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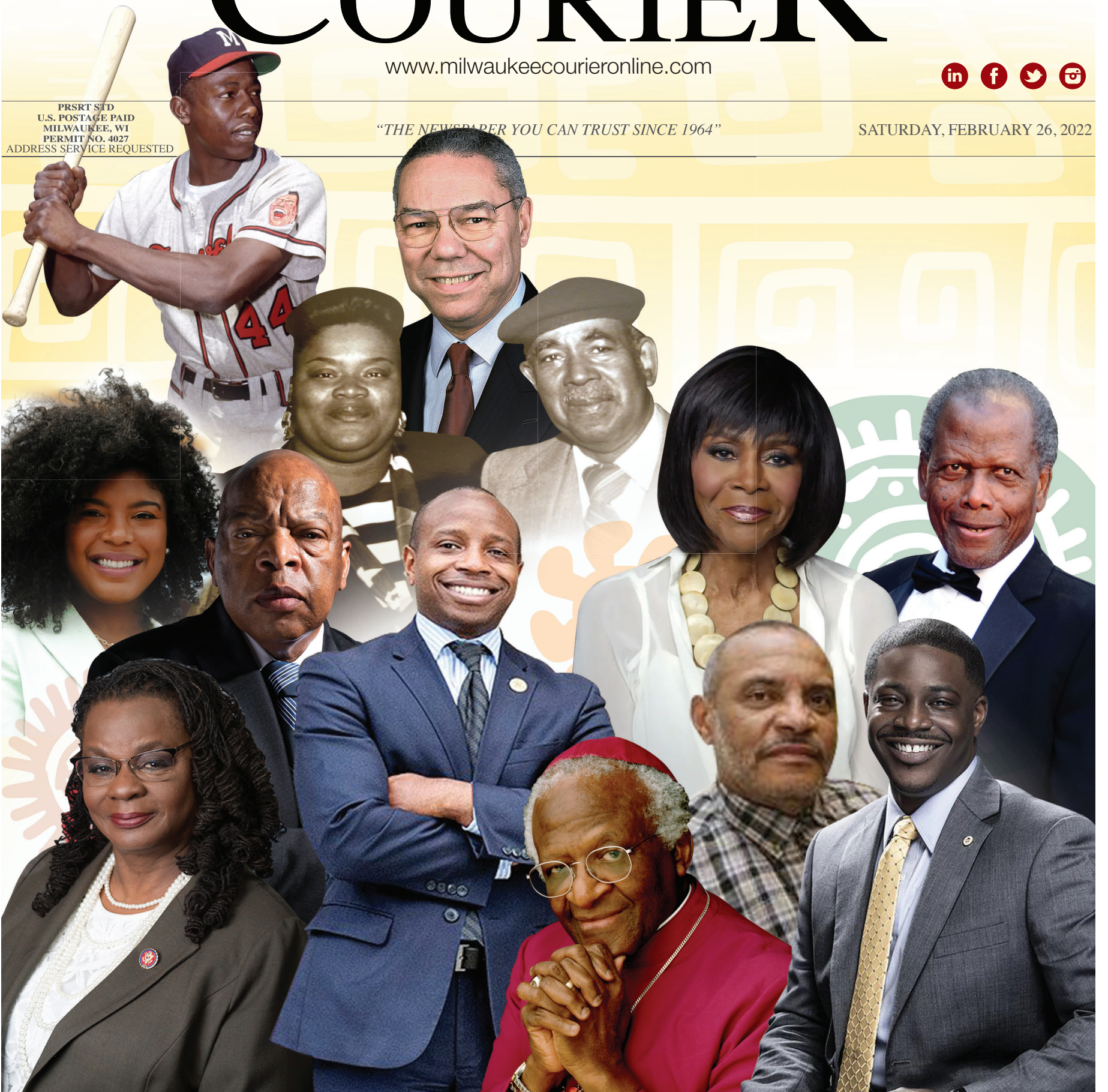
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2022



BLACK HISTORY IS OUR BLACK FUTURE



THE VICE PRESIDENT

December 16, 2021

I send my warmest congratulations to my dear friend, Ms. Amelia Ashley-Ward, on the awarding of her honorary degree from San Jose State University.

