

the STANDARD

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An Electronic Publication of the AEJMC Commission on the Status of Minorities (CSM)

Chairman's Corner: Moving forward on multiple fronts in 2016

By the Rev. Kyle Huckins, Ph.D., CSM Chairman

The Commission on the Status of Minorities is working to support the cause of historically underrepresented groups in the journalism and mass communication profession, academy and AEJMC by uniting with like-minded programs, promoting the attraction and retention of minority faculty and graduate students, and getting a new place on the Web.



of minority college educators is very much worthy of our parent organization's financial and philosophical support. I have done interviews with Felix Gutierrez and others as well as assisted with recordings, and I can testify firsthand that the material gained is quite helpful to advancing the legacy and pertinence of minorities in AEJMC, the profession and academia at large.

At the CSM business meeting in San Francisco in August, members voted to make a \$300 donation to the Trailblazers of Diversity project headed by Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez of The University of Texas at Austin. I reported this to the AEJMC board of directors at its meeting at the conclusion of the annual conference, and I strongly asserted this valuable effort dedicated to preserving the voices and stories

That meeting also saw me lobbying for speakers from the historically underrepresented in plenary sessions at the 2016 annual conference in Minneapolis. I stated that particularly a keynote address from such ranks would send a positive message to AEJMC's minorities, who are increasingly disappointed with the organization's lack of diversity in high-profile arenas.

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CSM Officers

Head

Kyle Huckins

Azusa Pacific University

kylehuckins@yahoo.com

Vice-Head

Marquita Smith

John Brown University

MSmith@jbu.edu

Secretary

Cathy Jackson

Norfolk State University

smokicat@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Nathaniel Frederick, II

Winthrop University

frederickn@winthrop.edu

16 shots in Chicago: A journalism professor's reflection

By Dr. Curtis Lawrence

In November, Chicago became the latest city to react to a longtime, nationwide pattern of unarmed black men being killed by white policeman. On Nov. 24, two days before Thanksgiving, police released video of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald being shot while walking away from police 13 months earlier. McDonald was shot 16 times by Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke, charged with murder the same day the video was released.

It was a Tuesday evening and I was standing in the hallway with Dr. Lillian Williams and a handful of students from the Communication and Media Innovation department at Columbia

College Chicago. Dr. Williams and I both teach in the journalism program and were watching news coverage of the video on one of the mounted televisions in our open hallway where students congregate and work at computer stations.



Watching the video of Laquan McDonald for the first time in its entirety, I realized my role as a journalism professor would require a lot of me. First, I'd have to help my students process witnessing this atrocious act – a young man being pummeled with bullets, falling to the ground, then shaking and twitching as he continued to take



shots while he was down and clearly not a threat to anyone.

I listened to the students, black and white, try to process their outrage. Some considered whether they would join the protests that evening

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CSM's Planning Committee is seeking to identify panelists for our commission's session at the '16 convention, which is slated to focus on how to hire and keep a diverse professoriate and graduate student body. Thanks to Tony DeMars, Osita Iroegbu and Maccamas Ikpah for stepping up to serve with me on this committee.

My survey of the available research on percentage of minority faculty finds virtually no progress in several years in attracting a greater share of underrepresented groups to those posts; in fact, there has been in some areas a regression. Graduate programs likewise are largely devoid of minority students, meaning it's un-

likely faculty ranks will gain ground in multiculturalism in the near future unless strong measures are taken. In a world and nation that are increasingly diverse, this is very much unacceptable.

The commission is getting a new website to better showcase its causes, research and other activities. CSMDiversity.org is up and running, and is much easier to update than our former main site and address. CSM will forward traffic and material from its old address to the new and invites contributions of writing, photography, audio and video pertinent to the commission's membership to go on its website. Contact me at kylehuckins@yahoo.com about your items, or, if they are specifically for CSM's convention newsletter, send them to Newsletter Editor Nathaniel Frederick at nfrederick2@gmail.com. Thanks to Mas Biswas for help on the new site.

A letter to Dorothy Bland

Jointly From the CSM and MAC Division

Dear Dean Dorothy Bland, We hope this email message finds you well.

We at the AEJMC's Minorities and Communication Division (MAC) and Commission on the Status of Minorities (CSM) are aware of the issues surrounding reaction to your Dallas Morning News article, "I Was Caught 'Walking While Black.'"

We wanted to inform you that we strongly condemn the move and online petition to remove you from the Dean's position of the Mayborn School of Journalism. We believe you have every right to express your perspective and feelings about the incident you encountered during your walk in your neighborhood on Oct. 24.

