

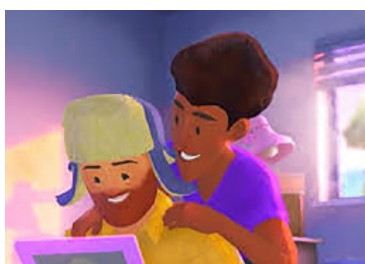
In This Issue.....  
 Gator Life.....2  
 News.....10  
 Arts and Entertainment.....13  
 Opinions.....15



**UHD welcomes interim President**  
see Gator Life, Page 3



**Katy protests for Black lives**  
see News, Page 12



**New LGBTQ+ inclusive short film**  
see Arts and Entertainment, Page 14



**Make America grate**  
see Opinions, Page 15

## We can't breathe — The Black Lives Matter protests in response to George Floyd's death

By Varah Thornton

Americans across the nation have appeared in droves to protest the death of George Floyd.

On May 25, Floyd died after being restrained outside of a grocery establishment in Minneapolis. In a video posted on social media, the restraining officer is seen kneeling on Floyd's neck for a lengthy amount of time while Floyd cries, "I can't breathe!" while 3 other officers look on. Within hours, there was outrage

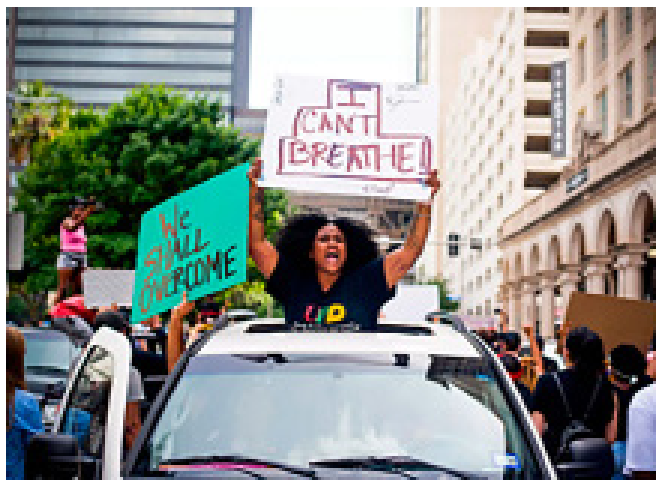
ties were called to respond to possible monetary fraud by a grocery store owner who believed Floyd used a counterfeit \$20 bill, which was later proven false. Later that day, Floyd was pronounced dead at a regional hospital.

Floyd was locally known in the Houston rap scene as "Big Floyd," a member of Swishahouse Records. He helped to spread Houston rap, the label most known for popularizing the signature style of "chopped and screwed," pioneered by DJ

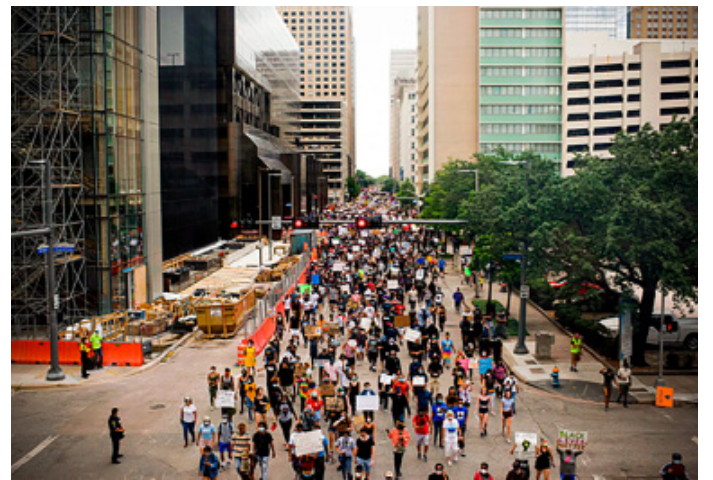
world over. The month of May was one of tumultuous outrages centering African American lives threatened and taken in overtly racist displays.

It began with the revelation of the death of Ahmaud Arbery on Feb. 23, a Black man who was chased and gunned down by a trio of white men who spotted him jogging in their Georgian neighborhood. Instead of calling the authorities, the 3 men took things into their own hands and pursued Arbery in their trucks for

in which a white woman called 911 and feigned that she was "being threatened by an African American male" after he asked her to leash her dog (a NYC law) while he was bird-watching. Despite his calm request, the woman continued to threaten him while on the phone with authorities. This incident incited outrage online and was pointed to as a demonstration that African Americans were threatened with overt police brutality, no matter their actions. On the same day



UHD BSA member, Victoria Jackson, protests for Floyd.



Images courtesy of Vox Media..

ensued across various social media platforms. As the video was shared, calls for justice were echoed.

### Who was George Floyd?

George Floyd was a native Houstonian whose name spread across social media after video of his arrest was posted via Twitter. It showed 1 officer with his knee pressed firmly against Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes while 3 other officers kept onlookers at bay. The incident was incited when authori-

Screw. A 1993 graduate of Jack Yates High School, Floyd was raised by his mother in Cuney Homes, a public housing project within Houston's well known Third Ward. Floyd was laid to rest in Houston beside his mother on June 9. He leaves behind 5 children and 3 grandchildren.

### Why this is Different?

Many have wondered why Floyd's death sparked the massive protests that erupted across the nation and echoed the

nearly 30 minutes before a father and son duo confronted him and shot him point blank. The pursuit was caught on video by the dashcam of the 3rd aggressor, each claiming they believed Arbery to be a robbery suspect. The 3 men were not arrested until months later, after the video was posted online on May 5.

On May 25, Christian Cooper filmed an incident at the Ramble in New York's Central Park,

as the birding incident, Floyd's death also posted online, which served as the tipping point of an already difficult month. In combination with the COVID-19 pandemic, historic unemployment, and the revelation from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that people of color suffered the most from this combination of factors, Floyd's death sparked an already tense public.

Continued on Gator Life, Page 6



# THE DATELINE

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## SPRING 2020 STAFF

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The Dateline has been the official student newspaper of the University of Houston-Downtown since 1982, and it has been “Student Run since Volume One”. We strive to meet the needs of a growing university as well as the growing metropolitan city that surrounds us.

### Submission Policy

The Dateline staff consists of students from the University of Houston-Downtown who complete all tasks required to produce the newspaper, which serves the main UHD campus, and satellite campuses at UHD-Northwest. We want all students, regardless of major, to contribute. However, we must comply with our submission policy to operate under our limitations of time, energy, and staff.

The opinions and commentaries expressed within reflect the views of the contributing writers. No opinions expressed in The Dateline reflect the viewpoints of the University of Houston-Downtown, its administration, or students.

The Dateline reserves the right to edit or modify submissions for the sake of clarity, content, grammar, or space limitations. All submissions become property of The Dateline and may not be returned.

All paid writers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Houston-Downtown. The Dateline interacts with contributing writers via messaging, phone and/or email.

Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed.

Any student interested in joining The Dateline staff may request more detailed information sending an email to the editors at [editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com](mailto:editordatelinedowntown@gmail.com).

### Follow us on Social Media!



@the\_dateline

# The Dateline thanks President Muñoz

By Jaida Doll

Though Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Ph.D. has only served as UHD President since 2017, he has impacted the school in numerous ways that are far greater than the average reach of a mere 3 years.

UHD has greatly benefited from the services of Dr. Muñoz, but The Dateline has especially benefited from his contributions. As an enthusiastic supporter of our student paper, President Muñoz has viewed The Dateline as an intricate and impactful aspect of our school system. He has shown his support by engaging and multiplying student writers, recognizing and complimenting students' work with The Dateline,

and has even made frequent stops to The Dateline office to encourage and inspire our writers.

