

# LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD™



Nov. 2023

Black Resistance in the Past, Present and Future

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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 don’t 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.

### Contact information

Contact us: [LetTheTruthBeTold2026@gmail.com](mailto:LetTheTruthBeTold2026@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.letthetruthbetold.net/>

### Let The Truth Be Told - Editorial Board



Dr. Marlene A. Saunders  
Executive Manager



Toni A. Barrett  
Executive Editor



Debra A. O'Neal  
Graphic Designer



Kathy M. Trusty  
Contributing Writer

# Voting for Democracy to Achieve Equality

by Dr. Marlene A. Saunders

How quickly time is passing becomes clear when we realize another election cycle is upon us. In November 2024, a short 12 months from now, Delawareans will have the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to VOTE. For many African Americans, voting is a painful reminder of the dangerous struggle many endured to achieve the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Some, however, did not survive. Among the sacrifices of the Civil Rights Movement were the brave and democratically patriotic individuals who were murdered while seeking the right to vote for African Americans. Let's never forget James Earl Chaney (African American), Andrew Goodman (Jewish), Michael Henry Schwerner (Jewish), Rev. James Reeb (white), Viola Gregg Liuzzo (white), Jimmie Lee Jackson (African American) and the many others who were killed. This history, combined with well-founded and legitimate concerns about the aftermath of the 2020 election, including former president Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the election and the mob attack on the United States Capitol, should be regarded as a serious warning that democracy and America are not on a stable foundation.

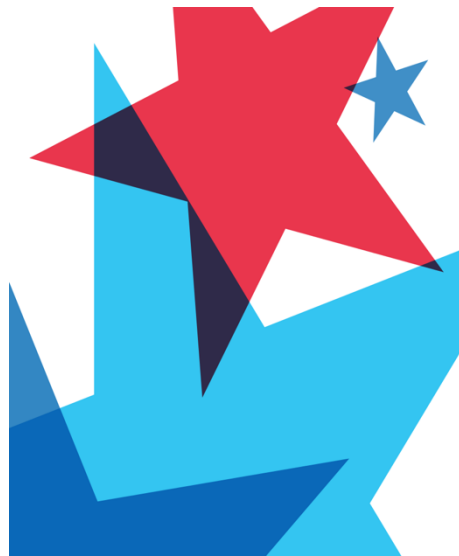
When asked whether we have a republic or a monarchy, Benjamin Franklin replied, "A Republic, if you can keep it." Among the factors that saved the Republic in 2020 was the fact that we garnered enough votes to defeat the former president. The election was notable because it had the highest voter turnout of this century. It must be noted though that a second critical factor was the number of elected officials, which included the Vice President and other Republican elected politicians, who rejected the former president's orders and pleas to identify votes necessary to overturn the election and/or appoint Trump electors.

This election cycle includes massive registration campaigns in Delaware. If you are not registered to vote, DO SO! However, the emphasis this article is placing on voting lets you know that registering but not voting will not preserve democracy and will not halt the perverted effort to dismantle our government in the manner we witnessed in 2020.

This reality leads to the choices Delawareans will make in the 2024 election. The national offices up election are U.S. Congressman-at-Large, and U.S. Senator. State-wide offices to fill are Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Insurance Commissioner. Also, open on the state level are 10 State Senate seats. In addition, there will be candidates to elect to fill all 41 State Representative seats. Voters will have the opportunity to choose the candidate who will occupy the Office of Mayor for the City of Wilmington, Wilmington City Council President and eight Wilmington City Council seats. In Kent County, three of the six Levy Court Commissioner seats are among the positions up for election, and in Sussex County, three of the five districts are on the schedule for elections.

When the February 2024 edition of *Let The Truth Be Told* is published, the early voting period for the Presidential Primary Election will begin the following month. The polls for school board elections will open on May 14, 2024. If you are still asking why we focus on voting so early, when the first election (Presidential Primary Election) is five months off, here are some answers:

1. The troubling events following the 2020 election clearly indicate that voting cannot not be taken lightly by anyone, especially African Americans and individuals in other marginalized populations. For example, recent Supreme Court rulings that have weakened protections against discrimination in voting, as well as legislation by states that enacted voting restrictions will likely continue and decrease access to voting by African Americans, other communities of color and poor people.
2. The services, programs and social policies that determine who gets services, the number of services individuals can receive and limits for services, etc. reflect the deliberate choices made by our U.S. Senators, U.S. Congressman, Delaware’s Governor, Lieutenant Governor, members of the Delaware General Assembly and local elected politicians, including county commissioners, school board members, etc. These individuals are **voted** into office. Voters should be asking, “Who is listening to Sussex County residents pleading for housing development that simultaneously protects waterways, preserves natural habitats and controls



the heavy traffic that has become more than a nuisance?”

3. Communities with low voter turnout run the risk of ending up with elected officials who will not advocate on their behalf to address their unique interests, problems and support workable solutions to resolve social and economic problems and inequities. Delaware was virtually unresponsive to the impact of COVID on African American communities and other communities of color until grassroots organizations noted the neglect. Although the state eventually stepped up COVID-focused prevention and treatment programs, disparities continue to persist. Who are the candidates that will not only advocate for health care services to treat and prevent COVID but, in addition, will support to expand health care to individuals with health problems that were disproportionately represented in African American communities before the pandemic?

