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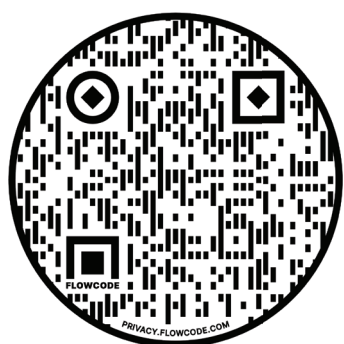
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\$27 Million Settlement Reached for George Floyd's Family

BY EMILEE CAMODEO
Staff Writer

On March 12, the city of Minneapolis reached a settlement with the family of George Floyd for \$27 million due to his death during a police arrest.

Ben Crump, attorney of the Floyd family, called this the largest pretrial settlement ever for a civil rights claim.

Council members unanimously voted in support of the settlement, which surpassed the \$20 million settlement approved by Minneapolis two years ago for the family of a white woman killed by a police officer.

According to the Associated Press, "The settlement includes \$500,000 for the south Minneapolis neighborhood that includes the 38th and Chicago intersection that has been blocked by barricades since his death, with a massive metal sculpture and murals in his honor. The city didn't immediately say how that money would be spent."

Floyd's death sparked a national movement, bringing awareness to racial injustice.

"The one thing we know as Black people...is there is no guarantee that a police officer will be convicted for killing a Black person unjustly in our country," Crump said. "That's what history has taught us."

City Council President Lisa Bender spoke about the settlement, saying "no amount of money" can bring back a life.

"I do not believe that any amount of money can be given to bring justice to an unwarranted death," said senior Thomas Lawless. "Unfortunately, million-dollar settlements cannot and will not address the systemic issue of police brutality in our country."

George Floyd was declared dead on May 25, 2020 at the hands of a white officer, Derek Chauvin. Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for just short of nine minutes, while complying with arrest.

"Any force used must be reasonable and necessary to accomplish the officer's lawful goal," said criminal justice Prof. Anthony Papa. "If the person in custody is seriously injured or dies, it should be investigated by some governing body other than the police department, such as a Grand Jury."

Floyd's family proceeded to take action by filing the federal civil rights lawsuit against the city, Chauvin and three other officers who were involved. These officers violated Floyd's rights and used excessive force sparked by racism.

"Police officers need to constantly receive use of force training, which includes reinforcing a force continuum, which promotes the use of less than lethal force by engaging in deadly physical force," said

Papa. "Officers also need to constantly be retrained in sensitivity."

All officers involved in the incident were fired. It has not yet been confirmed whether Chauvin will testify in his own defense, while the other three officers face trial in August on aiding and abetting charges.

"I am looking forward to the police officer to be indicted on all counts of his charges," said Lawless. "I hope that states will begin to pass legislation that takes a critical look into how they are currently policing and address what needs to be addressed."

Crump expressed that the settlement resembles an effort to improve justice rather than waiting for legal system conclusions that have lost the trust of many Blacks.

"We need to deeply consider a systemic approach that reevaluates our justice system and how we police in order to bring justice and maintain justice for all people," said Lawless.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

AFTER THE EVENTS OF THIS PAST SUMMER, MINNEAPOLIS REACHED A SETTLEMENT WITH THE FLOYD FAMILY FOR \$27 MILLION.

The hate crimes that have been directed toward the
Asian American and Pacific Islander community,
the Black community, LGBTQ+ community,
and all other minorities
over the years and especially within this past year
are acts based around ignorance.

.....

The Spectrum Newspaper stands in solidarity with those within
minority communities and we strive to do our
part to continue the conversation and educate the community.

A Rush To Register For Asylum Seekers

BY FRANCESCA COMPAGNO
Staff Writer

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees registered 12,000 asylum seekers, nearly half of the 25,000 cases the U.S. government has cited. Migrants are now waiting for hearings on their asylum requests with a mix of hope and frustration.

Due to the influx of asylum seekers, the U.S. government is working to process them all in a timely manner.

“There are three key challenges in adjudicating the asylum seekers,” said Dr. Gary Rose, chair of the Department of Government. “They are: COVID testing, verifying the authenticity of those claiming asylum and keeping children with their parents during the legal processing.”

There are many steps in registering asylum seekers.

“The federal authorities need to first test for COVID-19 and then proceed through the proper governmental channels for processing these people,” said Rose. “Process is key.”

In processing asylum seekers, the COVID-19 pandemic plays a significant role.

“Testing is taking place, but it is not as effective as it should be,” said Rose.

According to Associated Press, the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced it would begin processing asylum seekers with registered cases who have been living in a tent encampment on the banks of the Rio Grande in Matamoros, Mexico.”

Many people feel remorse for asylum seekers living in such horrible conditions.

