

EDUCATION IN REAL TIME

A Front Row Seat to the Civil Rights Experience

By AC Dunlap, Columnist | February 28, 2022

It is extremely critical that the community get on board to continue to educate our black children. Programs like the Civil Rights Heritage Tour of the South gives students a front row seat to civil rights advocacy and can help prepare them to become the next generation of leaders.”

As the President of NAACP Columbus, Nana Jones Watson is invested in the education and awareness of the African American community. Fighting social injustice on all levels, she along with the organization is embedded to train and connect youth and individuals with experiences such as the tour.

“I really feel that the tour is a great experience for students, particularly our black students,” said Watson. “They don’t learn about Black history in the school system, but there is no American history without African-American history. Experiences like the tour will help our youth to grasp and to embed history into their DNA. We encourage more of our youth to participate in tours. Seeing it and reading it, they have a front-row seat to civil advocacy and need to take advantage of it.”

Along with the NAACP, Watson is working to empower youth with the tools needed to prepare them to be the change agents of the next generation. Connecting with organizations like The Civil Rights Heritage Tour of the South TheHeritageTours.com founded and co-led by Napoleon A. Bell, II who also a member of the

Columbus Chapter of the NAACP, has helped to foster these tools. “The fight for civil rights and justice has been going on for centuries. Change did not happen overnight. Our youth must learn patience if they are going to be the next generation of civil rights advocates. This Tour is one that fosters patience and provides resources and experiences that raise awareness for our youth.”

Encouraging youth not to be afraid to step out and speak the truth in their own way. Watson believes educational experiences such as the tour, seeing history in real-time, will provoke youth to raise their voice. “Youth need to speak out in their own way. Maybe by writing a letter to the Editor, City Council, or County Commissioners, or engaging the churches they attend. Youth should be encouraged just to make a difference.”

As Watson challenges our youth to lift their voice, she challenges adults to do the same. “Too many people have lost their lives and fought so that we could live. Black people need to be represented in all professions, communities, and states, tackling issues such as health, housing, crime, and education. Change takes active involvement from us all.”



NANA JONES WATSON,
President of NAACP *Columbus*



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-and-
NAPOLEON
BELL, II**