Before closing, an important point needs to be made. Democracy certainly has not created equal opportunities for African Americans, and their questions about the value of

voting should not be dismissed. However, do not be mistaken that the group is apathetic about voting. In 2020, the voter turnout among African Americans was greater (62.6%) compared to the turnout for Latino Americans (53.7%) and Asian Americans (59.7%). Nevertheless, continuing the never-ending struggle for representation in all levels of government must include doing the following:

- Register to vote.**
- Vote In All Elections**, including school board and all local elections. In addition,

voting up and down the ticket (national offices as well as local offices).

- **Vote Early.**
- **Become Informed about all the candidates** in terms of their positions on issues that are important to your well-being and the well-being of your family and community. Then choose your candidate.
- If a candidate is running for re-election, become informed about the extent to which the legislations he/she voted for and against as well as the legislation they sponsored or co-sponsored kept the promises he/she made while campaigning.
- **Be Engaged.** That is, attend forums in which candidates are participating, ask questions and ask to meet with them.
- **Join a Legislative Advocacy Organization**, e.g., League of Women Voters, Women’s March, and attend and participate in the meetings.
- **Develop Relationships with Individuals Outside Your Racial/Ethnic Group.**
- **Attend School Board, County Council, City Council Meetings.**



### 2024 State of Delaware Election Calendar

The Department of Elections has prepared and published this calendar as an informational tool for the citizens of Delaware. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information presented in this calendar is correct, any questions or request for clarification and additional information regarding any date or event should be directed to the Department of Elections at (302) 739-4277 or [COE\\_Vote@delaware.gov](mailto:COE_Vote@delaware.gov). This calendar is subject to change in the event of revisions to applicable Delaware law.

[For the complete calendar, please click here.](#)

**February 7, 2024 – DEADLINE** to change political party affiliation before the April 2, 2024 Presidential Primary Election.

**March 1, 2024 - DEADLINE** for candidates for school board elections to file notice of candidacy.

**March 9, 2024 - DEADLINE** to register to vote before the April 2, 2024 Presidential Primary Election.

**March 20, 2024, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Early Voting Period for Presidential Primary Election begins.** Check website for locations of Early Voting Sites in each county.

**April 1, 2024 - DEADLINE** for Department of Elections County Offices to issue absentee ballots for the April 2, 2024 Presidential Primary Election.

**April 2, 2024 - Presidential Primary Election.** Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**May 14, 2024 - School Board Elections.** Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

“  
Elections belong to the people.  
It’s their decision. If they decide  
to turn their back on the fire and  
burn their behinds, then they will  
just have to sit on their blisters.  
Abraham Lincoln  
”

# Charles Hamilton Houston and Brown v Board of Education

by Kathy M. Trusty

2024 will mark 70 years since the Supreme Court's unanimous decision in Brown v Board of Education. In May 1954, the nine justices of the United States Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was a violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and therefore unconstitutional.

The fight to end school segregation through the courts began years before the Brown case. Those earlier court battles were led by Houston, one of the most important civil rights attorneys in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was sometimes called "Mr. Civil Rights" and was often referred to as "The Man Who Killed Jim Crow."



Charles Hamilton Houston was born in 1895 in Washington, DC, the year before the Supreme Court's ruling in Plessy v Ferguson, which declared that separate but equal facilities for Black and white Americans were constitutional.

Houston served as a First Lieutenant in the segregated United States army during World War I. His experience as a Black soldier led to his decision to attend law school. Houston wrote, "The hate and scorn showered on us Negro officers by our fellow Americans convinced me that there was no sense in my dying for a world ruled by them. I made up my mind that if I got through this war, I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back."

Houston entered Harvard Law School in 1919. He was the first Black student to serve on the editorial board of the prestigious Harvard Law Review.

In 1929, he became Associate Dean of Howard University Law School. He secured accreditation for the law school and implemented a full-time curriculum. Moreover, he added demanding civil rights courses to the curriculum and turned the school into a laboratory dedicated to the fight for civil rights. Houston trained future civil rights lawyers at Howard University, including Thurgood Marshall, who went on to become the first Black Justice on the United States Supreme Court, serving from 1967-1991.

Houston needed a legal and financial powerhouse behind him in his pursuit of civil rights for Black Americans. In 1934, he left Howard University Law School and became the lead attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense Committee. Houston believed the fight for civil rights should take place in court. He was the top attorney for most of the civil rights cases that went before the US Supreme Court. He also designed the strategy for fighting segregation in public schools.

Brown v Board of Education was five separate cases that were lawsuits against school districts in South Carolina, Washington, DC, Virginia, Delaware, and Kansas.



Each case was appealed to the Supreme Court. There they were grouped together and became Brown v Board of Education. Thurgood Marshall, who succeeded Hamilton at the NAACP Legal Defense Committee, argued the case for the plaintiffs.

Marshall argued that separate school systems for Blacks and whites were inherently unequal and, thus, violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.”