The Dateline Staff would like to thank President Muñoz for his continued support and encouragement throughout his time at UHD. Though we are dismayed to see him depart, we wish him the best in his next endeavor. We know University of California Merced will greatly benefit from his tenure as Chancellor

just as The Dateline has benefited from his support as UHD President.



Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Ph.D. Image courtesy of UHD website

# Fellow Gators

By Jaida Doll and Aansa Usmani

In the current age, individuals are constantly bombarded with information. There is always new news – a variety of videos and articles sprouting from a variety of sources and websites. With this overwhelming influx information from media and news outlets, it is rare that a student newspaper is first to report on an issue.

Writing for a student newspaper often feels repetitive – as if we are simply reminding readers of what they've already learned from other sources. If a student newspaper rarely breaks news, what is the purpose of a student paper?

What is the purpose of a media that does not newly inform?

In this current age, things are happening. Tensions are rising, reform is stirring, minds are opening. History is changing. Though we find ourselves in an unprecedented moment, it is one that is perfectly concocted – in it contains all the ingredients necessary for social reform.

Though we are but a small student paper which

rarely break news, it is our intention at The Dateline to harness those ingredients and stir them together to inspire that social reform.

We believe that the first steps to social reform are education and visibility.

We, at The Dateline, believe it is your essential human right to well-informed, and we are committed to educating and informing our student body on the issues in our university, our community, and our nation. We are committed to covering these issues truthfully and without bias. We recognize the importance of objective journalism, and we will not allow subjective elements or personal opinions to influence our reporting or editorial board. As student journalists, we will cover UHD administrations – both student and faculty – holding them accountable for their words, actions, and promises made to the student body.

Furthermore, we intend to communicate not only current issues, but we also welcome and host diverse opinions, both personal and political. We aim to understand and communicate the entirety of the UHD community. We strive to uphold and visibil-

ize the thoughts and ideas of our Gators and our community without infringing upon our journalistic integrity. Knowing the facts behind these issues, as well as the opinions of our diverse community will encourage understanding, education, and political involvement among our Gators.

It has always been our goal at The Dateline to truthfully and objectively inform our Gators of the issues in our nation and community, but this year has amplified that goal. As we urge readers to understand the current issues, we also urge them to understand their impact on our current history.

2020 is a pivotal year – a watershed moment.

And in this year, we aim to educate our readers on current issues, not only so they may be well-informed and politically active, but so that they may better understand and contextualize this moment as one that is historic. We hope to urge readers to understand where we are in this moment in history as well as our individual, potentially life and history altering impacts on the times, the movements, and the changes.

# Did you Know...? UHD has an Interim President

By Sheryl Sellers

As UHD's current President, Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Ph.D., leaves to take on the responsibility of Chancellor at the University of California Merced, the campus welcomes Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D., as new interim president effective July 2.

Dr. Tillis comes to UHD from the University of Houston (UH) main campus where he has held the position of Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and was M.D. Anderson's Professor in Hispanic Studies since 2017.

From a UH announcement, we learn that in his role as Dean Dr. Tillis had oversight of 13 academic departments, 10 academic areas

and programs, 13 academic centers, 6 clinical service units and over 688 faculty members.

Just prior to his position at UH, Dr. Tillis served as Dean of the School of Languages, Culture and World Affairs at the College of Charleston.

He worked as Chair of the African and African American Studies at Dartmouth, as well as the Inaugural Chair in Latin American and Latino Studies at Purdue.

Dr. Tillis also held faculty positions at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of the West Indies in Jamaica and the Federal University in Brazil.

He is also an author, editor, and

co-editor and has a vast list of books and articles to his credit.

He has been awarded many honors including his mention in Top 50 African American Professionals and Entrepreneurs in Houston by d-mars

Business Journal.

Mayor Sylvester Turner announced March 7, 2017 as "Dr. Antonio D. Tillis Day."

In 2000, Dr. Tillis received his Ph.D. in Latin American literature from

the University of Missouri. He received an M.A. in Spanish literature from Howard University and a B.S. in Spanish from Vanderbilt.

A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. Tillis has traveled

around the globe as a lecturer and academic.

UHD is excited to welcome Dr. Tillis to the community and looks forward to witnessing his contributions to the school.



Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D. Image courtesy of UH website.

# Virtual awards ceremony foreshadows future of UHD

By Jaida Doll

On May 29, UHD hosted the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) Annual Student Awards Ceremony. This yearly event celebrates CHSS students' academic accomplishments. Exemplary student essays are nominated by their respective professors, in hopes of receiving recognition.

Though an annual event, this year's ceremony was hosted with a twist in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than a face-to-face presentation, the ceremony was hosted in the typical fashion of our "new normal"

– over Zoom video chat.

This was one of UHD's first attempts to move large student events from the campus to a virtual setting. Students were required to register for the ceremony beforehand and were provided with a specialized link that correlated with each of their respective departments.

At 6 p.m., the ceremony began with students and faculty of all CHSS departments in the chatroom. Dean of College of Humanities & Social Sciences, DoVeanna S. Fulton, Ph.D. began the presentation. After

her opening remarks, the Zoom chat divided into "breakout groups" for each department.

This is where the confusion began. Many students (and even many professors and ceremony hosts) were not transferred to their breakout groups, leaving them stranded in the main chatroom awaiting technical support.

Those who were left behind were asked to change their display name to the department they wished to be transferred.

Nearly 20 minutes later, everyone had been properly transferred to their

breakout group and the ceremony continued. The Chair of each department made some remarks before the awards were presented. Each department allowed for 3 winners in each level – freshman, sophomore, and upper-level classes.

Professors presented awards to the students they nominated, speaking eloquently and extravagantly about the work accomplished by each student. Winners not only received recognition from their professors during the ceremony, but they were also rewarded with Amazon gift cards of varying

amounts based on their placement.

Though microphones were muted throughout the presentation, students and professors could interact through the chat feature. In the chat, viewers could watch the interactions as students welcomed the classmates they recognized on the call, professors congratulated students on their accomplishments, and the occasional overly excited family member cheered on their student. Though nothing can replace the old-school, face-to-face interactions, the chats offered an inkling of that feeling

of community and togetherness that is so often missing from virtual interactions.

Though chaotic at first, the event, as a whole, was successful as it recognized and celebrated individual student accomplishments in the face of the UHD community. As the first of many of UHD's attempts at virtual alternatives, the CHSS Annual Student Award Ceremony offered a glimpse of normality in an unprecedented time, a sense of community even through physical distance, and a hope for the virtualized future of UHD.

# “Let’s Talk about It” rouses bold student discussions

By Jaida Doll

*Editors’ Note: Quoted students have not been identified throughout this piece to retain anonymity in accordance with the safe space environment of “Let’s Talk about It.”*

On June 4, Crystal Guillory, Assistant Dean in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, kicked off a new series of discussions groups. The first of the weekly installments was entitled “Let’s Talk about It: Conversations with Assistant Dean Guillory Regarding the Protests of George Floyd’s Death.”

The virtual discussion, hosted via Zoom video chat, offered students a chance to react and respond to the death of George Floyd.

Also leading the virtual discussion, was Stacie DeFreitas, Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychology at UHD who engaged with students to lead them to a deeper understanding of the issue. Realizing the complex emotional effect such a traumatic occurrence may have on students, the discussion offered them a chance to deconstruct the issue and understand their feelings surrounding it.

Many students were eager to express the emotional weight of such an injustice.

One student shared, “It has been really, really heavy trying to process how George Floyd was

murdered.”

Another added, “This whole series of events has been pretty stressing for me... I just want justice for George Floyd.”

Dean Guillory stated that the purpose of these weekly discussions is, “To give students a platform to process this moment in a safe space.”

And this was certainly accomplished. Dean Guillory mediated conversations, but discussions were free-flowing and excited. Students could respond to the questions raised by Dean Guillory and other experts, or they could use the chat feature to anonymously ask questions of their own.

