

# LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD™



*A Quarterly Publication*

Welcome to the fourth edition of **Let The Truth Be Told**. The Management Team has compiled a variety of articles that are informative, educational and entertaining. Please share it with family, friends and folks in your community and networks. Here is a glance at what is in this edition.

## 3 Peter Spencer and August Quarterly.

Learn about this annual historic African American celebration. This year's celebration will be an opportunity to celebrate while launching a discussion on HB 198.

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As the 2022-2023 school year begins, school districts and charter schools will begin to operationalize and incorporate HB198. This article provides an **Implementation Update of HB198**.



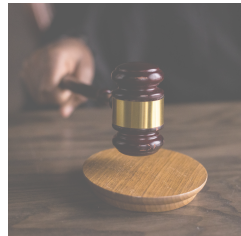
## 8 When young people speak, we should listen. Kayla Spruill shares her perspective about the **Importance of Teaching Black History**.



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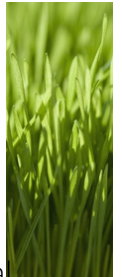
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**Let The Truth Be Told (TM)** is a quarterly newsletter.

**Let the Truth Be Told** is intended to give African Americans the opportunity to speak “truth to power” through media such as commentary, poems, history and art, among others, which will be provided by parents, teachers, children, ministers, historians, and other citizens. This platform aims to transform our words into empowered activism.

We are seeking contributors to **Let the Truth Be Told**. If you feel you have something to say but do not believe you write well enough, don't let that stop you. Please submit what you want to say and you will be given support which will lead to your voice being heard. Let the Truth Be Told!

Submissions are reviewed by the editorial board and may be edited for brevity and clarification. We regret we cannot return any unsolicited articles, photos or other materials.

## Let The Truth Be Told Editorial Board

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# ***Peter Spencer*** ***&*** <sup>TM</sup> ***August Quarterly***

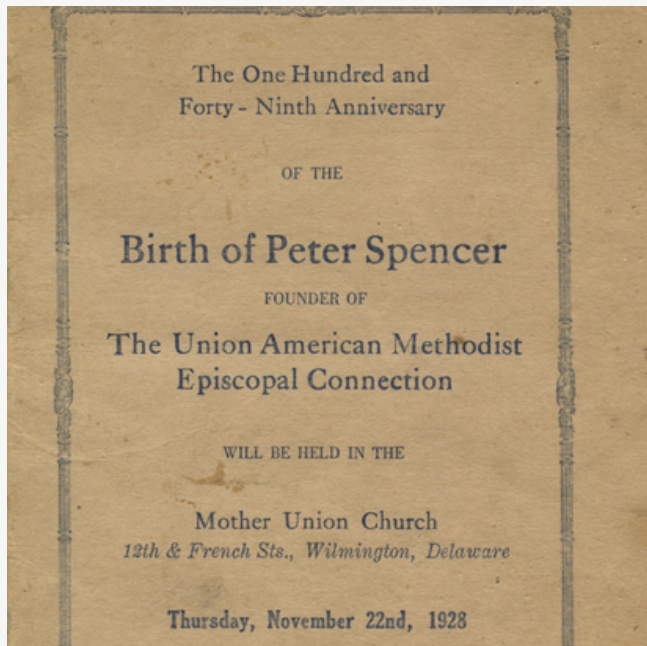
by Rev. Dr. Lawrence Livingston

The August Quarterly Festival, also called Big Quarterly, is an annual celebration to commemorate the founding of the Union Church of Africans. The church is the first African American Church in the United States, independently incorporated in 1813. Simply put, it is a celebration of African American Religious freedom in the United States. The August Quarterly, which began in 1814, became a kind of Independence Day for Black people on the Delmarva Peninsula. In fact, in the early years of the festival abolitionists and Underground Railroad conductors of the stature of Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman were often in the Wilmington area to assist enslaved men and women who wanted to escape. The Big Quarterly, over the years, has remained a time of reunion, religious revival, and celebration of freedom for the people in and around Wilmington, Delaware. It is a perfect opportunity, in the liberating spirit of Peter Spencer's founding of the church and launching the August Quarterly, to discuss HB 198.

If we let the truth be told, we are not only uncovering the history of African Americans left out of our history books for the last 400 years, but we are making connections between then and now, not only for the people the narrative is about, but for the entire nation. HB 198 is not simply about African American students learning their own history, it is about a society learning the truth of the historical narrative that belongs to all of us. African American history is shared history, in the same way we believe American history is a shared history.

In recent years, there has been the outcry, "Black Lives Matter!" To that there is usually a rejoinder, "All Lives Matter." If we let the truth be told and the second statement was true, there would be no need for HB 198. There is a long overdue need to have the lives and significance of Black people included as part of the American narrative. As a matter of fact, Black lives have always mattered, but only when a self-determined African American community developed its own resources through innovative means for progress. The prophetic Black Church, as exemplified by Spencer, has been at the forefront of this affirmation of Black life in several areas, no less in education, a fact in and of itself that demonstrates the need to operationalize a vigorous history of African Americans in our schools. Society in general does not know the significant role of the Black Church in the African American struggle towards freedom. HB 198 will change that.

The best example of the Black Church leading the way for the benefit of its constituents and the declaration of their humanity was the Union Church of Africans, started in Wilmington in 1813 by Peter Spencer. One year later, as said above, is when Spencer launched the August Quarterly. Again, that church body was the first incorporated African American denomination in the entire country, which is a little-known Black History fact.



images from Peter Spencer: Father of the Independent Black Church Movement - Delaware Historical Society (dehistory.org)

Every church in Spencer's denomination was also committed to having a school to emphasize the education of Black lives, and in effect that the history of Black people mattered. This was a groundbreaking assertion, which was quite a proclamation in 1813 during the era of slavery. In our nation, more than two centuries later, we are still trying to put into operation an educational curriculum that sustains the view that Black lives do matter.