“It is heartbreaking to hear that the conditions of the camps have not changed,” said sophomore Christina Gori. “No woman, man or child should have to suffer these harsh conditions while awaiting a safe haven from their previously known hell.”

While there have been poor living conditions for asylum seekers during both the Obama and Trump administrations, some people are hoping for change under the Biden administration.

“The administration has many priorities moving forward, and I hope to see funding that can be spared not only to better the conditions of these camps but to better the conditions of various underfunded systems in the country,” said Gori.

Associated Press said that there are unjustified living conditions in the tent encampments. Asylum seekers’ journeys to registration can, however, be improved with the help of the Mexican government.

“The Mexican government should make sure that asylum seekers have access to humanitarian aid, relief and health services,” said Prof. Isil Akbulut Gok, an assistant professor in the Department of Government. “Additionally, the Mexican government should protect them from gang violence.”

There are still many asylum seekers who have not yet registered to come into the U.S.

“I think the biggest challenge is that there are not enough immigration judges and asylum officers who can adjudicate asylum seekers,” said Gok.

Some asylum seekers have been waiting years to be let into the U.S.

“The U.S. government needs to make the process shorter and less confusing,” said Gok. “They should also speed up asylum decisions.”

Karleigh Lam, a sophomore nursing major, believes that asylum seekers should be treated with more respect.

“I believe that if someone is truly fleeing their country due to the many issues within it and coming here with a purpose and goal to work toward gaining citizenship, then they should be granted that respect and accommodation,” said Lam.

Lam also commented on the environment which asylum seekers had to live in.

“The conditions in which these people are coming from are horrifying,” said Lam. “If I were in their position, I would want to go somewhere where freedom lies as well.”



ASSOCIATED PRESS

ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE RUSHING TO REGISTER FOR U.S. BORDER PROCESSING AFTER FLEEING FROM CENTRAL AMERICA, A LENGTHY PROCESS THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO ACCOMMODATE.

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Perspectives

The Political Side of Instagram Posts

BY ANASTASIA COLAGRECO
Staff Writer

Is Instagram the future of activism?

According to a survey by Statista, “With roughly one billion monthly active users, Instagram belongs to the most popular social networks worldwide.”

Due to recent attention surrounding movements such as Black Lives Matter and Autism Awareness, social justice advocates have shared their opinions via the photo sharing platform.

“I will often post about current events that I find shocking on my Instagram story,” said sophomore Sarah Carr. “When I see something that is so horrible, I think, ‘Does anyone else know this happened?’ and I want to share it with my friends.”

Like Carr, freshman Kelly Irwin says she has reposted content to spread awareness about pressing matters.

“Posting about these major issues is the least I can do to try to help these people,” said Irwin. “Being white myself, I haven’t had any personal experiences of racism or discrimination, so I feel an obligation to amplify these voices. If I can spark a conversation or even a thought about these problems, that’s all I want.”

With over one million followers, the Instagram account @impact is just one of the activist-led profiles that seeks to spread awareness about current events. Their most recent posts titled “Anti-Asian Policies You May Not Have Heard About” and “COVID Fatigue and Mental Health” have thousands of likes.

“Accounts like this can definitely be informative because everyone is allowed to voice their own opinions,” said sophomore Eric Bodeker.

Over the summer, many Instagram users posted a black square on their feed in solidarity for the Black Lives Matter movement. While its goal was to show support for the Black community, it sparked a debate over whether people just posted the square to fit in with the crowd.

According to Urban Dictionary, this type of posting online has been dubbed “performance activism; when a person jumps on a political bandwagon in order to keep up appearances.”

“I believe most people who posted a black box for Black Lives Matter had good intentions,” said freshman Jessica Waldron. “But I think some people just did it because everyone else was, not because they truly supported the cause.”

Yet, not everyone thinks Instagram is the ideal place to have such conversations.

“It’s not the right spot to talk about these things,” said sophomore Paddy Francis. “When I’m on the app I don’t really need to see posts about current events. I’d rather check the news.”

Is posting a picture truly the most effective way to solve the world’s problems?

Junior Lorenzo Pusateri sees Instagram as an unproductive method of activism.

“If everyone is at home posting black squares on Instagram, they get the benefit of feeling like they did something, while not actually influencing real change,” said Pusateri. “When someone posts a political rant or opinion online, they get a pat on the back or some sense of unity within their social circle of people who agree with them.”

There are many other options to spread awareness in addition to sharing information with your friends.

“Signing petitions, writing to law-makers, donating money if you can, and going to peaceful protests do much more than posting a picture on your feed,” said Carr.



CHARLOTTE GRENS/SPECTRUM

SHU STUDENTS REACT TO WHETHER OR NOT INSTAGRAM POSTS SHOULD BE POLITICAL AND IF THEY ACTUALLY ASSIST WITH FORMS OF ACTIVISM.

