

Message from the chair

Representation matters: If you can see it you can be it

By Elias "Eli" Valentin II

Chair, GCDP



One of the beautiful things about celebrating Black History Month is acknowledging the multitude of ways African-Americans have contributed to America's progress and the larger global

community. As we celebrate the history, we must also look to the future and work to create spaces where Black women and men can thrive and shine.

At the highest levels of every industry, we must continue to include these faces, voices, and perspectives that have been overlooked or marginalized for far too long — representation matters. The explicit message it sends is superseded by the unconscious message it sends. I can't think of a more critical time than now to ramp up these efforts.

According to a working paper by the National Bureau of Economics in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University, researchers discovered that Black students who have one Black teacher before the 3rd grade are 13 percent more likely to enroll in college. The percentage skyrockets to 32 percent when you add a second black teacher by the 3rd grade. What work are we doing in the community to recruit black teachers and school administrators? What is the Greenville County Schools or our School Board doing? What are the elected officials doing to legislate this proven valuable component to our classrooms?

One of the sharpest people and legal minds I know first learned she could be a lawyer by watching Claire Huxtable on the Cosby Show. The concept of a professional African-American family was a way to "soften" the blow to white America on the changing demographics and society's changing face. How many other young boys and girls pursued their JD or MD because they saw their reflection in the Cosby's? The explicit message was African Americans are continuing to reach the highest of heights. The unconscious message was to the young black children that they could do anything, including being a successful attorney or doctor.

In a recent conversation with one of our Greenville Democrats leaders, he talked about how intentional his

parents were when raising him. In selecting a cadre of black professionals who served as his pediatrician, optometrist, and dentist, his parents set up a framework for him to see possibilities without limitations. This opportunity for all is the real American dream, but we must have equal access to these ladders. The explicit message was "Black Excellence" was possible. The unconscious message was normalizing this, so when he shot for the stars, he knew he had a chance to reach them.

Far too often, people of color are unable to see our reflection in these places and spaces. We see it in politics, media, and professional sports. The National Football League came up with the Rooney Rule to ensure minority coaches could get opportunities to interview for head coaching positions when they came available.

Black students who have one Black teacher before the 3rd grade are 13 percent more likely to enroll in college. Two drives that percentage to 32.

In the last three off seasons, 20 coaches were hired, 3 of them people of color, and only one of them Black – despite the fact that 70 percent of players and roughly 30+ percent of assistant coaches are Black.

The problem became exacerbated after Eric Bieniemy, who, as offensive coordinator led the Kansas City Chiefs to back-to-back Super Bowl appearances and a championship, wasn't even hired this offseason. The explicit message is supposed to be you are getting an equal chance at this position. The unconscious message is the adage, "you have to work twice as hard to get half of what they get," still permeates our society, as blind as some of us may want to be to it.

I want us here locally and the voters across the State to think about this as we gear up for the critical elections in 2021, but more importantly, for 2022. We have too many essential seats that need a Democratic champion in them. I hope we can recognize representation matters as we work through the primary contenders.

Democratically yours,
Eli



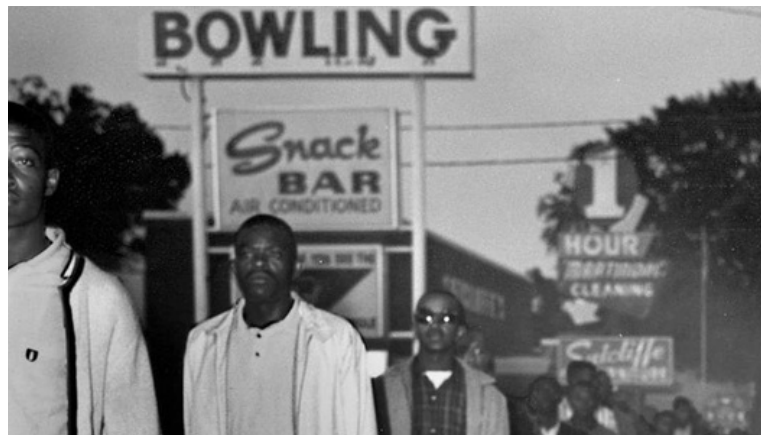
To commemorate Black History Month this year, we turned to you – our network, friends, volunteers – to crowdsource a multi-media curated project of more than 60 items including virtual events, books to read, films to watch, podcasts to listen to, voices worth following and more. Here's a sample of some of the compelling, challenging, and engaging content from our contributors. [View the entire project.](#)



