

GOOD NEWS

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Three Men Honored with V. Pierre Toussaint Award



Robert L. Brown recently retired from the University of Connecticut, where he has been employed since September of 1970. For over sixteen years, Mr. Brown worked closely with students and their parents in the Connecticut Precollegiate Enrichment Program (CONNPEP)/Upward Bound program based out of Storrs, CT and also working out of both Hartford and New Haven high schools.

In January 1987, he transferred to the UCONN Greater Hartford campus and became the program manager of the Student Support Services program which is a program within the Center for Academic Programs.

He is past President of the OBCM Advisory Board and still serves on the Board; he is a past Vice Chairman of the Board of the Archdiocese of Hartford's Office for Catholic Schools; currently a parishioner at St. Michael Church in Hartford, he is Vice President of St. Michael Parish Council, a member of the St. Michael Gospel Choir, a member of the Archdiocesan Gospel Choir, and Treasurer of the Knights of Peter Claver, St. Benedict Council #311. Mr. Brown is presently the Board Secretary of the Klingberg Family Centers, on the Board of Special Olympics Connecticut, and a member of the Connecticut Association of Latin Americans in Higher Education.

Mr. Brown and his wife, Phyllis, a recently retired public school teacher, have been living in Bloomfield, Connecticut for fourteen years. They have two adult children, Sean and Shirene, both living in Greensboro, North Carolina and one grandchild, Dawn.

Since retirement, Mr. Brown has accepted a new challenge as Mentor Recruitment Specialist for the City of Hartford, Office for Youth Services. To volunteer as a mentor call him at 860-757-9894.

Dr. Michael Greene is a former member of the first Advisory Board for Office for Black Catholic Ministries serving from November 1999 to spring 2004.

He received the Distinguished Services Award from the Inner City Dental Mission for offering pro bono dental services to the underprivileged across the State of Connecticut.

He received the City of Hartford Official Citation Achievement of Recognition.

He is a member of the Blue Hills Civic Association and sponsored the Inner City Youth Basketball team.

Dr. Greene graduated from Howard University College of Dentistry in 1985. He frequently speaks to students in city schools on being successful in school and in life and sits on the St. Francis Community Relations Board.

He is a long time parishioner at St Justin's Church where he is a Knight of Columbus and a member of the St. Justin Choir. He is also a cantor for the Archdiocesan Gospel Choir. He and his wife Heather have four children and reside in Windsor, CT.

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**It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people.
The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.**

Horace Greeley



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Christopher J. Doucot is happily married to Jacqueline Allen and the proud father of Micah (17) and Ammon (16). In 1993 Jackie and Chris, along with Brian Kavanaugh, founded the St. Martin De Porres House of Hospitality on Clark Street in Hartford's north end. At the St. Martin De Porres House folks from greater Hartford gather to practice shalom by seeking right relationships that overcome economic, cultural, generational, gender and racial divides through the personal practice of the Works of Mercy.

Chris has participated in nonviolent campaigns for peace and human rights in the U.S., Darfur, Palestine/Israel, Iraq, Chiapas Mexico and Bosnia. He is currently teaching *Race, Class and Gender and Religion and Nonviolence* at Central CT State University.

Lift Every Voice & Sing

This year America marks the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of an important part of the civil rights movement, the Freedom rides. The year 1961 was a time of upheaval in our nation. The changes in our society that were critical to the essence of this nation that chose to be free had to be faced. Our country had to confront the truth that as long as many of its citizens were not free then the parchment on which its constitution was written was broken.

So it is right, it is proper that we take time to embrace our stories of courageous people who stood and faced grave danger...it is proper that we do this so that we might understand our present and lift up hope for our future. It is particularly proper that we do this at this time that we celebrate the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday and in February, Black History Month.

It is proper that we listen and tell the stories we already know...the stories of brutality and anger...the stories of faith and courage...to remember it all again...the bus stations with colored and white signs demarking where you could and could not go, the 16th Street Baptist Church where four little girls dressed in their Sunday best cried no more in Birmingham, but the world wept for them. The Mississippi home where Medgar Evers died, the hallowed ground where Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman saw their last day, where the Trailways bus was burned in Anniston, Alabama.

