

A 50 year sharing of the Civil Rights Movement

As presented by Ernest Hardmon, III

As a member and officer of Black Men Speaks, speaking mostly on the Legacy of Slavery and our African American Heritage. I feel myself to be somewhat of a black servant on the subject of Civil Rights issues, and a career student of past and current sufferings and challenges of the African American people. This writer has currently been doing serious research on the 50 years of challenges of the Mental Health Movement, but I began to think that it's also the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement and I would be totally amiss if I didn't share the African American struggle for Civil Rights and injustice.

I remember in my reading of the "Soul of Black Folk", by WEB Du Boise. Him mentioning "Book Learning, the curiosity, born of compulsory ignorance, to know and test the power of the cabalistic letters of the white man, the longing to know". In those somber forests of his striving his own soul rose before him and he saw himself, darkly as though a veil, and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission. He began to attain his place in the world he must be himself, and not another. WEB DuBois the first African American to obtain his doctorate at Harvard, and Carter Godwin Woodson the second African American male to obtain his doctorate, they're both read authors and a very necessary books to read even in this day and time.

"To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardship" WEB DuBois. What is our current administration telling us? Are they saying be content to be servants and nothing more; what need of higher culture for half-man. Away with the black man's ballot, by force or fraud, and behold the suicide of a race; never the less, out of the evil came something of good, the clearer perception of the Negroes social responsibilities, and the sobering realization of the meaning of progress.

Our education was taken or we were tricked into changing directions. In other words, the things which the patient needed most to pass the crisis was taken from him that he might die. This one act among many others is an outstanding monument to the stupidity or malevolence of those in charge of Negro schools and universities, and it serves as a striking demonstration of the mis-education of the race. Carter Godwin Woodson

Civil Rights, are a class of rights that protect individual's freedom from infringement by government, social organizations, and private individual. They ensure one's ability to participate in the society and state without discrimination or repression. How does this relate to the Mental Health processing, civil rights include the ensuring of peoples physical and

mental integrity, life and safety; protection from discrimination on grounds such as race, gender, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability, individual rights such as privacy and freedom of thought, speech, religion, press, assembly, and movements.

Civil Right Activists used nonviolence protest and civil disobedience to bring about change, and the federal government made legislative headway with initiatives such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Many leaders from within the African American Community, and beyond rose to prominence during the civil rights era, including Martin Luther King Jr. Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Andrew Goodman and others. They risked and sometimes lost their lives in the name of freedom and equality.

Background

- **Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.**
- **Birmingham and the March on Washington.**
- **Selma to Montgomery march.**
- **Despite occasional open conflicts between the two groups, both SCLC protest and SNCC's organized activities were responsible for major protests in 1965, which prompted president Lyndon B. Johnson to introduce new voting rights legislation. On March 7th an SCLC planned march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery ended almost before it began at Pettis Bridge on the out-skirts of Selma, when mounted police using tear gas and wielding clubs attacked the protesters. New account of "Bloody Sunday" brought hundreds of civil rights sympathizers to Selma. Many demonstrators were determined to mobilize another march, and SNCC activist challenged Dr. King to defy a court order forbidding such a march. But reluctant to do anything that would lessen public support for the voting right cause, Dr. King on March 9th, a day after my birthday turned back a second march to the Pettis Bridge when it was blocked by police. That night a group of southern whites from Selma killed a northern white minister who had joined the demonstration after the deaths of Jimmy Lee Jackson, and a few weeks before, the Reverend James Reeb death. This led to a national outcry. This Selma to Montgomery march was the culmination of a stage of the African American freedom struggle. Soon afterwards, congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which greatly increased the number of southern blacks able to register to vote. But it was also the last major racial protest of the 1960's to receive substantial white support.**

This writer currently feels that after 50 years of struggle our current administration still hasn't gotten it right. Are we going forward or in reverse? "Like many of you, I am disturbed by the normalization of racism, bigotry, xenophobia, and sexism in our highest offices. Already, the new administration has taken steps to repeal the Affordable Care Act. And, as a result of the latest executive orders, women reproductive freedoms have been undermined, immigrant

communities have been intimidated, and refugees have been locked out of our nation. In the coming months, what issues are you most concerned about?

Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Affordable and Accessible Health Care

Women's Rights

Civil Rights

Environmental Protections

Global Peace and Security