How Diverse is SHU?

BY DEANNA DRAKOPOULOS
Staff Writer

Do you think Sacred Heart University is a diverse campus?

“Although I think that SHU has made initiatives toward making diversity and inclusivity more prominent, it does not have a diverse campus,” said junior Kristine Udahl. “If you look at the statistics of the ethnic diversity of the campus, you see that well over half of the population identifies as white.”

According to Niche.com, 71% of the students on Sacred Heart’s campus are white, 10% are Hispanic, 5% are African American and 2% are Asian.

Other students say they have seen Sacred Heart grow into a fairly diverse campus over the years.

“I feel confident in saying that over my four years here, I have seen growth in diversity and efforts to promote diversity on our campus,” said senior Kolby Driscoll.

Similar to Driscoll, other students say that Sacred Heart has taken efforts to become a more diverse campus.

“I believe SHU has made significant strides with inclusivity initiatives in the past year with the implementation of the Multicultural Center because now underrepresented students have a place where they can be heard and accounted for,” Udahl said.

According to the Sacred Heart website, the Multicultural Center was established in September 2020 to connect and create a sense of community for underrepresented students by promoting cultural exchange and enrichment among students of diverse backgrounds.

The Multicultural Center seeks to foster open dialogue on inclusivity, ensuring a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds while amplifying underrepresented voices within the community.

“It’s important to continue these conversations of diversity and acceptance,” said Rob Johnson, Director of the Multicultural Center. “We’re doing okay, but we have a lot of work to do, and just because there’s a Multicultural Center on campus doesn’t mean the work stops.”

Some students say that underrepresented students are able to feel comfortable and involved within the community through the vast number of extracurricular activities.

“I do feel like SHU has done a good job of letting minorities be heard, whether it be through clubs or organizations,” said sophomore Jordan Griffin.

Some students say they have never felt uninvited on campus due to their race.

“Even though the school has a wide majority of a single race, no one has ever made me feel uncomfortable or unwelcomed at SHU,” said freshman and Multicultural Chair of Phi Sigma Sigma, Sage Thomas.

On March 1, Dr. John Petillo, president of Sacred Heart, sent out an email with the subject “Respect and Inclusion.” In it, he wrote that within the past few weeks, reports of hate speech had been noted both verbally and written against members of the LGBTQ+ and Jewish communities.

Petillo emphasized that this behavior is unacceptable, and it goes against Sacred Heart’s mission to recognize the value and dignity of every human being.

“I believe that Dr. Petillo handled the situation well,” said Driscoll. “I appreciate the

efforts made by him when responding to an issue like this, and I will always encourage him and other university officials to remain consistent when dealing with these types of issues.”

Many say that Sacred Heart has made efforts to implement diversity and inclusion within the community.

“I worked with chief diversity officer Julie Lawrence to implement diversity and inclusion training that students have access to on their Blackboard,” said Johnson. “I also have conducted collaborative events and social identity training with organizations on campus like Greek Life and the Gender and Sexuality Alliance.”

Some students say they have praised the action the university has taken in light of this incident.

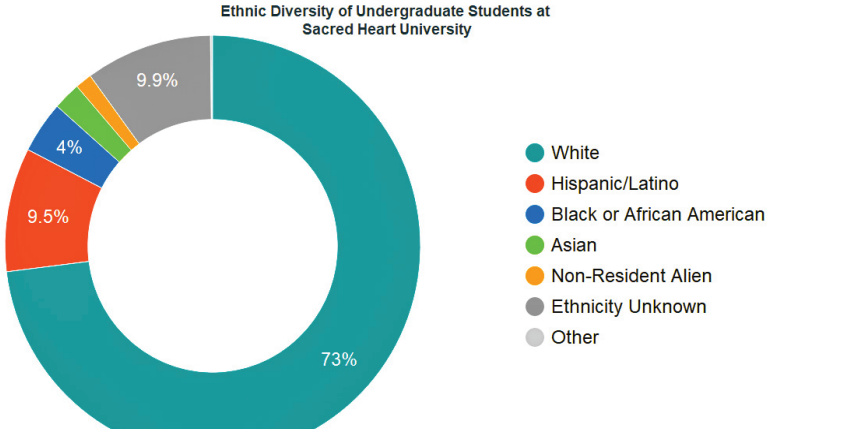
“I think Sacred Heart has been very good with being inclusive through the guest speakers, all of the different clubs for all different types of people and always sending out emails about issues going on in the world,” said Thomas.

Many students say that the university should take further measures to make sure underrepresented students feel comfortable.