For more than forty years, Amelia has shone the light of truth. She has told the stories that others ignore. She has held the powerful to account. And she has upheld the highest journalistic standards through it all.

As an intern, reporter, editor, and now publisher, Amelia has built the Sun-Reporter—a keystone of African American media for more than 75 years—into one of the most important and influential newspapers in the United States.

Today, we thank Amelia for serving as a beacon for our community and our Nation. Amelia and I have been on this journey together for a long time, and I am grateful for our years of friendship.

Congratulations again on this tremendous achievement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Kamala Harris", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward Receives an Honorary Doctorate Degree from San Jose State University

By Attorney Peter Graham Cohn
Published in the
Sun Reporter Newspaper
Date: February 3, 2022

Black History Month is the perfect time for each of us to pause, reflect and celebrate the wonderful contributions that African American people within our midst have made to our heritage and history. Sometimes we forget to consider those near and dear to us who have been faithfully witnessing and recording the milestones and achievements that our brothers and sisters are making every day. Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward of the San Francisco Sun-Reporter Newspaper is one of those chroniclers who has so often lifted up others whose life stories have not been told and enabled them to achieve their personal best in life and to give back to their communities through a diverse range of public and private service.

For some 78 years, the Sun-Reporter – founded by Dr. Carlton Goodlett and Mr. Thomas Fleming in 1944 and led by Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward since 1997 – has been that beacon and legendary news journal of Northern California “dedicated to the cause of the people so that no good cause shall lack a champion and evil shall not thrive unopposed.” In 1979, Amelia graduated from San Jose State University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism and, after serving as an intern at the Sun-Reporter during her final year of study, was hired as a reporter by Dr. Goodlett and took up the paper’s mantle of being a leading advocate for others. In 1984, she was promoted to Managing Editor; and, in 1994, she became the Publisher. In 1997, she bought the entire Sun-Reporter Publishing Company which includes the California Voice, the Metro and the Sun-Reporter.

Throughout her career, Amelia has exemplified the mission of the Sun-Reporter and has stood firm on behalf of those who needed a champion and whose stories would not otherwise be told. Like the great

tradition of her newspaper, she has always been willing to give voice to those in need and to be fearless in undertaking unpopular causes. As a result, civic leaders have always sought the counsel of the Sun-Reporter in confronting challenging issues of the day as well as support in their administrative and legislative initiatives, and campaigns for public office. In 2014, Amelia created and implemented the Talented 25 tradition of annually telling and publishing the stories of the lives of those in various positions of private or public service. Amelia’s innovation set a wonderful example for the African American press and community because it embodied what Dr. King underscored in his inspiring quote: “Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.” As a result, Amelia and her late Editor – Gail Berkley – interviewed some 150 souls over the years to capture all the key influences and mentors in their lives and their philosophies that have enabled them to serve others. These narratives were developed to inspire the future generations of up-and-coming Afri-

***“Everybody can be great
because everybody can serve.”***

can American community leaders on how they too can best serve in very meaningful ways.

On December 16, 2021, Amelia’s proud ancestors and the elders – who were summoned – had the honor of witnessing San Jose State University turning the bright light of history onto the life and legacy of Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward by awarding her the honorary Doctorate Degree of Humane Letters during its 2021 Commencement ceremony. She was awarded the Degree by SJSU President Mary Papazian in front of her family and friends and the 571 graduates of the College of Social Sciences along with their families and support-



Attorney Cohn and Evan Carlton Ward

ers. Her family delegation was led by her son Evan Carlton Ward and her sisters Shunda Ashley-Criswell and Lytoria Ashley-Little.

In awarding the Degree, President Papazian read both the extensive citation that was the basis for the academic action taken and the

out her career.” It then proceeded to memorialize her illustrious career, honors and awards both in journalism and public service.

