

NEW JERSEY

How will the movements, protests today be taught during Black History Month in the future?



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Critical race theory is a hot-button topic around the country right now.

Banned in classrooms across multiple states (although many K-12 teachers say they weren't teaching it anyway), CRT is an academic framework that examines if, and how, systems and policies perpetuate racism, according to USA TODAY.

For Black History Month, we asked Black South Jersey influencers how the movements and protests of today — Black Lives Matter, fight for social justice, the murder of unarmed Black people such as George Floyd and Tyre Nichols by police — be taught in future Black History Month programs.

'Sparks to ignite bigger problems'

Cory Cottingham, co-owner Shokra Soups, Willingboro

"Those instances (the murder of George Floyd, etc.) are almost like sparks that will be recorded in history to hopefully ignite some of the bigger problems. One of the big problems we have, especially in the Black community, is our support for Black businesses ... When something happens in our community, it riles us up and makes us upset and emotional and that kind of 'what can I do?' One of the things we can

do is support Black businesses because supporting Black businesses will help build up the local economy, helping build up the economy creates jobs for our youth. If they're not working, they're in the streets doing things they should not be doing."

"Colin Kaepernick and Kyrie Irving and these individuals are making a stance in the sports field. You haven't seen that type of stance since Muhammad Ali and (he) is considered one of the greatest of all time, not just because of his boxing skills, but because of his stance and some of the work he did humanitarian-wise."

'Let my Black History infuse my every day'

Sena Amuzu, Smith College junior (currently studying abroad at Oxford), activist, Collingswood

"I think discussion and teaching will have to be extended into community practice and be fortified by personal initiative. I share what I learn with those I love, family, friends, acquaintances, anyone who will listen and really just let my Black history infuse my every day.

"Cool examples of educational initiatives outside the academy include the Seeda School or Cassandra Press."

Check out these people, places South Jersey people and places to know for Black History Month

Black history for kids: His new book out soon, here's what Rann Miller says about and learning Black history

"I see the significance of infusing our history in curriculum and formalized settings of education, but don't think it should permeate in an academic vacuum alone. Especially since these educational settings are already under attack. I saw headlines that College Board (which oversees AP courses) removed any mention of Black Lives Matter, Black feminism, and Black queer theory from AP African American Studies.

“I think of the mainly Black people/scholars/artists who have impacted my life personally and not of ‘figures’ per se since sometimes idealization puts people on a pedestal drowning out efforts of the collective.”

Heavy focus on Black Lives Matter

Christina Jackson, associate professor Stockton University, activist, Galloway

“How today’s movement will be discussed years from now is a difficult question because when we think about historic struggles against domination, part of our movement work has been revising what has been in our textbooks about the racial landscape of inequality in this country. Nikole Hannah-Jones’ the 1619 Project is an excellent example of that. It provided us with a revisionist history of slavery and its’ legacy today in food deserts, mass incarceration etc. There will be a heavy focus on the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement on our nation, and the increased role of the camera and social media for transparency and connecting those struggles for domination around the world.

“What stands out for me as a scholar-activist was the resurfacing of the conversation about the connections between sudden violence (police shootings) and slow violence (ongoing assaults through the form of housing, jobs, and environmental toxicities) on Black communities. Black history months years from now will also discuss interracial social uprising across the country in 2020 post George Floyd’s murder.

Events in South Jersey Still time to celebrate Black History Month at Burlington County venues

“I would hope the history books will discuss Hannah-Jones’s 1619 Project ... Definitely Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, who created the movement for Black lives (Black Lives Matter)... Others like Ta-Nehisi Coates and Ashon Crawley, Dr. Bettina Love and Tarana Burke, with the spark of the #Metoo movement.”

‘Truth should be taught’

Walter L. Hudson Sr., community organizer, Penns Grove

“I believe the truth should be taught. So much of our Black history has been 'white-washed.'

“... So what should be taught is systemic issues in criminal justice, law, and schools, and how we need to go about rectifying them, or ways that people, particularly young people, need to get involved and make a difference. I was taught in similar ways from my old professor, Reginald Smith, at Salem Community College. He said, ‘If the system is out of harmony with the way Black people are treated, give the issues a conscious and challenge it.’

“I believe activists like myself, Jamal Green in Chicago, Hawk and Chivona Newsome of New York, all of us have been at the forefront organizing, and challenging systems of oppression, in terms of police brutality, quality education, and voting rights, and many other social issues.”

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