“I think actions speak louder than words, so I think it’s great that the school isn’t just preaching about diversity, but continuing to show people of color that they are welcomed and are represented equally,” said senior Ryan Bradley.

According to an email sent out by the student government, Sacred Heart has a silent witness program for reporting incidents of racism, discrimination or hate, as well as a bias response team.

“As a university, if we could address these gaps and divides within our community as well as acknowledged privilege, we could bridge the gap,” said Johnson. “But the work never stops.”



COLLEGE FACTUAL

STUDENTS ACKNOWLEDGE THE FACT THAT SACRED HEART IS NOT A VERY DIVERSE COMMUNITY AND RECOGNIZES THAT SHU IS IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE.

Features

Women in Media

BY **MAISY CARVAHLO**
Assistant Features Editor

“The same as many major cultural industries, the gender imbalance in media is significant, and the representation of women and minorities has been perpetually narrow and stereotypical,” said Prof. Shanshan Wang from the Sacred Heart University School of Communication and Media Arts (SCMA).

Some say that production and media have a larger male representation than female, but Wang is proof that women can be successful despite the imbalance.

“To tackle this problematic reality, more and more women should be encouraged and given the opportunity to join the media workforce,” said Wang.

According to Sacred Heart’s website, “Shanshan Wang, MFA, is an award-winning experimental filmmaker and new media artist. Her research-centered practice focuses on exploring digital humanities and socio-political interactions.”

Wang has been exposed to the industry and has observed the gender inequality, and some students entering the industry have also seen it.

Senior Kali D’Agostinis is currently studying Media Arts and recently completed an internship with Z100.

“It’s important to get women in the media industry because women have such powerful capabilities and talents to project through the media and within their work,” said D’Agostinis. “There are countless women across the industry that have significantly changed the way the media is portrayed. As more and more women are becoming a part of the media industry, the more change is happening, and we need that.”

D’Agostinis says that she looks to shows like “Good Morning America,” “The Today Show” and “The Talk” for inspiration.

“Many years ago, it was extremely rare to see a woman reporting the news on television or interviewing an iconic figure for a news segment,” said D’Agostinis. “Nowadays, I feel that it has completely flipped.”

Similar to news and talk show positions, some say the sports media industry is becoming more inclusive as women step into roles traditionally held by men.

“I feel that the media industry is rapidly diversifying,” said Lauryn McNair, Sports Communication and Media Graduate Assistant. “Women are moving up into leadership positions in so many aspects of the media industry.”

McNair is currently working towards her master’s degree in Sports Communication and Media.

“In sports specifically, there could be more women, but again, the number of women entering sports media, especially behind the camera, is multiplying every year, which I think is absolutely great and welcoming as I will be transitioning into the workforce in the next year,” said McNair.

Wang, as a veteran of the industry, has witnessed the breakthrough that women have

been able to make firsthand but says there is still more work to be done.

“The issue here is that women in media are largely employed in entry level positions,” said Wang. “The dominating patriarchal leadership culture limits the development of the female career. Film and TV industries should recognize this gender inequality and strategically promote more women to be in leadership roles.”

Carolyn Beddow contributed to this article.



RIEANNA FLORES/SPECTRUM
VARIOUS WOMEN SPEAK ABOUT THEIR ROLES IN THE MEDIA WORLD AND HOW THEY SEE WOMEN IN GENERAL BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING AND THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Art of Solidarity

BY **JULIA PORTOGHESE**
Staff Writer

On March 17, Dr. Nichole Flores, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia, explored the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe during a virtual colloquium at Sacred Heart University.

“Dr. Flores has been rightly praised by Olga Segura as ‘one of the most important theological voices in the Catholic church today,’” said Dr. Charles Gillespie, a professor in the Department of Catholic Studies. “She holds degrees from Smith College, Yale University and Boston College.”

Flores began the presentation by explaining the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Juan Diego, a Christian, encountered Our Lady of Guadalupe and an apparition of the Virgin Mary. According to the story, she told Juan Diego that he must visit the Bishop and that Guadalupe Basilica was to be built in Mexico City. Juan Diego felt unworthy to visit the Bishop due to his social status.

After unsuccessful visits to the Bishop, Juan Diego attempted one last time with flowers when a sign appeared: “the image of the Virgin Mary that Catholics and many others believe appeared to St. Juan Diego on a hill outside modern day Mexico City in 1532,” according to Flores.

“The relationship between Guadalupe and Juan Diego acknowledges the narrative’s essential connection to rectification of power imbalances in both the ecclesial and political structures,” said Flores. “It situates anyone who has encountered oppression in any dimension as Guadalupe’s beloved child whom she empowers to recognize and embrace the autonomous and relational dimensions of their personhood within the work of justice.”

Students had positive reactions to the presentation.

