

Bernie Foster
Founder/PublisherBobbie Dore Foster
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News EditorPatricia Irvin
Graphic DesignerMonica J. Foster
Seattle Office CoordinatorSusan Fried
Photographer

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415 N. Killingsworth St.
P.O. Box 5455
Portland, OR 97228Telephone (503) 285-5555
Fax: (503) 285-2900

info@theskanner.com

www.TheSkanner.com

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Opinion

Graduation is Just the First Hurdle

Marvel's "Black Panther," Chadwick Boseman, graduated from Howard University with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts (BFA) in 2000.

On May 12, Boseman returned to his alma mater to address the Class of 2018, while receiving an honorary degree.

The Howard University graduation is one of more than 100 Historically Black College and University graduations and one of more than 4,000 general graduations across the country.

On May 5, White House Correspondent April Ryan, brought down the house at Bennett College in North Carolina.

In Arkansas on the same day, journalist and political commentator Sophia Nelson, made lasting remarks during the Philander Smith College commencement exercise.

All across the nation, families are gathering, people are celebrating and graduations are being hailed as an occasion of joy.

However, despite these many festivities, if you are a Black American who graduated from the University of Florida (UF), your achievements may have been marred by the horrible memory of faculty marshals physically pushing you off of the stage, after you decided to celebrate your Black Greek (fraternity) pride, with the execution of a few "steps."

More than 20 students were assaulted by the unidentified faculty member (although some say he is a chemistry



Julianne Malveaux

NNPA
Columnist

lecturer), who is now on paid leave.

Why would the university continue to pay someone who seems to have differentially attacked Black students, as apparently no White students were assaulted or pushed off of the stage?

This lecturer is a menace to society and college students, who should not be exposed to his racism, either on stage or in a classroom.

According to The New York Times, UF President W. Kent Fuchs apologized to the affected students and left a personal message of apology on Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity member Oliver Telusma's voicemail, due to the incident.

However, from where I sit, President Fuchs should track that student down along with all of the others and visit them face-to-face.

The UF incident reminds Black students that graduation is but one of the many hurdles they must clear.

Every day, every single day, they face the possibility of pernicious racism, differential treatment, and the threat of law enforcement to compel compliance with the most foolish of laws and norms, spoken or unspoken.

That's why Holly Hylton, the White woman who managed a Philadelphia Starbucks, felt

free to call the police on two Black men after they had been seated, without ordering anything.

That's why a hysterical White female bigot, called the police on a Black man, who was barbecuing in a public park in Oakland, California, where barbecuing is customary.

That's why the police were called on three Black women (and a White man), because they failed to wave or smile when they exited an Airbnb in Rialto, California, and were detained for 45 minutes despite possessing proof that they had reserved their space.

“I want the graduates to know that their place is everyplace

That's why the police wrestled a 25-year-old Black woman to the ground (exposing her bare breasts) in an Alabama Waffle House, after she asked for plastic cutlery and an ignorant employee reportedly said "she did not know her place," and the beat goes on and on and on.

The police are too often called to put Black people in their place, to force them to comply, to reinforce the tenet of White supremacy; the notion that when we see a White person, we must shuck and jive and smile. So-called law enforcement officers become servants of racism, who want us in our place.

I want the graduates to

know that their place is everyplace.

Class of 2018, your place is in that Starbucks at the table, order or not. Your place is in that Waffle House, getting the utensils you requested. Your place is at the lake in Oakland, burning those bones on your grill. Your place is on that stage at UF.

Resistance has a high price. Who wants to go to jail and end up, like Sandra Bland, whose mysterious death in Texas still has not been solved? Who wants to be handcuffed, humiliated, exposed, and maligned, just for asking a simple question?

Starbucks will close thousands of stores to the tune of millions of dollars for unconscious bias training. But who will train these biased police officers and the racists who call them, because their feelings are bruised when no one waves at them?

The Class of 2018 will learn, as have millions of other Black Americans, that racism is alive and well.

They've cleared a hurdle with graduation, but even as some cross the stage, they are being reminded that there are many more hurdles to clear, to survive in our unfortunately racist nation.

Perhaps though, the Class of 2018, will be among those to dismantle the racist hurdles.

Perhaps in the process of clearing other hurdles (graduate and professional school, marriage and children, artificial intelligence and gentrification), they will also find the wherewithal to eliminate racial barriers to success.

The Racial Politics of the Israeli State (Part 2)

In my last column, I addressed the murder of Palestinian protesters by Israeli state officers. The racial politics of the Israeli state were also demonstrated by another recent action: the April 3 reneging on an agreement on the handling of African migrants.

The Israeli political establishment goes out of its way to present Israel as a civilized democracy. The hypocrisy of this can, of course, be seen in the apartheid system created to oppress and suppress the Palestinian people. But it can also be demonstrated in actions towards African migrants.

Over the years, African migrants, seeking refugee from war, political repression, poverty, and environmental devastation, have entered Israel in search of a safe haven. This population, which Prime Minister Netanyahu and his right-wing clique have termed "infiltrators," has come to oc-



Bill Fletcher Jr.

The Global African

cupy a rung in the social hierarchy reserved for poor and disenfranchised labor. Much like undocumented workers in the United States, these African migrants are subject

“Much like undocumented workers in the United States, African migrants in Israel are subject to various forms of abuse

to various forms of abuse including harassment from employers and government alike. In January 2014, on a visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, I witnessed demonstrations by African migrants in Tel Aviv

as part of a protest against the barbaric treatment that they have received when imprisoned.

The Netanyahu administration originally came to an agreement with the United Nations — after threatening to deport these migrants to their countries of origin — to send them to safer locations. Returning the migrants to their countries of origin would, in some cases, be nothing short of a death sentence.

of the migrants unclear, but also leaving unclear whether there are to be further negotiations towards an acceptable resolution of this crisis.

The Israeli political establishment over the years has made Israel available to anyone claiming Jewish heritage. Thousands of Russians entered Israel after the collapse of the USSR irrespective of their ability to prove their alleged Jewish origins. A line, however, has been drawn when it comes to African migrants and in this line one can see evidence of the racial politics of the Israeli state.

The democratic face of Israel is crumbling as it becomes more repressive against generalized dissent; as it strengthens the apartheid system against the Palestinian people; and as it ramps up its xenophobic attacks on African migrants. There are no further excuses that can be made nor justifications accepted.