Listen to Maya Angelou deliver an animated reading of her quintessential poem "Still I Rise." Angelou got her start in the public eye as a Calypso dancer and singer, even appearing in a film, "Calypso Heat Wave" and releasing an album, "Miss Calypso", both in 1957.

It's said that Billie Holiday told Angelou in 1958, "you're going to be famous but it won't be for singing," Angelou retained the air of a performer as a reader of her work.

The Orangeburg Massacre is a lesser known but extremely violent episode in the Civil Rights Movement. What began as a confrontation over integration of a local bowling alley ended in tragedy on the night of February 8, 1968. After three nights of protests, police beatings and arrests, the National Guard, armed with tanks and live ammo, was called into to tamp down a peaceful and unarmed protest at South Carolina State. When the smoke cleared, three young men were dead, 28 wounded, and scores (including Cleveland Sellers, father of Bakari Sellers) had been arrested. [Read more about how this tragedy unfolded.](#)



More on next page / [Explore the entire project online](#)

28 DAYS OF BLACK HISTORY

In the arts

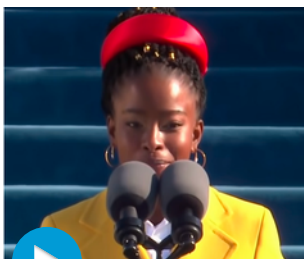
The Chadwick Boseman collection of films goes far beyond the wildly popular Black Panther. Boseman's last film – Ma Rainey's Black Bottom – is a tour de force for Anderson, SC, native Boseman, even though Viola Davis is the titular star. Boseman took on biopics of some of the most iconic Black barrier breakers: James Brown (Get On Up), Jackie Robinson (42), and Thurgood Marshall (Marshall). Binge



them all on Netflix and Amazon Prime. A great talent taken far too soon.



Comedy is a great transportation mechanism for painful truths as comedienne Amber Ruffin shows as she riffs on why we need a White History Month (to get at the truth about Black history).



Watch poet Amanda Gorman, 22, and the nation's first Youth Poet Laureate, soar at the inauguration as she reads "The Hill We Climb." Expect to hear more from this powerful voice.

About Greenville

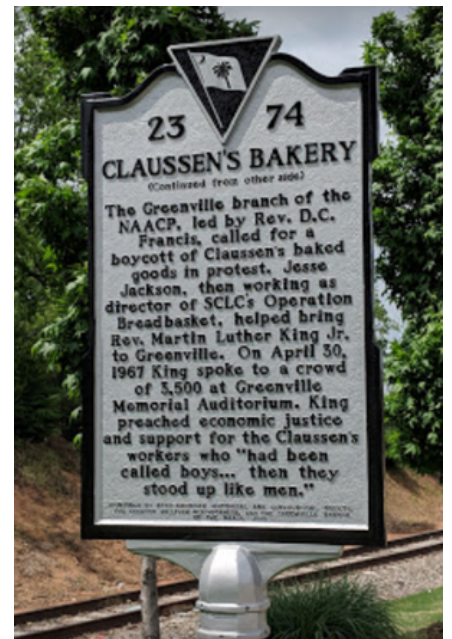
Get to know Greenville. There's a rich Black history in our community that you won't find strolling down Main Street. A few ideas:

Sterling Community Center was once a black HS and epicenter of culture and learning. [Learn more about the importance of the Sterling Community.](#)

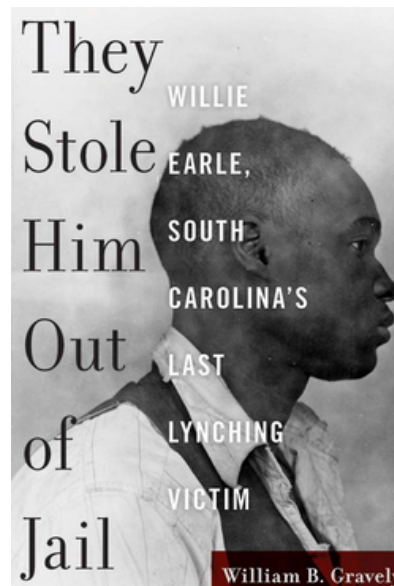
Springfield Baptist Church was the hub of non-violent organizing for Civil Rights in the Upstate in the 1960s, and remains a community centerpiece today.

