CELEBRATING BLACK STORIES

COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORIES AND RECKONING WITH INJUSTICE
The University Judiciary Committee’s case statistics report for the fall semester found that more than half of the guilty verdicts passed down in the term were for violations of COVID-19 policy. The report tracks cases that were adjudicated in the last semester, rather than those that have been accepted by the committee.

An accepted case is a complaint that UJC has decided to hear in a trial, and an adjudication is when a verdict — guilty or not guilty — has been made on a case. A total of 12 cases were adjudicated last fall, a major decrease from the 57 adjudicated last semester. Of these 12 cases, half of adjudications and 65 percent of guilty counts were for violations of the University’s COVID-19 policies, which include masking requirements and gathering limits. In comparison, 46 of the 57 cases last spring or 88.5 percent of cases concerned COVID-19 violations. The latest case concerning a violation of COVID-19 policies was opened in June 2021.

Between early decision and early action, the University has made 936 offers of admission to first-generation students compared with 691 last year — a 72 percent increase. Nine percent of offers went to children of University alumni, roughly the same percentage as the Class of 2025.
JSAAHC to honor Black-run community organizations

The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center aims to raise $45,000 for the organizations ahead of Liberation and Freedom Days

Zach Rosenthal | News Writer

The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center is drawing community members’ attention to Liberation and Freedom Days for the sixth time since the celebration’s inception in 2017. After earning $27,000 from last year’s community race, this year JSAAHC is aiming to raise $45,000 to help support Black-run organizations in Charlottesville, with primary funding coming from those who register to run or walk a course throughout Charlottesville between March 1 and March 6.

The organizations set to receive funding from the race span interest areas from radio to public housing, technology and coding to education. Once race costs are paid, all donations will be split evenly amongst the organizations.

The race intends to highlight Liberation and Freedom Days, a holiday celebrated annually March 3 that is unique to the City of Charlottesville. The holiday was first celebrated in 2017 to commemorate March 3 through 6 — the days in 1865 when Union troops arrived in Charlottesville. There, University and City officials surrendered to the Union troops at the University Chapel. As they left, many enslaved laborers followed the Union troops north through Virginia, escaping bondage.

Much of the story behind Liberation and Freedom Days was lost to history until 2016, when Charlottesville City Council sought a commission to tell a more full story of Charlottesville history. On May 28 of that year, the Council approved a resolution to create the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials and Public Spaces with one task of “identifying additional opportunities within the City to enhance a holistic reflection of our history.” The Commission then voted unanimously to submit to Council a recommendation to designate March 3 through 6 Liberation and Freedom Days.

“This year, funds from the JSAAHC fundraiser will be directed to 101 Jamz, a radio station that plays urban and R&B music, the African American Teaching Fellows, which aims to address the racial disparity in the number of Black teachers in schools, the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, whose mission is to help preserve the honor and legacy of African American in the Charlottesville area, the Albemarle-Charlottesville NAACP, the Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents, which advocates for and with Charlottesville-area residents in public housing, the Black-run Vinegar Hill Magazine and the Code Too 2 programming and coding program that aims to increase the number of Black and Brown girls in technology.

“In all of these organizations are run by Black leaders and serve the community directly,” said Andrea Douglas, the executive director of the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, in an email to The Cavalier Daily.

Sign-ups for the race opened Feb. 6 and will remain open until the final race day. Individuals can register and donate to the event as well as make their own fundraisers to help support the cause.

“The race’s route is substantial — 9.03 miles across the City that takes runners and walkers by some of the city’s most prominent Black-owned businesses and important sites of African American history. Participants will then follow the course past the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers, which was unveiled in April 2021.

Moving through Grounds, the race crosses both the Kitty Foster Memorial outside of Nau Hall and the African American Burial Ground located at the corner of McCormick Rd. and Alderman Rd.

The first landmark memorializes Kitty Foster, a free Black woman and leader in Charlottesville. Kitty Foster, who maintained a plot of land just south of the University between 1833 and her death in 1863. Upon her death — 49 years after Foster was freed from enslavement — Foster passed the land to her female descendant — 3

the City’s African American businesses and most importantly, learn about our local African American history,” the race description reads.

Last year, Liberation and Freedom Days events were hosted by both JSAAHC and the Descendants of Enslaved Communities at the University. DEC’s event included pre-filmed performances and conversations among descendants of enslaved laborers at the University as well as a virtual tour of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. JSAAHC’s 2021 Liberation and Freedom Days celebration included 12 events beginning Feb. 26 of last year.

“The 2021 Liberation and Freedom Days event also included a Reparations Run or Walk,” Martin said.

Douglass expressed her firm belief in the work each benefiting organization does, noting that staffers and volunteers in these organizations work tirelessly to benefit the greater Charlottesville community.

“Together they address the media, housing, education and civil action sectors,” Douglass said in an email statement to The Cavalier Daily. “While doing yeoman’s work they have small staffs and while some have dedicated fundraising staff, the majority do not.”

JSAAHC’s fundraising efforts have come to be a staple in the efforts to recognize the history of Black Charlottesville residents. In anticipation of the festivities of Liberation and Freedom Days, the fundraising will help to provide attention to the celebrations of freedom and community and uplift the organizations that form its foundation.

“After so much time being enslaved, to become liberated and allowed to express freedom is something that will always be remembered and celebrated,” Martin said.

LUIS COLON | THE CAVALIER DAILY

Staff and volunteers at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center work year-round to preserve the rich and varied history of African Americans in Charlottesville.

THE CAVALIER DAILY
Portrait project highlights Black Charlottesville residents

The project was awarded $73,000 by the Jefferson Trust to contextualize and display portraits to the public

Lauren O’Neil | News Editor

Nestled among 16 million other objects in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library — including archival records, rare books and maps — are over 9,000 glass plate negatives taken by photographer Rufus W. Hosking between the year 1912 and the start of World War I. Around 500 of these photographs are of Black Charlottesville residents — and for the first time, a group of individuals from across the University are blowing the dust off the slides and bringing them into the light.

While Hosking’s portraits of Charlottesville and Central Virginia landscapes or white Virginians can be seen throughout the City, the hundreds of portraits of Black Virginians have never been publicly exhibited or displayed as a cohesive unit.

Now, dedicated individuals from the University of Virginia Library, the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, the University’s Corcoran Department of History and the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center are working collaboratively to present these portraits to the greater Charlottesville community. The group will also enlist the help of student researchers and local partners to complete the feat.

The project’s goals of making the portraits publicly accessible is bolstered by a recent $73,000 grant from the Jefferson Trust, which grants money to ideas and projects that enrich the University. This year, the Jefferson Trust funded 14 projects, totaling nearly $1.35 million in funding.

History Prof. John Edwin Mason said he stumbled across the portrait collection in 2014 through Virginia Tech’s digitized collection platform, and was immediately struck by the figures. A historian by trade, Mason immediately began to question why Black Charlottesville residents spent time having their portraits taken at the height of the Jim Crow era.

“Some of these portraits are just astonishingly beautiful and all of them are compelling,” Mason said. “You wonder Who are these people and why did they take such care to go to the studio and present themselves to the camera in very self-conscious, thoughtful ways?”

The portraits were a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many Black residents. Costing up to $5 or $20 in today’s dollars, Mason said obtaining a portrait was a cumbersome task for primarily poor Black residents at the time. The mass of individuals, families and couples who went to such lengths to obtain a physical record of their existence despite the cost, according to Mason, thus demonstrates the value African Americans placed on countering the racist stereotypes pervasive in mainstream American visual culture at that time.

Between 1912 and 1914, Charlottesville was dominated by racial segregation. The early 20th century marked the height of the Jim Crow era, during which elaborate, racialized laws enforced strict segregation. In this period, white Charlottesville residents constituted the Ku Klux Klan in the City with a moonlight ceremony at Thomas Jefferson’s grave and others successfully campaigned for the erection of statues to Confederate giants such as Robert E. Lee and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson.

Yet, Mason noted, these portraits vividly reveal the conscious effort African American residents made in crafting their own narratives — ones of love, fashion and loyalty.

“The visuals that people got of African Americans were grotesque caricatures and what African Americans were doing by individuals, couples and families — they were creating this alternative archive where they were implicitly saying ‘We are not who you think we are,’” Mason said.

“We are people of dignity and style and fashion, we love our families, we have romantic loves, we run our businesses, we honor our elders, we build our churches.”

Similarly to Mason, Worthy Martin, acting director at the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, emphasized the gravity of the portraits at the time, something modern-daycitizens may take for granted in the age of social media and the current ease of documenting daily life.

“Those images are clearly people coming to a white photographer and hiring him to take their picture, and these pictures really stood for an enormous amount,” Martin said. “They didn’t have Facebook, they didn’t have Instagram — a photograph on the manila was a major way of communicating about the person.”
As the multiple portrait exhibits are curated, Martin will lead a group in undertaking humanities-based scholarship focused on uncovering the personal narratives of subjects in the photographs.

Holly Robertson, curator of exhibitions at University’s Library, noted the benefits of preserving materials, no matter the contemporary importance—these sorts of archives allow for researchers and interested community members glimpses into the past through physical objects that remain.