Why did those who fought the difficult and dangerous fight choose to take up that challenge? Why did they choose such a difficult and dangerous path? After all there was little or no support from family or government... Why fight for something that the laws, the culture, tradition, and the suffering told you, you could not win...Everything you saw, everything you experienced, that your mama and daddy experienced told you to stop trying, for you could not overcome this battle, it was useless, others had tried before and failed...some were killed. So why, why try?... Why? Why?

Because the arc of the moral universe is long but bends towards justice...Because there beyond that dim unknown standeth God within the shadows keeping watch above his own...

Why? Why? Why indeed? "Because we walk by faith not by sight." So it didn't matter how difficult the road nor how long the path...We walk by faith not by sight.

That is the path we must learn to choose... The path of Faith... even though that path can be difficult, even though that path

can be thorny, even when that path can be lonely... The path of faith is the only one on which you cannot get lost...

A little more than 48 years ago I sat quietly in a jail cell. Frankly I was frightened. It was the summer of 1963...I was 17 years old ...a soon to be freshman at the University of Illinois. I sat in that jail questioning the decision I had made to protest the segregated school system...the segregated housing patterns...all of the injustices that were a part of being Black in America. And yet as I sat in that hot sticky cell I knew the truth...and that truth was I could never lose hope...I could never lose hope in what I believed black people could do and be. I was raised believing in hope... hope that one day we would overcome...hope in time justice would triumph over injustice...that one day righteousness would roll in on the slow pondering wheels of inevitability. And yet it never dawned on me that my far off dream, the dream for the ages would happen while I still walked and breathed on this side of my grave.

I never thought that the hallowed strains of "**Lift every voice and sing, 'Til earth and heaven ring, Ring with the harmonies of Liberty**" could sound so sweet and good and finally be so close to being true. But are things different, are we different?

I have pondered that question... deeply...deeply pondered within the depths of my soul are things different? After all, I spent four years serving this country during the Viet Nam war. I would have died for the people and idea of this country called America. So are things different? I always stood alongside others at football games or at school pledging allegiance or singing about the home of the free. Yes, I always stood, but proudly? Then, I ask...are things different? Great-great-great granddad Hiram fought for the union in the war that Lincoln said freed us. Uncles and cousins...my brother...my son served this country in the marines for 11 years. Are things different? Maybe it's all those deep scars, not on my skin but in my heart, in my bones, in my sinew, in my remembrances, Dr. King, James Meredith, George Wallace, Bull Connor, Little Rock nine, Emmett Till, Rosa Parks. Viola Liuzzo, vicious fire hoses held by adult firemen spraying water on black children. Police men with their dogs grabbing black children with American flags in their hands snatching the American flags away from them..." No!... No!... you're not an American you just a ni..." Yes those children tried to hang on to that flag because they wanted to be Americans.

Then there was the black man in Boston who was struck by a white teenager ...he struck that black man with the American flag...the flag that I saluted, the flag that I fought for...that my son fought for...that my brother fought for...that my ancestors

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Lift Every Voice & Sing Continued

fought for. Then I ask are things different? Those scars put a strange membrane around me and mine... It insulated me from America. I fought for it...paid taxes for it...sang the songs and pledged the pledge. I did it all while looking at white folks' teary eyes for a beloved country that I saw, that I lived in, but I was invisible to, unless some black fool did something ignorant... Then oh yes then I was always visible. Having to answer questions about why do my people...? Or drove in a town where we didn't live... Or walked into a restaurant where we didn't go...or into a meeting where I was the only one...Those meetings where all the eyes turned and conversations stopped, Oh yea I was truly visible then.

That membrane not only insulated me from America...but it insulated America from my love... America, are you different? So is the hope we have longed for finally arrived? Is the place our ancestors sighed over finally come... I accept that we have been much like the lost people of Israel who wandered in the wilderness seeking the hoped for promised land... we have grumbled because our freedom has not come easy ...and yes we have often been bitten by those serpents those snakes in the grass... Oh yes we have...and we know the names of some of those snakes don't we... Yes they are called... drugs ...they are called poverty...they are called racism...but they have other names don't they ... yes I'm going there... for the snakes are also called envy and jealousy... self-righteousness and vain glory...they go by the names of greed and denial...self-hatred

and apathy.

But despite all that...despite our community's sometimes destructive behavior...we must continue to struggle through our difficult moments ...We must face the snakes in the grass and march on... climbing and reaching and pulling ourselves forward.