Claussen's Bakery is an important site in the history of Civil Rights in South Carolina. In 1967, The Rev. Jesse Jackson of Greenville got Martin Luther King Jr. involved in a boycott of the bakery. King came to Greenville in April 1967 and addressed 3500 protestors. That protest and King's involvement, according to one historian, "taught our community members to fight."

[Learn more](#)



The Last Lynching



Read this [1947 article in The New Yorker](#) about the trial of the men responsible for the last lynching in South Carolina. An event that took place in Greenville County. Then [read the complete story of Willie Earle](#), the last lynching in South Carolina, in the book, "They Stole Him Out Of Jail" by William B. Gravely. A historical marker was installed in 2010 but has now been stolen. [Read more about this and efforts to purchase and install a new marker.](#)

COMING SOON: 31 Days of Women's History

If February comes, can March be far behind? Apologies to Shelley, but I was looking for a lead! With March comes our annual celebration of Women's History. As we did with Black History Month (see [Pages 3-4](#) and [our full online project](#)), we're asking for everyone (yes, that means you) to contribute. We'll include live events – although the pandemic will certainly tamp those down, virtual events, books to read, films to watch, podcasts to listen to, local history to explore, and

more. Email us at gcdpcomm@greenvilledemocrats.com and include a description, a link to all online events, locations, dates and times for any in person events, and pretty much anything we'll need to connect readers with activities. We'll include your name as a contributor, unless you ask that it be withheld. We'll accept contributions throughout the month and post them as we get them, but we really want a good number of events read to open the project up on March 1.

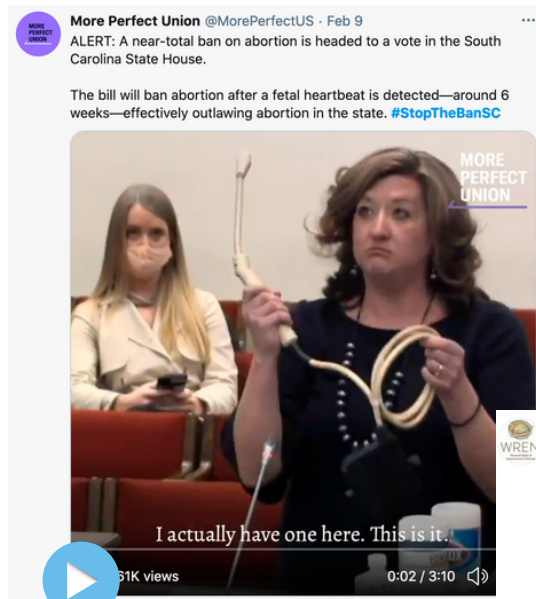
Voices of advocacy

The battle against the Fetal Heartbeat Bill continues

Once again, womens rights organizations like WREN, women's health organizations like Planned Parenthood, joined by women, men, young activists, and Democrats banned together to right the draconian Fetal Heartbeat legislation, that the governor signed on February 19. We thank all of our network and constituents who took our advocacy challenge last month and made countless calls to state elected officials. The fight now moves to the courts ([read about Planned Parenthood's suit](#)) and it won't just be South



Carolina: Nine states already have passed similar legislation, setting up – perhaps – the final battle over Roe v. Wade that conservatives and the religious right have been hoping for 28 years since its passage in 1973. Here's a look at some of what the social media universe has to say.