“The beautiful thing about material culture and records is that they’re more difficult to suppress, and that’s the whole reason that we have libraries and archives,” Robertson said. “To keep, retain, manage [and] steward these records.”

Students research assistants and researchers at the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities have already begun analyzing individual photographs, poring over maps and documentation from the Jim Crow era and crafting biographical sketches of portrait subjects when possible. Once enough information on the subjects is discovered, Martin will lead the project in creating a webpage to make all of the information publicly accessible with further contextualization. With community accessibility as a cornerstone of the effort, the webpage will be coupled with freely distributed brochures and exhibition catalogs.

“We want a website more oriented to the people and to the social context of these images and that will come out as a socially accessible website,” Martin said.

Funding from the Jefferson Trust will allow for the realization of the project’s other goals, including a year-long exhibition in the Main Gallery of the Small Special Collections Library from September 2022 until May 2023 and a community engagement program bringing components of the exhibition into local schools, churches and community centers.

Andrea Seese, assistant director of promotions and events at the Jefferson Trust, said this year’s grant application pool was one of the most competitive in recent years. High dollar requests, the quality of the proposals and creativity in creating solutions or improvements for the University or Charlottesville communities made all of this year’s grantees stand out.

Seese said the trustees were highly impressed with the Holsinger Portrait Project, cognizant of the impact it could have by revealing a bit of Charlottesville history to the community that otherwise may have been forgotten.

“The project provides an opportunity to share positive stories and history and conduct further research on citizens of the local Black community that are still not being shared,” Seese said.

While still holding in tension “painful histories of slavery and segregation and the long and dark shadows they still cast,” the project will offer viewers to experience the fullness and beauty African Americans created for themselves, according to the grant proposal.

“It’s not just the history of Charlottesville, it’s a proud demonstration of Black lives in Charlottesville,” Robertson said. “These portraits are so proud and dignified.”

Ultimately, Mason says the project seeks to tell the history of portrait subjects, publicly acknowledging for time immemorial the humanity, agency and fullness of those thus far unacknowledged but who will soon come into the light.

“These portraits are a way into this history, but they’re a way into this history that starts with beauty, that starts with style, that starts with fashion, that starts with respectability, that starts with family, churches and business enterprises,” Mason said. “We’re not starting with oppression, we’re starting with the lives and communities and institutions that African Americans created despite the oppression.”
Celebrating Black History Month beyond February

Examining the legacy of Virginian scholar Carter G. Woodson, whose work served as the foundation for Black History Month

Maggie Glass & Eileen Powell | News Writers

Black History Month, a time of pride, celebration and remembrance during the month of February, was first recognized in the U.S. in 1976 under former president Gerald R. Ford. It began as a way to commemorate efforts of the African diaspora, and was developed from the efforts of Carter G. Woodson — a Virginian scholar who sought to dedicate a week in February to the coordinated teaching of Black history in public schools.

Woodson, who is known as a father of Black history, was the second Black American to receive a doctorate at Harvard following W.E.B. DuBois. Cognizant of the lack of historical or academic attention to Black history, Woodson founded the Organization for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and the Journal of African American History in 1916, in addition to publishing his own books on Black history.

Woodson is also the namesake of the University’s Carter G. Woodson Institute, founded in 1981. Since its founding, the Woodson Institute has supported the goal of promoting both the research and teaching of African American studies at the University. In addition to establishing an African American Studies Research Center, the institute is responsible for administering undergraduate major and minor degrees in African American and American Studies.

Deborah McDowell, previous director and chair of the Woodson Institute, led the institute from 2006 to 2021. Under McDowell’s leadership, the Woodson Institute became a full-fledged department — previously, it was recognized solely as an academic program. The change in status allowed the institute to hire and to expand its faculty directly, and garnered attention as a wider academic and intellectual landscape.

Courses in the African American studies department at the University include Music, Politics and Social Movements and Peoples and Cultures of Africa, among others. Students may also take courses in the Swahili, American Studies, Drama, English, History, Religion and Sociology departments to satisfy major or minor requirements in African American Studies or to learn more about the field.

The institute also offers a Distinguished Majors Program for fourth-year students, through which majors in African American and American studies conduct advanced research for the completion of a thesis, and has sponsored over 25 pre and post-doctoral students through its residential fellowship program.

Recent Woodson faculty publications explore topics such as popular music and Black Atlantic Humanism. The Woodson Institute also holds events to discuss books, films and current issues. The most recent event last year featured a roundtable discussion of Jarvis R. Gibbs’ book “Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching,” which featured panelists from University of Southern California and Michigan State University.

Malahai Little, post-doctoral fellow at the Woodson Institute and American Association of University Women Dissertation Fellow at Ohio State University, commented on how special it has been for her to be a part of the Woodson Institute, especially while celebrating Black History Month.

“I grew up in a very pro-Black family and community and attended an historically Black college or university for undergrad, so being a part of the Woodson is like coming home in a way,” Little said. “I cherish opportunities to be part of historically Black institutions, and the legacy of Carter G. Woodson and the diversity of Black thought is alive at the Woodson Institute.”

In addition to attaining departmental status, the Woodson Institute under McDowell also restarted its publishing imprint with UVA Press through the series “Carter G. Woodson Institute Series: Black Studies at Work in the World.” The series is a collection of monographs and essays, and intends to aid transformative work in the classroom by providing resources to educators. McDowell also serves as the current editor of the imprint.

McDowell’s efforts continue with Robert Trent Vinson, director and chair of the Woodson Institute, who took over from McDowell last August. Vinson is the current president of the Association for the Study of African American Affairs — the world’s premier professional organization of African and African diaspora scholars — which refers to scholars who study the voluntary and involuntary movement of Africans to various parts of the world. He is also a former Woodson fellow, a two-year pre or post-doctoral program in which scholars study topics in African-American and African studies and related fields.

In an interview with The Cavalier Daily, Vinson said Black History Month is a moment for all students and faculty to celebrate and partake in.

“Black History Month is not just a moment for Black people — the understanding of Black history is really important for the nation’s history,” Vinson said. “Studying Black history as a Black freedom struggle, as an attempt … for this country to live up to its ideals, is liberatory for many people beyond just Black people, including those who are doing the oppressing.”

In 2021, events celebrating Black History Month at the University included a virtual week-long celebration by the National Pan-Hellenic Council and a series of events by the Office of African American Affairs. The series highlighted prominent figures from Black Bottom, Detroit, based on Alice Randall’s novel “Black Bottom Saints.” Students and faculty had the opportunity to examine relevant books, films and music through discussions, viewings and guest speakers.

This year, the Black Student Alliance is hosting a “Black History at UVa” event each Friday in February. The first week will focus on “the foundation,” honoring the enslaved laborers who built and upheld the University. The second week will address “the firsts,” or specific accomplishments within the Black community. The final two weeks will feature Black professors, deans and students who have impacted a peer’s experience at the University or who served as leaders within the Black community.

UVA’s Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Department of History and Philosophy will also host a series of events to explore the Southwest Virginia African American experience. The series will consist of five lectures which will discuss the African American experience in Appalachia.

Vinson explained the importance of a universal celebration of Black history.

“I think Black history is for everyone — that includes those who have been privileged since the beginning of this nation’s founding, because those spaces around racial exclusion not only diminishes and harms the people who are being affected, it also diminishes those people who are doing the excluding, doing the oppression, because it diminishes their humanity, as well,” Vinson said.

Those interested in learning more about Black History Month can explore resources on the Center for Racial Justice in Education and Black History Month websites.
LIFE

U.Va. hosts annual MLK Celebration “Why We Can’t Wait”
Community members reflect on the meaning of the title of Dr. King’s 1964 book in month-long memorialization exploring history and current events

Jia Williams | Features Writer

As all of the celebration’s events, participants were able to learn about opportunities for growth and active engagement in the community that underscored the theme, “Why We Can’t Wait.”

Every January since 2011, the Community MLK Celebration Planning Committee has organized a month of events to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year’s event series spanned from Jan. 17 to Feb. 8 and touched on the topics of history, art and social justice.

The event series covered a variety of subjects, including affordable housing, identity in injustice, healthcare justice, data activism and LGBTQ+ policy issues, among many others. Many of the events highlighted the intersectionality of issues as they appear in the University community and society as a whole.

Third-year College student Ainsley Zimmer attended the celebration through the Office for Sustainability’s Affordable Housing program. Zimmer noted how the event helped her recognize the intersection between sustainable housing and healthcare justice. She believes in the importance of acknowledging the University’s past as a means of enacting clear change going forward.

“Tackling affordable housing means addressing healthcare justice and banking and education and districting and policing and criminal justice,” Zimmer said. “Looking into the past and acknowledging the history of UVA as well as making visible systemic racism in the major institutions students both actively benefit from as well as are harmed by is only the starting point.”

Lea Garner, student outreach & engagement specialist for the Office for Sustainability, helped plan and promote the affordable housing event that Zimmer attended. Garner spoke to the purpose of the celebration and how its message bridges the gap between University life and systemic race inequities in the area.

“I think, for me personally, it’s kind of a call to action — like the time is now,” Garner said. “We have these issues laid out in front of us, and we all need to feel empowered and educated to speak up and act on behalf of those challenges.”

