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San Rafael

Gather @Grand Speaker Series

Racism: Roots, Resolve, Results

Miss Evers' Boys (Movie #6)

Thursday, May 20, 2021

San Rafael, CA

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Presenters

Sr. Barbara Green, OP -

Convener of Gather as if @ Grand and

Designer of the Racism Unit

Sr. Patricia Dougherty, OP -

Professor Emerita of History

Linda Carter Pete – Film Series Curator,

Dominican Alumni Class of 1991, 1993 and 1994

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Group Norms

- Everyone is welcome here.
- Everyone should participate respectfully.
- Engage – don't avoid.
- Listen to others. Share the microphone.
- Be prepared to be uncomfortable.
- Use “I – statements” – it shows personal accountability and facilitates open-mindedness.

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Racism is the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. Systemic racism comes from American history, institutions and culture.

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Racism is engrained in our society. Our task today is to continue to examine and discuss the roots of racism and take actions that support

“Black Lives Do Matter!”

- The movies *Amistad* and *Roots* showed a glimpse of the racist, dehumanizing treatment of African people in the 1700s.
- During Reconstruction (late 1800s) free Blacks were anxiously awaiting the right to own land, achieve education, exercise their right to vote, and run for and win public office.

Now, let’s discuss the Tuskegee Study to see how Black lives were deliberately devalued in our highly developed nation of America.

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“Miss Evers’ Boys” Study Guide Questions 2,3 & 4 (Break out Groups & Report Back)

2. Describe Miss Evers role in the Tuskegee Study. What is your opinion of her actions? Did Eunice obey the Nurse’s oath that she said at the beginning of the Senate Subcommittee Hearing? Explain how racism affected her actions.
3. Describe Dr. Sam Brodus’s role in the Tuskegee Study. What was his motivation. What is your opinion of his actions when Miss Evers questioned him about the Tuskegee study? Did Dr. Brodus follow the Hippocratic Oath? Explain how racism affected his actions.
3. Why did Dr. Douglas say that the Black men could not get the penicillin? What do you think motivated him to lead the Tuskegee Study? How did you feel when you heard how none of the hospitals would help because the test subjects were placed on a list that stated they should not receive medical treatment because they were participants in the experiment? Did Dr. Douglas follow the Hippocratic Oath? Explain how racism affected his actions.

***Be prepared to have one person from each group report back to the larger group on how racism affected the decisions and actions of these three characters.**



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“Miss Evers’ Boys” Commentary from the Film Curator

Racism is the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior.

Under the common law, murder is an intentional killing that is:

1. unlawful (in other words, not legally justified), and
2. committed with "malice aforethought."

Malice aforethought doesn't mean that a killer has to have acted out of spite or hate. It exists if a defendant intends to kill someone without legal justification or excuse. In addition, in most states, malice aforethought isn't limited to intentional killings. It can also exist if the killer:

- a. intentionally inflicts serious bodily harm that causes the victim's death, or
- b. behaves in a way that shows extreme, reckless disregard for life and results in the victim's death.

285 Black men were not treated with medication so that scientists could study the effects of syphilis on their bodies after they died, to find out if Blacks were inferior to whites. Is this an example of “reckless disregard for life”? Should someone have been investigated for murder?



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“Miss Evers’ Boys” Study Guide Question 5 (Large Group Discussion)

The Senate Subcommittee declared the Tuskegee Study outrageous and intolerable. They said that the study was human experimentation. The following was offered to the victims:

- Survivors were provided with penicillin for life. Not a single adverse reaction to the penicillin was ever reported.
- Survivors were given \$37,500 and heirs of the deceased syphilitics were given \$15,000.

- 20 years later, In 1997, President Clinton gave an apology for the victims:

“To the survivors, to the wives and family members, the children and the grandchildren, I say what you know: No power on Earth can give you back the lives lost, the pain suffered, the years of internal torment and anguish. What was done cannot be undone. But we can end the silence. We can stop turning our heads away. We can look at you in the eye and finally say on behalf of the American people, what the United States government did was shameful, and I am sorry.”

What could any doctor, actor or politician say today that could persuade any African American to get a COVID-19 vaccine now, knowing how America has treated their ancestors in the past?

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Resolve Challenge for April/May (Group Discussion)

- Before viewing “Miss Evers’ Boys”, share something that you learned from the articles about the affects of racism and how it has impacted African Americans health and attitude about healthcare.
- What can our healthcare system or government do to improve healthcare for African Americans?
- If African Americans cannot trust the legal system, or the health care system or their political leaders - how can African Americans be active participants in the democratic way of life in America?

How can America consider itself “The United States” when racism and hatred still divide our people and Black lives are not valued!

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Resolve challenge for the summer of 2021

Keep up the **heart work** that we have started.

Take risks - If you are successful you will be happy. If you are not successful you will be wise.

Continue to watch movies, read, and strive for humanizing dialogue to end racism!

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Next Movie: Ruby Bridges (study guide available on 6/15/21)



When bright six-year-old Ruby is chosen to be the first African-American student to integrate her local New Orleans elementary school, she is subjected to the true ugliness of racism for the very first time. But guided by the love of her mother and father, Ruby's heroic struggle for a better education becomes a lesson for us all.

**Available to rent on
you tube and Amazon**

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*Thank you for participating in our discussion today.
The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael appreciate your support as
we work toward our Vision:*

“We reverence and affirm the inherent dignity of each person.
We will work for transformation of attitudes and systems
that deprive any person of dignity.”