A shared history is so much more than simply uncovering events or a recitation of facts and principles. It is connecting history with the lives of those living in the present, learning from that history, and then providing much needed healing for our society. Simply put, operationalizing a Black history curriculum connects not only what happened, but also points to what it means for our world today. This responsibility in the Black community, over the years has fallen to the Black Church. The affirmation that Black Lives Matter certainly has been part of the spiritual teaching of the church—yes, every life and the humanity of every person is valuable to a Loving God, but many Black churches maintained the African American historical journey is also to be affirmed and matters as part of the spiritual narrative. The church's reach of *this is what happened and here is why it matters* has not extended beyond those Black congregations to society in general. That's not solely the church's responsibility. That is the responsibility of our society, starting in our schools. That's where we definitely need to **Let The Truth Be Told.**

*Rev. Dr. Lawrence Livingston is the Pastor Emeritus, Mother African Union Church & Assistant Professor Associate, Art Program University of Delaware*



*Update on the*  
**IMPLEMENTATION  
OF HB 198**  
by Dr. Marlene A. Saunders

On June 17, 2021, Governor John Carney signed HB 198 into law. The act requires each school district and charter school teaching K-12 students to provide instruction on Black history as part of all educational programming beginning in the 2022-23 academic year. The legislation's primary sponsors were Representative Sherry Dorsey Walker and Senator S. Elizabeth Lockerman. The bill is significant because Delaware's educational institutions can no longer deliberately exclude the history of African Americans in America and Delaware without louder civic objections from the public and formal legal responses from judicial authorities.

Even though **Let the Truth Be Told** is gratified by the passage of HB 198, the management team recognizes integrating African American history into 19 school districts and 23 charter schools is easier said than done. Nevertheless, we believe it provides Black parents and others who grasp the positive impacts of HB 198 for all children a unique and necessary opportunity to partner with Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) to implement this important piece of legislation. Consequently, between December 2021 and June 2022, **Let The Truth Be Told** has organized and facilitated seven discussion groups between community (i.e., parents, teachers, community leaders, members of the Social Studies Coalition, etc.) and DDOE administrators, including Dr. Mark Holodick, Secretary of Education, Dr. Monica Gant, Associate Secretary, and Dr. Michael Feldman,

DDOE Instruction Associate. Of these meetings, three meetings included only Dr. Feldman, and community members George Beckerman, Substitute Civics Teacher, Cape Henlopen School District, Bebe Coker, Education Advocate, Rev. Dr. Lawrence Livingston, Pastor Emeritus, Mother Africa Church, Mary Lomax, Retired College Professor, Delaware State University, Debra O'Neal, Social Worker and Graphic Designer for **Let The Truth Be Told** who has three children who completed their K-12 education within the Christina School District, and me. I emphasize that we, in no way, represent the community, rather, our purpose included identifying, clarifying, and verifying elements of discussions between large groups of community members, DDOE, school district personnel, teachers and other interested parties who want to make HB 198 work all the way.



Overall, the meetings have been meaningful in positive ways, eye opening and useful. Furthermore, DDOE representatives have attended every meeting and have put in considerable time and effort to make the meetings beneficial to all, especially for Delaware's students. The meetings have been critical because they clearly identified why community must actively partner with DDOE and school districts to implement HB 198. The major reasons include the following:

1. HB 198 requires public and charter schools to teach Black history. Furthermore, HB 198 requires DDOE to provide resources to assist school districts and charter schools in developing Black history lesson plans. However, and this is important - because Delaware is a local control state, HB 198 leaves the development of school curricula, including Black history, up to the individual school districts and charter schools.
2. Parents and interested parties must understand that the most powerful institutions in determining Black history content to be taught in district public and charter schools are the local school boards.
3. A major target for ensuring the infusion of Black history content that has been missing in instruction regarding the history of America and Delaware remains with local school boards.
4. **Action steps to ensure the integration of content** specified in HB 198 must include the following:

a. Obtaining **key dates** for implementing HB 198. These are: **September 15th of each year** – Each school district shall identify the individual responsible for overseeing the implementation of educational programming under HB 198. **November 15 of each year** – Persons in each school district responsible for overseeing implementation of HB 198 shall report to DDOE how the curriculum has been implemented. **January 15th of each year** - DDOE shall submit to the Governor, members of the General Assembly and the Director of the Division of Research a report describing the educational programming prescribed by HB 198 and how curricula has been implemented by each school district.

b. Advocating and pressing for the establishment of local school board community input committees to be comprised of African Americans whose specific purpose is to insure a local voice in the development of Black history programming by local school districts

c. Identifying specific topics (e.g., African Americans as a source of American values), facts, persons, and events as well as in-depth analyses of systems, and institutions that are missing in history education, but nevertheless explain the Black Experience in America as part of American and Delaware history. Among these include the direct relationship between enslavement of Africans and America's growth as an economic giant. As social scientists have noted, " Together, cotton planters, enslaved workers in the South, wage laborers in the North, and millers and consumers from across the ocean helped fashion a new economic system, one that was global in scope and required the movement of capital, labor, and products across long distances."



## **HB198 Implementation Continue**

(Mathew Desmond, *The 1619 Project*, 2021). Clearly, “The beating heart of this new system was slavery” (Becket, 2015, *The Empire of Cotton*).