However, the purpose of this segment was two-fold. Not only did the conversations aim to provide students with a safe space to process this complex moment in our history, but the discussions also challenged the ideas of systematic racism and aimed to understand how that racism functions in the society in which we live.

To chime in on this aspect of the discussion, Dean Guillory invited Serie McDougal III, Ph.D., a Professor of Pan-African Studies at California State University. Through Dr. McDougal’s insights, students were prodded to analyze, historicize and contextualize this moment we are

experiencing. The student-led, expert-directed conversations allowed for students to recognize and better understand their unique place in history and the profound effect they could have on such a critical moment in time.

“We are living in a historical moment,” remarked one of the students on the call.

The conversation continued to the many waves of police murders and police brutality against Blacks in the recent past. Though these issues have been in the mainframe of society for the better part of ten years, students and experts agree that there is something different about this time – there is something different about George Floyd’s death.

“The difference this time is that a whole lot of people are called to action,” commented a student.

Though we are experiencing an unprecedented time in history, it is one that is perfectly concocted. This watershed moment combines all the ingredients that we can use stir up change and create social reform.

“The Civil Rights Movement of 2020,” one student mused.

But how do we breach the gap? How do we create a movement out of an injustice?

Dr. DeFreitas emphasized the importance of empathy. She states,

“We are starting to see each other in a more empathetic way.” She stresses that we cannot grow if we do not communicate with one another. We must hear others’ experiences without judgement and listen to their perspectives, rather than preparing a counter argument.

One student emphasized the importance of allyship and education. They encouraged listeners to “have those conversations – not just with Black people, not just with people of color – nothing’s going to change that way.”

Another student agreed that it is of utmost importance that we “educate our white brothers and sisters.”

In addition to empathy and education, Michael Wilson, Lecturer of Communication Studies at UHD, emphasized the importance of

cross-cultural communication.

He explained, “Everyone needs to think about how we communicate cross-culturally – we need to see other cultures [as cultures] with value, not as strangely different.”

Though there is a long way ahead in America’s journey to equality and improved race relations, these 3 aspects – empathy, communication and education – are key to social reform. Dean Guillory’s “Let’s Talk about It” Series promotes each of these reformative behaviors through bold, insightful, illuminating discussions that tackle the complexity of race relations in America.

Furthermore, the conversation satisfied the desire for the intense analysis and deep intellectual stimulation that has lacked since pandemic restrictions limited face-to-face interac-

tions.

The video chat included over 50 participants at its peak. It concluded at 7:38 with much left undiscussed – conversations were still booming and questions were still pouring in.

In addition to this first segment, Dean Guillory has also hosted: “Addressing Systematic Racism: Exploring Ways to Be an Agent of Change,” “Police Reform: Changes You Would Like to See” and “Reparations for Descendants of Enslaved Africans as a Way to Right Our Nation’s Wrongs”.

Join Dean Guillory and invited experts every Thursday at 6 p.m. to analyze other aspects of race relations and to grow and benefit from the shared insights of other UHD students. The next month of the series will discuss a variety of films, listed below.

## Upcoming “Let’s Talk about It” Sessions with Assistant Dean Guillory

- July 2 - Let’s Talk About It: “13th” Documentary Discussion
  - Meeting ID: 995 0748 2694
- July 9 - Let’s Talk About It: “Glass Shield” Film Discussion
  - Meeting ID: 930 5970 8426
- July 16 - Let’s Talk About It: “Malcolm X” Film Discussion
  - Meeting ID: 912 6129 1626
- July 23 - Let’s Talk About It: “Selma” Film Discussion
  - Meeting ID: 950 3522 8854
- July 30 - Let’s Talk About It: “I Am Not Your Negro” Documentary Discussion
  - Meeting ID: 967 6655 1445

# Faculty Senate Update - School is never out for the pro, and that includes the faculty senate

By Sheryl Sellers

Learning is a lifetime journey, so school is truly never out for the pro – the individual who values education. And, preparing for “school” is never out for the faculty senate either. The team met on June 2 to discuss several ongoing matters and concerns.

First on the slate was Lea Campbell, Ph.D. providing feedback on the spring survey. Nineteen percent of the student population, of which 59% were full time students, 45% of which were seniors and 8% freshman, completed the survey. The majority of students who completed the survey resided in the College of Business.

Twenty-nine percent of the faculty completed the survey, and of that group 67% were full time and the majority hailed from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Regarding readiness to move classes online after spring break, 80% of faculty felt prepared. Only 29% had previous experience teaching online. For students, the numbers were a bit lower. Only 62% felt prepared for moving online and a mere 24% had prior experience in that medium.

The survey identified the challenges to moving classes online including added weight of work and family, which was amplified

by the student respondents.

The survey also told a story about student success on Blackboard. Students requested improvement to the Blackboard structure in order to make it simpler to locate necessary information. Faculty are not consistent in the use of folders on the platform. Students also noted the lack of engagement of some faculty and the delayed (or lack of) responses to emails. They also noted that submission due dates needed clarification in some courses.

Faculty requested ongoing online development and a coordination of assignment workload in their survey.

Provost Earl Carl Link, Ph.D., also in virtual attendance, announced that fall enrollment was up 29% from this time last year. However, First Time In College (FTIC) student and transfer student enrollments were down by 11%.

He also stated that DoVeanna Fulton, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, will

be leaving UHD to take on the position of Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Norfolk State University. She is wished well in her new role.

A significant item on the Provost’s discussion agenda was the planning for UHD’s fall term. A

the fear of eroding the quality of education that students deserve, while simultaneously decreasing the amount of students on campus. Classes with enrollment of students with approved accommodation requests will be a first priority.

On the ques-

accessible for the fall semester.

At the June 16 meeting, conversation resumed concerning the current COVID-19 situation, opening the campus, and making Blackboard user friendly for the students and ongoing training for faculty and staff.

including a written process for first time online teachers to be approved to teach an online course. Questions included naming the courses that would benefit specific faculty/instructors. There were also questions surrounding if the colleges would decide independently on their prerequisites; and, whether the training would be ongoing or offered annually.

Discussion also surrounded the Blackboard platform and the inherent flaws that cause confusion for students. As stated at the June 2 meeting, there is a lack of organization on Blackboard which makes it difficult for students to find the course information they need. It was suggested that the students be involved to determine what would be helpful for them. This could be accomplished through the Student Government Association.

A final note surrounded Black Lives Matter. Some UHD organizations have put out narratives on the subject embracing all students regardless of race. The faculty senate will prepare a similar statement from the senate.

These uncertain times are creating extraordinary changes and thoughtful decisions for the faculty senate.



Image courtesy of TrinityPride.org

handout was given to the faculty senators to review and make recommendations to create a blueprint for possible return to campus. As he said, it is no easy task and requires “all hands on deck.”

The Provost laid out some options such as synchronous online, hybrid, and creative space optimization for face-to-face classes. There was a great deal of discussion in this area. Many of the questions and concerns revolved around student needs, especially the needs of FTIC students. One major concern was

tion of student success, face-to-face learning has proven to be the most successful.

Provost Link stated that students should be made aware as soon as possible as to the mode of learning they are signing up for so that they can switch classes if desired. He also heartily encouraged the senate to bring suggestions to the table and to be flexible and compassionate in creating the blueprint.

Regardless of the decision on the best way to conduct fall classes, Provost Link noted that the library and computer labs need to be

Again, Provost Link provided some updates. The return to campus plan, for one, has been suspended indefinitely and the August 17 return to campus for staff was not agreed upon at a recent president cabinet meeting. However, emergency pay was extended, and there will be no staff layoffs or furloughs.

Susan Henney, Ph.D. provided an updated report as chair of the Online Education Committee.

The report contained a draft procedure to establish minimum faculty and staff training for online education

# We can't breathe — The public's reaction

Overnight, protest sprang up across Minnesota with a call for the arrest of the 4 officers involved in Floyd's death. Hundreds poured into the street despite the danger of COVID-19 citing that police brutality was

just as big of a threat to their lives as the virus. For 3 very long and difficult days, the calls for action evolved into Black Lives Matter movements to bring attention the difficulties African Americans face due to systemic

racism and over-policing.