“Juan Diego was chosen to approach the Bishop by Our Lady of Guadalupe to see a sign from God. Though Juan Diego had lower social class, God still spoke to him. This story relates to our world today because it shows that God is there for us no matter our gender or social class,” said senior Katie Russelman.

Our Lady of Guadalupe stands as a symbol for United Farm Workers’ movements, immigration reform and empowerment for Mexican and Latina women.

“The symbol of Our Lady of Guadalupe shows that no matter who you are or where you come from, there is always hope that something great can happen. I found the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Juan Diego to be beautiful and inspiring,” said Russelman.

Annually, the Our Lady of Guadalupe torch run takes places to honor Guadalupe. The torch run travels from Mexico City to New York City. The run is to raise awareness for citizenship rights and human rights. Each year, activists carry the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe along the run.

“From Denver to Charlottesville to New York City, a political theology of Guadalupe and Juan Diego places her on the side of those who have been subject to unjust legacies

of conquest, colonization, slavery, segregation, racism, sexual violence, and unjust deportation,” said Flores. “It is a political theology of Magnifica where Mary’s soul is magnified where she is witness to God’s promise to lift up the lowly.”



RIEANNA FLORES/SPECTRUM
DR. NICHOLE FLORES EXPLAINS THE STORY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, CHALLENGES SHE EXPERIENCED DURING HER LIFE, AND WHAT HER NAME STANDS FOR NOW.



An Umbrella Life

KAILEY BLOUNT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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Every time I move my wrist, my joint cracks. Cracks to the clicks of a keyboard that has been rotting at the bottom of my backpack all week.

A few days ago, when my bones were quiet and my mouth was loud, I made a promise. In the passenger seat of my best friend’s car, as the sun shone bright, I promised to write an article on disability for Audrey’s Corner.

Now, I find myself three states away, listening to the soft sound of the rain against my childhood bedroom’s window pane. My umbrella’s nearby, leaning right against the door, waiting for when I make the trek back into the real world.

The rain will never hit my scalp. Not like the sun. Not like it does my friends three states away. They don’t own umbrellas. They let the rain run soak their hair and run down their cheeks in a way those of us with umbrellas would never dare.

Disability is an umbrella, one that covers our heads from the rain of normalcy. One billion people live under umbrellas. I’ve created a list of what I’ve learned beneath mine.

1. Just because we all own an umbrella does not mean our experiences in the rain are the same. Every disability is different, just as every person is different. The word “disability” encompasses invisible, visible, learning, motor, vision, hearing, speech and psychological abnormalities under one broad term. How could we expect that our experiences would all be the same? However, no matter our differences, we must stand with one another in solidarity and support. We are all human beings who deserve the same things as those living without umbrellas.

2. Even those who live under the same umbrella stand in different places. Those who have the same disability do not share the same experiences. It’s important to acknowledge that everyone’s lifestyles are valid and should be respected, no matter how different they are from your own.

3. Even though you have an umbrella, you still belong in the rain. The world would be bleak and dreary without umbrellas. We add color to gray days. Disabled people deserve their place in an able-bodied world.

4. The sun always returns. Living in an able-bodied world with a disability is difficult. There will be days where you feel like the rain will never go away, but the sun always does come back.



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<https://app.joinhandshake.com/jobs/4461933>

Arts & Entertainment

How Television is Serving as a Platform for Voicing Social Justice

BY JACKIE O’ROURKE & ELIZABETH COYNE
A&E Editors

The role of television regarding issues surrounding social justice is one that has been heavily debated and continues to be a topic of discussion within popular media.

“Television, and popular culture more broadly imagined, has always been a space for addressing issues of social justice. Even when TV doesn’t explicitly address these issues, if you look below the surface, media narratives can uphold or challenge take-for-granted beliefs about power and equality,” said Associate Professor Dr. Lori Bindig Yousman, Department Chair in the School of Communication, Media and the Arts.

On March 7, CBS broadcasted a primetime exclusive interview where Oprah Winfrey sat down with Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, and Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex. During the interview, they discussed social justice issues including mental health and race. Markle talked about her own personal struggles with mental health.

Markle also opened up about the racism she has experienced within the Royal Family. Specifically, she mentioned the “treatment by the British tabloid press, the lack of support from ‘The Firm’ to counter racist media narratives and purported concerns from a royal family member over the color of their son Archie’s skin before he was born” during the broadcast.

“With talk show mediums, and opportunities such as the Oprah and Meghan Markle interview, there is the opportunity to reach large audiences through celebrity voices. The fact that Meghan Markle shared her experiences with racism on national television was huge, and provided a space to talk about an important topic,” said Communications Professor Alexis Walker. “With that, media has a great opportunity to make a difference, and given the high rates of television viewership, television has a great opportunity to contribute to social change.”