The court’s ruling on May 17, 1954, in favor of the plaintiffs, overturned Plessy v Ferguson, a decision made in 1896, which had declared that separate but equal facilities based on race were constitutional.

Regrettably, Charles Hamilton Houston had already passed away by the time the Court issued that ruling. He died in 1950, before the cases reached the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, his contributions were instrumental to the 1954 decision.

Charles Hamilton Houston planned the strategy that led to this decision. Without his work, this landmark ruling might not have come about when it did.





## Why Voting is Important

By Marie Pinkney

If you live in the Philadelphia media market, like I do, there's a good chance you were overwhelmed this fall by a constant stream of television commercials featuring politicians slinging mud at each other in the run up to the 2023 election.

I know it can sometimes feel like this thing we call democracy is just one big reality TV show where the contestants care way too much about tearing each other down and don't care nearly enough about lifting people up.

As an elected official, I see how that constant negativity could turn people off from politics, elections and voting. As a Black woman, member of the LGBTQ+ community, social worker, and former foster parent who works a full-time job to keep food on the table, I want to urge you to resist apathy, overcome complacency and insist on making your voice heard each and every time you have a chance to vote.

I know, we are all spread so thin these days. There are so many reasons why we're too busy, too discouraged, or too inconvenienced to get to the polls. Often, those reasons are valid, but here's the thing: Those who benefit from the status quo benefit from us staying home!

Many of these politicians don't want people who look the way we do, love the way we do, and think the way we do making decisions about how our cities, our states and our country are run, especially if those decisions are going to threaten existing power structures.

If you don't believe me, just look at our history. For the first 100 years or so of this "great" experiment known as the United States of America, the system was explicitly set up to keep power in the hands of white, male landowners.

When the 14th Amendment affirmed the rights of Black men to vote, those same white, male landowners found new ways to keep us from the ballot through poll taxes, literacy tests and flat-out violence. Women of all ethnicities had to fight for another 50 years just to have a voice in our democracy. Since then, we've seen countless examples of redlining, gerrymandering, and other attempts to minimize or outright disenfranchise people of color.

If our vote didn't matter, why would they work this hard to take it away? Our vote does matter, and when we use it, we have the power to make real change.

*Marie Pinkney, State Senator, District 13*



The truth is that most decisions affecting our daily lives are made at the local level. What gets taught in your child's school is determined by your local school board. Whether you live near a park or how much you pay for water is decided by your municipality. What roads get paved, how much you pay in taxes and whether you live in a state that uses marijuana to put people in jail or create good-paying jobs is all decided by your state Legislature. Yet these are the elections people most frequently skip.

In 2020, I became just the third Black woman ever elected to the Delaware Senate, but only because 282 people refused to be complacent and accept the status quo. Because of them, I was able to defeat a 40-year incumbent who, on key issues, especially gun safety, was out of touch with our diverse district.

Not only did we pass those gun bills after I was elected, but we also raised the minimum wage, passed paid family leave, increased police accountability, expanded access to birth control and forced insurance companies to pay for insulin pumps and other equipment that people with diabetes need to live.

My election is not unusual. The highest-ranking Republican in the Delaware House won reelection last year by just 35 votes. He then immediately held funding for new schools and bridges hostage while trying to force us to give limited liability corporations the right to decide Seaford town elections, the exact same voting rights that people like him denied to us for generations.

A more diverse electorate has directly led to a more diverse Legislature. In just the last

decade, we have gone from one or two Black voices in the General Assembly to 15 Black legislators, one quarter of the Delaware General Assembly with nine of us being women.

Collectively, the Delaware Legislative Black Caucus led the General Assembly to pass an equal rights amendment to the Delaware Constitution, banned discrimination based on hair styles, banned police from using chokeholds, required all police officers in Delaware to wear body cameras and forced them to record any police interrogation of a child, among many other long-overdue



reforms. Along the way, we also made voting a lot easier for families like ours. Delaware families can now cast their ballots in person up to 10 days in advance of Election Day. In addition, registering to vote has never been easier.

With your support in the next election, we can add Delaware to the list of 22 red and blue states with same-day registration and one of 27 states with no-excuse absentee voting. A friend of mine likes to say the four most dangerous words in the English language are, "Somebody should do something." The truth is, we can't expect the status quo to change unless we are personally willing to do something about it. That's why I want each of you to cast your vote and make your voice heard when the next election comes around.

Just a few minutes of your time could determine whether we continue down this well-worn path of negativity and complacency or whether we forge a new path of positivity and prosperity for our families, our neighbors, and our communities.

# Alpha Alpha Mu Omega Honors Three “Sheroes”

by Toni A. Barrett

Alpha Alpha Mu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc® recently held a fundraising luncheon at which it honored three of Sussex County ‘s “sheroes” who showed exemplary leadership and service during our recent Pandemic.



St. John Second Baptist Church Facebook photos

Among the honorees was **Rev. Annie Jane Custis**, who opened her church for funerals for those who lost loved ones during the pandemic. She did so without charging families who could not afford to pay. Rev. Custis is known for being empathetic, caring, giving, phenomenal and bold. She serves her congregation as well as other communities and is a dynamic woman of God. She says, “Don’t wait for something to happen or someone else to do something; go out and get involved.” She is one who practices what she preaches.