On May 29, the Minnesota Governor activated the National Guard in response to riots, though many believed these were bad actors taking advantage of the tense crisis. That

same day, former President Barack Obama posted a statement to social media expressing his discontent with the lack of justice for George Floyd and urging swift action. Before the end of the day, former officer Derek

Chauvin was fired, arrested and charged with third-degree murder.

By May 31, protests had been recorded in over 30 major American cities, eventually spreading to all 51

By Varah Thornton  
Continued from  
front page

states and 2 territories, the largest Civil Rights movement and demonstration in history. Movements have even spread internationally - cities including Paris, Frankfurt and London, among others, have also protested in solidarity with the Black community. But the call to action in support of Black lives also brought about the conversation of allyship and how best to support the African American community. Because of the many incidents that came to light in May, many African Americans feel overwhelmed and overburdened in response to witnessing such harrowing events as they are plastered across the media. Instead, resources were posted by various organizations on how to best self-educate instead or burdening African Americans with emotionally draining work.

On June 2, this evolved into Black Out Tuesday, a day where non-Black voices were encouraged to be silent and instead amplify the voices of African Americans activists and resources for those who had been arrested during the protests. Despite the confusion of what was actually supposed to happen, the event dominated social media and thousands posted black squares to accounts in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Continued on Gator  
Life, Page 7



Image credit: Ross Barber



Image credit: Ross Barber

# We can't breathe — Why Houston was different

By Varah Thornton  
Continued from  
Gator Life, Page 6

Despite the fact that Floyd was a native Houstonian, the city received notably little national coverage. It was the only major city that did not enact a curfew despite the protest that took place in Downtown Houston on May 30, in which UHD Black Student Association member, Victoria Jackson participated. Only local media covered the spontaneous event which spanned nearly all of Downtown from the George R. Brown Convention Center all the way to City Hall. Many businesses were damaged along Main St. and nearly 100 arrested late into the night, despite a peaceful beginning.

In response, a protest was led on June 1 by Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, alongside Floyd's family. They led a peaceful march that attracted more than 60,000 participants, triple what organizers were expecting. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee took part in the protest, later introducing the George Floyd Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act in Congress which aims to reduce police violence by encouraging cooperation between police departments and communities.

There was confusion over what exactly happened during the protest, as conflicting accounts from various participants recalled vastly differing environments. Houstonian

Natalie Ferguson attended the event, describing it:

"The energy was positive and the diverse array of people that showed up was amazing. There was a sense of camaraderie and com-

munity. I did not get to hear the speakers, but the march itself was great. Police kept a respectful distance and did not seem overbearing during the 'formal' hours of the march. Yet after, when protesters

remained to continue demonstrating, they put on riot gear and held batons and tear gas guns as they stood in lines to block off streets. It seemed unnecessarily and excessively hostile and combative, especially

when protesters were not showing excessive force at all, just voicing their feelings. I heard accounts they did deploy tear gas and arrested many after they forced people out of downtown."

Such ac-

counts were echoed across social media as people posted the confusing and blatant actions of police in different areas to peaceful protests that were later broken up by officers in riot gear.



Image credit: Ross Barber



Image credit: Ross Barber

Continued on Gator  
Life, Page 8





# We can't breathe — A personal note

By Varah Thornton  
Continued from  
Gator Life, Page 8

Writing this article was a very difficult journey for me. As a Black woman, these events left me scared and depressed, but mostly they left me drained. Floyd's death is one in a continuous string of excessive force used against African Americans since our nation's founding, but like every death, should never be ignored. My instinct was to turn inward and try to block out what was happening, but that was nearly impossible as it permeated every media outlet I turned to. I counted myself lucky that I was off from work the week everything occurred. There were a few days where I just sat and cried because I felt overwhelmed by the sheer emotion of seeing such brutality and the desperation in the cries for being treated like a normal human being. My hands shook every time I attempted to

type this article because everything was so close to home.

This article was very personal to me. I was born and raised in Third Ward, just a few miles from where Floyd grew up. My father attended Jack Yates High School and my grandfather can still

recount every racist interaction he's ever had with police while performing his job as a U.S. postal worker. I nearly did not complete this article because of the stress it caused me. But I knew it was important to recount these events and put them in perspective.

I did not attend any of the protest, but it does not mean that I do not think that they were necessary. Never did I think that I would be living through a new era of civil rights, yet here we are. I would like readers to know that it is okay to feel the numerous emo-

tions they may be experiencing during this time. It is not selfish to put your mental health first. I encourage my fellow Gators to reach out to Student Counseling Services and programs like UHD's Active Minds who provide free resources to students.

This article is my contribution to raising awareness of police brutality and the continued struggle African Americans face every day of our lives. Despite my fear, my strength is my words. And I want every word to convey that Black Lives Matter.



Image credit: Ross Barber



Image credit: Natalie Ferguson



Image credit: Ross Barber

# Texas Medical Center scientists and healthcare professionals march in support of Black lives

By Jema Pantoja

On June 9, a hot Tuesday afternoon, healthcare students, professionals, and allies gathered at the water wall at the John P. McGovern Texas Medical Center (TMC) to march in support for Black lives. While wearing white coats, masks, and holding signs, they marched a 30-minute loop around TMC. At the same time, a funeral was being held for George Floyd at The Fountain of Praise Church in Houston.

The march was a walking vigil to honor the Black community and former Houstonian, George Floyd. The walking vigil was organized by TMC students, Ayesha Khan, a postdoctoral fellow in infectious diseases at The University of Texas Health Science Cen-

ter at Houston and Malcolm Moses, a graduate student in genetics and epigenetics at MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School. The vigil was held not only to support the Black community, but also to advocate for eradication of police violence, inequality, and to shed light on systematic racism.

As they marched around TMC, holding signs that read “Black Lives Matter,” “I Can’t Breathe,” and “Black Health Matters,” people of various ethnicities and personal experiences came together for an important cause.

An

anonymous source who attended the vigil expressed the importance of the TMC event.

They explained, “[It is] important to express solidarity in an active way... It shows that a community meant to be of service to Hous-

ton - a diverse city - cares for its patient population beyond treating and healing.”

On the topic of the peaceful protests that have been transpiring around the United States, the same anonymous source believes, “[There is] hope that

in the future justice will be objective to race, ethnicity, etc., so that people will be treated equally by the system... but that will take lots of work.”

To help further the momentum the Black Lives movement Matter has built, it is important

to “protest your own prejudices and learned racism. It will help to make a difference. The most challenging of all is calling out those around you when someone makes an unkind comment about another group. It may be uncomfortable to do but it can help to prevent racial injustices in the future.”



Healthcare professionals at TMC march for Black lives. Image courtesy of TMC News.

## Title VII cases extend sex to sexuality

By Jaida Doll

On June 15, the Supreme Court ruled that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 should extend to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination of the workplace. The ruling, delivered during Pride month, came after a long battle surrounding 3 separate cases.

In October 2019, 3 cases surfaced in the Supreme Court concerning workplace discrimination against

LGBTQ+ employees. Two of these cases (Altitude Express v. Zarda and Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia) involved gay men who claimed they were terminated for their sexuality. The third case (R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) involved a transgender woman who was terminated 2 weeks after informing her supervisor of her decision to transition sexes.

Since the cases surfaced last year, The Supreme Court has battled over whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 extends to protect LGBTQ+ employees. The Civil Rights Act prohibits workplace “discrimination, based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.” But the legality of workplace discrimination – based on sexuality and gender identity – has gone undecided until recently.