Amelia has now joined an elite list of distinguished individuals that San Jose State University has very selectively chosen to honor with such an award beginning with President John F Kennedy in June of 1963. After awarding the Degree, Dr. Papazian invited the new doctor to address the graduates regarding both the meaning of the award and their graduation. In her typical tradition of uplifting others, Dr. Ashley-Ward inspired the graduates to pursue their careers and dreams by never accepting “No” or “You can’t” and by always employing “the power of positive defiance” to remove any impediments to their goals. She shared insights with the graduates as to how a little African American girl who migrated from Mississippi to San Francisco – and raised by a dedicated single mom (the late Ms. Louise Ashley) – pursued her dream of working in journalism. In doing so, she never let the gatekeepers of the halls of power or anyone block her access or prevent her from achieving success in her chosen field that was often dominated by those who were

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Degree itself that was signed by her, the Governor, the Chancellor and the President of the California State University Trustees. The declaration of the Degree stated: “The Trustees of the California State University on the recommendation of San Jose State University hereby confer upon AMELIA ASHLEY-WARD the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters with all the rights, privileges and honors pertaining thereto, given at San Jose State University.” The Citation to Amelia’s extraordinary career by the University began as follows: “Amelia Ashley-Ward has been a strong voice for more inclusive journalism through-



Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward

The Milwaukee Courier Newspaper and The Chicago Crusader Newspaper
Congratulates our fellow publisher, Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward
of the Sun Reporter Newspaper.

San Jose State University has awarded Dr. Ashley-Ward
an honorary Doctorate Degree in full acknowledgment of her contributions.

Dr. Ashley-Ward is a publisher who for decades has been committed
to the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the Black Press
and the Bay Area through her commitment to print journalism.

During Black History Month and every month
we are proud to celebrate her outstanding accomplishments!

Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward Receives an Honorary Doctorate Degree from San Jose State University

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white and male.

Amelia graphically shared with those gathered how – as a reporter, editor, publisher and owner of the Sun-Reporter – she was able to lift up and empower others. She cited the example of a young African American female lawyer who came to her in 2003 and wanted to run to become the District Attorney of San Francisco against a very well-known white male incumbent. The lawyer was told no, that it was not her time, and she should defer to the incumbent. Amelia and the Sun-Reporter took up her cause in the face of all the naysayers and the young lawyer – whose name was Kamala Harris – ran and won. As Amelia noted, the rest is history in that Kamala subsequently became California's Attorney General and U.S. Senator.

That history also played out for the graduates on that day in December when a moving letter was officially read to the graduates from the Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris in which she captured the essence and value of Amelia's career. The Vice President's words provided additional motivation to the graduates for pursuing paths of excellence not only in journalism or the social sciences but also in public service. She wrote: "For more than 40 years, Amelia has shone the light of truth. She has told the stories that others ignore. She has held the powerful to account. And she has upheld the highest journalistic standards through it all."

She added: "Amelia has built the Sun-Reporter – a keystone African American media for more than 75 years – into one of the most impor-

tant and influential newspapers in the United States."

Like the Vice President, Ms. Berkeley was also a dear friend and admirer of Amelia and she had shared how proud she was of Amelia receiving this distinguished and well-deserved honor from San Jose State University. Having collaborated with Amelia on a number of the Sun-Reporter most popular and sought-after Special Editions covering major events affecting the African American community in Northern California, Gail insisted prior to her recent passing that the Sun Reporter have another Special Edition lifting up and honoring Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward on the receipt of her honorary Doctorate Degree from San Jose State University.

This Special Edition honors that wish, keeps true to the great tradition of the Sun-Reporter, and makes clear

the importance of all of us continuing to support the Sun-Reporter and the African American media so that wonderful life stories – like Amelia's – can be documented and chronicled to inspire others to have the courage to be champions for those who are in great need of someone to stand up for them. Congratulations to Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward.

Attorney Peter Graham Cohn has represented the SFNAACP Branch and the public school children of San Francisco in the San Francisco school desegregation case in federal court from 1978 – 2006. He has worked with the national NAACP – including the late Chairman Emeritus Julian Bond – for over 45 years at the national, regional, state and local levels.

