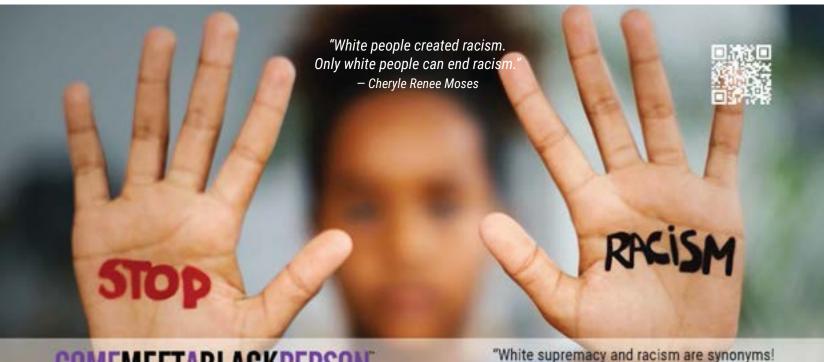
The non-Black media has played a demonic role in shaping perceptions and reinforcing stereotypes about African-Americans. Representation matters, and the skewed portraval of Black individuals perpetuates harmful narratives. Whether it's criminalizing protests for justice or sensationalizing incidents, media bias further fans the flames of anti-Black sentiment. The relentless portrayal of African-Americans as threats or anomalies exacerbates the daily challenges we face, affecting our interactions and opportunities.

Education is often heralded as the great equalizer, but the reality for many African Americans paints a different picture. Unequal funding, lack of access to quality education, Eurocentric curriculum all contribute to perpetuating the cycle of disadvantage, and now the elimination of the white supremacy/racism history of the nation being taught. These daily disparities limit opportunities, hinder upward mobility, and compound the effects of anti-Blackness. These above challenges are ongoing and shapes the trajectory of our lives.

The simple act of moving through various spaces becomes a nuanced experience for African-Americans. From being followed in stores under suspicion of theft to the implicit biases that dictate interactions, daily life is punctuated by moments of tension. The need to modulate our behavior and appearance to fit into predominantly white

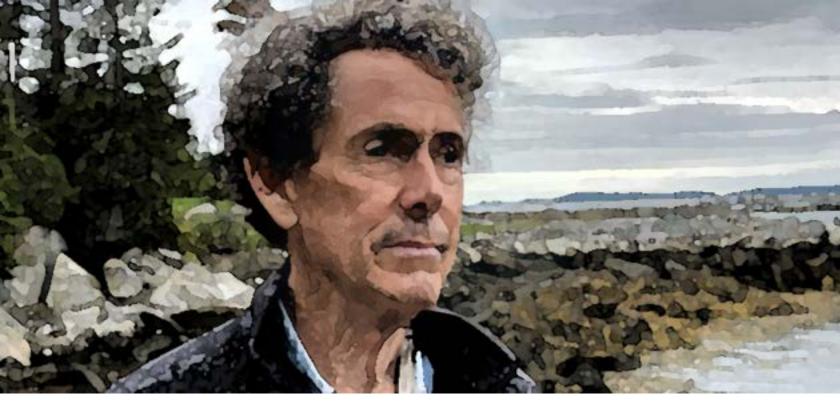
environments speaks volumes about the challenges we face. Navigating these spaces is akin to a delicate dance, where we strive to retain our identity while minimizing discomfort for others.

As African-Americans and Black individuals, our daily experiences are marked by the persistence of anti-Blackness. The microaggressions, coded language, institutional racism, media misrepresentation, educational disparities, and the complexities of navigating spaces all underscore the depth of this issue. But despite these challenges, our resilience shines through. We continue to celebrate our culture, embrace our heritage, and strive for equality, fighting to remove the deeply rooted structures of discrimination. By acknowledging these daily realities, we take a step towards fostering empathy, understanding, and ultimately, a more just and inclusive world.



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White people created this, and only white people can solve it. They just need the desire to." – CMABP



#### Edward Blum's Strategy: Undermine Affirmative Action

Exploiting Asian Americans to Push a White Supremacy Agenda

by Larry Joe Howard

In the complex landscape of American civil rights and legal battles, a figure named Edward Blum has emerged as a significant player. Over the past few decades, Blum has orchestrated legal challenges that target affirmative action policies, all while using Asian American plaintiffs as pawns in a larger agenda that critics argue serves to perpetuate white supremacy. Blum's efforts, often masked as an advocacy for meritocracy and colorblindness, have ignited debates about the intentions behind his actions and the implications for marginalized communities.