Supreme

Court Justice, Neil Gorsuch, previously urged the court to consider the “massive social upheaval” that would accompany a ruling in favor of the LGBTQ+ community. Despite this speculated upheaval, the Supreme Court ruled that the definition of sex extends to include sexuality, broadening the scope of Title VII to extend protection and prohibits workplace discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals.

In the Bostock

decision, the Court stated, “An individual’s homosexuality or transgender status is not relevant to employment decisions. That’s because it is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating against that individual based on sex.”

The Court furthermore stated, “An employer violates Title VII when it intentionally fires an individual employee based in part on sex. . . [b]ecause discrimination on the basis

of homosexuality or transgender status requires an employer to intentionally treat individual employees differently because of their sex, an employer who intentionally penalizes an employee for being homosexual or transgender also violates Title VII.”

Though this is only one decision in the country’s journey to LGBTQ+ acceptance and equality, the new Title VII ruling allows LGBTQ+ individuals increased security in the workplace, which is a step in the right direction.

# ABC13 hosts Virtual Town Hall, “Police and Our Communities of Color”

By Indira Zaldivar

On June 4, ABC13’s journalists ,Melanie Lawson and Chauncy Glover, moderated a virtual town hall following the death of native Houstonian, George Floyd. Important city officials and community members discussed the relationship between the police and Houston’s communities of color, as well as the need for new efforts within the Houston Police Department (HPD).

“This is not new. For decades, we’ve been fighting the same issues,” said City of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner about the ongoing disconnect between the police and the Black community. Turner grew up in Acres Homes in Houston while it was still segregated. He emphasized the importance of relational policing where police officers are familiar with the community, they are policing. In this way, police force and community can work together.

Turner said, “It is so important to have a very diverse police force that represents the diversity of our community as much as possible. To have police officers coming from these very same communities that they are policing,”

To challenge the mistrust of police, Chief of HPD, Arturo Acevedo said his department works on 3 initiatives including

the selective hiring of police officers, accountability, and embracing relational policing over community policing.

“You have to have a department that is reflective. You have a mayor born and raised here. You also have to have a police department that is home-grown and is minority-majority... It starts with who you hire, your hiring practices. Number two, holding people accountable, that is something we’ve been doing here for a long time. Number 3, the work never ends. Every contact is a start of a relationship. That is why we don’t talk about community policing; we talk about relational policing and that is something that we’re going to continue to move forward with very aggressively.”

Per viewers’ demand, Glover

asked Acevedo if HPD would release the body-cam footage of the 6 fatal police involved shootings. Acevedo responded that the timing of the release is very important.

“I’m very forward with transparency, but we have got to be thoughtful as to when that occurs. Everything that we do has a consequence.”

Besides the timing issue, there is the emotional burden to consider. The family members involved likely want to avoid seeing the footage circulate online.

Acevedo says, “You have these websites where people put these videos and a lot of our family members don’t want their family sitting there for eternity for generations for the same family seeing how their loved one died.”

Mayor Turner also added to the same thread saying he personally took the time to review 4 of the videos and reconfirmed 3 of the 6 families did not want the videos released.

Acevedo stated, “There is al-

ways room for added improvement. I intend on establishing the mayor’s taskforce for policing reform. It is always important to try to provide avenue for the public to be heard and be able to

express themselves in this matter, to listen. De-escalation training is important, crisis intervention training is important... But, the family members do have a huge say on what we do with the footage that we have.”

The panel also discussed Black males fearful of being stopped by the police. Two Black women shared how they advise their own families when being stopped by the police.

“Don’t ever stop in a dark area if a police officer comes after you. Drive slowly. Get to a lighted area and be respectful,” said Arnetta Murray, former school teacher and councilwoman, as well as a mother of 4 sons and a daughter. She recounts her son’s fearful reaction after watching the death of Floyd’s footage.

“The bottom area is that we are fearful. We know it’s isolated cases, but we’re fearful. My son should not have come

home after looking at the video of Mr. Floyd saying, ‘Mom we gotta get a gun.’”

Police officer, Jamie Byrd-Grant was also in attendance. Byrd is the daughter of late

James Byrd Jr., the Black man murdered by 3 white supremacists in Jasper County, Texas on June 7, 1998. Byrd shared her advice on the matter.

“As an African American police-woman, and spending the majority of my time in the police force in a predominant Black community... I would tell them to comply and complain later. Make sure that you get the badge number, officer name. Turn on your dome lights. Get to a safe place.”

She shared an emotional and powerful statement of the change she is actively seeking and creating.

“We have to allow our anger and pain and frustration to be heard in the movement. Do not stop here. I decided to join the HPD because I wanted to affect change within the HPD, not only in the African American community but in the world. I tell people ‘be the change you want to see in the world. If nobody understands the pain, I am here to tell you I am standing in solidarity.’”

Byrd and Acevedo stressed the importance of unity within the community and police force.

“I cannot do it alone. My chief cannot do it alone. This is a movement and not a moment. We can’t do it alone. We need the community to come together.” said Byrd.

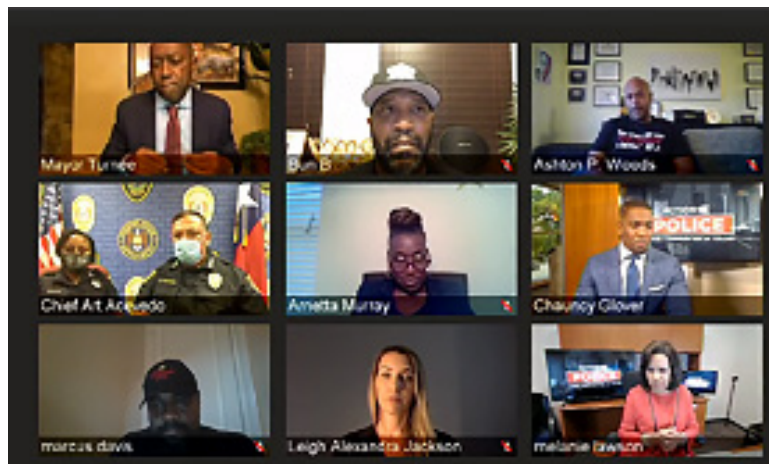
“When we got bad policing, you got to report it, so that we hold them

accountable. We got to hold the bad ones accountable and lift up the good ones,” said Acevedo.

The panel experienced tension as they argued about implementing changes in the police department and provided suggestions to implement in future key conversations. Three members voiced that HPD should redact reform policies now, instead of waiting for the implementation of national policies.

“We have to come up with a national policy. Again, it’s one law in all 50 states. What are the rules of engagement? Because if I do it one way in Houston, and Ferguson does it another way, and Minneapolis does it another way, we end up with mistrust because we use each other’s policies to impeach one another,” said Acevedo.

“The American people are saying that this is no longer a federal or national issue. This is a local issue. There are local decisions that can be made. There are changes that we can implement at the local level. The American people are tired of having the same conversation over and over again... We need to identify the key stakeholders, bring them to the table, and give everyone equal leverage for conversation so that we can make change,” said Howard Henderson, Ph.D., Director for the Center for Justice and Research at Texas Southern University.



Mayor Sylvester Turner, among others, discussing policing relations during ABC13’S Virtual Town Hall. Image courtesy of ABC13’s Facebook

Continued on News, Page 12

# ABC13 hosts Virtual Town Hall, “Police and Our Communities of Color”

By Indira Zaldivar  
Continued from News, Page 11

Marcus Davis, a local businessman.

“I am anxious for Houston to take the lead and not wait on any other city to be the blood-stain bearer of what’s good, and what’s right, and what’s righteous with police departments in the nation,” added

Woods and Henderson emphasized the need to include more people who have experienced injustice involved with the police in future discussions.

“People who should be on here

should be the people just like the officer... people that have been victimized by the police.”

We also have to be fair and say that while we are trying to look good as a city and as people, we should be able to peel the scalp back and

see the ugliness too,” said Ashton P. Woods, community activist and local leader in the Black Lives Matter movement.

