

## **Black History Month**

In honor of Black History Month, St. Barnabas' was deeply blessed when Cricket Camp gathered together with Betty Jo Fortune and Sharon Jones to put together four reflections, each sharing (via a weekly email) a part of their experience and perspective on Black History as Black women. Their leadership and thoughtfulness is very generous! Their reflections also became the basis for some very productive discussions and sharing during 11:15 a.m. Forum & Fellowship gatherings in February. In case you missed the emails, we wanted to share at least a portion of their writings in an insert in the Reporter, as well. Thank you once again for your generous sharing, Cricket, Betty Jo, and Sharon! John+

*(Writings have been abbreviated for space . Full copies can be requested from the Parish Office.)*

### **My Thoughts on Black History Month**

by Cricket Camp

My recollection of Negro History Week are sketchy at best, until High School. Growing up in Evanston, Illinois, there was one high school that everyone attended. However, Black students were in the minority, often the only person of color in a class, and there were no Black teachers. During that week, I remember talk of enslaved people, recognition of entertainers/sports figures, and few examples of professionals. I remember the boredom on the faces of my White classmates. I remember being uncomfortable about the color of my skin. I remember being anxious that I might be called on for some relevant comment.

When Charles and I moved to Fairfax County, we vowed that our children's experiences would be different. They would always be Black and in the minority, but we made a conscious effort to inform them and others of their rich history. I scheduled and taught lessons in their preschool and elementary classrooms that presented facts about the role Blacks played in the success of this country...the subtle message being that Black Americans thus qualified for equal treatment as citizens. This is a lesson that still needs teaching in our country.

I thank Carter G. Woodson, historian, author, and founder of Negro History Week in 1926, for his insight. His call to knowing the past as opening the door to the future and honoring ancestors by remembering their struggle has been and continues to be an important message for all of us. Until History can be accurately rewritten, Black History Month will remain a vehicle for education, understanding, and change.

### **The Negro National Anthem**

by Betty Jo Fortune

During COVID-19, I was introduced to an interpretation of the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." While I've sung the words to this song hundreds of times, the article presented me with a new and more powerful meaning of this song of my heritage. As an African American female in a country that still refuses to deal with our history, I found it inspiring, insightful, and informative. I would encourage all to read the article (linked below) for better understanding.

[Behind the lyrics of 'Lift Every Voice and Sing'](#)

May God help each of us to respect all of His children.

## ***Who is Florence S. Price? (1887-1953)***

by Sharon Jones

Florence Beatrice Smith Price is a noted African American composer who was raised to believe that, with hard work and determination, she could accomplish whatever she wanted. She attended the New England Conservatory of Music in 1904, enrolled as Mexican since at that time African Americans were not allowed to study at the conservatory.

Once she returned home from the conservatory, Florence began working in segregated schools. In 1912 she was married to Mr. Thomas Price, an attorney, and together they had three children. All this time her family experienced racial prejudice. A lynching in Little Rock soon convinced the Prices to move north to Chicago, IL.

Price continued her musical work in Chicago as a prominent organist in area churches and as a composer. She composed many works for organ, voice, and piano, as well as for symphonic orchestra. Her composition called "Adoration" is her best-known organ work. Eventually, she became the first African American composer whose work would be performed by a major symphony orchestra: In 1933 her Symphony No.1 in E minor was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Source: <http://www.florenceprice.org>

## **Burgundy Farm Country Day School**

by Cricket Camp

Burgundy Farm Country Day School in Alexandria, an independent school, was started in 1946 by 12 White families who were seeking a progressive education for their children while maintaining high academic standards. In 1950, Burgundy made the decision to admit Black students. That was four years before Brown vs. Board of Education outlawed segregation in public schools nationally, and nearly ten years before White resisters shut down Virginia public schools rather than desegregate. Camay Calloway, daughter of famed musician Cab Calloway, was hired as a teacher. Her presence on the faculty was a welcome sign of the school's commitment to racial diversity.

Our friend and frequent contributor at many Adult Forums, Tony Lewis was a member of Burgundy's first graduating 8th grade class in 1961. His fond memories of the school seeing itself as fitting the child, rather than the other way around, are a source of joy for him. He speaks of a place where creativity, rather than conformity, was celebrated. He was well prepared, both academically and socially, for moving on from Burgundy when he was accepted at both St. Alban's School in Washington DC and St. Stephen's School in Alexandria. He was the first Black student to be admitted to and graduate from St. Stephen's...the only Black student there during his four high school years.

Burgundy was and remains committed to inclusivity and has put its money where its mouth is, offering scholarships and reduced tuition to minority students to achieve that goal. Our daughter, now a teacher at Burgundy, reminds us of the reality of Burgundy striving to stay true to its mission of diversity while seeking socio-economic balance during these trying times. Burgundy remains a special place to be, and will always have the goal of building a school community that more accurately reflects the broader human family.