Edward Blum's journey into the world of legal activism began in the late 1990s when he

transitioned from a career as a stockbroker to focus on shaping the legal landscape. While his early efforts involved attempts to dismantle affirmative action through cases like Fisher v. University of Texas, it wasn't until recent years that his strategies gained more attention. Blum's notable cases include Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard and Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina, where he targeted college admissions policies that consider race as a factor in an attempt to promote diversity.

Blum's tactics have included using Asian American plaintiffs to challenge affirmative action policies, ostensibly under the

banner of fighting against discrimination. However, critics argue that Blum is exploiting Asian Americans' desire for a level playing field and weaponizing their grievances against other minority groups, particularly African Americans. By framing affirmative action as a policy that disadvantages Asian Americans, he attempts to pit minority communities against each other, diverting attention from the larger structural issues of racial inequality led by whites.

Blum's manipulation of the "model minority" myth adds another layer to his strategy. This stereotype portrays Asian Americans as high-achieving and successful, perpetuating the narrative that they have overcome racial discrimination through hard work and diligence. Blum's legal cases suggest that affirmative action policies hurt Asian Americans by giving preferential treatment to African American and Hispanic applicants, a narrative that distorts the reality of systemic racism and perpetuates division among marginalized groups.

Blum's ultimate goal appears to be the elimination of affirmative action policies. However, the potential consequences of this agenda raise serious questions. While Blum claims to advocate for meritocracy, his approach conveniently overlooks the structural disadvantages faced by African American and Hispanic communities due to historical white supremacy.

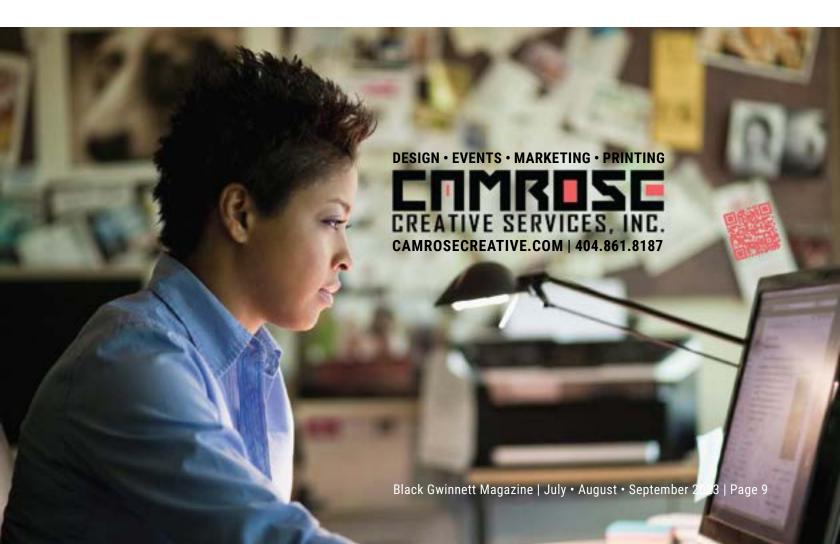
Critics argue that his efforts to remove affirmative action could exacerbate existing racial disparities, ultimately reinforcing white supremacy by maintaining an unequal status quo.

The aftermath of Blum's legal victories at the Supreme Court has led to discussions about the role of affirmative action in promoting diversity and addressing systemic inequality. As the legal battles continue, we must understand the larger context in which these challenges are taking place. Many Asian American activists and scholars emphasize the importance of solidarity between minority groups, recognizing that true progress requires addressing the root causes of racial disparities

rather than further dividing marginalized communities.

Edward Blum's use of Asian American plaintiffs to challenge affirmative action policies reflects a complex web of motivations and agendas. While he purports to advocate for equality and meritocracy, his tactics have the potential to undermine the progress of all marginalized communities fighting against historical and systemic discrimination.

As society grapples with the implications of Blum's continued strategy and legal actions to dismantle affirmative action, we must critically examine and understand that the driving force for Blum is a white supremacy agenda. Period.





Fans frequently inquire why R&B singer and actor Jill Scott abstains from performing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at sports events. Her response stems from her connection to an alternative anthem, which she discussed during a March concert in her hometown, Philadelphia.