Another example of a conversation surrounding racial inequality happened recently with ABC’s “The Bachelor.” The incident occurred within the most recent season that aired its finale on March 15.

According to an article from Associated Press (AP), “Chris Harrison’s journey with ‘The Bachelorette’ is over, at least for now, after a controversy over racially insensitive comments. The longtime host of ‘The Bachelor’ reality franchise will not be back to guide the next ‘Bachelorette’ on her search for love, producers announced on Twitter late Friday.”

The article continued and said, “Warner Horizon and ABC Entertainment released a statement after regarding the firing of Harrison, saying, ‘As we continue the dialogue around achieving greater equity and inclusion with “The Bachelor” franchise, we are dedicated to improving BIPOC representation of our crew, including among the executive producer ranks.’”

According to AP, “Harrison temporarily stepped down as host in February after making controversial statements during an interview with Rachel Lindsay, a current ‘Extra’ host and 2017’s ‘Bachelorette.’ Harrison defended a current contestant who was reportedly photographed at an antebellum plantation-themed fraternity formal in 2018.”

Emmanuel Acho, a former NFL player and current Fox Sports Analyst/author of the book “Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man,” took over for Harrison and hosted the “After the Final Rose” segment that aired after the season finale.

“This was very important to have, because of the controversy with contestant Rachael Kirkconnel who had racially incentive pictures come up from her past. It is so important to have these conversations that might be uncomfortable for us because we need to learn and grow together,” said sophomore Rachel Petti. “We have to keep growing and becoming educated about social injustice and do the best we can in being an ally.”

“I think it’s good that Rachael is holding herself accountable. When you have a platform like that, it’s important to learn from people who follow you and use your platform to educate others,” said senior Mickey Pirro. “I also think the way Chris Harrison handled the situation undid everything she did to apologize because all he did was come after people who called Rachael out. I don’t think Rachael should be canceled because no one is perfect and I think being held accountable and learning from your mistakes is important, whether or not you have a platform on social media.”

James Gallagher contributed to this article.



DAILY MAIL
TELEVISION SHOWS ARE TAKING THE TIME TO SPEAK ON INJUSTICES IN THE WORLD AND “THE BACHELOR” HAS TAKEN EXTRA TIME TO MAKE CHANGES WITHIN THEIR FRANCHISE.

Social Justice Films

BY CHLOE CURTIS
Staff Writer

Have you ever finished watching a movie and taken a sigh of relief that the plot is not in real life?

Today, the lines are becoming blurred between fiction and reality in films as history unfolds. As more films relating to racial injustice and other social justice topics hit theaters, viewers have begun to take notice of the importance of the stories behind the plot.

“I think that films relating to social justice are influential because it forces people to sit and learn about these topics,” said senior Mia Stark. “Many people are uneducated on these topics and don’t have the drive to sit down and do research about it.”

Stark recalls watching many films that relate to racial injustice. She specifically reflects on Destin Daniel Cretton’s “Just Mercy.”

“Just Mercy,” an adaptation of Bryan Stevenson’s novel of the same name, tells the story of Stevenson, a Harvard graduate who travels to Alabama to defend African Americans who were wrongly accused of crimes they did not commit. Throughout the movie, Stevenson endures multiple encounters of racism in the legal system.

Senior Hope Lecours also mentions viewing Barry Jenkin’s “Moonlight,” a film that follows the life of Chiron, a young African American male in Miami. The film highlights his journey through manhood and becoming comfortable in his own skin.

“By watching these movies, they have changed my outlook toward certain topics of race and social justice by educating me about race and the issue that the country is facing regarding social justice, as well as criminal reform in connection to these social justice issues,” said Stark.

“Just Mercy” and “Moonlight” are just two examples of many films that portray racism in society. Lecours also recalls watching Spike Lee’s “Do The Right Thing,” a film that highlights the days of a diverse racial group living in lower class Brooklyn, N.Y.

Radio Raheem, a character in the 1989 film, is murdered at the hands of a white police officer. This scene is not something that only appears on the big screen. In May 2020, George Floyd, an African American man, was killed in Minneapolis after a group of police officers wrestled him to the ground and placed a knee on his throat. This lasted for a total of eight minutes and 46 seconds.

Floyd’s story remains a significant discussion in the news today. “These events broke my heart, along with many others’ hearts as well,” said Lecours. “Seeing the constant abuse and mistreatment in this country through movies and through the news as we live through it makes it impossible to watch these films and not feel that this is a call to action.”

A call to action is a common theme between many films and their viewers. The 2011 film “The Help” is based off Kathryn Stockett’s bestselling novel of the same title. Set in

Jackson, M.I. during the early 1960s, African American maids’ stories are highlighted by white journalist Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan when she publishes her novel “The Help” to bring awareness to the experiences African American maids have been through.

