

5 6 7 1

IB: Solfege | Chorus - IB - Sing songs from different cultures.

1) Used ground the world

2) Began in the 14th ce

3) ...ion marks in

4-3 = Suspension

5 6

Thursday:

- 1) Be in Mell at 9.
- 2) Be deessed
- 3) Be read

VOICE

I Feel

it 7. Total

New World

ker

FGABCE

Shardel

cats

40, 41, 42

Wenceslas / Weck

**Featured:** LIVING HISTORY: Fine arts department chair Dr. Tony Rucker remembers segregated Athens well from his youth. Rucker's experiences with racism have shaped his worldview. "That's the kind of stuff that these students are not living. They've gone past the Civil Right's Act and they need to understand from whence they've come," Rucker said.

# HONORING BLACK HISTORY

*Clarke Central High School celebrated Black History Month in February. Students and faculty share what the celebration meant to them.*

STORY BY VIOLET MERRITT  
News Writer

LAYOUT BY LOUISE PLATTER  
Editor-in-Chief

**W**hen fine arts department chair Dr. Tony Rucker was a child, his mother would take him to see their doctor in Athens. In the office, they had to wait in a separate area. Instead of a waiting room divided into sick and healthy patients, the area was divided for “colored” and “white.”

“I didn’t understand that when I was younger,” Rucker said. “My mama would say, ‘This is where you go, and this is what we do.’”

After visiting the doctor, Rucker’s mom would take him to the nearby Dairy Queen, where again he recalls being serviced in a separate colored area.

“That’s the kind of stuff that these students are not living. They’ve gone past the Civil Rights Act and they need to understand from whence they’ve come,” Rucker said.

Segregation is one element of black history, but it’s not all of it. To honor, remember, teach and celebrate black history, The United States government recognized the observance of Black History Month in 1976, with the intention that it would be the month long celebration of black Americans. When addressing the nation in his message on the Observance of Black History Month in Feb., President Gerald Ford urged Americans to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

For Rucker, the biggest purpose of a Black History Month observance is to provide students with knowledge of historical racial issues in society, like the segregation he faced as a child.

“It’s one of those historical things that brings about an awareness of students,” Rucker said. “In the past, textbooks have not included very much black history; today’s textbooks are doing a better job, but there are many students that don’t know their heritage.”

Rucker also thinks that students need to realize that some struggles faced by black Americans in the past never ended and are still prominent issues today.

“(Students) thought that everything was hunky dory nowadays, but there are still little bits and pieces going on,” Rucker said.

Rucker believes that one element that contributes to achieving this aware-

ness in students are guest speakers during the Black History Program, especially ones who have lived the history being honored.

“Sometimes (the current Black History Program) uses a speaker and sometimes they don’t but it’s always good to hear from someone who has lived, especially civil rights, and can give you that perspective,” Rucker said.

At Clarke Central High School, Black History Month has been in some way observed in past years. According to math department teacher and black student union sponsor Ed Hendry, there are various events planned to honor black history in February.

“We have plans for a school-wide assembly and broader evening event presentation this year, along with afterschool workshops, and weekly trivia games for students to participate in,” Hendry said.

“In the past, textbooks have not included very much black history; today’s textbooks are doing a better job but there are many students that don’t know their heritage.”

--DR. TONY RUCKER,  
fine arts department chair

In past years, CCHS traditional Black History Month Program has taken place along with a “Black History Fact” being read on the daily announcements.

In addition to teacher organized events, in previous years at CCHS, there was a stronger participation and leadership of students in the observance of Black History Month.

Assistant Principal Dr. Sheila Dunham recalls one student, Fred Smith Jr., who performed Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech during the Black History Program for each of his four years at CCHS.

“He started doing it his freshman year and started doing it every single year after,” Dunham said. “That was very special. I mean, I will never forget it. It touched me every year and it brought tears to my eyes and every year, it made me think. I would certainly put that out there to students if they want to do

something special like this.”

However, during Dunham’s past classroom observations during Black History Month, she said she has not noticed much discussion or teaching of black history.

“When I visit the classrooms, I don’t hear a lot about (black history) and generally do a good number of observations in the month of February,” Dunham said. “Teachers, when being observed, know that they are being evaluated on this, this, this and that. So they might purposefully shy away from these types of discussions when an administrator is in the room.”