Henderson highlighted the key points, “We need to focus on police training. We need to focus on cultural sensitiv-

ity, and we need overall education. The key to do that is to identify individuals who are in these communities, who have these experiences, to make that change.”

“All we want is justice. We want equality in this country. We want to be treated and seen as human beings,” said Bun B, a community

activist and rapper. Bun B expressed what justice would look like for him, “We do not want to be pulled up for being Black. We don’t want to be arrested for being Black, and definitely, we do not want to be killed for being Black... We want everything and everyone in the same playing field.”

## When a hashtag is not enough

By Sheryl Sellers

Crowds gathered. Volunteers distributed water bottles. Posters and banners were raised. Cheers rang out. “A hashtag isn’t enough,” was heard across the park, shouted out by a high school student.

This was the scene on the evening of June 4 at the Black Lives Matter rally at Katy Park in the city of Katy.

The peaceful protest, attended by approximately 2,000 people of a variety of races and ages, was organized by 3 Katy area high school seniors.

This 16 year old student referred to above, just one of several student speakers, spoke out on what it means to be a

Black student walking the halls of the schools, bullied for the color of her skin. She offered an insidious example of students calling her the “N-word” and when she rebukes them, she is told to “chill.”

The student activist articulated the need for the community to further educate themselves by reading and listening to real Black history – that which is left out of the history books. She encouraged the crowd to get out of the dark and to “spread the light of truthful knowledge.”

The white community was encouraged to use their white privilege to create justice for all – to speak up.

Several student speakers spoke out on the injustices directed at Black citizens regardless of their age. With the additional assistance of sign language interpreters, the students condemned members of law enforcement that violate the rights of Black citizens. It was noted that more police training is spent on the use of firearms and less on the critical aspects of conflict management, de-escalation training, crisis intervention and considerations of racial bias.

The students reminded the audience of the many years that their forefathers have fought for the same justice that white citizens

enjoy. Black citizens have these rights also, but those rights are often ignored.

As a step to create change, the crowd was encouraged to go vote and to ask friends if they are registered to vote.

Near the end of the rally, the cry, “Let’s go vote!” resounded from the crowd.

Katy police were on location, but there was no need. The rally was peaceful and respectful.



Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers



Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers

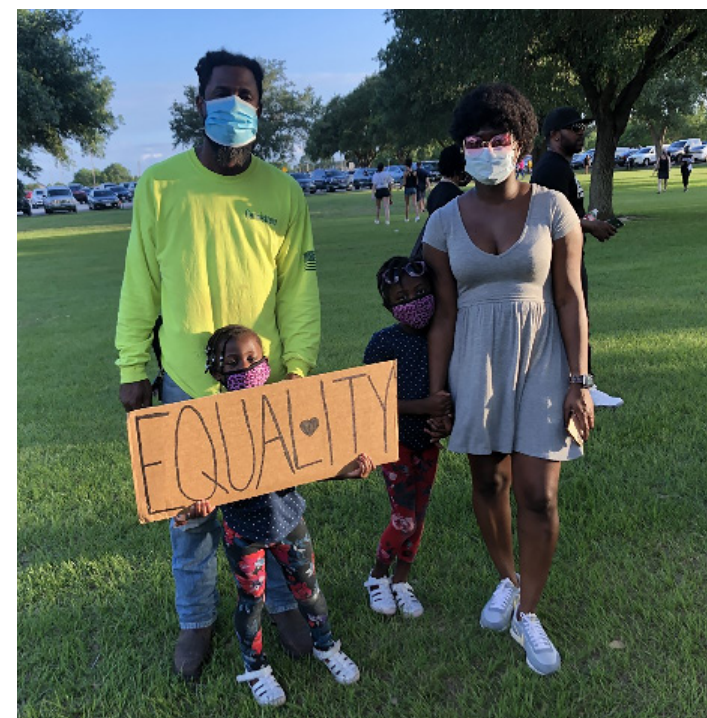


Photo credit: Sheryl Sellers

# Celebrities react to the death of George Floyd

By Indira Zaldivar

Many celebrities and public figures demonstrated their concerns with the exposure of the footage of George Floyd's death at the hands of police officers. Some exercised their civic rights to protest, while others voiced their concerns through social media. Some donated money, while others physically showed support.

Various celebrities made donations to organizations that demand racial and social justice. Halsey, Lil Nas X, Harry Styles, Kehlani, Justin Timberlake, Emily Ratajowski, Steve Carell, Seth Rogen and Patton Oswalt are among those who donated to the Minneapolis Freedom Fund which provides bail funds for those who cannot afford them.

Together all donations exceeded \$20 million according to an announcement by the Minneapolis Freedom Fund on May 30.

The Weekend donated \$200,000 to the Colin Kaepernick's legal defense

initiative which helps bail out those who were wrongfully arrested at protests.

Dak Prescott, quarterback for the NFL, pledged \$1 million to, "improve and address systemic racism through education and advocacy."

Kanye West also donated \$2 million to racial justice organizations and created a college-savings fund for Floyd's 6 year old daughter, Gianna.

Other than monetary donations, many celebrities expressed their concern via social media platforms.

Numerous celebrities posted a black photo on various social media platforms with the hashtags "#BlackoutTuesday" and "#TheShowMustBePaused."

Music executives, Jamila Thomas and Brianna Agyemang initiated the movement behind the hashtag to encourage artists to reconnect with the communities, while pausing regular business operations

for that whole day on June 2.

Thomas and Agyemang expressed through a letter posted to the official website, "In observance of the long-standing racism and inequality that exists from the boardroom to the boulevard."

After resuming regular operations, various celebrities continued with a mission spreading awareness and ways for their fans to support the Black Lives Matter movement and racial justice.

Gregg Popovich, the long-time coach for the San Antonio Spurs, in a very emotional video expressed he was, "embarrassed as a white person," for Floyd's death.

Black people have been shouldering this burden for 400 years. The only reason this nation has made the progress it has is because of the persistence and patience and effort of Black people."

On June 19, Alicia Keys shared song entitled, "A Good Way to Die,"

that tells a story of a mother mourning her son's death. The song explains how her son had "been gunned down," and how she is one of many mothers grieving for the same reason.

Others have shown their support by appearing at various Black Lives Matter protests across the country.

Rapper, Machine Gun Kelly (MGK), along with drummer and music producer, Travis Barker, were seen protesting in Los Angeles on June 2. MGK's sign read, "Stop Arresting Protestors! Arrest Killer Cops!!" while Barker's sign read, "No Justice, No Peace."

Stephen Curry, NBA player for the Golden State Warriors, was spotted

protesting in Oakland, California along his wife, Ayesha Curry, on June 3.

Ariana Grande tweeted her photos at a peaceful protest in LA on May 31 with a caption that read, "Hours and miles of peaceful protesting yesterday that got little to no coverage. All throughout Beverly Hills and West Hollywood we chanted, people beeped and cheered along," she wrote. "We were passionate, we were loud, we were loving, cover this too please."

That same day, Ellen Page shared a video on Twitter of a protest in Barclays Center.