At all of the celebration’s events, participants learned about opportunities for growth and active engagement in the community that underscored the theme, “Why We Can’t Wait.”

“Making space for ‘waiting’ or ‘patience’ essentially frames issues facing Black Charlottesville residents, University staff and students as tolerable for the time being,” Zimmer said. “Slow rolling and small changes in the University, often prioritizing individual-level interactions rather than institutional changes, are what continues to make the message of ‘Why We Can’t Wait’ just as pertinent today and tomorrow as it was in 1964.”

The celebration was planned jointly by the University’s Division for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Community MLK Celebration Planning Committee. In addition, the events were co-sponsored by community partners, including the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the Allmarie Charlottesville Historical Society and the Office for Sustainability.

The co-sponsorships enabled the University’s organizations to enlist the help of other organizations in the greater Charlottesville community when planning and promoting the events.

“It’s a really nice reminder that these folks are in our community and making such a profound impact on a really important topic,” Garner said. “It was really interesting to see all of these people unite together with such a strong synergy emphasizing how important the topic is and how interconnected housing, sustainability, food access and all those topics can be.”

Students, Charlottesville community members and University staff were all encouraged to attend the free, public events. Though most of the events were held virtually over Zoom, a few events adopted a hybrid format with a limited number of participants invited to attend sessions in person.

PRIDE at Batten Presents Victoria Lill was one event that offered both an in-person and virtual component. The event’s speaker, Victoria Lill, recounted her experience dealing with issues of LGBTQ+ discrimination and racial segregation as an attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division. Kaytee Wisley, a graduate Batten student and event organizer, noted the importance of continuing the conversation.

“I think despite the fact that we have made a lot of progress as a country, there are still obviously areas where bigotry is present and racism is present,” Wisley said. “Moving forward as an institution, prioritizing racial equity and everything that the institution does is really important.”

“Charlottesville occupies a unique position within the national gaze as not only home of the University of Virginia, built and maintained by thousands of enslaved laborers, instituted by founding father and slaveholder Thomas Jefferson, and a leading institution in eugenics research, but [also] the site of the Unite the Right Rally of 2017,” Zimmer said.

When looking ahead into the immediate future, Garner hopes to see an increase in sustained dialogue held on these topics. With MLK’s call to action reminding the community that it cannot sit around and wait for change to happen, Garner promotes the need to confront the University’s troublesome history head on.

“UVA has a complex relationship with race relations,” Garner said. “So I think it’s really important to elevate conversation about equality, inclusivity [and] accessibility as much as possible.”
Top 10 podcasts to listen to for Black History Month

There are many educational and fun podcasts to listen to during of February located on Apple Podcasts, iHeartRadio, Spotify and SoundCloud

Anna Mason | Top to Writer

1. “Intersectionality Matters!”
   This podcast is hosted by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a leading scholar of critical race theory and an American civil rights advocate. She works alongside Jullia Staple-Levine, the program director of the African American Policy Forum. I was captivated by the way Crenshaw tells her own stories in a way that makes me feel as though I am with her, and eloquently explains the importance of the topics she covers. “Intersectionality Matters!” has 4.7 stars on Apple Podcasts, and the first of the 44-episode series introduces the podcast as exploring intersectionality through the deeper dimensions of today's most pressing issues and movements, such as the “Say Her Name” campaign. “Intersectionality Matters!” helps listeners understand politics, social movements and their own lives through nuanced viewpoints and discussions with leaders in these subjects.

2. “The Read”
   “The Read” is a weekly podcast hosted by Kid Fury and Crisble, who chat about hip-hop and pop culture stars. The two hosts discuss the most recent news in this sphere in a more lighthearted and entertaining podcast. These episodes range from one to three hours long and cover the drama occurring in the pop culture sector in the podcast’s “Hot Topp” section with the weekly entertaining news. There are four other sections of “The Read,” including Black Excellence, a sports section, Listener Letters and a mental health advice section. Listening feels as if you are overhearing your friends’ banter and jokes — this podcast is definitely a fun way to keep up with any gossip going on in the pop and hip-hop industries.

3. “Humanity Archive”
   Historical storyteller and public educator Jermaine Fowler hosts the “Humanity Archive.” This podcast features deep conversations about the untold and overlooked Black stories of history such as the Great Migration, in which six million African Americans moved from the rural South to urban parts of the United States in order to escape poverty and racial persecution. Fowler has a passion for teaching and uses his platform to educate the world about a deeper, more authentic, history. He addresses how schools teach history and as more of a “wished” model than a reality — in essence, how American schools gloss over certain details of enslavement and civil rights instead of presenting the harsh reality of what Black Americans have endured. The “Humanity Archive” is definitely the most engaging history lesson I’ve listened to and presents history in a way that brings back the raw emotions of events, forcing you to think and challenge accepted teachings.

4. “Black History Year”
   This podcast is put together by PushBlack, the largest Black non-profit media organization in the U.S. Launched in 2020, “Black History Year” is PushBlack’s politics and history podcast. In these episodes, they dive into thought-provoking stories, interviews with experts and the relationships between history and current events and politics. The podcast aims to connect activists, thinkers and histories who are left out of many conversations.

5. “Witness Black History”
   This educational podcast was created by BBC News as part of its World Service and Witness History segments. At about eight minutes per episode, “Witness Black History” episodes are shorter than the other podcasts on this list. The episodes were published between 2010 and 2020 and are available indefinitely on all streaming platforms. As a woman majoring in chemistry, I found the episode that examines the contributions of Black women working with NASA particularly interesting. Other episodes also examine events that occurred through history and other particular figures in Black History that may not be well known.

6. “Black on the Bluff”
   “Black on the Bluff” is a talk show hosted by college students in the Black Student Union at the University of Portland. The students discuss their personal experiences at school, offering a unique perspective into the Black student experience. For those of us at the University, this may be a very relatable podcast and a unique way to learn about shared experiences from across the country. These episodes cover issues from education systems and Black femininity to the classism faced within Black communities.

7. “The Nod”
   “The Nod” tells stories of Black life throughout history and present in America, celebrating the innovation and resilience throughout Black history and culture. The Nod is put on by Gimlet Media and hosted by Brittany Luse and Eric Eddings. The pair explores stories about Blackness that are not heard often and talks to heroes and stars in Black culture, including actor Jay Ellis and executive producer and director Premice Penny. I loved how the hosts on this show also play games and have day-to-day conversations that make episodes very immersive and fun to listen to. The podcast explores student debt, sports and reviews of political debates in episodes ranging from five minutes to an hour.

8. “Dear Culture”
   “Dear Culture” uses a cultural lens to keep listeners up to date on entertainment, politics and social justice. The podcast is hosted by Gerren Keith Gaynor and Shana Pressock from ThetGen. The hosts just celebrated reaching 100 episodes in January with a very energetic episode about how we define culture alongside film producer Demi Lewis Davis as a guest to examine how her work in Hollywood shapes Black culture. Demi Lewis Davis is the co-founder of Color Creative, a company that champions diverse voices and creates a pipeline for minority and female writers in Hollywood. Listening to this episode felt like sitting in on a deep conversation between a group of friends with different perspectives that are both informative and enlightening.

   This podcast is hosted by “The Nation” magazine columnist Kai Wright who discusses how the country’s controversial past still resonates in today’s political and social climate. “The United States of Anxiety” airs live on Sunday evenings on the radio, but is also available on all podcast platforms. An episode from Jan. 26 discusses voter suppression and the way it undermines democracy — especially in the suppression of Black voters in the South since the era of Jim Crow to even today. The podcast also features honest and deep conversations about the history behind other important societal issues, ranging from critical race theory to Joe Biden’s recent promise to nominate a Black woman to the Supreme Court. Wright also highlights Black accomplishments, such as the work of James Reese Europe, a Black WWI veteran and jazz player, and discusses how such contributions have shaped history.

10. “Code Switch”
   This is a free weekly podcast hosted on the American public radio network, NPR, and was named Apple Podcasts’ Show of the Year in 2020. “Code Switch” launched in 2016 and became one of NPR’s top podcasts after the George Floyd inspired protests in 2020. Hosted by a variety of journalists of color, “Code Switch” discusses race and how it permeates pop culture and, specifically, Black culture. In a recent episode, they memorialized Andrée Leon Talley by reminiscing on his uncanny influence and contributions to fashion and by reflecting on the struggles he faced as a Black, queer man in the world of fashion. The podcast has earned 49 stars on Spotify and while listening, I frequently laughed out loud at some of the hosts’ quips. However, I also found their tributes and use of audio recordings from interviews before Andrée’s death thought-provoking which prompted me to reflect on the segregation Andrée had endured in the 1950s. You may even listen to this podcast as a homework assignment during classes here at the University — I personally listened to an episode during an anthropology class my second year.
A Black-owned soul food spot worth visiting downtown

An exploration of the tastes and history I discovered at Soul Food Joint

Yijing Shen | Food Writer

My trip to Soul Food Joint was a savory and informative experience about African American cuisine, history and the value of Black-owned small businesses. As an international student, African American culture is something I barely knew before I came to the U.S. Once I came here, however, I found that soul food is a first step to learning about a different culture.