The AEJMC's Minorities and Communication Division (MAC) is committed to advancing research, teaching and professional freedom and responsibility scholarship and initiatives that explore the relationship between racial and ethnic minorities and mass communication. The Commission on the Status of Minorities (CSM) fights to advance

the cause of historically underrepresented groups in media, academia and AEJMC.

MAC and CSM recognize the importance of leadership diversity in journalism and mass communication education. Therefore, we wish you much success as you continue to lead journalism and mass communication programs. You have been a valued member of the Minorities and Communication Division and Commission on the Status of Minorities. We greatly appreciate your contribution to our division and commission.

Please let us know if we can be supportive to you in any way since the situation you have experienced and are experiencing is not an easy process.

Sincerely,

Officers of Minorities and Communication Division (2015 - 2016) and Officers of Commission on the Status of Minorities (2015 - 2016) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

Finally, many thanks to Nathaniel and our other officers for 2015-2017, Vice Chairwoman Marquita Smith and Secretary Cathy Jackson. Your work is much appreciated.

Know that the Commission on the Status of Minorities stands ready to defend, protect and promote the historically underrepresented. Have a great 2016 in shining a light on diversity at your school!

Achievements

Kyle Huckins, CSM chairman, has won awards from the Religion Newswriters Association for reporting on faith, Evangelical Press Association for best standing column, and Indiana Society of Professional Journalists for overall column writing as well as coverage of issues of concern to minorities.



Jenny Korn, Ph.D., won the 2015 Carl J. Couch Internet Research Award at the annual conference of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) in Phoenix.

Korn has been a Ph.D. student in the Dept. of Communication Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

16 shots

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as mostly young people took to the streets of downtown Chicago. I encouraged them to follow their hearts, but to be careful and safe. Later, I learned that a couple of them had participated.

I also had discussions with students on social media. One of my students wrote:

“It took 400 days for a disturbing video to be released to all of the world to see. UNFAIR! Yes I understand the world is going through some things, but here at home, no threat of any faction from Iraq, the Middle East or ANYWHERE can amount to the killings we’ve seen from uniformed, white officers against Black men. I close an amazing chapter of my life to come home to yet another sad book, another sad story of unwarranted and egregious acts by those who are supposed to serve and protect. Sadly, until something is done, this repetitive scene will continue to be played over and over again.

“I just pray I will never be put in a situation to judge whether or not blue flashing lights will be the last ones I see. #LaquanMcDonald”

I responded:

“Lillian Williams and I watched the dash-cam video in the Orange Area with a few students last night. Who could not be angry watching that. Then I feel a sense of pride knowing that there are young journalists like yourself, who will not let injustice go unnoticed or unanswered. Stay strong



and focused.”

As reaction to the video release unfolded, I saw my responsibilities increasing. I had to offer advice that was wise, and as an adult, partly responsible for my students’ safety, I had to be careful with my words. I had to tell my young journalists that they did make a difference and their work would make a difference, even when I had doubts myself.

On Nov. 25, the day before Thanksgiving, I took my journalism class to cover a press conference by the Chicago City Council’s Black Caucus. We split up with some students covering the press conference, which included comments from aldermen and from young activists on the front lines of the protest. We returned to our class newsroom and wrote a collective story that was published on ChicagoTalks, our journalism program’s online news site.

On the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year known as Black Friday, activists targeted Chicago’s historic Magnificent Mile. It’s a collection of the country’s classiest department stores, boutiques and restaurants. A longtime journalist

friend of mine urged me to meet him there to witness and report the protest. I wrestled with myself about whether to attend or enjoy a well-deserved day off. But this friend has a way to tug on a conscience, so I went.

I was glad that I did. It was heartening to see the young people on the front lines – some of them challenging the old guard activists and expressing their anger in stark, unapologetic chants: “No justice, no peace, no racist police.” And throughout the protest others shouted: “No Justice, no shopping,” and “Thirteen months, 16 shots,” reminding that it took more than a year before the video of the shooting was released or the police officer was charged.

My next challenge will be to determine what’s next. Will I continue to observe and report events as I have done most of my life. Or do my responsibilities as a teacher, veteran journalist and community elder require more. In my office at Columbia, I look to my bookshelf at two of the framed photos there: Vernon Jarrett and Lutrelle Palmer. I’m sure they will have the answers.

