

the tribal tribune

WANDO HIGH SCHOOL MT PLEASANT, SC
volume 41, issue 1 sept. 17, 2015



Where do we go from here?

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Where do we go from here?

Over the course of a year, numerous tragic, emotional and controversial events have opened up a discussion about race and the role it plays in everyday lives. The major events of the last year are recounted in the *Tribal Tribune's* timeline.



Michael Brown

Ferguson, Mo.

Aug. 9, 2014

After an altercation with the 18 year old, Ferguson officer Darren Wilson shot Brown 12 times. Brown died on the scene. A grand jury did not indict Wilson for the shooting.

Tamir Rice

Cleveland

Nov. 22, 2014

Tamir Rice, 12, brandishing a fake gun, was shot by police officer Timothy Loehmann. Rice died the following day. Loehmann has been charged with murder.

Freddie Gray

Baltimore

April 12, 2015

Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old black male, was arrested in Baltimore for possession of illegal switchblade. Gray fell into a coma on the drive over to the police station and was taken to the trauma center, where he was diagnosed with spinal cord injuries and died on April 19. Six officers have been charged with manslaughter.

Sandra Bland

Waller County, Texas

July 13, 2015

Sandra Bland, 28 year old black woman, was pulled over by Brian Encinia, a Texas state trooper, for a minor traffic violation. Bland was arrested after allegedly assaulting Encinia during the traffic stop on July 10. Two days later she was found hanged in a jail cell. Her death was ruled a suicide.

Alison Parker & Adam Ward

Moneta, VA

Aug. 26, 2015

In Moneta, Va., two news reporters for WDBJ, Alison Parker and Adam Ward, were killed in during a live broadcast by black male Bryce Williams, a former reporter for the station. Williams later killed himself. According to a writing by Williams, the killings were in response to the racial discrimination of the Emanuel Nine shooting in Charleston.

Eric Garner

Staten Island, N.Y.

July 17, 2014

Eric Garner, a 43-year-old black man died in Staten Island, N.Y. after a police officer had put him in a chokehold. Officers had approached him because of suspicion selling single cigarettes without tax stamps. After Garner said that he could not breathe 11 times, no CPR was performed at the scene and he was pronounced dead an hour later.

Ferguson riots

Ferguson, Mo.

Aug. 9-25, 2014

A series of protests and riots began after the shooting of Michael Brown. Violent acts of retaliation of burning cars, breaking into buildings and other acts continued after his death.

Walter Scott

North Charleston

April 4, 2015

Walter Scott, a 50-year-old black man, was pulled over for a non-functioning brake light by police officer Michael Slager. Trying to flee and unarmed, Scott was shot with eight rounds and died at the scene. Feidin Santana recorded the incident on his phone and turned it into the police department. Slager is charged with murder.

Emanuel Nine

Charleston, SC

June 17, 2015



Samuel DuBose

Cincinnati, OH

July 19, 2015

Samuel DuBose, a 43 year old black man in Cincinnati, was shot and killed by Cincinnati University police officer Ray Tensing. DuBose was sitting in his car after he had been stopped for a missing front license plate. Tensing allegedly shot him after DuBose had started his car and began to drive off.

Dep.

Darren Goforth

Harris County, Texas

Aug. 28, 2015

Deputy Darren Goforth, a 47-year-old white man, was shot several times in Harris County, Texas while pumping gas at a local station. Shannon J. Miles. Miles was charged with capital murder for allegedly gunning down the officer.

Unity, understanding a key to progressing past racism, violence

Jane Daniel

co-writing editor

Why are some people racists? Is it their upbringing? Their education? The society they live in? With regards to the origin of racial prejudice and bias, Jen Wright, a professor of psychology at the College of Charleston, said that there are some key biological and psychological characteristics in humans that come into play.

"We are hard-wired to identify group differences," Wright said. "We have certain expectations about the way we interact with members of our groups that are not translated into how we're supposed to treat other groups. In fact, we tend to think of other groups as potentially suspicious because they're not members of our group."

Suspicion is one thing, but hatred, resentment and racism are different things entirely. So how does identifying differences translate into aggression and racial bias? Wright draws the line between competition between groups and the subjugation of others.

"[Groups] might be in competition and they might have negative thoughts about each other," Wright said. "But they don't treat them like they're other than human, which is certainly one of the things that happens with racism. That's where dehumanization comes in."

"Part of it's a disregard for the humanity of other people, so there's a tendency to reduce people to animals. And this is metaphorical in some sense, but at some neurological level, it's not metaphorical at all and it becomes literal," Wright said. "We lose the ability to empathize and sympathize with that other group of people. This sort of underlying belief that a certain group of people are less human in some fundamental way... that facilitates violent actions."

In essence, the violence of racism stems from an underlying suspicion caused by an unfamiliarity with diversity, as well as a subconscious effort to reduce others to subhuman status in order to justify an irrational fear and disliking. While understanding the mind of a racist is definitely essential to moving beyond said mentality, just what should be done remains up for debate.

Part of advancing beyond racist attitudes is focusing on the positive as opposed to dwelling on the negative, something senior and vice president of SAME -- a club geared towards promoting the advancement of students from different cultures and backgrounds -- Andrew Grant does when he considers what effects the past year of unfortunate events has had on our community.

"It's really brought our community together," Grant said. "A lot of people have taken initiative to go to rallies where white and black people can get together and talk about the issues going on. It really has brought

us together.

For senior Shekinah Campbell, president of the SAME club, improving racial tensions and relations starts in the classroom.

"That's where people are most of the time, they're in school, going to class," Campbell said. "There's not really enough training to know what to do in sensitive situations like diversity [issues] so if we were able to have a class to teach [people] how to be sensitive, anything of that nature."