Inasmuch as enslaved Africans were human beings, information about their background illuminates the diversity in customs and values that characterize America’s human fabric. Thus, two questions to be asked include: (1.) Who were the 175 Africans who arrived in Wilmington, Delaware from the Gold Coast in 1762? (2.) What should children’s understanding be of how and why some Europeans changed from owning slaves to becoming prominent anti-slavery advocates?

Historical lessons that delve into transformation of Quakers from the owners of enslaved Africans to abolitionists with Africans among their strongest allies, including Olaudah Equiano, Charles Ignarius Sancho, Quobna Ottobah, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones provide important lessons breaking down divisions based on race.

d. Advocating for historical content that in addition to social studies, also includes African Americans who developed America’s and Delaware’s culture and technical advancements in the areas of music, literature and science, medicine, etc. Instruction should include books written by African American authors and works created by African American artists.

e. Utilizing information and activities that promote understanding and engagement between and among parents and teachers as a means to enhancing the competence and effectiveness of instruction of African American history by teachers.

f. Insisting local school boards and DDOE provide continuous and timely reports to community input groups related to the implementation of HB 198.

***“Whatever Your Mind Can Conceive and Believe, It Can Achieve.” – Napoleon Hill***





# The Importance of Teaching Black History

by Kayla Spruill

The celebration of Black History Month in K-12 schools is getting more attention now than it has in the past. Students are learning more of the untold stories of how African Americans endured series of hardships to earn the rights they enjoy today.

Even so, a greater effort needs to be made to keep Black history in the classroom well beyond the month of February. It is vital that Black history be included in a child's daily education so they can get the full scope of events that took place in the past.

Usually when someone thinks of Black history, they think of the Civil Rights Movement with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks or the Underground Railroad with Harriet Tubman. It's about time students understand there's more to Black history than slavery and segregation.

This starts with introducing students to figures in Black history they may not recognize. For example, many students don't know that Bayard Rustin organized the famous March on Washington in 1963 or that 15-year-old Claudette Colvin was one of the first women to refuse to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus before Rosa Parks performed the same action.

It is crucial that teachers emphasize not only well known historically significant Black people, but also lesser-known figures who will give students a broader insight into Black history. Teachers should also use Black history as a way of teaching the various layers of the "American Dream" where someone comes from nothing and works hard to achieve great success.







African Americans make up a large part of minority groups (such as Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, women, etc.) who weren't welcomed in mainstream society and therefore had no access to the traditional American Dream, however, many African Americans, in the past, have used art or writing as a way of conveying their view of the American Dream and expressing the various challenges they faced daily. For instance, author Ralph Ellison's, *The Invisible Man*, talks about the struggles of Black people in America that have made them invisible to mainstream society. If teachers were to expose their students to writings such as *The Invisible Man*, they would realize the American Dream really looks different to everybody based on their background, their beliefs, and their values. They'll learn that success doesn't always mean fame and fortune, but it can also mean living life to their full potential. You will also find that students may have a greater appreciation for history when they're able to learn about it through the experiences of people who were well respected and people who were considered outsiders or minorities.

Therefore, it is crucial that Black history be taught more in schools across America so students can have a well-rounded education where they learn about new people, new events, and new concepts throughout our rich history.



Kayla Spruill is a Senior at Early College High School in Dover, Delaware



# Did You Know?

**Let The Truth Be Told:** The Georgetown Town Council voted to give \$24,750 to the Georgetown Historical Society, which has allowed a Confederate flag to be flown on its property.

A group known as The Delaware Grays Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp #2068 had reached an agreement with the Georgetown Historical Society back in 2007 which allowed them to hang the confederate flag as a monument to those who fought for the confederacy. The flag was hanging outside of the Historical Society's Marvel Museum alongside the Delaware State flag.

The Confederate flag is a symbol of white supremacy which is made evident in the words that birthed it, according to Confederate Vice President, Alexander H. Stephens in his Cornerstone Speech given on March 22, 1861 in Savannah, Georgia:

*“Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon **the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition...**”*

It was a symbol used to represent a divided nation and was flown during the Civil War when 11 states broke away in order to defend the practice of slavery.



A Confederate flag flies alongside a Delaware state flag at the monument to Delawareans who supported the Confederacy at the Marvel Museum in Georgetown. WILLIAM BRETZGER, DELAWARE NEWS JOURNAL

Image from DelawareOnline.com, published 10:54 am, July 26, 2022

According to YouGovAmerica, most Americans feel the flag is a racist symbol (41%), while about one-third of Americans (34%) feel it symbolizes heritage. Those who are in favor of it, tend to live in rural communities and are usually non-college-educated white Americans.

## Georgetown-----Do Better!

### For more details

"Georgetown Votes to give Confederate flag-flying museum more than \$24K", Shannon Marvel McNaught, Delaware News Journal | 10:54 a.m. EDT Jul. 26, 2022 ([DelawareOnline.com](https://www.delawareonline.com))

"Delaware NAACP condemns Town of Georgetown for pushing ahead with funding museum where confederate flag flies" - 47abc, August 12, 2022 by Rob Petree, ([wmdt.com](https://www.wmdt.com))

[The Southern Poverty Law Center Applauds Georgetown Activists for Their Work to Deter Funding of Confederate Flag Display](#), August 12, 2022

The editors of **Let the Truth Be Told** would like to know your opinion on this issue. Should the Confederate flag be allowed to hang outside of the Historical Society's Marvel Museum alongside the Delaware State Flag?

# How Overturning Roe v. Wade Highlights Health Disparities for African American Women

by Natasha Warsaw

The ultimate purpose of the system [of white supremacy] is to prevent white genetic annihilation on Earth.