When I first saw the phrase “soul food,” one question automatically arose — what does “soul” mean? Briefly speaking, the term “soul food” first appeared in the mid-1960s, when “soul” was a popular term for African American culture. Soul cuisine is, at its foundation, down-home cooking with origins in the rural South and is rooted in long-established family recipes. Amiri Baraka, a poet and civil rights activist, released his essay “Soul Food” in 1962 in response to white critics who claimed there was no African American food. Over the past 60 years, soul food has gradually spread across the United States and become a symbol of African American culture.

Soul Food Joint is 1.5 miles from the University and is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays. On a bright Sunday afternoon, I rushed to the restaurant and was excited to delve into the world of soul food. I was honored to have the opportunity to interview the restaurant owner, Shaun Jenkins, and hear the story behind the establishment.

The entrance is on 3rd St. NE, beside the restaurant’s open-air areas. According to Jenkins, a window facing East Market Street opened Feb. 9 for pick-up orders and desserts so that customers can grab their food and streamline the takeout process. Upon entering the restaurant, the warm ambiance adored with antique wooden chairs and tables made me feel at home. Posters of African American culture decorated the red walls, giving the impression of a family restaurant with a rich history.

The restaurant provides many choices of meat — including chicken, fish and pork. From mac and cheese to fried deviled eggs, different sides are designed to cater to all kinds of preferences. Customers can have their soul food plated with their choice of meat or a sandwich with meat on a potato bun. Both are served with sides, sweet cornbread and beverages. After soliciting a recommendation from the owner himself, I ordered one platter with fried chicken and candied yam and the other with fried fish.

Since all the dishes are made fresh, I couldn’t wait to try the crispy golden fried chicken and fish. The juicy tenderness of the fried chicken blended perfectly with the outside crispy layer. I could not help having a second bite of this intriguing combination. I made sure to balance out the savory flavors of the chicken with some candied yam and sweet cornbread, whose sweetness enhanced every unique flavor in the platter. For my next visit, I may try deboned pork ribs and sandwiches.

I was fascinated by this extraordinary meal, so I became more excited to hear about the story behind this authentic soul food restaurant. It is not surprising that a restaurant with such delicious food is very popular. Although there were not many people dining in the restaurant, I could tell business was booming as takeout orders kept coming in and Jenkins answered phone calls regarding catering events. At 3:30 p.m., he was finally available for an interview with me.

Jenkins’ family is originally from Camden, N.J. and relocated to Charlotteville 20 years ago. They started as a catering kitchen and turned it into a full-service catering company in 2014. At first, they set up a window at the corner of the restaurant’s current location to sell takeout food, and came up with a small menu of only six items, including fried chicken, baby back ribs and collard greens. Most of these are still their most popular dishes nowadays.

As their soul food became more and more popular, they opened the space up for customers to dine in doors in 2019. To fulfill different preferences, the menu has since expanded to include a kids’ platter, a family meal, deboned meat for sandwiches and even a hidden menu for catering. Jenkins reckons that the reason for their continued success is because they chose a successful niche and venue to appeal to everyone around.

“A lot of the Black-owned restaurants that survived through the pandemic have survived — survived because I think the style of food that we had is comforting,” Jenkins said. “Family wanted our food [back then] and they want it now. And a lot of it is made fresh for us.”

The ingredients of many dishes from Jenkins’ family date back over 70 years, some of which can be traced back to his own grandmother, who had special ways of bringing families together. Also, Jenkins and his mother had modernized some dishes for their customers’ contemporary tastes. For example, his mother created the new batter, which is key for a delicious fried chicken, from an old recipe, and Jenkins uses the same recipe she conceived all those years ago.

For Jenkins, the restaurant is the main source of income that supports his family. Fortunately, their business was able to continue to provide to their customers for the past two years because the business began accepting takeout and delivery orders at the beginning of the pandemic. With the Charlottesville restaurant set in stone, Jenkins is considering opening more locations around the country in the future as well.

Jenkins sent his sincere welcome to students to come dine at Soul Food Joint, especially for those who want to find a place to hang out together and have social events.

I had a wonderful time eating at Soul Food Joint, it was a great place for me to enjoy a relaxing and delicious meal. Fresh, delicious soul food at an affordable price is always worth trying out, especially with the restaurant’s convenient location. You will always be greeted with warmth and hospitality from this family restaurant and you will undoubtedly appreciate the traditions that have been passed down for decades.
The legacy of basketball legend Dawn Staley

The former Virginia star has excelled in every aspect of her journey, paving the way for other Black women to follow.

Joe von Storch | Sports Editor

As one of the greatest student athletes ever to step on Grounds — often considered the best female Virginia athlete of all time — Dawn Staley’s legacy and impact in Charlottesville will never be forgotten.

The current national championship-winning head coach of the South Carolina women’s basketball team arrived at Virginia as a freshman in 1988 to a successful program under the direction of former coaching legend Debbie Ryan. Prior to Staley’s time in Charlottesville, the Cavaliers had reeled off five consecutive seasons with more than 20 wins, culminating in a trip to the Elite Eight in 1988. However, the excitement and buzz that often accompanies successful programs was not there for Virginia, as average attendance at home games hovered around 1,000. It was Staley who brought the spark.

Despite being a freshman, Staley made an immediate impact on the floor, scoring 16 points in her first game as a Cavalier before going on to average 18.5 points per game for the season — a number that at the time was the second-highest in Virginia history. While her freshman campaign was statistically special, it was the following years that set her apart in Cavalier lore and made her a pioneer for Black women in sports.

“Of the things that Dawn did were just naturally what Dawn was about,” Ryan said. “So her personality became a national symbol of what women’s basketball should be about. I think that’s the thing that makes me the most proud of Dawn Staley and that the University of Virginia played a small part in her.”

After 10 losses in the 1988-89 season, Staley lost only 11 more times during her Virginia career. She led the Cavaliers to three consecutive Final Fours — remaining the program’s only appearance to date — including a thrilling run to the 1991 national championship game against Tennessee. Her final two seasons in Charlottesville marked Virginia’s only 30-win seasons in program history, a level of success that generated genuine enthusiasm for women’s basketball around Grounds.

Average attendance at women’s basketball games climbed to close to 4,000 in 1991 before topping 6,000 in 1992 — by far the highest mark in Virginia history. The impact of her play is still plainly obvious years after her graduation, as attendance has only dipped below 3,000 on four occasions since 1992.

Throughout her career, Staley averaged 16.3 points per game to go along with an even more impressive 5.9 rebounds and 5.6 assists per game. With 2,135 career points, Staley sat alone atop the Virginia all-time scoring leaders until Monica Wright surpassed the mark nearly two decades later. She also sits in second place all-time in both career steals and assists. As a mark of her exceptionally well-rounded presence on the floor, despite standing at only 5-foot-6, Staley is tenth at Virginia in career rebounds.

Her accolades go beyond just Charlottesville, though, as she was named the Naismith Player of the Year twice, the ACC Player of the Year twice, the Sports Illustrated Player of the Year and, despite losing to Tennessee in the 1991 National Championship game, earned the NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player distinction. Staley’s list of accolades goes on and on.

Staley competed with the U.S. basketball team, winning three Olympic gold medals and two World Cup gold medals. She was twice named the United States Basketball Female Athlete of the Year, and for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Staley earned the high honor of bearing the American flag during the opening ceremony.

In 1999, she was drafted into the WNBA, leading the Charlotte Sting to the WNBA Championship in 2001.

A true mark of who Staley was as a leader came in 2000 when she accepted the head coaching job at Temple while she was still playing in the WNBA — a challenge considered by many to be not possible. Yet, not only did she take the job, she excelled. Her teams showed year-over-year improvement, and she became the fastest coach in women’s college basketball to reach 100 career wins, reaching the threshold in just her fifth season. It was clear that Staley was a coaching legend in the making, and after the 2006 season, she embarked on a new journey to take over a desolate South Carolina program.

After suffering through three mediocre seasons to start her tenure with the Gamecocks, Staley’s program blossomed into a national powerhouse. Since 2011, South Carolina has won at least 25 games in all but one season, and Staley led the school to three Final Fours and the program’s first National Championship in 2017. Her team is currently ranked first in the nation, and with the likes of Connecticut Coach Geno Auriemma and Staley considered one of the greatest coaches in college basketball — further confirmed by her induction into the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012.

Following Staley’s National Championship victory, she gifted every Black woman head coach in college basketball a piece of the net they cut down to represent a tangible inspiration for all Black coaches. This was carrying out a long-kept promise on Staley’s part, who received a piece of the 1999 National Championship from Carolyn Peck — the first Black woman to win an NCAA Championship in women’s basketball.

“So, I pick all of you to receive this piece of our 2017 National Championship net in the hope that making our goal tangible will inspire you as it did me, to keep pushing forward and us all to keep supporting each other in our journeys,” Staley said in a message to the coaches.

Last fall, Staley inked a historic seven-year $22.4 million contract extension, officially making her the highest-paid Black coach in women’s college basketball.

“It means that doors open up for other young Black coaches who are in this profession to see that they’re worth more,” Staley said.

