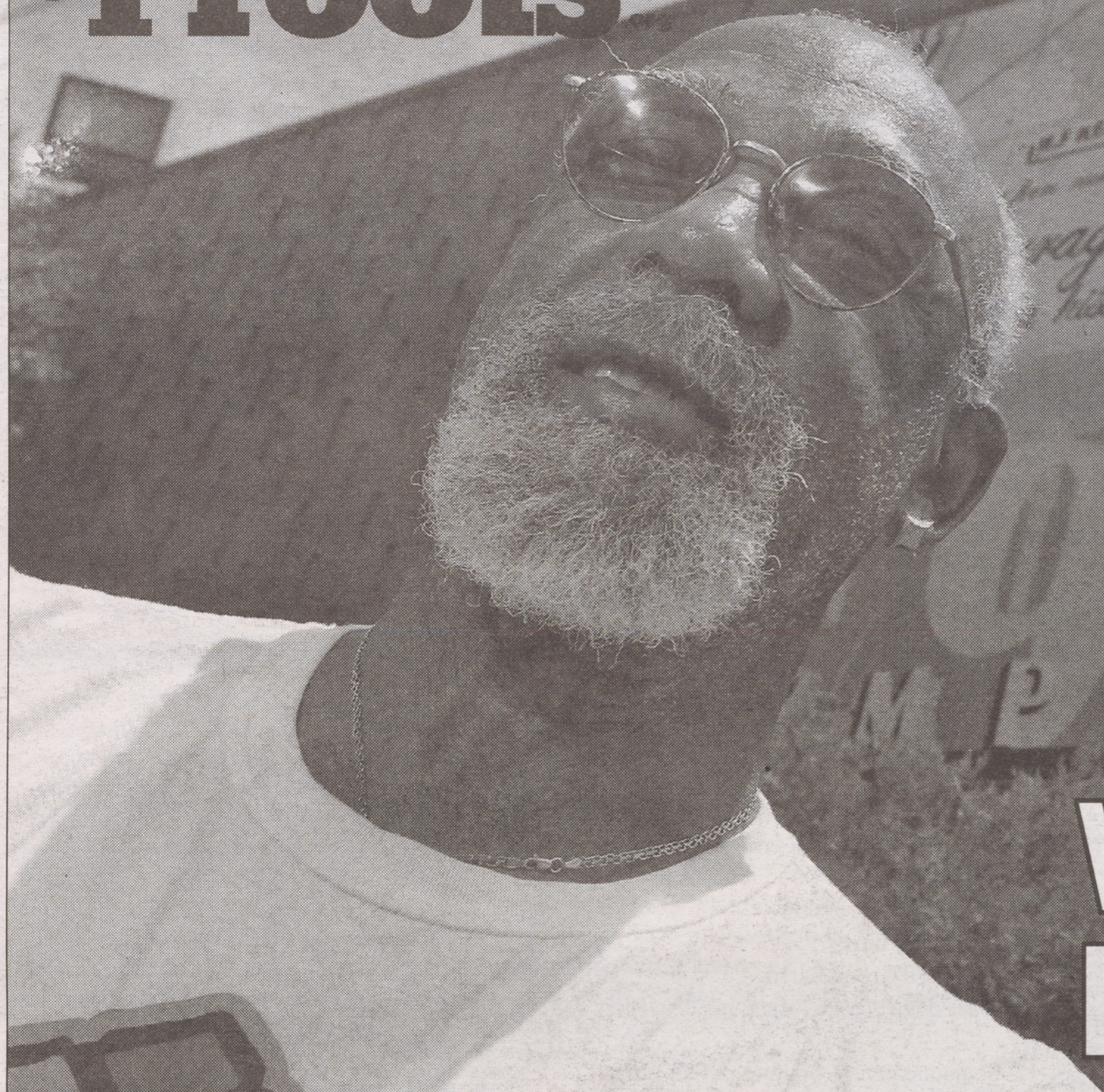


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With heads and hands held high

REUTERS/ALEX GALLARDO

John Carlos, participant of the 1968 Olympic Games, stands in front of a mural made by students on the campus, at Palm Springs (Calif.) High School, where he is a teacher and counselor.

Olympian John Carlos reflects on the highly public and controversial stand for human rights he and others took in 1968

BY JULES BOYKOFF
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

At the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, John Carlos rocked the world. After winning the bronze medal in the 200-meter dash he—along with gold medalist Tommie Smith—thrust his black-glove-clad fist into the sky to reflect solidarity with the civil rights movement and the strength of the human spirit. They wore black socks and no shoes to represent impoverished people who had no shoes of their own. Meanwhile, Peter Norman, the Australian silver medalist, stood with them in solidarity, pinning an Olympic Project for Human Rights button on his sweat jacket. It was an iconic moment that placed them under the international spotlight. Following the controversial ceremony, they paid a price for their courageous gesture. Carlos and Smith were dismissed from the Olympic Village. The athletes were bombarded with death threats against them and their families. They were pilloried in the media as unpatriotic, with young reporter Brent Musberger writing in the Chicago American that Carlos and Smith were “unimaginative blokes” and, even worse, “black-skinned storm troopers” who had brought shame on their country. Carlos persevered, successfully navigating a career in the NFL with the Philadelphia Eagles and with the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League. He also represented Puma and carried the Olympic torch