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Newspaper February 3, 2022*

HONORING
BLACK
HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month

Oby Nwabuzor Takes the Unorthodox Approach

By Ana Martinez-Ortiz

Obiageli 'Oby' Nwabuzor will be the first to tell you she loves Milwaukee. For her, Milwaukee is home, but the Milwaukee she grew up in isn't the one she sees today. Milwaukee was promising, she said, and while great things are happening in some parts of the city, other parts are being neglected.

"Milwaukee has ample opportunity to continue to develop itself to be a thriving ecosystem in the city for those who want to live here," Nwabuzor said. "I do believe we have a long way to go, but I do believe that Milwaukee has the right people to get us in the right direction and the right track to be a metro city."

Nwabuzor is one of those people.

Nwabuzor is the founder of Envision Growth, a real estate development group that focuses on building healthy people and communities. She is also the director of community impact at the American Heart Association.

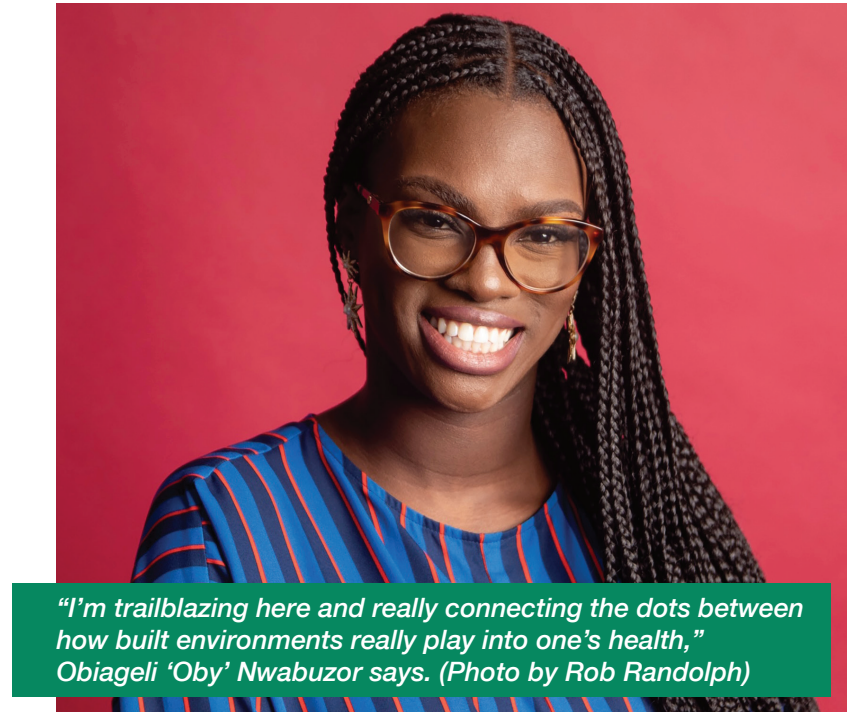
This upcoming fall, Nwabuzor will study the intersection between health and real estate at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where she plans to attend the Doctor of Public Health program.

"I'm trailblazing here and really connecting the dots between how built environments really play into one's health and how we can actually use that as a strategy to improve the health of the community as well as the people who live within them," Nwabuzor said.

Nwabuzor's interest in health began in high school after she sustained an injury in high school. Growing up, Nwabuzor had been an avid basketball player, but when she tore the ligament in her left ankle, she struggled to get back into it.

But the passion for sports was still there and she viewed health as the potential correlation. She originally considered being an athletic trainer or physical therapist, but then changed her mind.

While she appreciated the health



"I'm trailblazing here and really connecting the dots between how built environments really play into one's health," Obiageli 'Oby' Nwabuzor says. (Photo by Rob Randolph)

side of things, neither career path allowed much room for engagement. There was a disconnect, she said, and in the end, she landed on organization and communication with an emphasis on kinesiology for her undergraduate degree. Later, she obtained a master's in business administration.

Through her work in the nonprofit sector at organizations such as United Way, Nwabuzor could focus on health in the community also known as public health.

Health, specifically public health, led Nwabuzor to real estate and development.

At the American Heart Association, Nwabuzor began doing more policy and systems change work, which allowed her to further explore how built environments from buildings to landscape impact one's health. She's been with the organization since 2018.