<https://radaris.com/p/Nancy/Collick/>

**Nancy J Collick** was also honored. Nancy has served as a Respiratory Therapist at Beebe Healthcare for over 40 years. During the pandemic, she worked tirelessly helping patients on ventilators, tracheostomy tubes and those needing respiratory care. She risked her life daily to ensure those suffering with this awful illness received the best possible care. Nancy has deservedly won awards for her outstanding work in respiratory therapy and is an inspiration to us all. She has always gone the extra mile to help those in need. In her words, she “Did what she was trained to do and what needed to be done.”



<https://www.firststatecaa/about>

Our third recipient was **Bernice M. Edwards**, who has been associated with First State Community Action Agency for over 40 years where she is currently the Executive Director. She assists in connecting families to vital resources. She ensured First State Community Action remained operational during Covid-19 and worked with other organizations to make sure support was readily available to those in need. She assisted in reaching out to seniors in need, homeless families, families in need of food, and those in need of transportation to get to vaccination clinics. She also provided assistance to children as they navigated hybrid learning. Bernice Edwards is another example of an individual who worked tirelessly to help the community during a very difficult time.

The luncheon was attended by approximately 140 people coming from all over the state. Among the attendees were Estelda Parker Selby, Delaware State Representative District 20, who delivered the Keynote Speech, as well as Sherry Dorsey Walker, Democratic member of the Delaware House of Representatives, District 3. In addition to these attendees, a video presentation was given by Lisa Blunt Rochester, U.S. Representative for Delaware’s at-large Congressional District.

Alpha Alpha Mu Omega, the host chapter, was chartered on January 12, 2020, and became the first four-letter chapter in Delaware. The President at the time of Chartering was **Mary C. Lomax** and the current President is **Shorel Clark**. The members of AAMO are extremely proud of the recipients of our inaugural fundraising luncheon and were honored to recognize these three outstanding women.



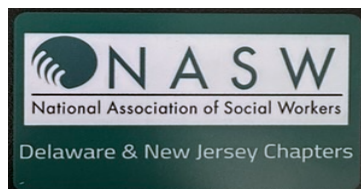
## Let The Truth Be Told Co-Founder Takes on New Position as Executive Director National Association of Social Workers Delaware/New Jersey Chapter



Debra O’Neal serves as the Graphics Supervisor for *Let The Truth Be Told* and we have chosen to highlight her for her recent leadership appointment. After a national search, the National Association of Social Workers selected Debra as the Executive Director for the [Delaware](#) and [New Jersey](#) Chapters. She will provide leadership to these two chapters whose combined membership of nearly 7,000 social workers.

Debra is a professional social worker who earned her BSW from Rutgers University and her MSSW from Columbia University. As a Social Worker, Debra served adults with developmental disabilities in New Jersey. In 1990, she moved to Delaware and continued her work in the developmental disabilities community and later provided mental health services in adult correctional facilities. Since 1994, she has worked in various positions within the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF), including case managing youth on probation. Debra has also served as a Regional Manager for four probation units in New Castle County, as well as Training/Education Administrator II for the Division of Youth Rehabilitative services.

Subsequently, Debra became the Department-wide Training/Education Administrator II for



DSCYF Center for Professional Developmental (CPD). In that role, she served on various work groups and special projects for the division and department. Twenty-five years later, she moved to the Delaware Department for Human Resources (DHR) Training/Education Administrator II. While in Delaware, Debra completed her state service as the Training Administrator II for the DHSS Division of Health Care Quality.

Debra has been a highly active professional who served in various NASW positions in Delaware. She held roles such as New Castle Regional Representative, Secretary, served two terms as President, Delegate, and acted as the Eastern Coalition Co-chair for NASW Delegate Assembly. Debra served on two NASW national committees: Woman’s Issues and The Black Caucus.



Debra is a member of the Alliance of Black Social Workers, Philadelphia chapter of National Association of Black Social Workers. She serves as the chapter’s website manager and has also been a part of the membership and bylaws committees.

In 2012, Debra received the Outstanding Leadership Award from the Delaware Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Delaware Chapter, was inducted into the Loyal Sons and Daughters of Rutgers in April 2015 and received the NABSW Chapter Individual Service Award in August 2023.

Please join the Editorial Board of *Let The Truth Be Told*, in commending Debra for her many accomplishments.



## The Reader's Corner

### Spotlight on African American Authors and Literature

by Toni A. Barrett

#### The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride

Who was the skeleton and how did it get buried in an old well in Chicken Hill, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Pottstown, Pennsylvania? This is the setting for James McBride's historical fiction novel, *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*.