*Florence Cress Wesling, MD. The Isis (Yssis) Papers, 1991*

Over the course of a lifetime, there are almost always a few events that alter the way people see the world. Events that come to mind over the last fifty years include the Challenger Disaster, the Oklahoma City bombing, 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of those events has changed the course of the country and the course of many individual lives. The most recent foundation shaking event is the result of a legal decision that has far reaching implications for women at large, and Black women in particular. The Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe V. Wade in its Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health opinion reversed a fifty-year precedent. In a world where Black women already face many barriers to build stable, healthy, and sustainable lives, the impact of Dobbs v. Jackson has the potential to eliminate those opportunities for economic advancement and access to quality healthcare and educational opportunities that do exist for them.

## White Supremacy and the Fight Against Abortion

The anti-abortion movement has long had ties to white nationalism. For example, the Ku Klux Klan referred to legalized abortion

as a genocide against the white race. This mindset was readily apparent after the Roe v. Wade decision. Conflating abortion with race suicide became the core reason to oppose abortion. This mindset is part of the engine that has driven white nationalist participation in the anti-abortion movement for decades.

The setting aside of Roe as a precedent also means the right to contraception is also in danger. Limited access to both healthcare and contraceptives because of financial constraints for some Black women is already the catalyst for a significant number of unplanned pregnancies. Should contraception become illegal, the damage to Black women will be devastating.

## Black Women By the Numbers

Economically, the wealth gap between Black women and white women continues to expand. Between 1970 and 2019, the gap has increased from \$472 to \$12,700. On average, Black women and their families earned \$26,500 less than white women and their families. Some of these economic gaps are exacerbated by lags in educational attainment. An increase in teen pregnancy and parenthood reduces access to educational opportunities and, thereby, reduces educational attainment. With regard to health, the gap between white women's health outcomes and those of Black women is significant. Life expectancy for Black women is 3.1 years less than that of white women. Black women tend to be three times more likely to die in pregnancy, post-partum than white women.

## Why Abortion Isn't a Health Care continued

While a lower percentage of Black women suffer from hypertension than white women, Black women have higher rates of heart disease and obesity than white women do. There is also data that reflects lower funding for health issues that disproportionately affect Black women. Black women also have a lower participation rate in clinical studies that require consent.

All of this health and economic data lends itself to the question, how will the overturning of *Roe v Wade* impact Black women's health and economic outcomes? Black women are three times as likely than white women to experience an unintended pregnancy. That is, in large measure, due to inhibited access to health care and contraceptives. Prior to the *Dodd v Jackson* decision, roughly 37% of Black women obtained abortions. Now that abortion care is no longer an option in a number of states, it is likely that the maternal mortality rate will increase. It is also likely that Black women's participation in the labor force will decline and the poverty rate among Black women will rise. As of 2019, 13% of Black women were uninsured, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the number of uninsured women will rise as they are forced to exit the labor market. A study published by BMC Women's Health concluded that Black women with lower educational attainment experience higher levels of allostatic load. Allostasis refers to the process through which the body responds to stressors and the ways those stressors impact the bodies return to homeostasis.

There are organizations that specifically advocate for reproductive justice for Black women. [In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#) partners with eight organizations to work for reproductive justice. Those organizations, Black Women for Wellness, Black Women's Health Imperative, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, SisterLove, Inc. SisterReach, SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW, The Afiya Center and Women With A Vision, all invest significant resources in the fight for reproductive justice. There are also mainstream organizations which serve the Black community that should also be advocating for reproductive justice for Black women. These organizations include the NAACP, the National Urban League and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. It is up to the Black community to push these organizations to use their influence to advocate for reproductive justice for Black women.

As Dr. Mutcherson's article in this edition shows, 23 states have abortion laws that can be classified as most restrictive, very restrictive or restrictive. These are Missouri, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, South Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Utah, Arizona, Idaho and Wisconsin. Black women who live in these states are going to be disproportionately impacted by the decision that set aside *Roe*. The question that remains is, what will the African American community and reproductive justice advocates do to save them?



## *MOTHERHOOD, FROM WONDER TO NIGHTMARE | OPINION*

BY KIMBERLY MUTCHERSON

The Supreme Court's decision to overrule *Roe v. Wade* in its *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health* opinion created seismic shifts in the lives of thousands of women and others in the United States.

For some, those shifts were immediate. Consider the women sitting in clinics on the morning of the decision whose providers sent them home without their planned abortion because *Roe* was no longer the law of the land. Or women who were in transit from their home state, perhaps Texas — where abortion after about six weeks has been banned since September 2021 — to a state where they could still legally get an abortion. Or even women who were sitting out the legally obligatory waiting period post-consent because their state legislators thought they needed more time to contemplate whether they wished to remain pregnant. And, of course, there are the women who were feeling a deep sense of relief that they had been able to have their desired abortions before the Supreme Court took that decision away from them.

Many of us who have been doing reproductive rights and justice work expected that the outcome of a decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* would be chaos — and chaos is exactly what the decision has unleashed. The map of where abortion is legal or banned and what restrictions are in place is in a rapid state of transition. States like New Jersey, California and Connecticut worked prior to and in the immediate aftermath of *Dobbs* to shore up protections for people who provide or receive abortions and even fund travel for those living in

states where abortion is banned. Other states moved just as swiftly to shut down clinics and to send women scrambling for care elsewhere.

While pregnant people try to make plans where time is of the essence, their ability to do so is hampered by an unstable legal landscape. And abortion providers are also reeling as they attempt to understand the limits of laws that have gone into effect in the places where they provide abortions. How are they to understand medical emergency exceptions to bans? How close to death must a pregnant person be before a physician can intervene? How will these bans impact miscarriage management, which frequently uses the same medications used for medication abortion?