Keeping Faith: Emanuel killings attempt to sidetrack unity in diversity

By the Rev. Kyle Huckins, Ph.D., CSM Chairman

I headed to South Bend, Indiana, early on the morning of the first Sunday after a white assailant shot to death nine blacks at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. I was to preach at Saints Memorial Church of God in Christ, where I would be the only Caucasian in the overwhelmingly

African-American church’s service.

On the face, one might say the timing appeared inopportune.

I walked into Saints Memorial’s education wing and was immediately taken by a friendly guide to see Pastor Carl Steen. He warmly welcomed me into his office. Our talk brought up I had with me copies of

Keeping Faith

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my book of newspaper columns on religion. Steen then said on behalf of the church he'd purchase every one I had brought.

I preached and had a very positive response, with a third or more of the 50 or so attending coming up to the altar for prayer. Pastor Steen told me following the service I had an open invitation to contact him about bringing a message at his church anytime I was coming to the area.

I was overwhelmed with the day of blessings. In actuality, the timing of my Saints Memorial engagement was perfect, because it showed the heart of love, acceptance and unity of the congregation's believers specifically and, I believe, the vast majority of African-American Christians generally.

The Charleston shootings came at a Bible study after a youthful white man, identified by law enforcement as 21-year-old Dylann Roof, came in for the first time and sat next to the Rev. Clementa Pinckney. At first, all seemed fine, recounted witnesses, but as the group of 12 and Roof began to discuss Scripture, the young fellow became argumentative.

An hour into the meeting, the shooter pulled out a .45-caliber hand-gun and aimed it at an elderly church member. Roof allegedly said: "I have to do it. You rape our women and you're taking over our country. And you have to go." Accounts say he then started firing, yelling racist epithets throughout, and fled the church when done with his mayhem.

As reporters surveyed Roof's social-media pages following his arrest on murder and gun charges, they found him shown in pictures with the flags of apartheid-era South Africa, white-rule Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the U.S. Confederacy. Those who knew him said he'd made racist statements that frightened them.

"There is a subculture that sees whites as victims and minorities as predators," said the Rev. David Daniels III, a professor at Chicago's McCormick Theological Seminary and

a leader in African-American Christian thought. "I am hoping that now that subculture will be denounced and even challenged."

Daniels also expressed concern that retail outlets and other readily recognizable institutions in American life quietly feed this subculture through selling racially tinged products.

His is a difficult point; for example, while some people would consider the South's Civil War banner to be a racist symbol, others might say they see it as a remembrance of independence and achievement. I think the heinous crime at Emanuel AME as well as the racially tense era we live in demand we be willing to forgo our personal preferences in favor of the common good, which is best served by avoiding offense to historically marginalized groups.

Racism is one of the devil's main devices, as it draws narcissists who think everyone must be like they are to be right. Satan is the greatest in such conceit, believing he's best qualified to run the universe when he had nothing to do with it coming into being. However, if we say someone else's

culture can inform ours, then we're realizing we don't have all the answers but together we can do better than separately.

Those most directly affected by the Charleston killings are continuing to reach out to bless, not curse. "We pray and ask for the God of love, mercy and grace to comfort, restore and give peace," said the AME Church Council of Bishops in a statement on the shootings. Legal hearings for Roof saw survivors and victims' family members forgiving the accused killer.

Will there be more horrors like the Emanuel murders? "I don't know," Daniels told me. "One time is enough."

Let's pray this dark episode convicts us to appreciate diversity and integrate purposefully in the church, classroom and our world at large.

Huckins now has out a second edition of his nationally award-winning columns, "Race, Faith and Politics Today," which also has college journalism and theology curriculum available. For details, see his site, www.racefaithandpoliticstoday.com.

Routledge Releases Cultural Communication Textbook

By Dr. Maria Len-Rios

In January 2016, Routledge books released the first edition of "Cross-Cultural Journalism: Communicating Strategically About Diversity" edited by María E. Len-Ríos (Georgia) and Earnest L. Perry (Missouri).

This introductory textbook provides a practical guide for budding journalists and other communication professionals about how to write about and communicate with people of cultures and backgrounds that may be different than their own.

Relying on the Missouri Method, the book provides students with real-

world journalistic, advertising, and PR examples of how to go about creating news stories, print ads, or PR campaigns that take culture into account.

Topics include: Talking Across Difference, Religion, Class, Gender, Crime Reporting, LGBT issues, Health Disparities, Generational Differences and much more.

To learn more about the book and what others have to say about it, please visit <https://www.routledge.com/products/9781138784895>.