The anthem in question is one Scott composed during her teenage years while living in north Philadelphia. This anthem is a searing critique of the racial disparities pervasive in America. After more than three decades, she introduced her reimagined anthem on her current tour. At the 2023 Essence Fest in New Orleans, Scott, an iconic figure in the neo-soul genre, showcased her rendition in a groundbreaking performance. The festival, celebrating Black artists and women, has been held since 1994 and has drawn nearly half a million attendees.

Scott's rendition began with the familiar melody of "The Star-Spangled Banner," but with a deliberate alteration in tempo, allowing each word to resonate in the arena. The song concludes with a powerful revision of the final line, substituting "O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave" with "This is not the land of the free but the home of the slaves."

Social media erupted with much enthusiasm, capturing the impact of her performance. @ MariePurnell5 on Twitter remarked,

"In total tears of the power of this truth." Another user, @ forthecomments1, hailed Scott's version as the new "Black American National anthem!!" Even Essence magazine, the host of the festival, joined the acclaim, declaring on Twitter that Scott's rendition is the only national anthem they will recognize moving forward.

At 51 years old, Scott performed her anthem throughout her commemorative tour for the 20th anniversary of her platinum album "Who Is Jill Scott? Words & Sounds Vol. 1." Her anthem performances were intertwined with her song "Watching Me" and began to attract online attention as early as April.

The tradition of performing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at sports events dates back to the late 1940s. However, recent years have witnessed increased scrutiny of American patriotic symbols due to movements advocating for racial justice, sparked by events such as the killings of Michael Brown in 2014 and George Floyd in 2020.

Scott's anthem, penned in the early 1990s, joins a lineage of critical rearrangements of the anthem. While Jimi Hendrix's instrumental version protested the Vietnam War in 1969, Scott's vocal rendition boldly confronts America's history of racial discrimination against Black individuals.

Online observers acknowledged the audacity of Scott's rendition,

applauding her unapologetic embrace of her Black identity. After performing her anthem at Essence Fest, Scott also addressed language usage and the lack of representation of Black women in the media, emphasizing unity among Black women.

Although the reason behind Scott's decision to reintroduce her anthem remains unclear, she previously expressed her hope that the anthem wouldn't cause division. She explained that when she sings "home of the slave," she isn't seeking division, but rather aims to highlight modern forms of societal enslavement.

The complete lyrics of Scott's anthem read:

"Oh say can you see by the blood in the streets

That this place doesn't smile on you colored child

Whose blood built this land with sweat and their hands

But we'll die in this place and your memory erased

Oh say, does this truth hold any weight

This is not the land of the free, but the home of the slaves!"

Thank you Jill Scott for your racial intelligence, worldly understanding and phenomenal talents!



#### Bailey Point Investment of Norcross Is Trying to Take Black Generational Land

"LEAVE ME ALONE," SAYS THE 93-YEAR OLD BLACK WOMAN.



Meet Josephine Wright. In a courageous effort, this 93-year-old Black woman is battling a Norcross, Georgia developer to retain possession of her family's residence. The Hilton Head, SC property has been a part of Wright's lineage since the era of the Civil War in this country.

A lawsuit was filed by Bailey Point Investment Group, a developer in Norcross, GA. Bailey Point has cited both Wright and the co-owner of the property, Delores Wright, who is Josephine's former daughter-in-law, as defendants. Bailey Point is actively developing land situated directly behind Josephine Wright's home, and is attempting to force the Wrights to relinquish ownership of their property.

Despite persistent attempts by the development company, Josephine Wright has stood her ground and would not sell her land, prompting Bailey Point to initiate the lawsuit against her.

"They served me with incorrect legal documents, necessitating the engagement of a costly attorney," stated Wright in an interview with WTGS-TV News in Savannah, GA. "Moreover, they asserted that I encroached on their neighboring property," she further explained.

The developer is in the process of planning the development of a 27-acre plot encompassing the area surrounding Josephine Wright's property. Charise Graves, Josephine's granddaughter, shared with WTGS-TV that her

grandmother's primary desire is to enjoy serenity and tranquility, a wish that has been severely disrupted over the past year.

"Unbeknownst to us, they initiated the removal of trees, causing our house to tremble as though shaken by an earthquake. Regrettably, they failed to extend the courtesy of informing us about these actions," stated Grayes.

Bailey Point claims that Josephine Wright is impeding their project's advancement. The company filed a lawsuit claiming that portions of Wright's dwelling infringe upon their property, substantiated by their possession of relevant documentation, among other concerns.