Chicken Hill is an area where Black Americans and Jewish Americans must co-exist amidst serious racial tensions. The story revolves around Moshe and Chona Ludlow, a Jewish couple who own The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store at a time when most of the Jewish folks were leaving the area. Chona refuses to leave, even at the coaxing of her husband, and they become part of the Chicken Hill Community. The story also involves a young Black boy named, Dodo, who lives with his aunt and uncle, Addie and Nate Timblin, after his mother dies. Because he's deaf, the state government wants to take Dodo and put him in an institution, so Chona and Moshe offer to hide Dodo in their apartment to keep him safe. The authorities, including the town's prominent Doctor, Doc Roberts, who is a member of the Ku Klux Klan, search all over for Dodo. Doc Roberts comes to the grocery store looking for Dodo and while he's there, he and Chona have an argument and Doc Roberts assaults her. Meanwhile, Dodo witnesses this and throws himself at the doctor, who then calls the police. Dodo attempts to escape but is caught and put in the Pennhurst State Hospital. There, Dodo befriends a young boy who has Cerebral Palsy, whom he nicknames Monkey

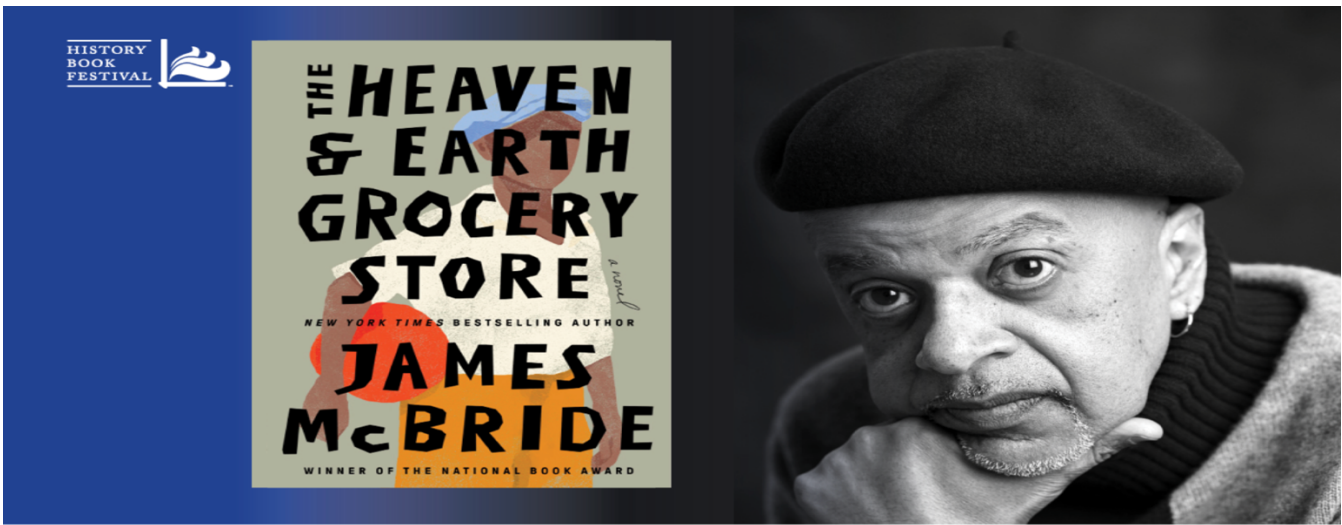
Pants. The rest of the story deals with the atrocities Dodo faces in the institution, how Monkey Pants helps him get through it all, the search and attempts to rescue Dodo and the quest to solve the mystery of the skeleton in the old well.

Throughout the novel's progression, it becomes evident just how challenging survival is for the residents of Chicken Hill, living on the fringes of white Christian America, and the profound harm bigotry, hypocrisy and deception can inflict upon a community.

You will find this book to be a page turner as the truth is ultimately revealed about the skeleton, who it was and how it got there.

James McBride, born September 11, 1957, is an American author as well as a musician. His mother was a Jewish immigrant from Poland who, with his father, Rev. Andrew D. McBride, raised him in Brooklyn. McBride's most noted book is his 1995 memoir, *The Color of Water*, in which he tells the story of his upbringing in a large, poor, African American family headed by a white Jewish mother. Among his other novels are, *Miracle at St. Anna*, *Song Yet Sung* and *Red Hook Summer*.

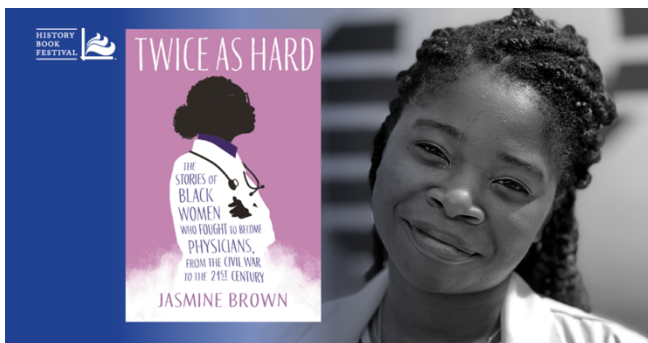
*James McBride was recently the featured author at the [History Book Festival](#) in Lewes, DE. The festival ran from September 29-October 1, 2023. McBride was the festival's closing speaker at which he spoke about his book and autographed copies of *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store**



James McBride | The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store: A Novel

### *Additional Reader Suggestion*

[All these titles were featured in the 2023 History Book Festival.](#)