While many Cavalier faithful have long desired to see Staley as the head coach at Virginia, it is impossible not to appreciate the legacy and contributions to the sport that Staley has provided. Despite having to overcome countless obstacles as a Black woman in her profession, Staley has reached the mountain top through her success as a player, coach and mentor.
The integration of the Virginia football team
How a handful of Cavaliers changed our football program forever, and for the better

Sarah Pettycord | Senior Writer

Cornerback Gary Ham became the first Black player on the Virginia football team after walking on.

Today, we are just 72 years removed from 1970 — the first year in Virginia Athletics history when Black athletes were given scholarships and spots on the football roster.

Harrison Davis, Stan Land, Kent Merritt and John Rainey all came to the University as freshmen in 1970 as the first four Black athletes with athletic scholarships. Gary Ham, a cornerback, also walked on to the varsity team that year — becoming the first Black player on varsity.

Davis joined the freshmen squad as a quarterback, Land as a defensive end and Merritt and Rainey as running backs. Coached by Al Groh, these four athletes came in with two objectives — win and get an education.

“We didn’t come in to change things,” Rainey said in a video feature about these four individuals. “We came in with two objectives — win and get an education.

Virginia was years late to integrate its football program compared to other colleges in the Atlantic Coast Conference and beyond, despite the surrounding Charlottesville area having a history of distinct Black communities like the Vinegar Hill neighborhood and business district. In 1916, Fritz Pollard, a football player at Brown, became the first Black player to compete in the Rose Bowl. Fast-forward to 1965, many more Black players were suited up for various teams across the country and Maryland became the first ACC school with a Black player on its football team. Virginia would be the last school in the entire ACC to integrate its athletic programs.

The late nature of Virginia football’s integration aligned with the larger, long-standing fight for integration and coordination at the University. The first Black undergraduate student was only accepted in 1935 — 15 years before Davis, Land, Merritt and Rainey arrived on Grounds.

Throughout the 1960s, the University took steps to become fully integrated, though that did not stop lingering issues of racism that were unfortunately prevalent for Black students. With white students still existing as the overwhelming majority in the student population, ideologies of white supremacy were pervasive throughout the community. This had real consequences for students at the time — these four players included.

“All of these experiences were not easy, nor were they quickly forgotten. It helped that Davis, Land, Merritt and Rainey had the support of Coach Groh, who believed all of his teammates had a lot more in common than they had differences.

“I wasn’t walking every step with these four guys,” Groh said. “So I understood that there are things that they’re going through that are not common to the usual freshmen experience.”

Groh’s empathy did not go unnoticed by these players. Even years after playing on the team in 2006, Land told the Roanoke Times that he has a “strong allegiance” to him.

Ultimately, what kept these athletes at the University was a desire to succeed. After playing on the freshman team for its 1970 campaign, Davis, Land, Merritt and Rainey all moved up to the varsity squad where they stayed until the conclusion of the 1973 season. In those three seasons on varsity, the Cavaliers amassed an 11-22 record and notched one win in 1972 against their rival, Virginia Tech.

This win, which came Sept. 16, 1972, was iconic — though it is often unremembered in Virginia football history. Davis was playing quarterback for the Cavaliers and struggled throughout the game — throwing “two interceptions off the bat,” according to Merritt. As per the usual culture of racism and white supremacy at the University, the Confederate flag was flying in the stands, “Dixie” was playing and the crowd was booing.

At one point during the game, Davis’ frustration got the best of him and he turned to the stands and held up his middle finger. The act, which Davis jokingly referred to as “Finger-gate,” would end up becoming a turning point in the game because, shortly after, his team overcame a multi-score deficit and defeated the Hokies 24-20.

“We came back and beat them,” Merritt told The Virginian Pilot. “You couldn’t hear a peep from anybody.”

Although that was the last time these four Cavaliers were on the field together for a victory against Virginia Tech, that moment still lives on in their memories. Davis, Land, Merritt and Rainey would finish out the 1972 season and go on to play another in 1973 before graduating with their diplomas and moving on from the University.

“I wish that … we could’ve done more, but the reality is that we were doing something,” Land said. “We were proving, to all that would care to look, that we were capable of doing the academic work and performing on the football field and being successful at graduating from the University of Virginia.”

These four individuals all made history as Cavaliers and deserve immense recognition for enduring such adverse circumstances. Despite being thrown punch after punch and often feeling unwanted by members of the University community and beyond, they prevailed and shaped Virginia football history forever.
Praise BSA but demand more from privileged groups

The Black Student Alliance exemplifies the power of student organizations to form a community and organize

For over half a century, the Black Student Alliance has called on the University administration to take steps towards racial equality. However, the University has prioritized optics over substantive change to benefit the lives of its Black students, leaving many of BSA’s current and historic demands unmet. Enough is enough. Black people and groups at the University have been rallying and pushing for change for decades. I condemn the University’s inaction and wholeheartedly praise the resiliency of Black people and groups at the University.

BSA was formed in 1969 — its goal is to articulate the problems and concerns of Black students on a larger and more collective scale. Through its activism, BSA has changed the University as we know it for the better. For instance, in 1976, BSA wrote a “Proposal For the Establishment of an Office of Minority Affairs At The University of Virginia.” After the University failed to respond, 300 Black students marched to the University President’s house to present the proposal. Due to the group’s insistence, the University created the Office of African American Affairs in 1977. This organization still exists and benefits students today, managing everything from Trivia Tuesday to a GradSTAR Program — which aims to prepare students for future career experiences and provides access necessary University resources. None of this would be happening without BSA’s organizing.

This column is not intended to commend the University in any way for its hesitant steps towards racial equality. Rather, it is a call to action for University administration. It is time the University listened to Black voices. In 1970, and repeatedly since then, BSA called on the University to work towards ensuring Black students make up at least 10 percent of the student body. Last year, just 6.8 percent of undergraduate students were Black. In 2020, BSA called for “the University to include students in the decision-making process regarding COVID-19 responses that impact students.” This has also yet to be done. These two examples are among many of the Black demands that the University continues to ignore.

Nonetheless, Black students and organizations remain resilient. Black students continue attending the University and — despite the fact that it is in no way their responsibility — trying to make it better for all students. Deric Childress Jr., president of BSA and fourth-year College student, explains that he believes “BSA will constantly reiterate these demands for as long as we need to until they’re met.” The persistence of all Black students at the University and the consistent organizational efforts of BSA must be praised. Moreover, we should all be inspired by BSA — it is an organization that has successfully built a community. Since one of BSA’s main goals is to support Black students, they host “numerous programs and opportunities for students to engage in specifically catered towards Black students and the Black student experience,” according to JaVori Warren, Class of 2020 alumna and former BSA President for the 2019-20 academic year. Creating a community is much harder than it looks, yet BSA has been overwhelmingly successful. BSA hosts events so Black students can build relationships with each other — everything from Black Ball to movie screenings. But it also organizes marches and protests and writes demands to hold the University accountable. BSA exists as an example of effective community building and organizing. We should all look to them with encouragement and adoration.

I hold the utmost respect for BSA. The organization and its members have put countless unpaid hours into bettering the University. However, a crucial caveat is that BSA is not responsible for solving racism on Grounds. Black students should not have to do unpaid labor to demand rights from the University that they should already have. It is time other organizations take action. We here at The Cavalier Daily have a responsibility. As an organization with a large platform, we should dedicate ourselves to highlighting the efforts of Black and other minority groups to demand change from the University. The Cavalier Daily must learn from minority organizations and, within our coverage, we must respect the decades of work they put into making change. Each of us — individual students and organizations — has power at the University. But how much administration wants us to forget it. It’s time for privileged students and organizations to take a stand.

JESSICA MOORE is the Executive Editor for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.

THE BLACK STUDENT ALLIANCE

BSA’s main goals is to support undergraduate students were Black. In 2020, BSA called for “the University to work towards ensuring Black students make up at least 10 percent of the student body. Last year, just 6.8 percent of undergraduate students were Black. In 2020, BSA called for “the University to include students in the decision-making process regarding COVID-19 responses that impact students.” This has also yet to be done. These two examples are among many of the Black demands that the University continues to ignore.
What it means to be Black at U.Va.

Being Black at U.Va. means constantly feeling the pressure of dimming down my Blackness for the comfortability of the white people that surround me

On the third day of Black History Month this year, the Free Food and Merch GroupMe — made of over 3,000 University students — erupted in a discourse about Black History Month. The conversation began after a petition to reform the Honor Committee’s single-sanction policy was sent to the chat accompanied by the claim that this policy targets Black and international students disproportionately. It is important to note that while Black students are also over-represented in Honor reports, it is Asian students who are targeted more often along with international students. Some students felt comfortable rejecting day’s standards. Yet, that non-white students are disproportionately targeted in Honor reports. An argument quickly ensued, and many students in the chat felt uncomfortable with the conversation taking place, attempting to remove people from the chat and asking that the conversation be taken elsewhere. The discourse went on for well over six hours before many students gave up trying to defend themselves and their perspectives. Watching the group primarily Black students be told repeatedly that the conversation should not have taken place was a somber reminder of the adversity we face at the University.