Getting it done in '21; turning SC blue in '22

By Stacey Mars

Volunteer Coordinator, GCDP

Stacey Abrams once said, "We can use our words to fight back against oppression and hate. But we must also channel our words into action." The last four years have proven that, as a country, we still have a long way to go fighting hate and oppression. But we know it can be done successfully having seen Georgia go from red to blue in this last election. I hope that the work done by women like Stacey Abrams of Fair Fight and Latosha Brown of Black Voters Matter inspired you the way it did me.

If they can turn Georgia blue, I'm sure with hard work, focus, and a little bit of elbow grease we can turn SC blue.

Here are some of our plans:

Volunteer Huddles: These meetings are a chance for volunteers to learn about how to sign up to volunteer for upcoming events. They are also opportunities to train on how to canvass/literature drop, phone bank, and text bank. The meetings will be the last Wednesday of every month through October. [Register here](#).

Listening Tour: If there's one thing I've learned it's that you can think you know what someone needs and be completely wrong. With that in mind, the Greenville County Democratic Party chair, Eli Valentin, and leadership are going to embark on a Listening Tour to engage with the residents and community activists of under-served communities in Greenville County.

Engaging these communities will allow the GCDP to gain better insight into the needs of the residents. Education on the local races in the city of Greenville and surrounding areas will also be a point of focus.

Weekends of Action: As local and state races gear up, candidates will need help from volunteers to get the word out



about their candidacies. The GCDP will provide information on how to volunteer for those campaigns. We are also launching Weekends of Action that include literature dropping, phone banking, and text banking.

Block Parties and Back-to-School Drives: Politics is a serious matter but it doesn't hurt to have some fun in the process, right? Right! During the summer - pandemic permitting - the GCDP will host block parties and back-to-school drives throughout the county that will feature local DJs, local restaurants, small businesses, and local candidates.

Voter Registration Drives: Fair Fight and other organizations were able to turn GA blue due to increased voter registration and turn out in communities of color. In 2021, the GCDP will have the same focus and coordinate voter registration drives at the Listening Tour, block parties, back-to-school drives and other events that are planned throughout the year.

These events sound good on paper, but we need your help to make them a reality. Sign up to join our volunteer team and turn #BlueIn22

Why child care workers should get vaccine first

This article is excerpted from Amanda's doctoral thesis and appeared on the online site for moms: Mother.ly.

By Amanda McDougald Scott

As a PhD candidate researching child care in the US, I have found that child care workers have continued to make sure parents can get to work during COVID, but do not receive appreciation, living wages, healthcare benefits, or paid leave in return. Unfortunately, for decades, child care workers have been living in these conditions, and COVID makes it much more urgent to take action.

I have been researching and learning about child care for six years, beginning with hearing from community members from a high-needs area of Greenville, SC, about why affordable, quality, and accessible child care allows people to get to work and provides early learning for children. With this statement from the community, I helped lead an effort to return 2- and 3-year-old Head Start classrooms to the area. I learned more about how child care works from implementing that project, and then I had my own son. I became friends with my son's child care teachers, who told me about what was going on at the center in which they worked, and the conditions for child care workers everywhere—and that led me to action research to improve child care as a whole. I have done more research on the topic through my employment at a local think tank, followed by writing a policy analysis and now my dissertation aims to begin improving child care as a whole, starting with the workers.

The women and men who care for our children while we work should have access to living wages, healthcare, and the respect they deserve. Here's the case for pushing childcare workers to the front of the vaccine line.

There is currently a public push for 4K-12 teachers to be prioritized for receiving COVID vaccinations, with good reason. Teachers are indoors for many hours with classrooms full of



children each day; therefore, according to CDC guidelines, they are at high risk for contracting COVID. Child care workers fit the same criteria, and deserve prioritization for the COVID vaccination—after all, they are also teachers. Child care workers should receive access to the COVID vaccination now.

What it's Been Like for Child Care Workers During the Pandemic

During the COVID pandemic, child care workers have watched as other businesses shut down, but in many states, child care never has. As schools (4K-12), doctor's offices, retail, restaurants, and more closed, child care workers have continued to go to work (and still do as we continue through the pandemic) to ensure that the people in jobs classified as "essential" could remain employed. In addition, workers who were classified as essential have been praised by many who could and can stay home, and thanked for their dedication. Efforts to push for hazard pay or bonuses for essential workers have gained momentum, but child care workers have not been a part of the discussion.