She began wondering why developers didn't take these factors into consideration. While she recognized that the two industries are very separate, her work showed her that they didn't have to be.

"I'm unorthodox in that lane and in that space," she said. "I see the

lanes being one and that is not very common."

Through God, Nwabuzor realized that she could combine her passion for health and her interest in building community.

"Health is rooted in building community," she said.

To Nwabuzor, the key to a successful community is a thriving ecosystem, a place where everyone has ample opportunity lead the quality of life they deserve. In a thriving ecosystem, individuals have access to quality, affordable and accessible social determinants of health from food to education to green space and everything in between.

Right now, too many communities in Milwaukee are lacking. While there's greatness happening, the neglected communities experience disparities in the form of food, education, health care and more that in turn impact the life expectancy gap, Nwabuzor noted.

"Everyone should have a hand in the greatness that is going on or be able to experience the greatness," she said. "When everyone isn't able to experience that, it really starts to uncover the truth of what's going on."

Black Indigenous people of color

are impacted the most, she said, and the ZIP codes with the highest vulnerability rating include 53204, 53205, 53206, 53209, 53215, 53216, 53218, 53223, 53224 and 53233.

"There's a root to everything, there's cause and effect," she said. "And we try to address the effect versus addressing the root."

When Nwabuzor begins school, she'll be able to further study the link between life expectancy and the built environment and how that built environment can positively impact one's life expectancy.

"We have to assure that we are actually creating something that is going to decrease that barrier, decrease that gap," she said. "If we're just building stuff and the gaps aren't decreasing, then we have a problem on our hands."

Built environments and real estate can be used as a strategy to mitigate barriers in health, she said.

In school, Nwabuzor will be able to align her background in health and policy change with her real estate experience. There's innovation there, she said.

She hopes that the work she is doing to improve communities and create thriving ecosystems spreads and creates a trickle effect. Milwaukee isn't alone in experiencing these disparities, she said, and other regions could benefit from this.

This summer, Nwabuzor will attend the Young Americans Leaders Program at Harvard Business School. The program allows young leaders to connect and share ideas on the work they're doing to help their communities thrive.

As Nwabuzor looks ahead to the future, she hopes that people feel inspired to partner with her and join her on this vision.

"We're greater together than by ourselves," she said. "I'm hoping that I – with the vision – can create something that we – as a whole – can tap into and really make some change in our communities and really make a difference. The time is now."

Black History Month: Clintel Hasan Wants to Create a Beloved Community

By Ana Martinez-Ortiz

During the Civil Rights Movement, leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and bell hooks, talked about creating a beloved community, a place based on justice and equity and where people seek understanding. Amidst the hurt and violence so often seen and depicted in the world, a beloved community can seem impossible, but it's not out of reach.

Clintel Hasan wants to create a beloved community in Milwaukee, and she believes the way to do so is through partnership and collaboration.

Hasan is the strategic initiatives manager for Milwaukee Succeeds and the co-founder and president of LiberatED. Prior to that, she worked for Teach for America first as a corps member and later as the manager then director of teacher and leader-

ship development.

She first got interested in education thanks to the educators in her life, including her mother. They believed in her, she said, and encouraged her to pass that belief onto others.

During her time in the educational field Hasan learned about the systemic issues in Milwaukee's educational system. She noticed that Milwaukee was often used as an example of racial disparity, as a statistic.

"It's been challenging," she said, on the lack of growth in the education field. "I do see a lot of opportunities that make me hopeful and the ways in which both educators and students are feeling more empowered also gives me hope."

Milwaukee is home and family, Hasan said, but neither is without its challenges. When she worked for Teach for America, Hasan often

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Clintel Hasan (left) credits her mom, Shelia Pelman, with teaching her to see people's humanity first and the value of relationships.

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Clintel Hasan Wants to Create a Beloved Community

Continued from page 7
traveled around to other cities, which deepened her appreciation for Milwaukee.

Other cities might have unique things about them, but Milwaukee has a deep sense of community that continues to exist despite the segregation, Hasan noted.