And despite Justice Samuel Alito's fervent claim in the majority opinion that this case was only about abortion and would not impact other cherished rights, the real-world impact of the decision belies that statement. One Kansas City faith-based health system announced that it would stop distributing Plan B, the contraceptive used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex, out of fear that providing the medication might conflict with the state's newly revived abortion ban. Fierce pushback from advocates and others led them to reverse the decision within less than 24 hours. The fact that they took this initial step at all represents the risk that abortion bans will expand beyond abortion to contraception and even fertility treatment in a state where a proclamation that life begins at conception could extend to frozen embryos.

It is devastating to equality for women in the United States that while other countries move forward in their abortion jurisprudence, including Mexico and Ireland, the United States has taken a substantial step backward. This is courtesy of states that proclaim allegiance to life while pursuing policies that prove otherwise and a Supreme Court majority that is woefully detached from the real world.

In the real world, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any developed nation. There is no federal requirement for paid family leave, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act is woefully under-enforced, and the gender wage gap persists. Mississippi, the state where the Dobbs case originated, has some of the worst infant, child and maternal mortality rates in the country. And those rates involve the same racial disparities in health that we see in many other health indicators. For instance, Black women are anywhere from two to five times more likely than white women to die as a consequence of pregnancy or childbirth.

Despite the state's professed allegiance to life, Mississippi legislators declined to extend the period of postpartum Medicaid eligibility from two months to one year when given the chance to do so early in 2022. Mississippi has one of the highest rates of poverty in the U.S., a public education system that consistently ranks as the worst of the worst, and a teen suicide rate that has been climbing exponentially. While women, infants and children continue to die at alarming rates in the state, the legislature has concerned itself with devoting significant resources to ending abortion rather than to caring for

the living infants and children within their borders.

There is no disputing that pregnancy, childbearing, and parenting can be amazing and fulfilling experiences in a woman's life. But, as the dissenting justices in Dobbs observed, when a state curtails the decisions that a pregnant person can make, it can "transform what, when freely undertaken, is a wonder into what, when forced, may be a nightmare."



This article was reprinted with permission from the author.

The article was featured in Rutgers Today, July 2022 and in an [op-ed on NJ.com](#).

*Kimberly Mutcherson is the Co-Dean of Rutgers Law School.*

# *Environmental Justice* More Than Just a Slogan

by Penny Dryden

Environmental Justice means different things to different people, although everyone can play a part in achieving it: ways advocates and allies can make “social and environmental justice” more than just a slogan.

As advocates continue to fight for equal rights for all citizens up and down the state of Delaware, the breadth of social inequities encapsulated by “systemic racism” continues to be illuminated. One such inequity often brought to the forefront of conversations is environmental racism, which is racist, discriminatory policies at multiple levels that intentionally and disproportionately burden low-income and/or communities of color with environmental hazards.

To combat these policies, let’s not forget the term ‘Environmental Justice’ emerged in the 1970’s from a study that traced the federal government’s bulk placement of hazardous waste sites within Black communities in North Carolina—in effect demonstrating environmental racism. Since then, light has been shed on countless other discriminatory policies and planning, for example, both governing bodies and private corporations benefit financially from polluting in Black and brown communities across the country as well as in Delaware. In addition, policies meant to sustain residents, such as the Clean Air and the Safe Drinking Water Act are underenforced in our communities and our communities have the least number of public resources and benefits.

However, in Delaware, environmental justice is not just about highlighting these discrepancies. We know them all too well through life. Real environmental justice refers to meaningful partnerships, letting communities lead and shifting decision-making power back to Black and brown communities that are systemically impacted by environmental racism.

## Educate Yourself

The first step in empowering and amplifying voices within our Black and brown communities is educating ourselves about the connections between structural racism and the disproportionate environmental hazards found in our communities: reading the findings of the Environmental Justice for Delaware (2017) report which highlights toxic pollutants and health impacts in Black communities in comparison to more elite white communities. In addition to learning about the inequities themselves, do some research on the local and federal policies which are designed to perpetuate those differences in the first place, such as the Justice40 Initiative. Additionally, it is important to realize even within major environmental groups and non-profits, the leadership tends to be middle class and white. Be careful not to blindly assume these organizations, policymakers, and leaders are advancing environmental justice for all. Read up on their policies and initiatives to get an understanding as to whether or not the concerns, priorities,





## ***Environmental Justice*** Continued

and voices of underprivileged (Black and brown) citizens are central to the agenda. A quick Google search of “environmental social justice” or “environmental racism” is an easy start to your self-education on either current inequitable environmental hazards or policymaking.

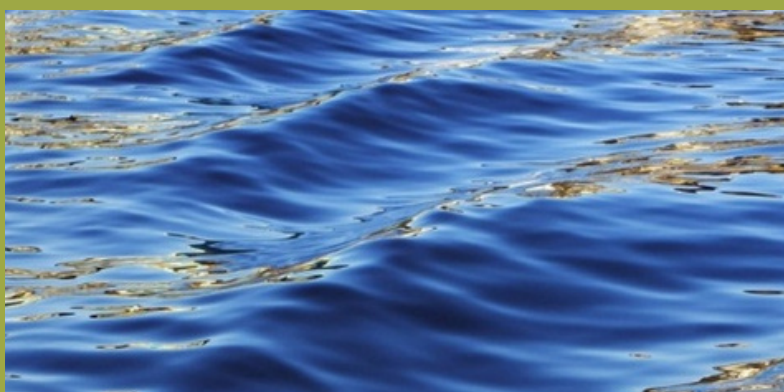
### **Elevate the Voices of Impacted Communities**

Once you’ve educated yourself, get to know the social justice advocates in your community and support them however you can. This support can take on several forms. If it is feasible for you, donate directly to organizations advocating for environmental justice or lend your help as an active participant. As the Black Lives Matter advocacy has demonstrated, online amplification of voices and sharing of resources on whatever platform is available to you can also be helpful. Within the Black communities, continued amplification of resident outreach through community newsletters, social media, grassroots organizations and environmental justice groups is also important. No matter what avenue you decide to pursue, the priority is making sure these environmental issues don’t get lost in the noise.