“I think (CCHS) should do more because we don’t really learn about black history. I feel like they don’t put that much effort into it because throughout the entire year we learn about more of one race than we do others.”

Freshman Maya Jones appreciates the Black History Program for the constructive academic benefits it can have on students.

“(Students) will probably have higher standards for themselves and it should increase their academics and their participation in school activities,” Jones said.

However, Jones said that more could be done to honor black history in addition to the annual program.

“I think (CCHS) should do more because we don’t really learn about black history. I feel like they don’t put that much effort into it because throughout the entire year we learn about more of one race than we do others and we get Hispanic Heritage Night and the African-American Celebration Day,” Jones said. “We don’t really do much for minorities.”

Principal Dr. Robbie P. Hooker is a strong supporter of working to integrate black history into everyday learning.

“I’ve always said it shouldn’t be one month. If we can incorporate it into the curriculum throughout the year as opposed to one month it would be fine; you could know more about black history,” Hooker said.

--MAYA JONES,  
freshman

Despite not seeing black history being focused on in classes in February, Dunham believes that all heritages should be integrated into lessons.

“I think all cultures, ethnicities and races should be studied throughout the year in all courses to continually talk about diversity, but I still enjoy that we have a special Black History Month program in February,” Dunham said.

When Hooker was the principal of Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School, one item on his agenda was putting more of the school’s attention on black history.

“When I came to Burney Harris, one of the things I did was say, ‘Yes, we will have (a Black History Month celebration), but I think it should be taught throughout all classes and how African-Americans have contributed to every area,’” Hooker said.

**Below:** KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: Junior Tirah Calloway participates in a black history trivia game at the Black History Month ceremony on Feb. 12. “Any effort made to bridge the gap of cultural awareness and understanding on any level is a step in a positive direction,” math department teacher Ed Hendry said.

Photo by Sophie Fernandes





Photo by Chad Rhym

**Above:** LEGACY OF SONG: Fine arts department chair Dr. Tony Rucker sings with freshman Breanna Gambrell during a chorus. The CCHS chorus, led by Rucker, performed at the Black History Month ceremony on Feb. 12. Rucker hopes the ceremony helped educate students. "It's always good to hear from someone who has lived especially civil rights and can give you that perspective," Rucker said.

Though Hendry agrees that more should be done to honor black history, he believes that it is a start to giving students a thorough education and celebration.

"Any effort made to bridge the gap of cultural awareness and understanding on any level is a step in a positive direction," Hendry said. "Unfortunately racism and injustice still exist today. Many people assume that because slavery is thought to be over, and an integrated system has been put in place, there is nothing else for the African-Americans to talk about, but that not's true."

Hendry believes that by dedicating a month to celebrating the accomplishments of black Americans, it opens the door to clearing up what black history is.

"Black History Month is a time of learning, reflection, and establishing new direction for all Americans. It creates a space for both personal and community growth," Hendry said. "It offers an opportunity to eradicate the myth that Black History is somehow only for the African-American, or that the only notable contributions of African-American culture has been in sports and entertainment."

For sophomore Maikel Atez, the occurrence of Black History Month has its benefits and drawbacks.

"I think it's important, but I also don't think it's fair that we always observe Black History Month but we never do anything for Hispanic Heritage," Atez said.

Atez said that the way to fix this would be to design time to honor both

heritages at CCHS.

"I think that (CCHS) should celebrate both of them equally or don't celebrate either one because its not fair to my part of the population," Atez said.

Junior Zulley Ramirez believes that the program should be expanded.

"We could participate in the event more, make it bigger because it's usually just a group that goes, not all the school. Nobody's actually aware of it," Ramirez said.

**"Black History Month is a time of learning, reflection, and establishing new direction for all Americans. It creates a space for both personal and community growth."**

**-- ED HENDRY,**  
math department teacher

While there are currently no plans for a future expansion of CCHS' Black History Month celebration, Rucker says that the program in place gives student an introduction and provides them with a snapshot of black history.

"It gives students an observance of what happened historically and will whet their taste to want to know more," Rucker said.