One child care administrator and teacher from my research felt this was an additional jab: "Nobody was proclaiming, 'Oh, you're putting yourself at risk every day'...the grocery store employees were getting bonuses and all sorts of stuff and thanks and appreciation. But we remained there throughout the whole thing and we were taking in children every day... to the people who do have families at home, they were risking bringing anything home with them every day." This teacher in particular was not concerned about infecting anyone at home with COVID, but she had her own health to be concerned about, and no health insurance provided by her employer to help her cover her expenses if she were to get sick.

[There's more to this story. Please continue reading on our website.](#)

Calendar: What's going on?

February

26

The Black History month monologue contest sponsored by the Greenville chapter of the NAACP, 6:30 PM, Room 101 John Hall, Furman University.

26

Every Friday, join SC Democratic Party Executive Director Jay Parmley [live on Facebook](#) at 1 PM for political updates and inside information.

27

Celebrate Black History Month at our February breakfast with speakers the Rev. Stacey Mills and the Rev. JM Flemming. Also Dr. Dawn Bingham will try to make sense of vaccine distribution. [Click here to join](#), 9 a.m., Feb. 27.



March

1

Good Governance Symposium series co-sponsored by the Greenville League of Women Voters, begins at 6 PM. The first of this five-part series focuses on voting rights with keynote speaker Leah Aden, deputy director of litigation at the NAACP. See more on Page 10. [Register to receive the Zoom link.](#)

2

Insurrection at the Capitol brings insights from Derek Black, former white nationalist and godson of David Duke, to a virtual conversation about what motivated the January 6th mob. The Riley Institute at Furman sponsors the event which begins at 6 PM. [Register online.](#)

4

Women in municipal government and the roles and experiences of elected women is the subject of a virtual panel discussion hosted by the League of Women Voters. 6:30 PM. Featured speakers included Greenville City Council representatives Dorothy Dowe and Lillian Brock Flemming. [Register online.](#)

4

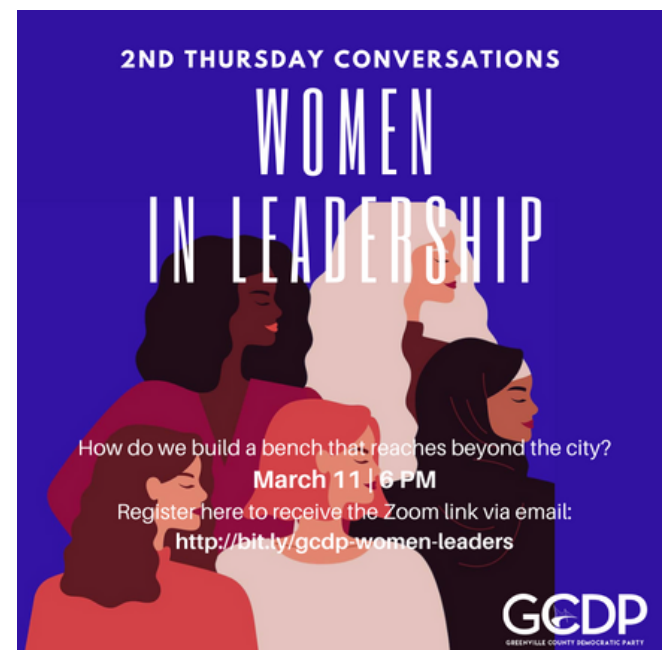
Greenville and Athens Virtual Chataugua present The Long Shadow: Understanding White Privilege, a virtual panel discussion, 7-8:15 PM. All participants are expected to view the film The Long Shadow, before the event. The film is widely available online. [Register online.](#)

5

Explore Guaranteeing Her Right...The 19th Amendment, Women and the Right to Vote an exhibition at the Upcountry History Museum. Photographs, drawings and artifacts detailing the stories of women's struggle to achieve full citizenship. March 5-13th. [More info.](#)

8

Regular meeting of the Greenville City Council. 5:30 p.m. [More information.](#)



11

2nd Thursday Conversation: Women in Leadership. Featuring Honorable Lillian Brock Flemming- Greenville City Council District 4, Honorable Dorothy Dowe- Greenville City Council At -Large and former Greenville City Council members Diane Smock and Jil Littlejohn. Sponsored by the GCDP. [Register online.](#)

Calendar: What's going on?