“It was a really good movie that opened my eyes to what life was like years ago,” said freshman Tara Shipos.

Some students, such as freshman Isabella Bodak, agree with Shipos regarding the eye-opening manner of these films.

“When I watched ‘The Help’ in high school, I was shocked and learned more from it than any textbook in history class,” said Bodak. “Seeing injustice acted out put things in perspective for me, which I think is why the film and other films are so influential.”



NEW YORK TIMES
THE FILM INDUSTRY IS BEGINNING TO BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN FILM AND INJUSTICES; SPEAKING ON RACIAL ISSUES GOING ON IN THE WORLD.

Sports

SHU Linebacker Speaks Out on Injustices

BY THOMAS KOUREBANAS
Staff Writer

“Being a Black man in America, we have targets on our backs, and it’s almost like you wake up and you’re like, ‘Who’s next?’” said sophomore linebacker Myles Talley.

Talley, a Division I football player at Sacred Heart University, understands the fear that many people of color have toward social injustice and law enforcement.

“I live in Philadelphia, you see police brutality all over,” said Talley. “Speaking out and trying to have a voice is something I want to do to help change the world.”

Talley uses his voice to represent Sacred Heart for the Northeast Conference’s (NEC) Champions for Change platform. Activated on Aug. 2, 2020, the platform empowers student athletes, coaches, and staff to share their experiences with social injustice and discuss initiatives for social change.

“It is a great honor for me,” said Talley. “Being able to speak out for the school and athletics is something that I admire and strive to push for.”

The goal of Champions for Change is to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), initiatives that highlight how racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, etc. have impacted the NEC community. Athletes, coaches and staff also share how they work toward positive change in those areas and how they can celebrate their culture and identity.

“Every day is a celebration,” said Talley in his Champions for Change YouTube video. “God waking you up each and every morning, allowing you to breathe in celebration in itself.”

According to the Champions for Change website, the platform stemmed from the NEC’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee’s (SAAC) conversations on the death of George Floyd in May 2020.

Despite division throughout the country, Talley recognized the importance of educating people on social injustice.

“Ignorance is something that can be taught and can be changed,” said Talley. “If someone had an opposing view, I would put them in the shoes of what minorities go through.”

Talley is the only Sacred Heart student selected to Champions for Change, but he and sophomore women’s lacrosse player Mikala Eacrett started Every Heart is Sacred, an all-inclusive group that promotes the same goals as other DEI initiatives.

“We talk about uncomfortable conversations and have a safe place for all athletes to share how they feel about the causes and what’s going on [with injustice],” said Talley. “Me and [Eacrett] are looking to do great things in the athletic department and try to change minds and educate people.”

Although, ultimately, the goal is to include the Bridgeport community, Every Heart is Sacred is focusing on student athletes first.

“Right now, we’re scouting out people for representatives for each team,” said Talley.

The linebacker is also on the SAAC board and is part of the Multicultural Center, which

was established in Sept. 2020 to connect underrepresented students as well as promote cultural exchange and enrichment among students of diverse backgrounds.

“Me and Robert Johnson [Director of Multicultural Affairs] talk about issues that we feel are going around in the school,” said Talley. “And how we can nip them in the bud and also incorporate that into Every Heart is Sacred.”

Head football coach Mark Nofri has high expectations for Talley on and off the field.

“He’s a good player, tough hard-nosed kid who runs side to side,” said Nofri. “In the long term, I hope he can become a captain by his senior year.”

Nofri believes his program can learn from Talley’s experiences.

“If you’ve never been in that situation [social injustice] or never been around it, you don’t know,” said Nofri. “You have to make sure your eyes and ears are open and do whatever you can to support him.”

Talley encourages all Sacred Heart students to spread awareness for social change.

“Just keep speaking out; keep using your voice,” said Talley. “If you keep yourself educated and, in the loop, that’s a big change right there.”



THOMAS KOUREBANAS / SPECTRUM

MYLES TALLEY, SHU LINEBACKER, IS WORKING TO BUILD DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROMOTE SHARING STORIES OF SOCIAL INJUSTICES.

Women’s Basketball on Social Justice

BY ROBBIE FINIZIO
Staff Writer

“Our vision is to paint a huge Black Lives Matter roadway on the campus,” said head women’s basketball coach Jessica Mannetti. “It will have a collaboration of students, any students, that want to come be a part of it, to add something to what they believe is important.”

A visual representation of the Black Lives Matter cause is one of many of the initiatives that the Sacred Heart University women’s basketball team believes can become a reality this spring.

The team’s first initiative toward social justice came in Dec. 2020 when the team unanimously decided to kneel during the National Anthem, according to the Sacred Heart women’s basketball Twitter.