"I see so much potential and opportunity in the city," she said. "I think Milwaukee's truly a place that if you want to make a difference, you can."

She believes that it's easier to network and get connected to the power players or influencers in Milwaukee compared to other cities. That sense of community and collaboration is one of the reasons she has remained here.

Relationships are everything, Hasan said. She explained that her mother was a prime example of the value that relationships bring to one's work. She always saw someone's humanity first, Hasan said. It's a legacy she tries to fulfill in her own life.

Hasan's own work has allowed her to create deep and meaningful relationships with various individuals from her students to teachers that she's coached.

"For me, I'm still getting comfortable to this the term leader," she said. "I like to think of myself as a partner in doing what is right. I think it's important to be vocal and critical of your community, especially if you love it, because you want it to improve."

Hasan continued, "What I've really wanted to do, is create spaces and opportunities for dialogue to challenge our leadership collectively as a city. If people are more willing to take risk, we will have a better community for everyone."

Creating a beloved community requires effort on everyone's parts. It's about trying and not assuming, she said. Assumptions lead to barriers, she said, and can prevent partnerships or initiatives.

"I would love to see us truly come together as a community, despite our differences" Hasan said. "To really seek our own common good and goal and what we want to be true for

every person in Milwaukee."

She noted that bell hooks talked about the importance of embracing change and conflict and still building with people who you have differences with. For example, when it comes to addressing education, groups across sectors should collaborate because they care about children, specifically Black children, and want to see their needs met, she said.

One way Hasan is doing this is through LiberatED, a consulting group she co-founded with another Teach for America colleague in 2015 that helps schools and nonprofits adapt anti-racist practices and policies that focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

"I think everyone truly does want to be a better person, be a better leader," she said. "That's really what we seek to do at LiberatED. Our tagline is conscious leaders make better leaders."

If people take the time to have a good sense of their identity, they'll be more aware of how their experiences impact the way that they lead and will lead to a more inclusive environment for all, she said.

When it comes to work with Milwaukee Succeeds, a majority of Hasan's focus is shifting the power to the youth. Two years ago, Hasan started building the coalition, Youth Forward MKE, which works to have youth adult equity when it comes to decisions. It gives youth a seat at the table.

At first people challenged the notion, but now folks are excited, she said. It provides space for people to be heard while checking the adults and their decisions.

"If we truly want to solve the issues that plague our city, we cannot do it without those who are directly impacted being at the forefront of those conversations and those decisions that are made," she said.

Her advice to Black women and women of color is to believe in themselves and to know that their voice does matter. Her second piece of advice is to focus on the things