### **Hold Your Representatives Accountable**

Beyond amplifying the voices of environmental justice activists, it is important to examine the role elected officials can play in dismantling structural racism, namely at the city, county and state levels. Stay informed about local environmental issues in your community. When issues come up concerning permitting and land use plans, policy design and enforcement, and grant awards, advocate for these issues to be prioritized and the decisions concerning them be made transparent and fair. In short, hold your community and your representatives accountable for their environmental votes! Let’s all do our part to change the narrative that environmental considerations in our communities are cumbersome; the lasting impact of early intentionality is well worth our time.







## ***Environmental Justice*** Continued

### **Use your Power to Resolve Problems and Lead Projects**

Holding our community and public officials accountable while not being intentional about how we use our own power to resolve problems and lead projects is counterintuitive. Before you sit on the sidelines, investigate the environmental practices of corporations. While many companies have become increasingly transparent about their practices, deliberate environmental harm in vulnerable communities for economic gain is sadly commonplace. Instead of solely relying on government and big companies, consider investing your time and talents in your own ideas and solutions, e.g., form partnerships, create jobs, contracts and economic opportunities. You will be amazed at what you might accomplish—whether it be leading a community air monitoring

campaigns or developing clean energy projects that meet the needs of your community.

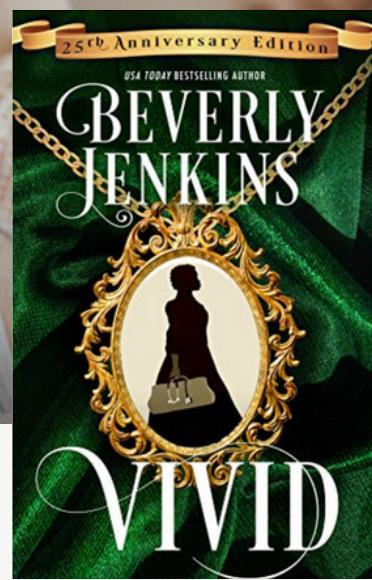
As was mentioned previously, policy and environmental impact go hand in hand. Through illuminating and dismantling this historical fatality, we can help recover impacted communities from the legacies of environmental racism. In the process, our allyship will reach new heights of intentionality so the understood framework of social and environmental justice will be that much more comprehensive and not just a slogan.

*This article is written by Penny Dryden, Executive Director of CHEC Inc., inspired by the Yale Sustainability Plan in Support of Environmental Justice.*



# Readers' Corner

## Spotlight on African American Authors and Literature



by Toni A. Barrett

### **Vivid, by Beverly Jenkins**

**Vivid** takes place in 1876, in the fictitious Black community of Grayson Grove, Michigan. It is the fictional story of Viveca Lancaster, one of the few Black females, at that time, to become a doctor after graduating from the prestigious Women's Medical College, which is an actual college founded in 1850 and located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As our heroine moves to this rural town, which is badly in need of a doctor, she must prove herself time and time again, that she, a strong, intelligent, independent Black woman, is more than capable of handling the business of being an effective doctor. While the story is an historical fiction, romance novel, it's a delightful and easy read, which reveals that the many struggles Black women faced in the 1800's are still many of the same struggles Black women face today.

**Beverly Jenkins**, born in 1951 in Detroit, Michigan, is an African American author who has written a myriad of novels based on historical events which are primarily centered around the 19th century because she feels this is a period which has been overlooked. She has received numerous awards for her writings, including the Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award (2017), NAACP Image Award for Literature (Nominee 2013) and the Romantic Time Historical Romance Winner (2016), among others.

For more information about Beverly Jenkins and for a list of her many novels, go to [BeverlyJenkins.net](http://BeverlyJenkins.net)

**Note:** If you have read a work of literature, fiction or non-fiction, that you would like to recommend to our readers, we'd love to hear from you. After all, there is much ***Truth to Be Told*** through our literature past and present.

# THERE'S MORE *to the Story*

## Who Was Rebecca Lee Crumpler?

by Kathy M. Trusty

- She was born in the First State.
- She went to the first medical school that trained women.
- She was the first Black woman to earn a degree in medicine.
- She was one of the first African Americans to publish a medical journal.

Rebecca Lee Crumpler was born in Christiana, Delaware on February 8, 1831. She later moved to Pennsylvania where she was raised by her aunt. Rebecca grew up watching her aunt take care of sick neighbors, which inspired her to become a nurse.

Rebecca's family realized how intelligent she was at an early age. Wanting her to have a better education than what was available to Black children in Pennsylvania, she was sent to Massachusetts to be educated at the West Newton English and Classical School. West Newton was a progressive school and accepted students regardless of race or gender. It was founded by Nathaniel Allen, an abolitionist and supporter of equal rights for women and Black Americans.

In 1860, Rebecca entered the New England Female Medical College, the first school in the country to train women in medicine. At that time there were only three hundred doctors in the United States, none were Black.

Rebecca graduated from the New England Female Medical College in 1864. She holds the distinction of being the school's only Black graduate as it then merged with Boston University in 1873.

When the Civil War ended, Rebecca went to Richmond Virginia to work for the Freedman's Bureau. She and other Black physicians treated Black Americans who became free after the war. Without the help of Rebecca and the other doctors, those who were newly freed from slavery would not have received medical care.