Being Black at U.Va. means having to pick and choose our battles. I have seen or heard of an instance of racial ignorance at this school at least once a week in my three years being here — before, during and after the period of being off Grounds for online classes. What happened in the Free Food and Merch group chat is not a singular occurrence. After witnessing many racist incidents at the University, such as racist jokes being told, people shouting racial slurs during Zoom meetings and multiple instances of defacement of pro-Black messages on Beta Bridge, I am convinced that every Black student has had an unsavory experience at the University. Having to defend and explain ourselves on what should be the simplest topics to grasp — such as the existence of racial prejudice on Grounds — is never surprising. Disappointed but not surprised is our standard disposition.

Being Black at U.Va. means feeling the pressure to dim down our Blackness. For the comfortability of everyone else around me, I often codewitch on natural instinct. Code-switching — when a person changes how they speak based on who they are talking to — is a major problem for students of color at the University. Most, if not all of us, know how to do it and may automatically be learning how to communicate without even realizing. There is constant pressure to perform when you are one of the only — if not the only — Black person in the room. I had subconsciously kept myself from doing or saying anything too Black in order to preserve the comfortability of white students around me. Beyond that, I had been trying to make sure because I’ve stirred the pot. I don’t care. White people frequently get riled up over people of color having opinions and identifying the shortcomings of white people. In the case of the Free Food and Merch chat, students were upset about where that defense was happening. But for many students, this brought up an important question — if the conversation didn’t happen in that chat, then where would it happen? Too often, these conversations are held in places where white people have control.

For me, being Black at U.Va. has meant reflecting on how I’ve presented myself as the ideal Black person in an effort to live up to white standards through most of my life. The cost of this was greater than I realized. Leaving a major part of myself at home for years caused me not to appreciate what I bring to the table as a Black woman. The racist view of the ideal Black person is not who I am. I’m just Black, I — and all other Black students at the University — reserve the right to be comfortable with ourselves and racial identity in all settings, whether they be white spaces or not.

I, and all other Black students at the University, reserve the right to be comfortable with ourselves and racial identity in all settings — white spaces or not. — ALIYAH D. WHITE is an Opinion Columnist for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.

We are not an elective

The way we view Black American history further creates an alienated, uneducated and unsympathetic America

My most notable Black History Month experience was over 10 years ago, when I dressed in purposely ragged clothes with a scarf tied around my head to pay homage to Harriet Tubman. In that third or fourth grade class, there were at least three Martin Luther King Jr.s, two George Washington Carvers, a few Rosa Parks — and of course, I was not the only Harriet Tubman. It was like Halloween, but instead of vampires and ghosts, we all dressed as abolitionists and boycotters. While I enjoyed the day, this was greater than I realized. Leaving a major part of myself at home for years caused me not to appreciate what I bring to the table as a Black woman. The racist view of the ideal Black person is not who I am. I’m just Black, I — and all other Black students at the University — reserve the right to be comfortable with ourselves and racial identity in all settings, whether they be white spaces or not.

Nevertheless, Black history is American history and if it were taught as stringently and extensively as any other aspect of American history, Black History Month would be a time to celebrate what we already know and continue to learn.

Nevertheless, Black history is American history and if it were taught as stringently and extensively as any other aspect of American history, Black History Month would be a time to celebrate what we already know and continue to learn.

You know? facts instead of a part of U.S. history — important enough to mention, not important enough to elaborate.

When Black History Month is treated as a time to show off years of Black history, Black voices and Black initiatives into 28 or 29 days, it suggests a trend. One can choose to learn about Black people — Black women, international Black women, LGBTQ+ figures and other intersecting identities specifically — but it is never mandatory. This should not be a choice. As opponents claim critical race theory and anti-racism policies to be themselves racist, I want to offer a hard truth. American history is racist — and sexist, homophbic, Islamophobic and two hundred more cans of worms.

However, history will not change. It has already happened — separating each racially marked history into a month does not lessen this truth. In order to highlight someone, they have to first be written down. Abruptly bringing up names, titles and facts for a month does not warrant appreciation — it warrants a feeling of dissociation. Nevertheless, Black history is American history and if it were taught as stringently and extensively as any other aspect of American history, Black History Month would be a time to celebrate what we already know and continue to learn.

Whether or not one chooses to learn about Black history, it is there and it is America’s history. Teaching it and learning it is not divisive, rather it unites us all.

Happy Black History Month.

— SHALEYA TOLLIVER is the Opinion Senior Associate for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at opinion@cavalierdaily.com.
Black students often face a number of hurdles after enrolling at the University. Not the least of which is the odd — and often inexplicable — behavior of their white peers. Below is a list of some examples. After going through the first list, please see the second one for important contextualization, resources and friendly advice.

1. Walking down the Corner and seeing every white girl wearing the same outfit.
2. The cringe of seeing the one millionth destroyed pair of Air Force 1s on your walk to class.
3. Finding and making eye contact with the one other Black person in your lecture hall — if there is one.
4. The group of white people trying to make you their token Black friend.
5. When you’re part of a Black organization on Grounds and The Cavalier Daily co-opts your work for the fifth time this week.
6. When you’re ready to collapse after your 27th codeswitch of the day.
7. White people literally referring to facts about racial statistics.
8. When white people actually streaked the Lawn in the middle of the snowball fight.
9. When you’re part of a Black organization and the TA looks to you as if you represent your entire race.
10. When that one girl in your breakout room thinks she’s not racist because she listens to Kendrick Lamar.

Here are the additions promised above —

1. Just practically, I’m confused how all of you find the same clothes. Walking by the frat houses on weekends, I can honestly point out the same shirt at least five times. And I cannot forget to mention the month of the same tennis skirt, tank top and hair clip updo. Here’s a friendly reminder that everyone does not need to look the exact same.
2. I must admit that I own a destroyed pair of Air Force 1s. However, here’s a quick tip — buy one pair for the day and one pair for going out.
3. In 2020, Black people only made up 6.74 percent of the University community. However, perhaps there is hope for the Class of 2026 — there was a 72 percent increase in Black early decision admits compared to the previous year.
4. Yes, your Black friends are likely funnier than you. However, please try to make your own jokes. Yes, they likely have a better style than you. But please try to put a good outfit together yourself.

5. I say this as a dedicated member of The Cavalier Daily, please continue to reach out and hold us accountable. As a predominantly white organization, we must recognize our privileged position and respect those whose work we are citing.
6. As opinion columnist Aliyah White recently reminded us, Black people are under no obligation to change themselves to make white people comfortable.
7. Recently, a member of the Free Food and Merch GroupMe sent in the chat the petition for two new Honor referenda along with the explanation that Honor’s current reporting disproportionately targets Black, Asian and International students. In turn, someone promptly responded that the — literally factual — data was incorrect and didn’t make sense. So yes, in 2023, there are still people who do not understand what “disproportionately target” means.

JESSICA MOORE is the Executive Editor for The Cavalier Daily. She can be reached at humor@cavalierdaily.com.

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**HUMOR**

**White-tivities at U.Va.**

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**CARTOON**

**Not Enough**

Teresa Michael & Jessica Moore | Cartoonists
Across
7. A type of gas a driver typically does not select (6)
8. Plays in a football game that do not involve passing (8)
9. College sports conference, abbreviation (3)
10. Watson, of ‘Harry Potter’ fame (4)
11. Donald, who achieved critical acclaim for his rap album released under a stage name (6)
13. Every (3)
14. UVa. building renamed after the only Black student and only woman in the 1967 graduating class from the School of Medicine (8)
15. Capital city of Myanmar (6)
16. Oscar nominated film about the most successful tennis player in the Open Era (11)
21. Religion that originated in Japan (6)
23. Month in which we celebrate Black History Month (8)
25. Smallest abundant number (6)
26. Native of Alabama (8)
29. Many people need to stay in their own, especially while driving (4)

Down
1. Controversial cryptocurrency made popular in recent years (7)
2. New area of accounting aiming to hold companies accountable, abbreviated (3)
3. What a member from the class of 2022 will be in just a few months (6)
4. Art form that superimposes two images (8)
5. American record company that popularized many black musicians in the 1960s (6)
6. One who initiates a trade (5)
8. UVa. student-led group that worked to offer tours focused on enslaved laborers, abbreviated (5)
12. 2016 album from one of the best selling musicians of all time (4)
17. A difficult mathematics course to many high school students (8)
18. Type of straw many environmentally conscious consumers may use (8)
19. What a bishop does to make someone a priest (7)
22. Nothing (3)
24. Things news writers must avoid when writing a story (6)
28. Mathematical constant (2)

CORRECTION
In Vol. 132, Issue 9 of The Cavalier Daily, the article ‘Community members frustrated with health protocols’ misrepresented the efforts of Plumas, Cafe, Cola, BSA and OAS, who have taken the lead on COVID-19 advocacy, with YDSA building off of the efforts that these groups started. Additionally, a previous version of this article misstated that YDSA and UVU Mutual Aid had opened a form to raise money for student support — YDSA did run a mutual aid program independently in the spring of 2021, but have not yet done so in 2022.
Director Barry Jenkins is headed for the history books

With his last two movies, the filmmaker has cemented himself as a remarkable talent

Charles Burns | Staff Writer

Nobody shoots a close-up like director Barry Jenkins. The acclaimed Black auteur, who has only made three feature films to date, has already established himself as one of contemporary cinema’s most notable talents. A large part of this attention comes down to the way Jenkins and his regular cinematographer James Laxton film the human face.