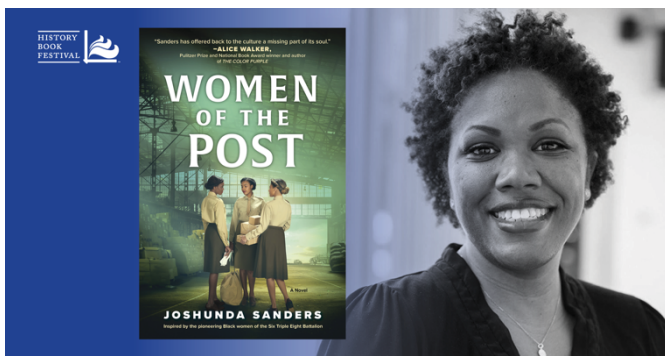
Jasmine Brown | Twice as Hard: The Stories of Black Women Who Fought to Become Physicians, from the Civil War to the 21st Century

#### **About the book**

Selected as one of the “Best Books of January 2023” by shondaland.com, *Twice as Hard* establishes a lineage of Black women doctors whose accomplishments are undeniably important and deeply contemporary. As she profiles each woman, ranging from Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler, who graduated 14 months after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed and provided medical care for the newly freed slaves, to present-day leaders, Brown weaves her own experiences into these intimate histories.

#### **About the book**

This novel takes a new approach to World War II historical fiction by giving voice to the pioneering Black women of the U.S. Army’s 6888 Central Postal Battalion, based in Birmingham, England, who made history by sorting a backlog of one million pieces of mail sent to the troops that had invaded Normandy. Told from the alternating perspectives of three members of the battalion, this is an inspiring story of perseverance, female friendship, romance, and self-discovery.



Joshunda Sanders | Women of the Post



## Implementing HB 198 2023 Update

HB 198, which is legislation requiring all Delaware public and charter schools to teach Black history to children enrolled in grades K-12, was enacted in June 2021.

*Let The Truth Be Told* (LTTBT) has been hosting HB 198 Community Input Meetings since December 2021, via Zoom (recordings of each meeting are available at [Home | Let The Truth Be Told](#)). The overall purpose of the meetings is to update the community on school districts' and charter schools' progress relative to implementing the law and secondly, to establish a dedicated platform for parents and community members to address questions, offer recommendations, and voice concerns specifically regarding the implementation and collaboration with Delaware's educational institutions in teaching Black History.

The sixth virtual HB 198 Community Input Meeting took place on Monday, October 23, 2023. The meeting focused on two agenda items, including updates on the implementation of HB 198 by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and presentations from community-operated programs that exemplify collaborative forthcoming and actual partnerships with school districts and charters to implement HB 198 fully and correctly.

### How Are DDOE, School Districts and Charter Schools Moving Forward with Implementing HB 198 During Year Two, 2023-2024?

The steps DDOE has taken to implement HB 198 “right, all the way” include the following:

- DDOE maintains a site that provides updates and implementation tools that have been shared with public schools and charter schools as well as an updated list of the [HB 198 Leads](#) (the person responsible for oversight of HB 198 implementation within each school and charter school) for the 2023-2024 school year. Parents and members of the community are encouraged to contact the Leads with questions and suggestions regarding HB 198 implementation. [Culturally Responsive Education / Implementation Tools \(doe.k12.de.us\)](#)
- DDOE continues a partnership with Social Studies Coalition of Delaware (SSCD) to develop resources on learning and instruction management. Through partnership between DDOE and SSCD model lesson plans have been made available to teachers. Plans were aligned with DDOE standards and addressed minimum content requirements outlined in HB 198. *Note: Because Delaware is a local control state, school districts and charter schools may choose to use the model lesson plans, create their own or use others.* Also, new model lesson plans were created for the teaching of United States History in grades 4 and 8, as well as new lesson plans for the teaching of economics, redlining, banking deserts, etc.
- A partnership was established with national and local presenters to provide professional development aligned with HB 198 to which school districts and charters schools were able to send their teachers. Forty sessions were dedicated to

teaching Black history across disciplines. More than 600 teachers attended Dawnavyn James’s keynote presentation titled, “**What’s in Your Black History Toolbox?**”. The day long staff development included programs titled, “African Empires in Geography” (K-12), “Picture Books” (Elementary), and “Do You Know Your Black History?” (K-12).

- DDOE and SSCD partnered with the University of Delaware Africana Studies Department to develop HB 198 Black history content recommendations. Key collaborators in the department were Drs. Cheryl Hicks, Brandon Stanford, and Alicia Fontnette, Executive Director of National Council of Black Studies, located at the University of Delaware. NOTE: This collaboration responded to teachers’ concerns that they were unclear about what to teach to follow each minimum course requirement.
- DDOE hosted a Sharing Session on May 4, 2023, at which teachers read each other’s reports, dissected HB 198, and shared approaches to teaching the minimum content requirements to obtain a clear, uniform understanding of what school districts and charter schools are teaching.
- A new reporting template that allows school districts and charter schools to create curriculum maps which will determine the grades when minimum content areas are taught along with related lessons and resources.

