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A CELEBRATION OF BLACKS IN HISTORY

Faces in High Places

Part 2

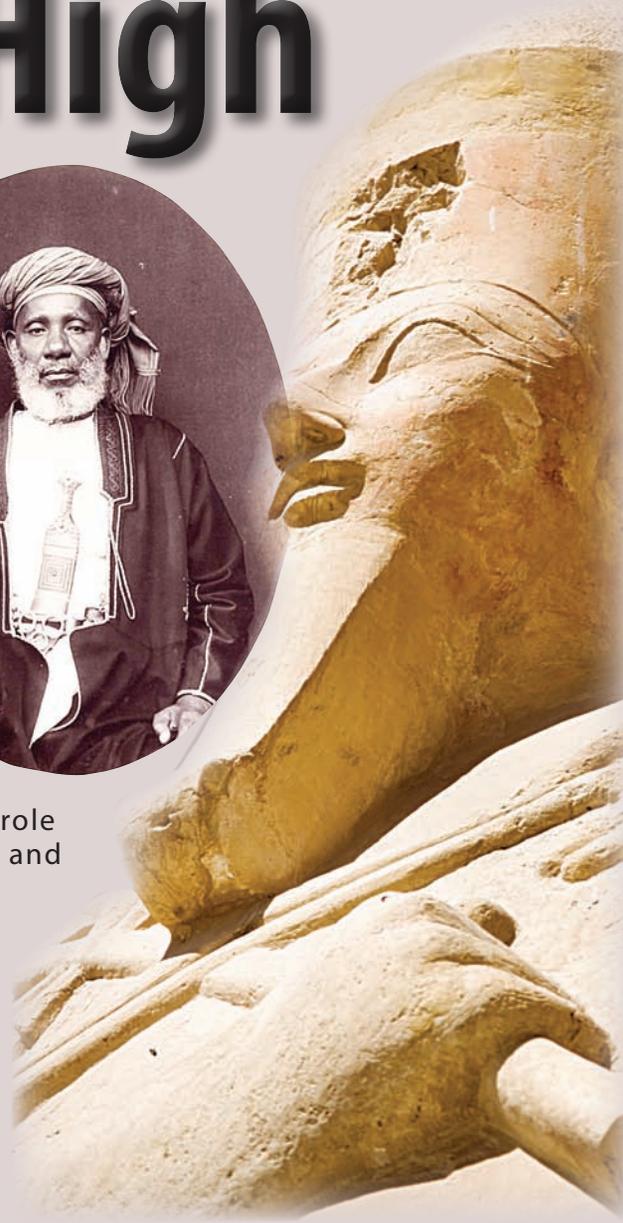
By Lesley R. Chinn

In the words of author Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Joel Augustus (J.A.) Rogers "looked at the history of people of African origin and showed how their history is an inseparable part of the history of mankind."

Whether it was ruling Ancient Egypt like King Akhenaton or being ruler of the throne like Queen Hatsheput (known as the ablest queen of far antiquity) Blacks have played a key role in developing and shaping nations, civilizations, and cultures worldwide.

Queen Hatsheput could have held her own against any male leader when she ruled Ancient Egypt. Regarded by Egyptologists as "the greatest leader of all time," she boldly confronted challenges by men about her position as a female leader by declaring, "she was really a man," said Rogers.

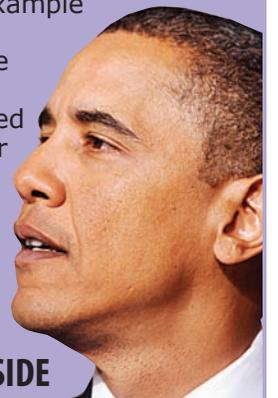
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Obama's Effect on Black Males Enrolling in College

November 4, 2008 was historic; a black man, Barack Obama, was elected president of the United States. Many blacks saw a new chapter in the African American experience, and some feel the number of black males in college will go up.

Gary Cooper, a Florida A&M University graduate, and Kermit Harrison, a Tallahassee Community College professor think it will have an impact. Cooper, 23, said black males don't see enough positive black role models outside of musicians and actors. "I feel like the African Americans see him as an example of a person who took the academic route, focused on his career and made it cool to be educated," Cooper said.



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Valentine's Day

Tips For Lasting Love And Friendship

By Shanita Bigelow

Valentine's Day is right around the corner but before you scramble for that perfect gift and make those special plans, Dr. Linda Miles, acclaimed psychotherapist, consultant, educator and writer, offers a few suggestions.

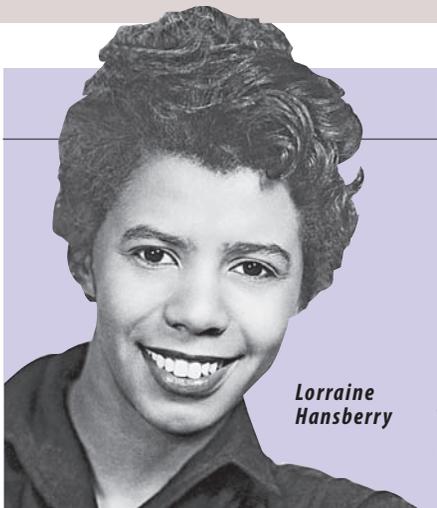


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> SEE MORE INSIDE

BREAKING NEWS



Lorraine Hansberry

Lorraine Hansberry's house on 6140 S. Rhodes, has become more than a home. Already famous for being the subject of *Hansberry v. Lee*, the 1940 U.S. Supreme Court case ending Chicago's racist real estate covenants, the home has become a part of living history. Hansberry, a famous playwright and author of "A Raisin in the Sun," was a leading literary figure in the civil rights movement at the time of her death from cancer at age 34.