ICYMI

2ND THURSDAY CONVERSATIONS

BEING A BLACK MAN TODAY

Hear our panel of activists, advocates, and businessmen to discuss their paths to bring about changes in their communities.

Video at <https://youtu.be/wBFIWcBUWk4>

Audiocast: <https://soundcloud.com/gvldems/blackmentoday-audio>



Kwadjo Campbell, chair of the Democratic Black Caucus of Greenville County; Derrick Quarles, founder of Black Lives Matter, Greenville; Je'Varus Howard, veteran, candidate, businessman; and Jonathon Sweeney, 3rd vice chair of the GCDP had a lot to say. Take us on the go with our [new audiocast](#) or [watch the video replay](#).



Did you miss breakfast in **January**? We had an inspiring conversation with Clay Middleton about how to turn SC blue. [Catch up and watch the replay](#).

March

8

Bakari Sellers, attorney, author, former state representative, and CNN political commentator will be the featured speaker at the Democratic Women of Greenville County's March virtual meeting.

Registration is required



16

Monthly meeting of the Greenville County Council. **Check the website for time and more information.**

18

Monthly virtual meeting of the Democratic Black Caucus. Streaming live 6-7 PM on **Facebook**.

31

GCDP Volunteer Huddle, virtual meeting at 7 p.m. to discuss volunteer activities and plans. **Register on Zoom.**

League of Women Voters' Good Governance Symposium

The Good Governance Symposium is a collaboration of several leagues, including Greenville, across South Carolina. The series will promote education and awareness of issues that affect us from local to federal government. Each session includes pre-reading materials and ends with an advocacy component for further action.

The first session on voting rights kicks off on March 1 (details on Page 9). **Sign up for the first event here and stay connected for the series.**

The rest of the series:

Session II: **Redistricting Reform**, Monday March 22, 6 p.m. A "redistricting 101" plus information from the League's State Redistricting Working Group about affirmative actions.

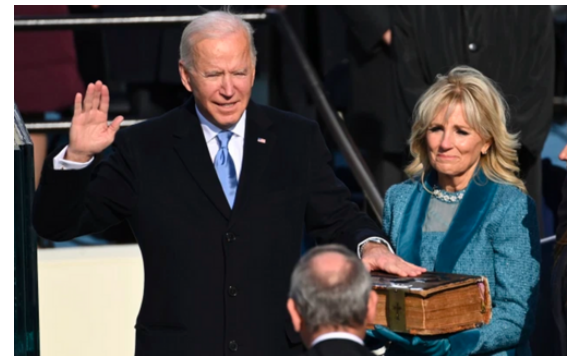
Session III: **Electoral College and Institutional Reforms**, Monday, April 12, at 6 p.m.

Session IV: **Dark Money and Campaign Finance**, Monday May 10, at 6 p.m.

Session V: **Election and Voting Systems and Approaches**, Monday June 7 at 6 p.m.

THE ECSTASY AND THE AGONY

January 2021



Dog day afternoons are also back as Jill gives Champ a scotch on the White house lawn. Above right, well, you know ...



At the end of the day, the Trump flag did **not** fly over the capital and the election certification was not usurped. Democracy – bloodied but unbowed – won. And Trump lost again as the House – for the first time in history – impeached a sitting president for a second time.



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*We welcome your one-time or recurring donations
on our website.*

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/greenville-county-democratic-party-1>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Our office remains closed until further notice due to COVID spikes. We will be checking voicemail and email remotely a few times each day so please call us at 864-232-5531 or email headquarters@greenvilledemocrats.com

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The Bray is published by the Greenville County Democratic Party, 1300-J E. Washington Street, Greenville, SC 29607, phone 252-5531, Eli Valentin, chair; Roxanne Cordonier, editor; Susan Huffaker and Lucille Herwald, production and layout; Ann Funderburk, distribution.