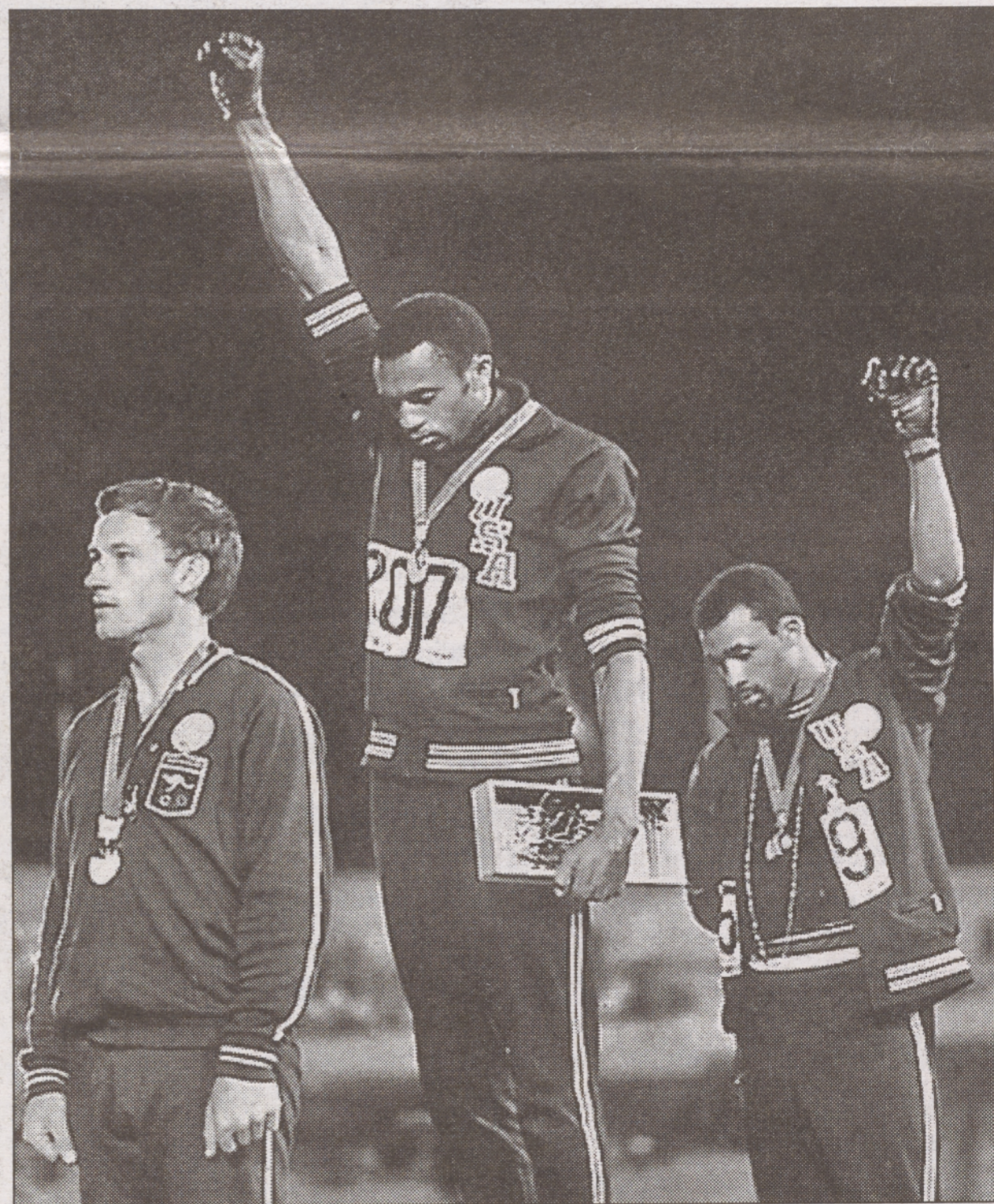
at the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles. He later worked with the city of Los Angeles to create possibilities for underserved communities. Carlos has continued to live true to his political beliefs, standing up for civil liberties and justice and against racism and greed. In 2011 he spoke at Occupy Wall Street in New York. Earlier this month, he was in Oregon to deliver the 2012-2013 Whiteley Distinguished Lecture at Pacific University in Forest Grove. Today he is a high school guidance counselor in Palm Springs, Calif.

Jules Boykoff: Why did you do your medal-stand protest at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City?

John Carlos: To set a standard. To have society show its best face. To bring attention to the plight of people who were less fortunate. To wake up the consciousness of those who had let their conscience go dormant. And to encourage people to stand for what's right as opposed to standing for nothing.

J.B.: Your act generated a huge range of responses. For instance, one disgruntled person from Racine, Wisconsin, wrote in a letter to Avery Brundage, the International Olympic Committee president, “The colored men who disgraced our country should be shot for treason and nothing less!” On the other hand, numerous people from around the world wrote Brundage to say your act was dignified and that you

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AP PHOTO

This now-iconic image from the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City shows bronze medalist John Carlos, (right) with gold medalist Tommie Smith raising their fists on the podium and wearing Olympic Project for Human Rights badges. The third athlete is silver medalist Peter Norman from Australia, who wore a Human Rights badge to show his support for the two Americans.

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Harm reduction for the 21st century

A talk with Harm Reduction Coalition president Allan Clear

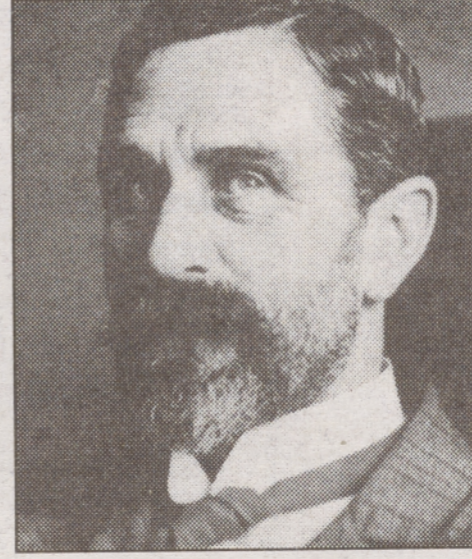
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