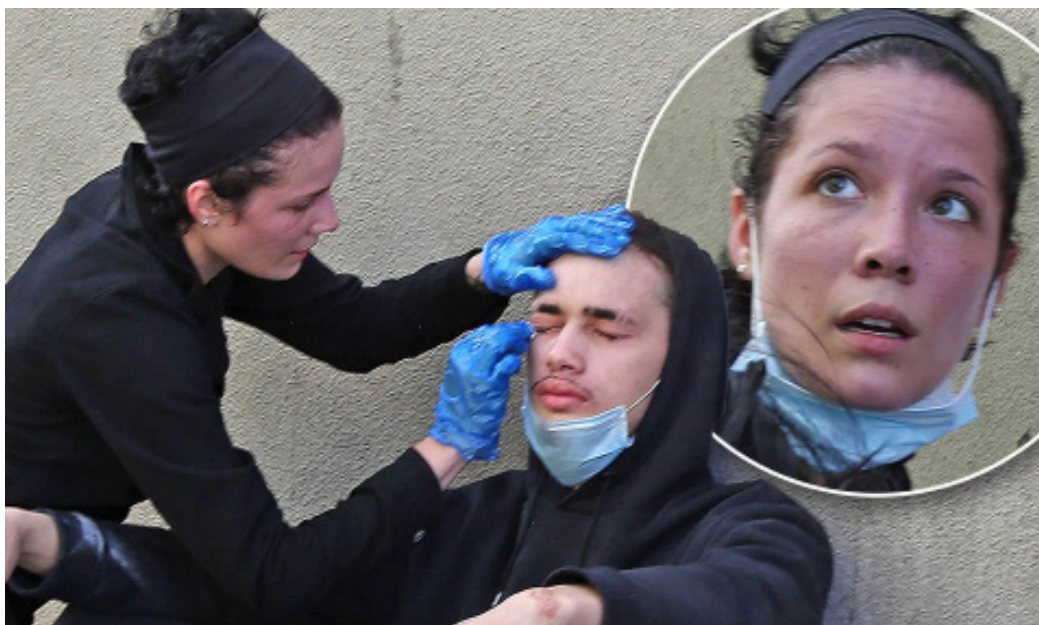
Cole Sprouse, "Riverdale" star, recounted on Instagram his experience being arrested at a protest in Santa Monica.

Nick Cannon, American rapper, actor, and comedian shared a picture on Instagram with a caption that read, "Stop Killing Us," and wearing a t-shirt that says, "Please, I can't breathe."

Other than appearing at protests, some celebrities even attended Floyd's funeral in Houston. Among the hundreds who attended the public viewing on June 9 were Jamie Fox, Channing Tatum and Houston Texans', JJ Watt.

Harris County Judge, Lina Hidalgo declared June 9 as "George Floyd Day" in Harris County.

She made the announcement over Twitter stating, "We must never forget the name 'George Floyd' or the global movement he has inspired."



Halsey spotted tending to an injured protestor at a Black Lives Matter event in Los Angeles. Image courtesy of Daily Mail.



Machine Gun Kelly and Travis Barker spotted at a Black Lives Matter protest in Los Angeles. Image courtesy of Daily Mail.

# Disney and Pixar break “Out” with newest short film

By Jaida Doll

Despite its 9 minute runtime, Pixar’s newest short film “Out” is groundbreaking in the film industry as the first mainstream cartoon to openly depict the life and struggles of an LGBTQ+ individual. Not only does the film promote sexual diversity and visibility, but it also promotes racial diversity as it hones in on an interracial gay couple, Greg and Manuel.

The animated short film follows Greg, a gay man who struggles to come out

to his parents. In typical Disney fashion, magical animals promote mischief in the name of true love. As a result, Greg’s closeted sexuality is put at risk when his mind is magically switched with his dog’s.

Both Disney and Pixar have previously danced around LGBTQ+ visibility in their series and films. Though they have featured background and secondary LGBTQ+ characters, “Out” is both companies’ first animated film to feature an openly gay main

character and a clearly LGBTQ+ storyline.

The film opens with the text, “Based on a true story.” As much of the plot revolves around magical, mind-swapping animals, this statement seems... ridiculous. But the internal conflict of the film is clearly true and is relatable for any LGBTQ+ viewer.

The experience of coming out is a universal conflict intrinsic to LGBTQ+ existence. Though Disney and Pixar have weaved their namesake elements

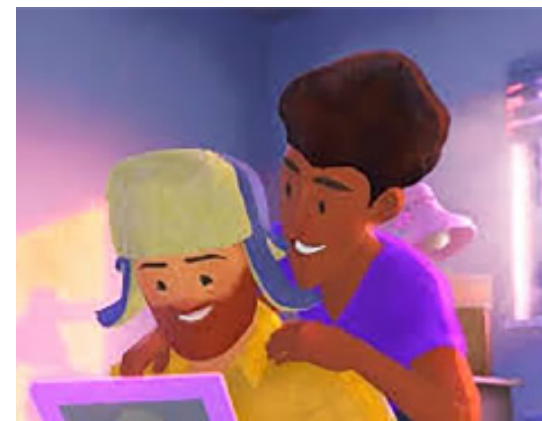
of magic, mischief, and impossibility into their depiction of this experience, they have also managed to retain the truth and the emotions that surround such a conflict. In a few minutes, and with even less words, “Out” captures the anxiety, the guilt, and the freedom that accompanies the coming out process.

As the storyline focuses on a gay man’s journey to come out to his parents, it focuses on the most basic and universal struggle of the LGBTQ+ community.

Though the depicted situation is rudimentary compared to the complex actuality of the LGBTQ+ community, Disney and Pixar have taken an unprecedented step in the animated film industry by so visibly

depicting the community and its experiences.

The short film, released on Disney+ on May 22, is the 7th installment of Pixar’s SparkShorts series.



Interracial gay couple, Greg and Manuel, star in “Out” Image courtesy of advocate.com

# “The Bachelor” white washes the picture of perfection

By Jaida Doll

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, long-running reality show, “The Bachelor” announced that its upcoming 25th season will star a Black bachelor.

On June 12, “Good Morning America” broke the

news that Matt James will go down in “The Bachelor” history, as the 1st Black bachelor in the series’ history.

Since its beginnings in 2002, “The Bachelor” has filmed 24 seasons, only 1 of which included a non-white bachelor. In its 18th

season, the popular dating show starred Venezuelan Juan Pablo Galvais as the Bachelor.

This type of exclusion is promoted not only by “The Bachelor” but by the society that watches, follows, and supports “The

Bachelor.” The series’ previous choice of contestants illustrates the ingrained racism that is so prevalent in our society. Though it is ABC who ultimately chooses the contestants, they base such decisions off of the picture of perfect beauty in our society.

And according to the previous “The Bachelor” seasons, the picture of perfection is Caucasian.

In previous seasons, “The Bachelor” has erased and excluded people of color from their cast. This type of skewed representation in the media is not reflective of the actuality and diversity of our country and society. ABC President Karey Burke commented on this issue.

Burke stated, “We know we have a responsibility to make sure the love stories we’re seeing onscreen are representative of the world we live in, and we are proudly in service to our audience. This is just the beginning, and we will continue to take action with regard to diversity issues on this franchise.”

“The Bachelor” host, Chris

Harrison, also commented on the issue.

He tweeted, “We acknowledge our responsibility for the lack of representation of people of color on our franchise and pledge to make significant changes to address this issue moving forward. We are taking positive steps to expand diversity in our cast, in our staff and, most importantly, in the relationships that we show on television.”

As the series’ 25th season features only its 2nd non-white bachelor, it is truly “just the beginning” of such a reform. However, “The Bachelor” is making steps to “expand diversity,” and hopefully with time, will be able to erase and redefine the so-called picture of perfection they have helped to create.



Juan Pablo Galavis, the 18th bachelor, but only the 1st who is not white. Photo courtesy of CNN.



Matt James, the 25th bachelor, but only the 1st who is Black. Photo courtesy of USA Today.

# Faculty Contribution: Environmental consciousness

By Dietrich M. von Biedenfeld, Assistant professor in Business Law at UHD

Resilience and sustainability are 2 concepts commonly associated with ecological concerns. Consider how both terms relate to success in environments beyond forests or oceans. In the same way that cross-pollination of plants builds resilience through genetic diversity, there is a vast body of research showing the financial benefits of diverse corporate boards. The value of different voices in political discussion is evident in the longevity and sustainability of heterogeneous political systems. Natural, political, and business environments share the need for resilient and sustainable attributes to thrive.