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OBAMA'S EFFECT



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"We became not only black Americans, but we became Americans with the election of Obama."

Harrison, who teaches philosophy, said when people see obtainable and achievable goals, they're more enthusiastic to go for it. Harrison went on to say that popular culture and black men visually being able to see college as a viable option helps them want to go. Harrison used the example of the hit sitcom of the 1990s, *A Different World*. When the show about student life at an HBCU was on air, there was a triple increase in enrollment in HBCUs. Harrison believes this is what Obama will do for this generation.

"Obama has shown that being smart and educated is cool," Harrison said. "We know he didn't do it by not being educated." Jude spoke about institutional racism still being a factor that will continue to discourage black men to go to college. Cooper believes institutionalized racism is just an excuse to not strive for more. He said black people have to overcome institutionalized racism. "I believe institutionalized racism is going to be around, but we have a part to play in it about how the society perceives us," Cooper said. "If Barack lost, we could've blamed that on institutional racism."

He adds people will try harder because of Obama, and institutions that use tests and other factors to deny black students won't work. Harrison said the moment of truth of racism for his generation was asking the question, "When did you realize that you can't be president?" Now with Obama in office, that is no longer a barrier for black males to face.

Photo by Jerry Richardson

Hansberry House More Than A Home, A Part of Living History

By Shanita Bigelow

City Council's Committee on Historical Landmarks Preservation convened this week to vote on recommendations for the landmark designations of five buildings associated with Chicago's Black Renaissance: the Griffiths-Burroughs House (3806 S. Michigan Ave.), the George C. Hall Branch Library (4801 S. Michigan Ave), the Richard Wright House (4831 S. Vincennes Ave.), the Gwendolyn Brooks House (7428 S. Evans Ave.) and the Lorraine Hansberry House (6140 S. Rhodes Ave.). The committee voted in full support of these recommendations.

Each of these spaces, recognized for their historical, social and architectural significance, provide opportunity. "Space is an opportunity," said Timuel Black, noted historian, educator and activist, as he testified before the committee.

These places are a testament to past struggles and to great achievements.

Carl Hansberry moved his family to Washington Park, an all white neighborhood, in 1937. It was this move, and the challenges it presented, at the heart of Lorraine Hansberry's award winning play "A Raisin in the Sun" that moved and gripped the nation. The house represents Mr. Hansberry and his family's strength in the face of much hostility and his journey to the Supreme Court and the end of racist restrictive covenants in Chicago.

"He realized [that] in that neighborhood [blacks] had been excluded," Black said as he described Mr. Hansberry's social concern and commitment. "...Congestion controlled much of

our freedom...even to think," he said.

The Hansberry house "to some is just another brick building," said Ishmael Smith, a junior at Mt. Carmel High School. To Smith it is much more: it is a reminder of African Americans' continued struggle for equality. It represents a movement from fear to a righteous fight to advancing forward, Smith said. Where would the black culture be without people like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lorraine Hansberry and Rosa Parks, he asked?

Stacey Stewart, Smith's former elementary school teacher, who introduced him to the history of the Hansberry House, also testified. She spoke of her former students, who "allowed themselves to be student historians," students "who wanted to do more," students who, discouraged by their age, asked "what can we do?" These students presented their research locally and nationally. "This is the fruit of their labor," she said.

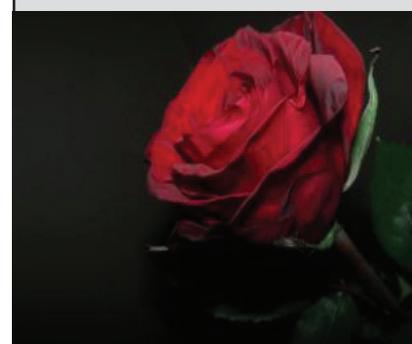
"History is a living thing," said Ald. Freddrenna Lyle (6th). But "it's only living if we impart it on our children," she said.

Anita Howard, Smith's proud mother and a nurse, knows that "if it's not documented it's not done." Her support stems from a desire to remember, to ensure that these pivotal places in black history are not lost.

These notable figures "documented the institutionalized racism of the north," said Christopher R. Reed of the City's Commission on Chicago Landmarks. They depicted an "interior view of black life in Chicago in a positive manner."

Ald. Lyle wants youth "to realize [that] these were real people...ordinary people who did extraordinary things."

VALENTINES DAY



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A relationship is greater than the sum of its parts:

Whether the relationship is new or one that has lasted a lifetime, you and your partner must avoid these behaviors: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and putting up a wall, according to Miles. "If you do those things long enough the relationship is going to cool," she warned. After all, you are creating a life together and "the relationship is greater than the two of you," Miles continued.

Don't get into a destructive dance:

The costumes may change, the tempo may change, but chances are you're doing the same old steps. "Couples often think they've tried everything when in fact they are stuck in a pattern..." Miles said. "Problems that are repetitive have roots in the past."

Let that baby grow:

Your relationship is like an infant but the baby is not going to be a baby forever; it will and must grow as you grow. "Right and wrong games are counterproductive," according to Miles and those games backfire. You or your partner must try to be more conscious and sympathetic to each other's habits or imperfections. "When your partner attacks or withdraws it is often a cry for help," Miles asserts.

"All there is... is now. Focus on the gift of the present moment":

"We will truly be surprised by joy when we can live in the moment with our partner and within ourselves," she adds.

You are with your partner for a multitude of reasons, so let them know. "Develop a positive emotional bank account by declaring something positive about [each] other at the end of each day," Miles said.

Remember not to take yourself too seriously and that "couples do best if they can join one another in the pain," and can comfortably ask for help, she continued.

There are many resources out there. Don't let your friendship fizzle for a lack of awareness. "Do your homework," Miles insists. "This is the best gift you can give your kids."