Wright has attempted to comply, stating that she had already spent approximately \$1,900 to relocate a shed and dispose of a satellite dish. However, the developers maintain that her porch remains situated on land under their ownership.

Bailey Point had made multiple offers to purchase Wright's land. After refusing to sell, the developer began a campaign of harassment.

"They likely believed that incessant harassment would erode my resolve to the point of capitulation. However, they miscalculate my determination. I stand here to protect what is rightfully mine," she stated.

Bakari Sellers, a former South Carolina state house representative and civil rights attorney, has joined Josephine Wright's legal team.

"This scenario exemplifies broader discussions regarding systemic injustices and the unfortunate reality of Black individuals losing their ancestral lands," said Sellers. "This transcends a singular incident involving one woman; it impacts an entire family. While the situation centers around a Black woman's property rights, it transcends racial divisions and boils down to a matter of ethical right versus wrong," Sellers continued.

Josephine Wright is a mother of seven children, a grandmother to 40, a great-grandmother to 50, and a great-great-grandmother to 16. Keeping the historical family property is the common goal of the Wrights.

Wright's story has resonated nationwide. To assist in covering Josephine Wright's legal expenses, a GoFundMe campaign was started. Many have given their support to Wright including studio executive Tyler Perry, rapper Snoop Dogg, basketball player Kyrie Irving, and musical theatre performer Mark Jacoby.

Bailey Point Investment LLC is located at 655 Engineering Drive, Suite 208, Norcross, GA 30092.

You can make a donation to help Wright in this fight at <a href="https://www.gofundme.com/f/fighting-injustice-on-hilton-head-island">https://www.gofundme.com/f/fighting-injustice-on-hilton-head-island</a>.



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## Is Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce Racist and Anti-Black?



An editorial opinion of Cheryle Renee Moses, president of Gwinnett County Black Chamber of Commerce

**Rac-ist:** (N) Characterized by or showing prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

Anti-Black: (ADJ) Resistant or antagonistic to Black people or their values or objectives.

Nick Masino is the first GenX President and CEO of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce and Partnership Gwinnett. Both organizations have always been white-run in Gwinnett County, Georgia. Masino was also the mayor of Suwanee, Georgia from 2000-2007, also in the county.

It is written that "Masino is known for his strong leadership, commitment to Gwinnett, and more than two decades of making an impact in the community and economic development arenas." But in the Black business community, Masino is known as racist and anti-Black in his dealings with Black business owners in Gwinnett County. Masino is also known for getting a DUI charge in 2011 while the vice president for Economic Development for the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce.

In my opinion, Masino has a very low racial intelligence when



Nick Masino

it comes to Black people. In
December of 2021, I contacted
Masino to introduce the Gwinnett
County Black Chamber of
Commerce, detailed how our
chamber works with African
American and other Black Business
owners. I let him know our
chamber wanted to participate in
their annual multi-chamber event.
Masino told me it was too late at
that time to participate, but 2022
for sure.

I attended the multi-chamber event, and there were very few Black people. I briefly introduced myself to Masino at the event.

In November 2022, I received an email announcing the 2022 Gwinnett Chamber Multi-Chamber event. I replied back to the invitation asking why the Gwinnett County Black Chamber of Commerce had been omitted again from the Multi-Chamber event and whether it was done deliberately because we are a Black chamber.

Masino called me angrily while driving because I copied members of his board on the reply email. He wanted me to know that he was not racist. Masino went down the "list" of things to show that he was not anti-Black or racist. I must say, Masino gave me 'text-book' rebuttals such as:

- (1) "You don't know where I come from."
- (2) "You don't know the life I have had."
- (3) "The Liberian Community Association of Georgia is part of the event. The leader is Black and my good friend."

After that comment, Masino confirmed to me everything I thought about his racial intelligence when it came to Black people. I said to him, "African-Americans and Blacks are the largest minority in the county, and you think a Liberian man is representative of Black business owners in Gwinnett, You have a very low racial intelligence." I hung up the phone on Masino because it was very early in the morning, and I was not going to entertain his ignorance about my community. Shortly after the call, Masino sent me an email that started out with a reference to the call dropping.

There are several organizations invited to attend the multi-chamber event over the past two years by Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce. The demographic of African

American and Black residents in Gwinnett County is 31.3%. So let's look at this multi-chamber list.