Looking at ecological environments, we can see how un-watered plants wilt and crops

in nutrient-rich soil prosper. Businesses that embrace diversity have seen higher profits while those shown to discriminate have paid fines and lost customers. Nutrients are preserved and replenished through crop rotation. In the same way, political environments that see limited terms of elected officials have performed better than those have where singular leadership is rooted indefinitely. Business and political environments benefit from clarity and removal of corruption, just as nature benefits from removal of pollutants.

Students sometimes struggle with new information until they are able to consider it in a familiar framework. Trying to conceptualize a \$170 million dollar enforcement action against a company,

such as the one levied against Rolls Royce, is simply beyond most of the Gator community's financial metrics. However, we can probably all picture the flagship Phantom produced by that auto group. This abstract number also means that, at a base price of \$450,000 for a 2019 Phantom, you could buy approximately 378 of the cars for \$170 million. Picture student parking filled exclusively—in both senses—with that car model.

Similarly, we may struggle to understand business or political environmental realities. Consider how many of our student, staff, and faculty grew up in homogeneous cultural environments. Our first-generation college student population is strong, and few in our Gator community have immediate

family members who are Chief Executive Officers or Mayors. We might struggle to understand political distinctions and hurdles for citizenship statuses different than our own. Without experiencing the same struggles as others, we may not understand the forces that drive them to believe in certain political ideologies.

As you look forward to moving past the instability and tribulations of 2020, plan to build resilient, sustainable environments. This requires communication, relationships, and practices based on principles transcending the 4 environments introduced here. Tree canopies can stifle undergrowth, and effective communication is like a clear path of sunlight. This provides the necessary support

for healthy relationships. You might also consider how communication blocks are like interruptions of irrigation. Healthy relationships can be found in the birds cleaning a crocodile's teeth, and unhealthy can be found when a plant's roots strangle another plant's in competition for resources.

Among all of these parallels, remember that context is key. UHD Dean of University College, Scott Marzilli, Ph.D., shared a story once about bananas. He had mulched bananas that had, to him, become overripe. These bananas had lost the bright yellow most of us imagine as ideal. Dean Marzilli's wife was not pleased because the dark colored, "too ripe" bananas were at exactly the right stage of maturity for use

in her banana bread recipe. She is also a professor, so Dean Marzilli couldn't pull the "trust me, I'm a doctor" card." You can take more than a few lessons from that true parable.

The caterpillar becoming a butterfly provides a cliché, but apropos analogy for the higher education experience. Alumni, faculty and staff provide a cocoon for students to develop into the best versions of themselves. Lessons should be taken from the educational environment into business and political environments to show the incremental changes as a tornado of achievement as powerful an impact as "The Butterfly Effect."

# Make America grate... again, and again, and again

By Sheryl Sellers

Make America Great Again. This writer cannot imagine a time when America was in the shape we are in now – and it is not great. The slogan that fits is: Making America Grate!

Why? Because our country's leadership is grating on some of our last nerves. At one time, and not so long ago, we were the country that others emulated. Because we were a great nation in many ways. Yes, we have our flaws, and a big one is in the forefront

right now – that is our overall treatment of the Black community. For that, we should bow our heads in shame and move toward "justice for all." Those words should ring familiar. We need to adhere to them.

But what I am referring to now is our industrialization, our advances in medicine and our advances in space. I am referring to the creation of the electric light bulb, the suspension bridge, GPS, the airplane and the list goes on. These are just a smidgen of

the things that made us stand out above the rest of the world – our innovations, our creativity.

But now I fear that we are becoming a laughingstock.

Nearly a half a century ago, some American men were heading to Canada to avoid the draft for the Vietnam War. Now I hear of Americans considering to move to Europe if we must live through another 4 years of racism, narcissism, lying, bullying, name calling and inconsistent leader-

ship.

And the distressing part of those disparaging characteristics is that they belong to our current United States President, Donald J. Trump.

There have been outcries from various groups surrounding gun rights and the Second Amendment.

But what about our First Amendment rights of free speech and freedom to peaceably assemble?

The presi-

dent tried to block the publishing of "The Room Where It Happened," a book authored by former United States National Security Advisor, John Bolton. Trump is now attempting to block the publication of a book authored by his own niece, Mary L. Trump.

If those 2 situations are not enough to make America's knees weak, consider the assault on peaceful protestors outside the White House.

They were fired upon with

rubber bullets and a product described by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as teargas.

This happened so that the president could walk to St. John's Episcopal Church and hold a Bible (upside down, by the way) for a photo-op. Thankfully, the Bible did not melt.

Watching that scene from the comfort of my home, I initially thought it was a police event in a 3rd world country.

But no.

*Continued on Opinions, Page 16*

# Make America grate... again, and again, and again

By Sheryl Sellers

Continued from Opinions, Page 15

But no. Not only was this horrific scene taking place in the United States of America; it was outside the White House, ordered by members of the president's staff – if not by the president himself (although he denies it).

That is the scene that brought me to this place to write these words: Enough is enough.

Just prior to that vile and unconstitutional event, the president held a news conference where he stated that he will protect the people and their property from protestors (he was referring to the protests stemming from the murder of George Floyd). He continued that he would “dispatch thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel and law enforcement to aggressively go after

protestors” who perform acts of vandalism and assault..

On that same day he contacted the state's governors, law enforcement and national security personnel, and told them that they need to imprison those who are becoming violent or they (the authorities, this writer assumes) will look like jerks. He recited his version of what happened to the police department in Minneapolis during the protests there. He pointed at New York City stating that he lives in Manhattan (not Washington D.C.?) claiming that the police there need to do their job. He called the governors “weak” and stated that the United States is a laughingstock to the world. He ended his anarchist speech encouraging the governors to dominate.

“You dominate.” “You have to

dominate.”

Laughing-stock? I do not think so. Countries around the world are embracing our nation's fight against racism. If there's any laughing going on it surrounds our country's leadership. It surrounds our president's lack of knowledge of the Constitution. His lack of world knowledge: “Is Finland a part of Russia,” he asked John Bolton.

As a nation, we should be concerned. And as a state, we should be concerned inasmuch as Governor Greg Abbott seems to be following the president's script.

For instance, in discussing that Texas has witnessed a remarkable rise in COVID-19 cases, Governor Abbott reported that people should not have gone out. When reminded that he opened the state for people to

leave their homes, he answered that just because you can go out, doesn't mean you should.

We have heard such a play on words many times. Lack of accountability is becoming all too familiar, in our state and in our nation.

We should reflect this president if we want to wallow in more injustice and lose our liberties. To dominate resonates anarchy. He has not been called to task yet for these abominable acknowledgments, so will he? Do we want to find ourselves in a country where we are under the thumb of a dictator who implores that those who turn violent (a broad term) should be treat-

ed aggressively and dominated?

We should be concerned.

I know I am. This concern was punctuated today when my daughter

texted me about the unrest in our country saying, “t's just so gross feeling like a hostage here.”

Is this what we want? For. Four. More. Years.



Teargas clouds the Black Lives Matter protesters in front of the White House. Image courtesy of New York Times.



President Trump fumbles with a Bible outside St. John's Church for a forced photo-op. Image courtesy of Times Leader.

## UHD **Now hiring!** DATELINE

Student Run Since Volume One

The Dateline is now hiring for the fall semester!

Student-run since volume one, UHD's newspaper is entirely run by our students. The Dateline provides students with an opportunity to get involved on campus, gain valuable experience, and build professional skills. Students can also earn course credit with TCOM/ENG 4360 and can even make a little extra cash.

Students are encouraged to submit as many pieces as desired for each issue, however no commitment or experience is necessary.

We welcome students of all majors, and we are excited to see what you can bring to the team! We are currently hiring for positions including journalists, photographers, editors, artists, cartoonists, and graphic designers.

To submit pieces or for inquiries about joining The Dateline, email the editor, Jaida Doll: [dollj1@gator.uhd.edu](mailto:dollj1@gator.uhd.edu)