SAME adviser Shawntell Pace said, when it gets right down to it, people need to ignore their discomforts and fears and take real, tangible action when dealing with these issues.

"I think what happens is people feel so uncomfortable even talking about it to even start the conversation to produce change that they kinda stay in their comfort zone. So [it's important to be] open minded and to see different perspectives," Pace said. "Even though you may not feel the same way, there are people who feel that way and it doesn't make it less invaluable. Sometimes you need to step outside your comfort zone, be uncomfortable for once, and not just try to stick to your own kind and your own perspective."

Above all, the most important thing to do in order to progress and prevent a slip back is to remain positive. Wright warned against the potential dangers of reacting with violence and resentment.

"Obviously there's a lot of anger and there's a lot of hatred and frustration on both sides of the issue, but if the response is one that resists the temptation to further divide and reinforces the fact that we are not separate, we're together in this, we're human beings with the same qualities and the same attributes, then it's likely to help us continue to move in the right direction," Wright said. "However, if it goes unchecked or if some of the responses are an increase in the exaggerations of our differences and an increase in the in-group out-group perspective and an increase in racial tension, then it's just another opportunity to spread the fear and this attitude... The social progress we make can be taken away, unfortunately."

"This sort of underlying belief that a certain group of people are less human in some fundamental way...that facilitates violent actions."

Jen Wright, psychology professor at the College of Charleston

Monumental decisions

Removal of the Confederate flag raises questions about other historical monuments and freedom of expression

Erin Slowey

Co-writing editor

One hundred and fifty-four years of controversy.

It's a symbol that once represented the Confederate States during the American Civil War. To some it is a symbol of heritage, but to others it sparks feelings of racism, prejudice and discrimination.

It all came to a head in July when a 21-year-old man entered the Charleston Emanuel African Episcopal Methodist Church -- the oldest AME church in the South -- and shot nine people at the Bible study on July 17.

Within three weeks, the Confederate flag, which had flown on the state capital's grounds since 1962, was taken down. Originally placed on the State House dome, the flag was moved to fly next to a fallen Confederate soldiers' memorial in front of the State House in 2000.

After the shooting, Gov. Nikki Haley, a Republican, made the call for the flag to be furled and moved to a history museum. After heated debate, the state legislature supported Haley's removal of the flag.

On July 10 it was lowered for the last time.

But what does the removal of the Confederate flag from the State House mean for the flag -- and other monuments of bygone eras in history?

"It is acceptable and appropriate that the State removes the Confederate flag from the statehouse and state grounds," AP U.S. History teacher Daniel Gidick said.

The Confederate flag was even lowered at Fort Sumter where the first shots were fired during the Civil War. The flag is now within the walls of Fort Sumter as part of the museum.

Gidick, however, said there is a value in learning history.

"If the job of the museum was to educate, then why would you take something down that could [do] that?" Gidick said. "For example,

there are British flags at Yorktown. It's [within] a historical context and I hope not to see it removed from museums."

Gidick also adds that he believes that the government should not remove Confederate flags from Civil War reenactments because they are an educational setting.

One of the reactions locally to the shooting was a new rule enacted by the Charleston County School District that forbids the Confederate flag be displayed on apparel or vehicles on school grounds.

Rev. Chris Collins, a member of Charleston County School Board, said the initial reaction has not garnered much negative comment.

"There was no negative reaction that I am aware of," he said. "Maybe one or two emails discussing the matter. Our community was very supportive of the decision."

Some students, however, are concerned about the new regulation.

"I have seen [students] react emotionally and with passion through Facebook about their disagreement with the new addition to the code of conduct," junior Peyton McKellips said.

Junior Sal Hodson believes limiting apparel now could cause further limitations in the future.

"I believe we have the freedom to express ourselves," Hodson said. "I think that if the Confederate flag is not allowed in dress code, anything could be next."

Senior Laura Wintjen believes the flag should be removed from the State House, but supports idea of personal self-expression.

"I can see both sides of the argument,"

Wintjen said. "I think it [the flag] shouldn't be a part of the State House, but I think people individually should be able to express themselves however they want."

Yet as the nation grows and becomes more progressive in acceptance, there are those who support the removal of the flag because of the negative connotation it carries for many Americans.

"The Confederate flag is an historical relic worthy only of academic study.

"The Confederate flag is an historical relic worthy only of academic study. While many people believe the flag is an innocuous symbol of Dixie culture, or of state's rights, many more Americans perceive the flag as an insidious symbol of disunity and division."

English teacher Simon Schatmeyer

While many people believe the flag is an innocuous symbol of Dixie culture, or of state's rights, many more Americans perceive the flag as an insidious symbol of disunity and division," English teacher Simon Schatmeyer said. "Those who insist on proudly flying the flag under the thinly veiled guise of historical or cultural significance are guilty of perpetuating -- consciously or unconsciously -- the cycle of violence and hate in this country."

While the Confederate flag itself is a heated topic, there's also the matter of Civil War monuments erected in the past that praise those who had been a part of the Confederacy. Are such monuments susceptible to the same scrutiny and opposition? Senior Dani LaFontaine said that such commemorations are simply a part of history and should be left alone.

"I think it's different for me because I'm from the North," she said.

"I've always grown up on the side of the Union, away from the controversy... I think that makes me unbiased. I don't feel pride or anger with [the monuments]. I just like the history."



Sam Becker // provided photo

Breaking the Chains of Racism

Metaphorical chains hold people back every day. Relationships, family, social expectations -- even race. After the nine tragic murders at the Emanuel AME church on June 17, the Charleston area is reexamining its beliefs, values and where we go from here.

The Tribal Tribune considers the issue of race in this special section.