- Atlanta Chinese Entrepreneurs Club
- French-American Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Indo-American Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Pakistan Business Council
- German -American Chamber of Commerce
- Italy American Chamber Commerce Southeast, Georgia Chapter
- Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Georgia
- Korean-American Chamber of Commerce of Georgia
- Latin-American Chamber of Commerce
- Liberian Community
   Association of Georgia

The only missing chamber is one dedicated to the needs of African-Americans and other Black-owned businesses in Gwinnett or Georgia. This list exemplifies the anti-Black and racist management and

thinking of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce.

And to be fair, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce has always been anti-Black. While Masino is leading the chamber currently, he has been with the chamber for years and the organization has never be pro-Black. Never. That is why the Gwinnett County Black Chamber of Commerce was created in 2019.

With the lack of attention the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce has given to the majority minority business owners over the years, I would say they are anti-Black.

But as my elders have always said, "A squeaky wheel gets the oil." I am speaking out about the powerful Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce because it is a perfect example of anti-Blackness operating daily in our faces. Now that I have been calling out these microaggressions and levels of systemic racism of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, they seem to be ramping up their DEI appearance and narrative, including sending their staff/board members to Gwinnett Black Chamber of Commerce meetings and events.

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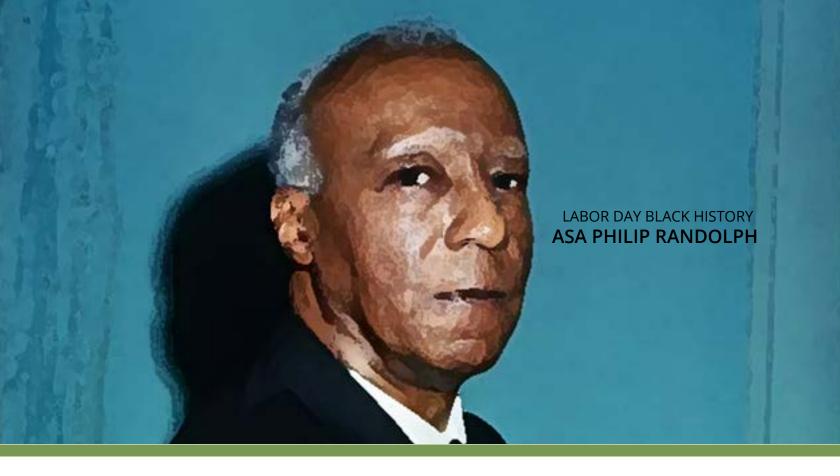
Small Business: \$275 Non-Profit: \$200 Corporate: \$750 No food booths allowed. Taste of Black Gwinnett is coming!



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### A. Philip Randolph and Black Labor Unions

by Rock Moses

The first Monday of September holds a twofold significance in the US — it marks the close of summer and pays tribute to the accomplishments of American laborers. Emerging in the early 1880s at the state level, this observance attained national holiday status in 1894. Amid the backdrop of post-slavery challenges, African Americans embarked on a resolute struggle for equitable wages and labor rights.

At the forefront of this movement was Asa Philip Randolph. In 1925, he embarked on a ten-year crusade as the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), a pioneering Black labor union. By 1935, the BSCP achieved a

historic milestone by becoming the first Black-led labor entity to be recognized by the American Federation of Labor, endorsing its role in collective bargaining.

The BSCP unified more than 18,000 Black railway workers to combat labor disparities and the exploitative practices of the Pullman Company. Randolph's advocacy extended beyond labor issues; he fervently protested the segregation within the US military following the enactment of the Selective Service Act in 1947. His relentless efforts led President Truman to sign an executive order in 1948, eradicating racial discrimination in the armed forces.

Randolph's influence reached its zenith when he chaired the monumental 1963 March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his historic "I Have A Dream" speech. Throughout the 1960s, Randolph remained an unwavering force, co-founding the Negro American Labor Council and serving as its president until 1966. Following his retirement as BSCP president in 1968, Randolph carried forward his mission through the A. Philip Randolph Institute, tirelessly striving to secure fair labor practices for Black Americans.

On May 16, 1979, Asa Philip Randolph's lifelong journey came to an end at the age of 90.

## ATASTE OF BLACK GWINNETT



#### **Friday**, August 18, 2023

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- · Virtual Reality

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AfroFuturism Fest 2023

College Student Filmmaker Competition

> Content Creators in the Park 2023

Diverse Content Creators Competition

Urban Directors and Producers Summit

Urban PitchFest

Youth Filmmaker Competition

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