Rebecca was not treated well or fairly in the south. She faced discrimination because of her race and sex.

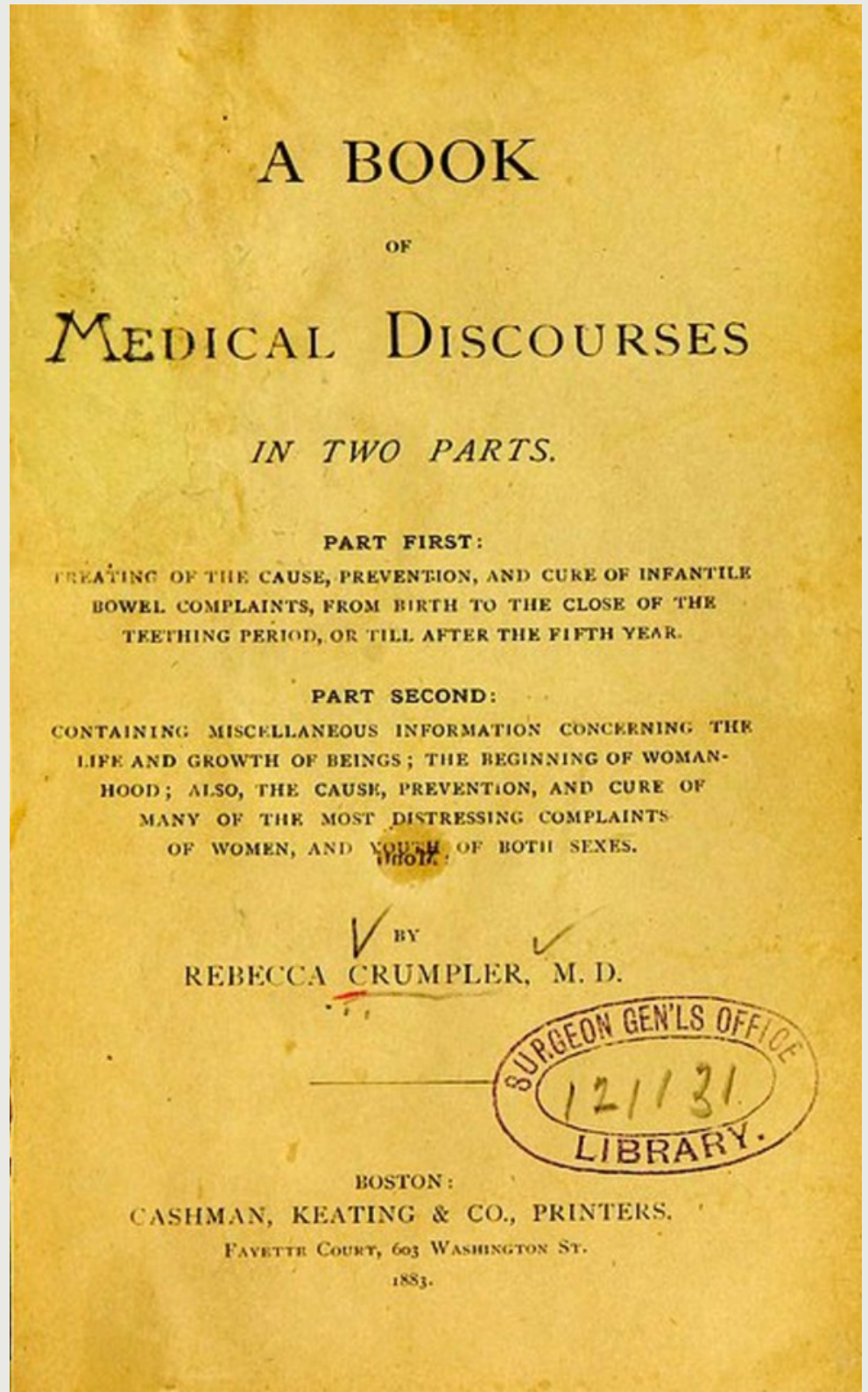


After her work with the Freedman's Bureau, Rebecca returned to Massachusetts and opened a practice in Boston. Rebecca always had an interest in diseases that affected women and children and she treated them regardless of their ability to pay.

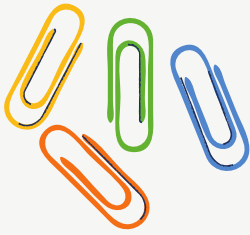
In 1883, Rebecca published "A Book of Medical Discourses." It was dedicated to mothers, nurses and those who took care of the sick. It was a medical advice book. Rebecca shared what she learned and things she did to help mothers and children.

Rebecca was a strong believer in preventive care. She ended the introductory section of her book with "... there is a cause for every ailment, and that it may be in their power to remove it. My chief desire in presenting this book is to impress upon somebody's mind the possibilities of prevention."

Rebecca's book was one of the first medical books published by a Black American.







# BACK TO SCHOOL



The time has come! It's time to think about back to school and all the excitement that comes with it. To help prepare parents and students for returning to school ready and eager to learn, the ladies of **Alpha Alpha Mu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc** have put together **a series of Educational Tips**. Presented here are tips that will not only be helpful in preparing for the return to school, but these best practices are designed to help bolster student achievement throughout the year. Please take time to read these tips and put into practice as many as possible and you should see the results of your efforts showing up in your child's academic progress.

ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC. @  
ALPHA ALPHA MU OMEGA CHAPTER  
Presents  
**EDUCATIONAL TIP #1**  
**FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL**  
From Experienced Teachers




**Visit [www.ixl.com](http://www.ixl.com)**

Get resources now to help you succeed this coming school year!