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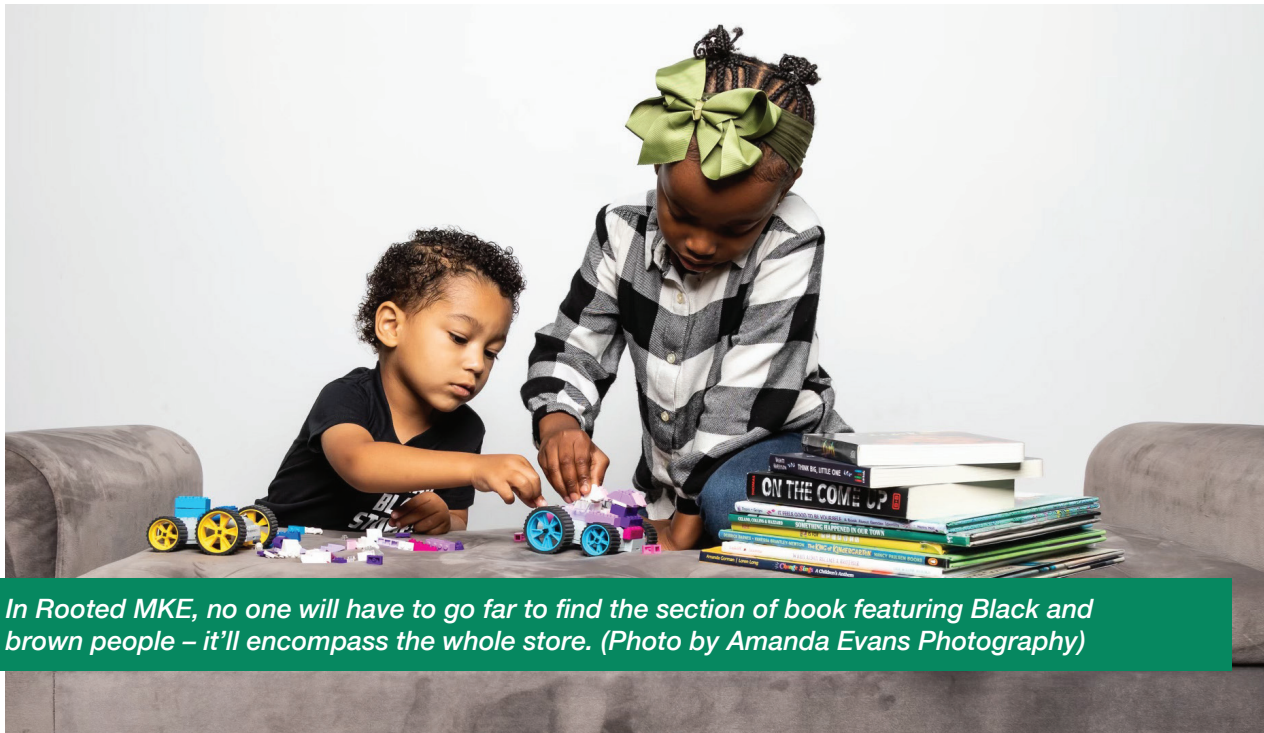
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HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATES



Black History Month: A Bookstore for Milwaukee, Ashley Valentine Gets Ready to Launch *Rooted MKE*



In Rooted MKE, no one will have to go far to find the section of book featuring Black and brown people – it'll encompass the whole store. (Photo by Amanda Evans Photography)

By Ana Martinez-Ortiz

Bedtime at the Valentine household means story time. Almost every night, Ashley Valentine and her husband read to their son from a children's graphic novel series known as Akissi. The series, written by Marguerite Abouet and Mathieu Sapin, takes place on the Ivory Coast and depicts the misadventures of Akissi, a young Black female protagonist.

Each book contains 10 to 12 short stories, Valentine said, and feature an array of characters from Akissi herself to her family, friends, neighbors and teachers. It's a fun series, that's easy to read and enjoyable for kids, Valentine said.

When it comes to books, specifically children's book or books featuring BIPOC protagonists, Valentine knows a thing or two. After all, she is the owner of the soon to be opened Rooted MKE, 5312 W. Vliet St., a bookstore that doubles as a tutoring space.

Owning a bookstore has long been a dream of Valentine's, but she didn't give it much thought until graduate school.

At the time, Valentine was a

teacher at Milwaukee Public Schools and enrolled in a MPS program that allowed her to teach during the day and obtain her teaching degree at night. Valentine chose to pursue a master's in reading and special education.

But then, she changed her mind about teaching.

"I really appreciated the art of teaching and supporting students to meet their academic goals and discover who they are as a person and what contributions they want to make to society," she said. "But I didn't like doing it through the formal public-school structure."

Valentine felt that the students often needed more than she could offer.

"I felt like I could be doing a better job meeting students' needs if it did it outside of the classroom and within the community," she explained.

She spoke with her advisor who challenged to examine what literacy looked like in the community. That challenge became the center of Valentine's thesis and through research, she looked at how children engaged with books beyond school.

After grad school, she attended a

weeklong workshop by Paz & Associates, that offers a crash course in opening a bookstore. While it was an intense week, the workshop only fueled Valentine's passion for her idea.

"I left feeling affirmed," she said. "This is what I want to do. This is me being able to provide kids with books."

As a teacher, Valentine often sought out books that featured Black

and brown protagonists.

"If I'm providing a literacy space for kids and centering kids and providing them with tool kits and things that they can have at home or in their community that support them through literacy, then I need to offer books that showcase Black and brown characters in a wide range of ways and in a wide range of stories," she said.