In his last two films, “Moonlight” and “If Beale Street Could Talk,” the two collaborators have used the camera to get increasingly intimate with their actors. The performers often stare into the lens of Laxton’s camera with stunning intensity, breaking the fourth wall and peering into the audience’s soul. It’s this mixture of emotional directness and distinctive visual thinking that makes his work so special.

Admittedly, Jenkins took some time to grow into his current mastery of cinematic technique. His debut, “Medicine for Melancholy,” opened in 2009 to positive reviews but limited public attention. The film, a romantic drama set over the course of a single day, is a movie of modest ambition and relatively limited achievement. It’s not without its merits, but it feels cheap and rudimentary. Shot in desaturated digital images, it’s clearly the work of an artist who’s working with limited resources and still figuring out the basics of his craft. The movie isn’t bad, but it’s unremarkable.

What is remarkable is the exponential leap forward Jenkins took with “Moonlight,” his following film. This evolution didn’t happen overnight. In the seven years between “Medicine for Melancholy” and “Moonlight,” Jenkins took an extended break from feature filmmaking, toiling away in carpentry and advertising — regardless of the particulars of his time off, it was evidently well-spent.

It is not an exaggeration to say that “Moonlight” — based on an unpublished play and released in the fall of 2016 — took the film world by storm. Greeted with breathless praise at its premiere, the movie was subsequently showered with accolades, eventually winning the Academy Award for Best Picture.

All of the acclaim was richly deserved. The movie, a triptych chronicling key moments in the childhood, adolescence and adulthood of the Black and closeted Chiron — played by Alex Hibbert, Ashton Sanders and Trevante Rhodes in different stages of his life — is a heartrending meditation on identity, race and sexuality.

Each of the film’s three chapters possesses a distinctly cinematic quality that is derived from Jenkins’s command of the medium. “Moonlight” may be based on a play, but there’s nothing stripped-down about the way this material has been translated to the silver screen. Jenkins and Laxton make expressive visual choices, heightening the emotions of certain scenes with unconventional angles, striking compositions and bold colors.

These bold touches are necessary to the emotional impact of the movie. Chiron undergoes a lot of physical change over the course of the film’s 111 minutes. Still, even as an adult, he remains the same confused boy that’s glimpsed in the opening minutes of the movie.

Jenkins’s directorial choices say what his protagonist can’t. When Chiron starts directly into the camera, everything becomes clear. These strikingly intimate close-ups are worth a thousand words.

With “If Beale Street Could Talk,” Jenkins’s adaptation of a James Baldwin novel, his directorial skill only grows. The film details the painful relationship between Tish — KiKi Layne — a pregnant Black woman, and Fonny — Stephan James — her Black boyfriend who is falsely accused of sexual assault and subsequently imprisoned. The movie, set in the early 1970s, is an unflinching look at the failures of the criminal justice system and devastating effects of institutional racism.

It’s not all doom and gloom, though. The story, which is told non-linearly, flashes back and forth between scenes of the couple’s early courtship and their ensuing legal battle. This structural decision ensures that the film remains almost equally balanced between romance and tragedy, letting the audience feel the rapture of the central couple’s blooming love just as acutely as the pain of the injustice they’re subjected to. Working with another bold color palette and an achingly beautiful score, courtesy of composer Nicholas Britell, the director uses his craft to enhance both the beautiful and gut-wrenching emotions his protagonists are feeling.

All of the dialogue, mostly repurposed from Baldwin’s novel, is sharp. It’s a testament to the director’s skill, then, that his images are as memorable as that seminal writer’s words. Late in the film, when Tish’s mother — Regina King — stares directly at the director’s skill, then, that his images are as memorable as that seminal writer’s words. Late in the film, when Tish’s mother — Regina King — stares directly into the camera as Britell’s score swells, it is almost impossible not to be deeply moved.

Jenkins forces viewers to look into the eyes of his actors and fully reckon with the struggles of his Black characters. Film critic Roger Ebert once said that cinema is “a machine that generates empathy.” There’s no better example of this than this director’s work.
Prime Video’s new docuseries “Phat Tuesdays” features interviews with living legends like Dave Chapelle, Snoop Dogg and Anthony Anderson. Through these interviews and old footage, the three-part series highlights the history of a weekly all-Black comedy show at the famous Los Angeles comedy club The Comedy Store called Phat Tuesdays.

Viewers may already be familiar with The Comedy Store from the Oct. 2020 Showtime documentary series of the same name about the historic Hollywood establishment. However, “Phat Tuesdays” is able to showcase a different perspective of the same place. Even though many of the celebrities interviewed uphold The Comedy Store as a significant place for the careers of many entertainers, they also acknowledge that numerous people who operated or performed at the comedy club maintained biases preventing marginalized groups from performing.

“Phat Tuesdays” is a three-episode series. Episode one centers on the process of creating Phat Tuesdays, followed by the second episode’s star-studded look on memorable performances — from Mike Epps to JB Smoove — and Hollywood titans that attended Phat Tuesday shows including Will Smith, Kobe Bryant, Prince and Magic Johnson. Lastly, episode three focuses on the long-lasting effects Phat Tuesdays has had on the entertainment industry.

The show does a marvelous job laying out the story of Phat Tuesdays by smartly utilizing the perspectives of those that were heavily involved. It also maintains a fitting comedic edge by interviewing numerous comedians and sharing footage of stand up performances.

While “Phat Tuesdays” mainly discusses how Black influences a person’s experience in the entertainment industry, it also explores other marginalized groups during the third episode, female comedians and members of the LGBTQ+ community discuss their experiences at The Comedy Store.

Tiffany Haddish mentions that many women would ask her to perform sexual favors to get preferential treatment. Transgender comedian Flame Monore reflects on her early days in comedy, during which many audiences didn’t understand her experience and insecure male comedians were not accepting of her. Guy Torry, however, fought to keep her performing on Phat Tuesdays.

Adding interviews with female and LGBTQ+ comedians gave the audience the opportunity to hear important stories — which are often not told. Media often focuses solely on the perspective of being Black, female or queer, so having an intersectional viewpoint in these documentaries enhances its informative nature.

Episode three takes time to hear from and about a surprisingly frequent guest — Beto Sager — who recently passed. Although he was well known for hisoin comedic memoir “Full House,” comedians in “Phat Tuesdays” spoke about the explicit comedy he performed at The Comedy Store. They highlighted Sager’s impressive ability to perform for an all-Black audience.

“Phat Tuesdays” ends by detailing how this relatively unknown celebratory genre of Black comedy has become so influential in the entertainment industry. Entertainer Nick Cannon discussed how important Phat Tuesdays was for his career, crediting how Guy Torry’s acceptance of him with his eventual inclusion in shows like “Wild ‘n’ Out” and “Real Housewives of Hollywood.” More broadly, Phat Tuesdays sparked numerous other comedy clubs across the country — and eventually internationally — to hold special nights showcasing Black comedians.

Not only is the docuseries extremely funny and informative, it is also edited and created beautifully. The outstanding coloring highlights the skin tones of the actors very well. The older footage is interspersed seamlessly with the current interviews.

“Phat Tuesdays” is both extremely engaging and vitally informative, giving audiences the opportunity to hear fascinating stories and reminisce on the last 30 years of the Black entertainment industry.

Black-oriented arts courses cover past and present

The growing number of course options now include contemporary cultures in addition to the histories of Black art

As any arts or humanities student at the University knows, there are a wide variety of arts departments and courses to choose from. Music, drama, English literature and traditional art are just a few options.

But while many of these departments cover a range of topics, it is obvious when browsing through course catalogs that the majority of courses only cover art forms centered around whiteness and the West. Nevertheless, the University has gradually expanded its course offerings to include a selection of arts courses related to specific cultures, including those specializing in African or African American art.

One of the longest-running arts courses covering Black art is History of Jazz Music. Conceived by Music Prof. Scott DeVeaux in 2011, this course surveys jazz music from its inception in New Orleans through its rise in popularity throughout the 20th century. As DeVeaux explains in this course, jazz is not an exclusive, or exclusively African American art form, but rather an amalgamation of various cultures’ music primarily rooted in African American foundations.

Emerging from a blend of African American musical traditions, such as ragtime, blues and more, jazz spread widely across the nation after the first recordings were created in 1917. Many Black artists — such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker — transformed what music meant to America, mastering a variety of instruments and vocal styles that would later be key to the development of genres like rock ‘n’ roll.

In that sense, jazz music was crucial in providing an outlet for Black musicians in the early 20th century. In a similar vein, History of Jazz Music has been crucial in diversifying the University’s music department by primarily focusing on Black artists. Just like the long-running popularity and influence of jazz as a genre, this 10-year-old course continues to be offered today.

Fourth-year College student Brianna Ivy is currently enrolled in the class.

“I took the class less so because I liked jazz and more because I wanted to learn about Black American traditions,” Ivy said. “It’s so interesting to learn about the less mainstream and commonly learned history of how America was formed, both with regard to the racial divisions and in general.”