- Language Arts Skills
- Math Skills
- Science Skills
- Social Studies Skills
- Spanish Skills

For Grades K-12


For questions please contact  
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ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC. @  
ALPHA ALPHA MU OMEGA CHAPTER  
Presents  
**EDUCATIONAL TIP #2**  
**FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL**  
From Experienced Teachers







**Reading is fundamental. Children should read for at least 20 minutes each day. Here are some of the benefits of reading 20 minutes per day.**



Your child can get a **FREE library card** and check out books to read throughout the year.

For questions please contact  
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Shorel Clark: [clarkshorel@gmail.com](mailto:clarkshorel@gmail.com)

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**EDUCATIONAL TIP #3  
FOR RETURNING  
TO SCHOOL**

From Experienced Teachers



Self-Assessment and reflection are important to student achievement. Students should take time to reflect on their learning. Have your child:

1. Write down 3 things they could do to maintain good grades.
2. Write down 3 things they are good at doing.
3. Write down 3 things they are going to need help completing.

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**EDUCATIONAL TIP #4  
FOR RETURNING  
TO SCHOOL**

From Experienced Teachers

National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. has an eLearning Academy with lessons and resources for parents and students. Go to



<https://nspdk.org>

Click on the banner

**NSPDK eLEARNING ACADEMY**

Other educational sites to visit:

[www.abcya.com](http://www.abcya.com)

[www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com)

<http://vdlibsearch.lib.udel.edu/elementary>

lib.de.us...for Delaware Libraries

[www.tumblebook.com](http://www.tumblebook.com)

go to TumbleBookLibrary

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**EDUCATIONAL TIP #5  
FOR RETURNING  
TO SCHOOL**

From Experienced Teachers



Writing is an important skill students need to practice over the summer. Students need to practice writing everyday. Have your child:

1. Write a letter to a friend or relative.
2. Keep a daily journal.
3. Write a thank you note for a gift they may have received.
4. Write a story about their favorite place they visited or an activity they enjoyed during the summer.

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**EDUCATIONAL TIP #6  
FOR PARENTS**

From Experienced Teachers



Children tend to stay up later during the summer months, so prepare your child to be ready to get up early once school begins by sending them to bed 15 minutes earlier each week.

They won't notice the difference and by the time school starts, they will be going to bed, at their normal school bedtime. Then your child will be able to wake up early and be alert and ready to learn from day 1!

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**EDUCATIONAL TIP #7  
FOR PARENTS**



From Experienced Teachers



**Eat Right to Think Right**



During the course of the summer, help your child develop the habit of eating breakfast and including fruit in their diet. Studies show students who eat breakfast and fruit do better in school.

- Hunger, due to insufficient food intake, is associated with lower grades, higher rates of absenteeism, repeating a grade, and an inability to focus among students.
- Student participation in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Breakfast Program (SBP) is associated with increased academic grades and standardized test scores, reduced absenteeism, and improved cognitive performance and memory.

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**EDUCATIONAL TIP #8  
FOR PARENTS**



From Experienced Teachers



1. Limit electronics - Set a daily time limit for electronic use.

Set a bedtime hour - Get a good night's sleep.

Eat a balanced diet - Add more fruits and vegetables.

Know your child's reading and writing ability. Make time to read and write with your child daily.

Set a homework location and a study time- Select a quiet location and a daily set time to do homework after school.

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**BACK  
TO  
SCHOOL**



# Let the Truth Be Told

*A Mission Statement Indicating What Let the Truth Be Told is All About, the Audience and the Outcome*

**Let the Truth Be Told** is intended to give African Americans the opportunity to speak “truth to power” through a variety of media including, but not limited to, commentary, essays, poems, history and art. These truths may be provided by parents, teachers, students, ministers, historians, and any other citizens who wish to have their truth be heard. This platform aims to transform our words into empowered activism and describes a mobilized African American community which is actively involved in insuring our liberation and our quest for equality in America. This also means energizing our family members, friends, church members and others to get involved in activities which are about shaping a democratic society equally open to all African Americans. More deeply, **Let the Truth Be Told** aims to encourage African Americans to participate as office holders, as well as to become outspoken attendees in town council meetings, general assembly sessions, school board meetings, and to be participants in all public venues. **Let the Truth Be Told** will make it abundantly clear the African American community is not stuck in the “victim mentality” and is quite willing and capable to contribute to all aspects of public service. **Let the Truth Be Told** will demonstrate, boost and illustrate how, as was the case with our ancestors, our demand is not something for nothing. Our quest was, and still is, to be recognized as viable contributors and to have equal rights as human beings. Despite lynching, police brutality and the psychological trauma created by enslavement, African American communities have built successful and profitable businesses, banks, schools and self-sustaining churches and we want/need to continue in these efforts by continuing to work together toward becoming even stronger. We can only become stronger by knowing and passing on the truth.

We are seeking contributors to **Let the Truth Be Told**. We are looking for people of all backgrounds to lend their truth and gain the opportunity for their truth to be heard. We invite you to submit narratives, essays, biographies, poems, art work, etc. Even if you feel you have something to say, but do not believe you write well enough, don't let that stop you. Please submit what you want to say and you will be given support which will lead to your voice being heard. **Let the Truth Be Told!**

We are seeking contributors to **Let the Truth Be Told**. We invite you to submit narratives, essays, biographies, poems, art work, etc. Please submit what you want to say and you will be given support which will lead to your voice being heard. **Let the Truth Be Told!** [LetTheTruthBeTold2026@gmail.com](mailto:LetTheTruthBeTold2026@gmail.com)



Don't miss an issue, subscribe to **Let the Truth Be Told.**