During the workshop, Valentine learned that most independent bookstores offer more than just books. A bookstore that just sells books doesn't make enough, she explained. While some bookstores include a wine bar or café, Valentine knew her store would be kid focused. So, she chose to incorporate tutoring as her bonus service.

It made sense, she said. As a teacher she knew the statistics regarding urban children and reading levels, but she also knew she had skills to offer a solution.

"If I'm going to be selling books, I need to make sure that kids are fully equipped to be able to read and enjoy the story," she said.

Already she's had parents reaching out to sign their children up for tutoring.

So far, the biggest challenge Val-

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Clintel Hasan Wants to Create a Beloved Community

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that give one energy. For her that's relationships and seeing people's growth, but each person has their own. Focus on the small wins, she said.

True liberation hasn't been achieved yet, she said, Milwaukee is still rigid in its ways, but change is coming. There are new opportunities on the horizon, Hasan said, and maybe they seem risky, but they could

have a positive impact on Milwaukee.

Liberating is about envisioning something new, Hasan said, and there's an empowerment in that. The world doesn't need to keep creating the same and operating within the same boundaries, it can redefine new opportunities and initiatives.

"Building that beloved community is about not operating in assumptions," Hasan said. "It's just trying new things and being innovative and looking at a new world."

Milwaukee Bookstore, *Rooted MKE*

Continued from page 10
entire has faced has been funding. While she came into the project with \$40,000 saved, costs for renovations, inventory, permits, inspections and more soon added up.

Although her business was considered too young to get traditional loans from the bank, Valentine persevered. She launched an Indiegogo campaign and pitched to Fund Milwaukee and other online platforms. Eventually, the Hmong Chamber of Commerce helped her secure additional funding.

“I had to piece together several smaller loans or grants or investments in order to make the project work,” she said.

It was frustrating, she said, but it also forced her to think about the why behind the project. And the answer was simple: she was doing this for her community.

The name itself is in part due to the community. Rooted is in reference to Valentine’s own history, and a reminder to kids to own their roots. MKE is Valentine acknowledging that she is proud of where she’s from while still recognizing the challenges that exist in Milwaukee for Black people.

“I wanted kids to have a strong sense of identity as a Black and



“If I’m going to be selling books, I need to make sure that kids are fully equipped to be able to read and enjoy the story,” Ashley Valentine, the owner of Rooted MKE, says. (Photo by Amanda Evans Photography)

brown child when they visited the place,” she said. “I wanted it to tell a story about being grounded and being nurtured and being celebrated.”

Aside from children’s books, the bookstore will offer young adult books. The soft opening will take

place on Wednesday, March 1 and the grand opening is set for Saturday, March 12. And in her bookstore, no one will have to go far to find the section of book featuring Black and brown people – it’ll encompass the whole store.

“I am most looking forward to seeing kids come into the store and get really excited to not have to look all over the place to find a book that has brown people in it,” she said. “Everywhere you look there’s going to be a Black or brown character.”

Racial diversity post-2000

Following the enactment of Civil Rights laws in the 1960s, many educational institutions in the United States that receive federal funding have undertaken affirmative action to increase their racial diversity. Some historically black colleges and universities now have non-black majorities, including West Virginia State University and Bluefield State College, whose student bodies have had large white majorities since the mid-1960s.

As many HBCUs have made a concerted effort to maintain enrollment levels and often offer relatively affordable tuition, the percentage of non-African-American enrollment has risen. The following table highlights HBCUs with high non-African American enrollments:

RACIAL DIVERSITY AT HBCUs, 2016–2017 SCHOOL YEAR

College name	State	African American	Non African American
Bluefield State College	West Virginia	8	92
West Virginia State University	West Virginia	8	92
Kentucky State University	Kentucky	46	54
Delaware State University	Delaware	64	36
Lincoln University (Pennsylvania)	Pennsylvania	84	16
University of the District of Columbia	District of Columbia	59	41
Elizabeth City State University	North Carolina	76	24
Fayetteville State University	North Carolina	60	40
Winston-Salem State University	North Carolina	71	29
Xavier University of Louisiana	Louisiana	70	30
North Carolina A&T State University	North Carolina	80	



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