“No school can work well for children if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the child’s best interests.” *Dorothy H. Cohen*

## Examples of Community Projects Responding to HB 198

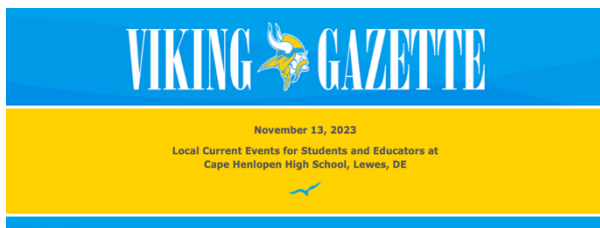
The Antioch A.M.E. (Church) Black History Study Series and the Viking Gazette are two new examples of how communities actively participate as advocates and partners with school districts. This collaboration ensures that communities where Delaware’s students live and learn can fully appreciate the benefits associated with having a comprehensive understanding of Black history.

**Antioch A.M.E. Black History Study Series** – Antioch A.M.E. Church, located in Frankford, DE, is 167 years old. Its history is well-known for its faithfulness to African American religious traditions, including steadfast adherence to a collective orientation that extends to helping others. During Black History Month 2023, Dr. Akawsi Osei (Interim Dean, College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Delaware State University) and Dr. Marlene A. Saunders (Antioch A.M.E. member) presented to the congregation, a program titled, “Africans Before Enslavement: 3200 B.C. to 1619 A.D.” Subsequently, the Antioch Christian Education Board decided there was a need to develop organized and sustainable ways to share Black history with members and community to discuss the group’s past, present and future. From August to October 2023, a series of Black history sessions, using the six episodes of the film *Eyes on the Prize* as framework, was held virtually and in person. The sessions: (1) examined and



discussed African Americans’ struggle for civil rights during the 1960s, (2) compared the situation of African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement to today’s position in society, (3) considered action steps for functioning in a society where institutional racism still impacts the lives of African Americans and (4) examined the Indian River School District’s Black history curricula to identify recommendations for adding or expanding Black history content. The participants included the church’s pastor, Rev. Dania Griffin, and members of the congregation. Having identified the value and benefits of the project, the decision was made to proceed with action steps that include meeting with the person who leads the Indian River School District HB 198 Implementation Team to establish a working relationship for the community to have a voice. For more information about the Antioch A.M.E. Black History Study Series, contact Karen Lewis, Director, Christian Education at [klewislearning@gmail.com](mailto:klewislearning@gmail.com)

**The Viking Gazette and Teacher’s Guide** – the Viking Gazette and Teacher’s Guide is a two-part program designed to give social studies teachers, as well as teachers in other disciplines, weekly instructional resources to stimulate discussions in classrooms. The first part of the publication is a



newsletter that contains four articles selected by the newsletter’s four editors. Core subjects include climate/environment, education, civics, government, and employment. Of the four articles, one is always connected to HB 198. These articles are reprints of articles published in the Cape Gazette. Nine hundred students attending Cape Henlopen High School receive a digital copy of the weekly newsletter.

The second section of the newsletter, the Teacher’s Guide, is published at the same time but is only distributed to teachers. This guide gives relevance to the articles selected and lists sites that offer additional information. They can also find questions to stimulate discussion in the classroom, as well as suggested civic engagement activities. The weekly publication of the Viking Gazette and distribution of the Teacher’s Guide began in September 2023.

For more information about the Viking Gazette and Instructor's Guide, contact George Beckerman at [georgebeckerman@gmail.com](mailto:georgebeckerman@gmail.com)

### Advocacy by Community

*Let The Truth Be Told* believes parents, aunties, grandparents, and other community members should expect Delaware’s teachers to comprehensively teach content that complies with HB 198.

*Let the Truth Be Told* strongly encourages all parents/guardians and other advocates for the integration of Black history in school curricula to engage school districts and charter schools to ensure HB 198 is implemented “right, all the way”.

*Let The Truth Be Told* also supports a multi-dimensional approach, involving not only parents/guardians, but also other members of the community including churches, museums, historical associations, civic organizations, and newspapers.

Implementing HB198 has been challenging, however efforts being made by DDOE, along with teachers, parents and other community members are encouraging. **These efforts must continue if we want to implement HB 198 “Right, All the Way.”**





THERE'S MORE  
to the Story

## Edward Garrison Draper January 1834 – December 1858 Maryland's First Black Lawyer

by Debra A. O'Neal



Edward Garrison Draper was posthumously admitted to the Maryland bar on Oct. 27, 2023 – 166 years after he was rejected because of his race. Image courtesy of the Dartmouth College Alumni Files via Maryland Judiciary.

*Edward Garrison Draper, Maryland's First Black Attorney, Posthumously Honored by the State Supreme Court*

**Edward Garrison Draper**, the son of Garrison and Charlotte Draper, was born January 1834 in Baltimore, Maryland. Although Edward and his parents were free Black people, they lived in a time when being a freed Black person came with strict limitations.

This was a period when Black residents in Maryland were required to obtain a certificate from the court or support from three "respected persons" in the neighborhood (meaning white men) to sell tobacco, crops, and other goods. Edward's father was what we would call an entrepreneur in current times and despite the restrictions he encountered during his lifetime, was a successful Baltimore tobacconist and cigar maker.