It is 2011 and I ask you this. Has the bright promise of hope finally dawned? What is it our kids say after a long, and difficult journey? Are we there yet? Are we there yet...Well the truthful answer is not yet....not yet...Even when President Obama walked into the White House we must accept that poverty did not walk out of our neighborhoods. We are not there yet...not while some of God's children remain lost...not while there remains a great disparity between the haves and the have nots... Not while the educational opportunities for black and brown children remains wanting...not while our cities crumble in disrepair...not while too many of our young folk are unaware of their glorious past...not while too many of our old folk forgot... We have value...I tell you no... we're not there yet...And so... We as a people continue to struggle with unemployment, layoffs, crime, poverty, educational malfeasance and addictions. Our communities are disproportionately affected by maladies that have their root in poverty and historic racism.

Our church, the Catholic Church has the significant opportunity and responsibility to stand in the gap for people who are searching for a place of peace...Our church has the opportunity and responsibility to reach out right now to those who have lost hope.

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Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford

Office for Black Catholic Ministries

Invites you to attend a SPECIAL Mass Celebrating



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February 13, 2011 ~ 2:00 PM

Cathedral of St. Joseph

140 Farmington Ave., Hartford

Archbishop Henry J. Mansell, Principal Celebrant

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Bible Quiz Time

1. What other name did King Solomon have?
2. What did Balaam's donkey do?
3. Who became a king when he was a little child?
4. Who received the first kiss mentioned in the Bible?
5. How many sons did Gideon have?
6. What does the name "Wormwood" refer to?
7. How many songs did King Solomon compose?
8. What is the longest verse in the Bible?
9. How was Ezekiel lifted between heaven and earth?
10. Who does the Bible call the most humble man?
11. What happened to Eutychus during Paul's sermon?

See answers below

Answers: 1). Jedidiah. 2 Samuel 12:24-25; 2). It spoke to him. Numbers 22:28; 3). Josiah. 2 Kings 22:1; 4). Isaac. Genesis 27:26-27; 5). Seventy-one. Judges 8:29-31,35; 6). A star that fell from heaven. Revelation 8:10-11; 7). One thousand and five. 1 Kings 4:30,32; 8). Ester 8:7; 9). By his hair. Ezekiel 8:3; 10). Moses. Numbers 12:3; 11). He fell asleep and fell out of a window. Acts 20:9.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
OFFICE FOR BLACK CATHOLIC MINISTRIES

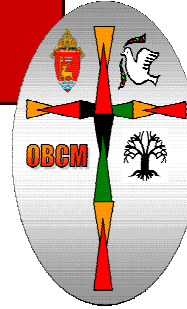
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We're on the Web!

www.aoh-obcm.intuitwebsites.com

www.archdioceseofhartford.org

Other Links of Interest

www.nbccongress.org & www.usccb.org

SAVE these DATES

- **January 17, 2011: ANNUAL ARCHDIOCESAN DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr. DAY MASS.**
Sponsored by the Office for Black Catholic Ministries.
Cathedral of St. Joseph, 9 am.
- **February 13, 2011: ANNUAL ARCHDIOCESAN BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS** Sponsored by the Office for Black Catholic Ministries. **Cathedral of St. Joseph, 2pm.**
- **February 20, 2011: ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS**
St. Michael Church, Hartford, 9am
- **February 27, 2011: ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS**
St. Martin de Porres Church, New Haven.
- **OBCM SPRING BIBLE STUDY** to begin in April. See website for details.

OBCM

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Lift Every Voice & Sing Continued

Most of my work in the Archdiocese of Hartford is with folks who have had terrible experiences and have made terrible decisions... But I'm not concerned about whether or not their own bad decisions have led them to bad places or whether or not bad places have led them to bad decisions... By the time I'm working with them the whole thing meshes together and the pendulum is swinging and I don't particularly care which side it started on...I'm most concerned about stopping the bad choices folk make in choosing those paths that lead to destruction.

Our church is uniquely situated with our Offices for Black Catholic Ministries to reach out and quench the thirst of those who have never tasted the satisfying waters of the Holy Spirit. I believe the time is now, for if not now, when?

I believe we are the ones to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and shut in, release those who have been imprisoned by all that plagues our communities, for if not us then whom? I believe our Catholic church is the place, for if not in the church whose very name means "universal", then where?

Written By Deacon Arthur Miller