“As a group, we collectively thought that it would be best for us to kneel, just to be in the presence but also take a stand against what’s going on,” said senior guard Jayla Davis.

Assistant coach Ashley Prim, a former Division I athlete at St. Joseph’s University from 2009 - 2013, believes social media has gradually elevated the conversation and importance of social justice since her playing days.

“It is more prevalent today because there is more access to social media. There are more cameras, and the world is seeing everything that is going on,” said Prim.

The Northeast Conference (NEC) also took a role in combating social justice issues by introducing a new campaign called “NEC Champions for Change,” according to the NEC website.

The campaign’s main goals are to address the issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. as well as formulate ways to take action against these issues, according to the NEC website.

“I think our conference has done a tremendous job,” said Mannetti. “I don’t know what more they could have done, just because the content they produce from a media standpoint and a support standpoint is tremendous.”

As they take on the issues of systematic racism, the women’s basketball team hopes to also tackle the issue of sexism and the inequalities that come with being women in sports.

“The more we talk about it, yes, people may get sick of it, but the more you talk about something the more people are like, ‘I need to do this,’” said Davis.

Senior guard Adrienne Hagood believes that one of the most important parts of being vocal about social issues such as racism and sexism is having a good support system, which is heavily present on the women’s basketball team.

“Our team is very close, we talk a lot in our group chat that we have, almost every day,” said Hagood. “People are very open; they feel comfortable talking to anyone on our team about any issue that is going on.”

This support also extends from the coaching staff.

“I think our coach does a very good job with women empowerment,” said Davis. “She

has taught us over our past four years, we are very strong women, and we don’t need to settle for anything.”

The team hopes to plan a Black Lives Matter rally this spring, but COVID-19 will be a deciding factor. Regardless, the message of social justice for all races, genders and sexualities will continue to be promoted by the lady Pioneers.

“Who we are is going to define who we are in the future, especially what we support,” said Prim. “We have to start somewhere, why not start at home.”



NEC SPORTS

THE SACRED HEART WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM IS DOING THEIR PART TO RAISE AWARENESS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT.

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Being Asian-American in the
Midst of COVID-19

SOPHIE CAMIZZU
ASSISTANT PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

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I cannot express how much I do not want to write about this topic, but not to do so would be irresponsible in lieu of the recent Atlanta shooting on March 16, where six of the eight people shot were Asian women.

In my first draft of this editorial, I wrote about this topic in a purely factual way in order to protect myself amidst a wave of anti-Asian sentiment across the world, but with the platform I have at the moment, it might be beneficial to share my feelings as an Asian-American woman despite the fact that I'm putting a target on my back.

Before I begin, I would like to clearly preface this by saying that I do not represent the thoughts of the Asian-American community as a whole, but only advocate my own ideas and experiences.

As a Chinese adoptee, I have always been surrounded by people who do not look like me. I went to school in primarily white institutions. I wanted to be white more than anything just so I wouldn't be called a "chink" or be asked if I eat dog.

You would think that it would be different as the years went on and people became more educated about different cultures, but it hasn't changed at all. In fact, it's worse than ever before.

Instead of being verbally harassed, I now get to fear for my life.

According to TIME, "The NYPD reported that hate crimes motivated by anti-Asian sentiment jumped 1,900% in New York City in 2020. Stop AAPI Hate, a reporting database created as a response to the increase in racial violence, received 2,808 reports between March 19 and Dec. 21, 2020."

These attacks are primarily directed toward women and elders who do not often have the means to protect themselves. The anti-Asian rhetoric can be traced back to former President Donald Trump, who tried to pass off his use of "Chinese virus" as a joke despite knowing beforehand that he was a major influence in American society.

In fact, according to a Washington Post article, it was reported that #chinesevirus and #covid-19 increased 10 times on Twitter with a mostly negative connotation after Trump first used the term "Chinese virus."

The anti-Asian sentiment does not stop there either. It happens on campus too.

The first time it was reported was the spring 2020 semester when "someone yelled 'coronavirus' at an Asian member of our community."

It's probably not the first time either, as I have also faced the

same kind of discrimination on campus.

When I was sitting in Hawley Lounge in March 2020, I overheard a conversation between two students talking about their plans for the upcoming spring break.

"Where are you going for vacation? Hope it's not Wuhan," said one.

They shared a laugh before the other noticed me in the corner and told their friend to shut up since "there's an Asian girl right there."

That was the first time in recent years that someone has made me insecure of not only my identity as an Asian-American, but also my safety, especially with the recent attacks against Asian-Americans.

While I don't think I could ever summarize the feelings of the entire Asian-American community singlehandedly, I think I might come close when I simply say that I'm tired.



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