Like most parents, Garrison Draper wanted the best for his son and when Edward was old enough, he sent him to a public school for Black children in Philadelphia to gain a quality education. "Because" of a fine preparatory education" in Philadelphia, Draper passed Dartmouth's college [the Ivy League school in New Hampshire] entrance exam in 1851. It encompassed Greek, Latin, English grammar, mathematics and geography."<sup>1</sup> With just a few law schools in the nation and none in Maryland, Edward Garrison Draper attended and graduated with his law degree in 1855.

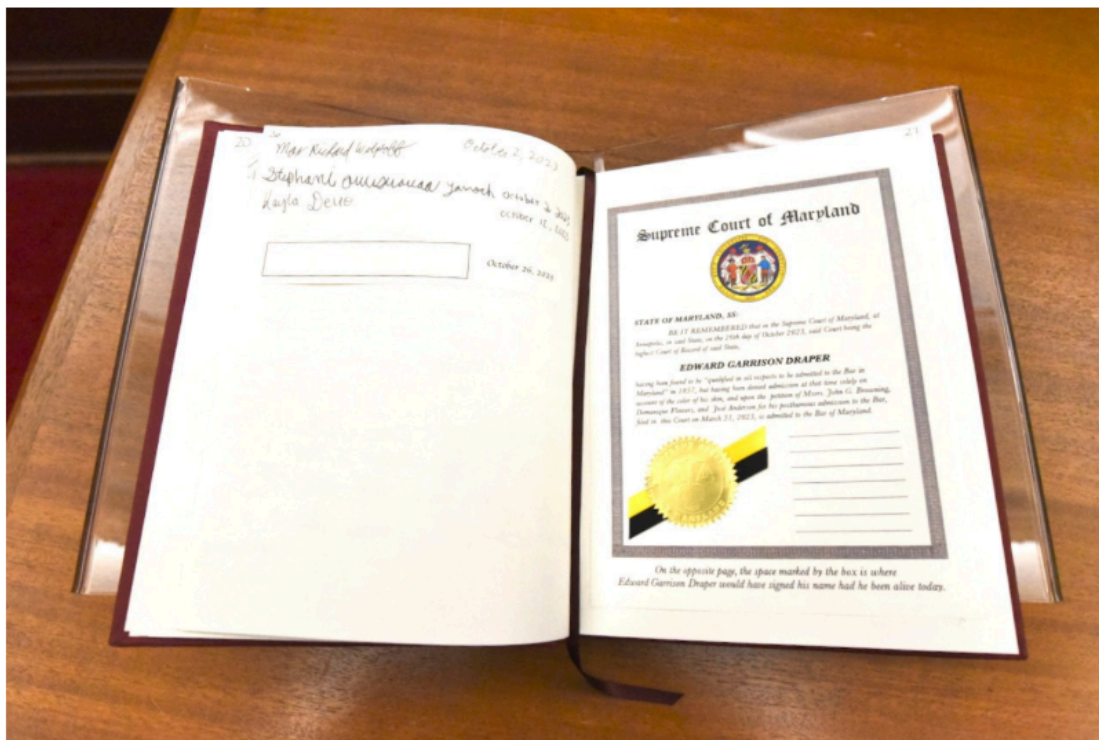
"Draper also was tutored by Charles W. Storey, a prominent Boston attorney who studied in the law offices of George T. Curtis who was part of the legal team that worked on the Dred Scott decision heard in the U.S. Supreme Court."<sup>1</sup>

Edward Garrison Draper petitioned to be admitted to the Maryland State Bar Association on October 29, 1857, during a time when Black people were not allowed to practice law. Superior Court Judge Zacchaeus Collins Lee (first cousin to Robert E. Lee and slave owner) was persuaded to issue the young lawyer a certificate that stated, in part, that **Draper was "qualified in all aspects to be admitted to the Bar in Maryland, if he was a free white citizen of this state.** This certificate is therefore

furnished to him by me, and to promote his establishment and success in Liberia at the Bar there." <sup>1</sup>

Because he was not allowed to practice law in Maryland and like many other Black Marylanders, Edward Garrison Draper decided to emigrate to the "Independent Republic of Maryland" currently known as Liberia. Within a week of obtaining his certificate, Edward and his wife Jane Rebecca Jordan, left Baltimore and took the voyage to Liberia. Regretfully, Edward's career was short-lived. Two weeks after turning 25 years old, Edward Garrison Draper died in December 1858.

On October 27, 2023, Edward Garrison Draper was posthumously admitted to the Maryland State Bar. Some may ask why posthumously honor this great lawyer 166 years later? Justice Angela M. Eaves of the Supreme Court of Maryland said: "The time for settling this matter is now. **There is no expiration to do the right thing.**" <sup>1</sup>



*A certificate acknowledging the posthumous bar admission of Edward Garrison Draper was on display in Maryland on Thursday. Photo from the Executive Office of the Governor.*

<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2023/10/27/state-supreme-court-posthumously-honors-edward-garrison-draper-the-states-first-black-lawyer/>