A similarly historically-leaned Black-oriented arts course was introduced the year after History of Jazz Music was initiated — African American Theaters. Offered consistently by Drama professor Theresa Davis since fall 2007, this Drama department courseexplores the historical and cultural aspects of African American theater. Like History of Jazz Music, this class gears its conception of theater towards inclusivity in the department, which typically explores a more generalized look of theater, by focusing on an exclusively Black perspective.

Today, some classes now revolve around more contemporary Black artists, such as Cultures of Hip-Hop — a well-loved course offering cross-listed in both the Media Studies and American Studies departments. Started in 2016, the course focuses on the hip-hop genre, a more recent Black-created artform.

As students taking the course are well familiar with, hip-hop was created by DJ Kool Herc Aug. 11, 1973 by hosting the “Back to School Jam,” a historical party accepted as marking the beginning of the hip-hop movement. The hip-hop genre reflected the economic and political instability that surrounded the Black community during the time of its genesis, and remains a vital space for Black artists to contribute to political and social discourse of their time. Jack Hamilton, professor of American Studies and Media Studies, covers both the other history of hip-hop but also continues all the way to present day hip-hop music and artists. The course uniquely extends its appreciation for Black artists far beyond lectures and into music, in the form of unit-based playlists and nonfiction literature, including Jay-Z’s memoir “Decoding.”

“As a living art form, studying hip-hop in this course sheds light on the rich history of the genre as well as its contemporary manifestations,” said Ash Darloos, graduate student teaching assistant. “I think students will see how hip-hop has been — and continues to be — an important mode of addressing pressing social issues.”

In fall 2018, the African American Studies department initiated a similar Black music-centered course entitled Musical Fictions. Unlike any of the aforementioned courses, Musical Fictions covers a broad range of contemporary Black art stemming from across the globe and covering a variety of genres. Novels written about blues, reggae and calypso — a popular genre of Afro-caribbean music — and set in the U.S., Jamaica and Trinidad are just a few of the Black music topics covered.

Like Cultures of Hip-Hop, this course demonstrates the University’s arts departments’ recent movement towards more current and diverse course material, an important stride in celebrating Black creators of the present as well as the past.

Remembering and understanding Black historical artforms and artists is incredibly necessary, and it is equally as essential to follow the development of Black culture as it relates to today. More arts and humanities courses rooted in the exploration of Black culture — whether the content is geared around historical figures or current ones — are slowly but surely expanding in number and interest.

While the add/drop deadline for spring 2022 has passed, students interested in learning from and supporting the expansion of Black arts course offerings at the University should leave a space open in their fall 2022 schedule.
Drug cocktail could streamline COVID-19 efforts

A global team led by a U.Va. researcher is working to group existing medications together to create a drug to fight COVID-19

Emmie Halter | Staff Writer

An international COVID-19 drug development team led by Cell Biology Prof. Judith White is creating a unique drug cocktail that will serve as an accessible way to treat COVID-19 patients and as a preventive measure for those exposed to the virus.

White first began looking into the idea of combining medications designed for various viral groups starting with the Ebola virus in 2014. White and her team attempted to make an over-the-counter drug that could be used by anyone exposed to the Ebola virus. In the process, they reviewed nearly 2600 drugs for anti-Ebola activity. These drugs were also evaluated for anti-coronavirus activity at the time, which serendipitously provided the researchers with a strong foundation for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

White’s current research focuses on which drug combinations are the most effective for COVID-19 that contain available over-the-counter drugs.

Matthew Frieman, professor of microbiology at the University of Maryland and colleague of White on this research, explained that it is important for the drugs in the drug cocktail to interact with each other. Making sure that the drugs used were combinable and able to circulate properly into the body were the two main factors researchers had to take into consideration when testing the drug.

“That leverages many different data sets of different studies that are out there to show which drugs are even combinable because not all drugs make sense to combine when you actually put them in a human versus putting them in a petri dish,” Frieman said.

A total of 77 unique drug pairs have been tested and deemed successful. These combinations still need further testing before they are packaged and sold to the public as a viable drug for COVID-19. Additionally, White is looking into combining drugs with the antiviral drug Remdesivir, which has already been approved for use against COVID-19.

“If this drug cocktail is successfully developed, it would not only help to combat COVID-19, but could also create a model for new drug cocktails to combat future pandemics.

“We can use datasets from this large panel of approved drugs,” Frieman said. “The goal is to have combinations that work for many different viruses, even the ones that we don’t know exist yet.”

The combinations use multiple different drugs to increase potency. White said this is known as a “pan family” drug cocktail, meaning that multiple different drugs are used versus single drug therapies known as monotherapies.

“Our approach right from the get-go was to develop pan family drug cocktails that will be superior to monotherapies and, especially for repurposed drugs, lowering the needed dose of each component,” White said.

Researchers are also aiming to make the drug cocktail accessible to the public and easily transportable.

“We have long thought that the global community must be prepared with practical therapeutics in the wake of new viral outbreaks,” White said. “By practical, we mean drugs that can be taken at home that are oral or inhaled and that are inexpensive and temperature stable, so they can be rapidly and easily deployed anywhere they are needed.”

The new drug cocktail research has been widely supported, but health professionals and those in the pharmaceutical industry are concerned that the availability of the drug will deter people from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

Researchers have emphasized that this drug is not a replacement for the vaccine and almost acts like Tamiflu, a preventative drug that can be taken after exposure to the flu or very early on after feeling flu symptoms.

“The key to getting any of these drugs to work is that you have to take them very early in the infection,” Frieman said. “The milder the infection, the better the drugs work. So you need the combination of the vaccine and then the drug treatment for these to be really ultimately effective.”

The drug cocktail is still not finished and will need to be researched further before anything official is developed. Funding is a major stressor for the research team — with more funding, more staff can be put in labs to test drug combinations.

White and her research team have also been collaborating with other researchers using this same approach for new drug cocktails for other COVID-19 variants.

“We think that a similar approach can be leveraged to identify drug cocktails that would have utility in the first days of a new viral outbreak even for example, for a new COVID variant,” White said.
A new health initiative called WellAWARE was launched with the help of UVA Health to combat healthcare inequalities in Charlottesville neighborhoods. The program is now welcoming referrals for its first patients.

The idea for WellAWARE first emerged from a group of UVA Health doctors who consulted with community leaders. Betsy Peyton, director of WellAWARE, served as a community health nurse for over 20 years in many different fields — including inpatient psychiatry, school nursing and community health — before being hired to bring this idea to fruition.

WellAWARE hires a community health worker in each neighborhood to work closely with its clients, seeking to prevent them from continuing to avoid healthcare.

“Healthcare barriers cause people to miss out on essential preventive care, often ending up in the emergency room for low-acuity complaints,” Peyton said. “They may also endure worse health outcomes, like increased cardiac and diabetic emergencies.”

WellAWARE’s philosophy is to approach neighborhoods in a friendly manner to ensure that the neighborhood wants its services. Workers talk to known community leaders, attend neighborhood association meetings to network, branch out and figure out what the neighborhood needs and what WellAWARE can do better for them.

WellAWARE hires community health workers that come from the same backgrounds and share life experiences with the clients. “This makes [them] much more relatable and approachable because [they] can then connect better with them and put clients at ease,” Peyton said.

One way that WellAWARE helps clients is by taking them to grocery stores and teaching them how to read labels on cans. WellAWARE also accompanies clients to the doctor’s office so that they can advocate for the patient if the provider misunderstands something.

Another way that WellAWARE helps level the playing field is by providing clients with transportation by offering free rides to the hospital and grocery store. Workers can also ride the bus with clients so that they know where they are going and where everything is.

WellAWARE represents a collaboration between UVA’s Health Charlottesville Free Clinic and the Central Virginia Health Services. The CFC helps to provide dental care, consulting and shared resources such as groceries and funding.

The CFC offers a range of specialty care, including dermatology, optometry, gynecology, endocrinology, psychiatry, rheumatology and orthopedics. Susan Sherman, executive director of the CFC, said that its partnership with WellAWARE is critical.

“The partnership allows [the organizations] to meet people where they are — both literally and figuratively — to help them understand their options for health care, help them connect to the appropriate medical home, accompany them to appointments and explain ‘medical talk’ to them,” Sherman said.

CVHS helps patients get access to medication that they can afford, to get transportation to appointments and to go with patients to their appointments if they don’t feel they are being heard or have trouble understanding all the different issues their doctor addresses.

“The most important thing we will be doing first is listening,” said Paulo Tomko, chief executive officer of CVHS. “We don’t want to assume we know what barriers they face in accessing healthcare or managing the chronic illnesses they may have that lead to a lower quality of life or a higher number of hospital visits per year.”

WellAWARE partners with other community partners such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as the neighborhoods themselves.

Peyton said WellAWARE hopes to reduce healthcare inequality rates by 30 percent in Charlottesville. Currently, WellAWARE is in partnership with the Rose Hill and 10th and Page neighborhoods.

“We have already had other neighborhoods ask to work with us,” Peyton said.

At the end of the day, the organization is working together with the neighborhoods in order to increase general health for the better good.

“It’s always a partnership,” Peyton said. “It’s not doing for, but doing with.”

Ellen Wu | Staff Writer

WellAWARE currently serves Charlottesville’s 10th and Page neighborhood.
Join The Cavalier Daily

Applications close Feb. 13 @ 11:59 p.m. Visit our website for more information!

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