

# GILLESPIE: Proud of the achievements of her race

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at her house. The little girl answered, matter-of-factly, that “my momma don’t like blacks.” A couple of nights later at dinner, Deletta told her own mother about the exchange.

“To this day, I remember the sound of the knife as it struck the plate,” Gillespie said.

Her mother, livid, banned her daughter’s white playmate from the house. Three times, her friend knocked on the door only to be shooed away by Deletta’s mother. The third time, Deletta looked out at her friend through the screen door as her mother stood back. The friends put their palms together from opposite sides of the screen until the door closed.

“That was the last time she came to my house,” Gillespie said.

On Monday, Gillespie relayed the story with a sadness that has persisted for more than 50 years. The Baltimore actress, singer and college professor spoke in BMCC’s Bob Clapp Theatre about “Black Lives Matter: A Performing Artist’s Perspective.”

Gillespie grew up in a musical family. Her father played the upright bass in the United States Army Band and later backed some of the great West Coast jazz musicians. Her mother, who played 18 instruments, started performing professionally at age 13. Music filled their home, ranging from classical to jazz, from Three Dog Night to Waylon Jennings. Gillespie sang her first solo at church at age four.

Also an author and playwright, Gillespie performed in the Baltimore Rock Opera

## BMCC Arts & Culture Festival

### PENDLETON EVENTS

**Tues, 9 a.m.** - Selena Hutchins, Bosnian War refugee shares her story loss, survival, and hope  
**Tues, 1 p.m.** - Gwen Trice, “The Logger’s Daughter”  
**Tues, 7 p.m.** - 8:30pm - Eastern Oregon Forum presents “On With The Show”  
**Wed, 7 p.m.** - Deletta Gillespie, “Songs of Protest, Songs of Peace”  
**Thurs, 7 p.m.** - Tiffany Midge and Xavier Cavazos at the Pendleton Art Center

### HERMISTON EVENTS

**Wed, 10 a.m.** - Jennifer Dean-Hill, “Sex trafficking in Thailand”  
**Wed, 11 a.m.** - Tina Martinez & Dr. Clark Hilden, “Myanmar: A case study of social isolation and its effects on a nation”  
**Thurs, 11 a.m.** - Manny Taiblum, stories of surviving the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II  
**Thurs, 2 p.m.** - Rotary presentation on The Peace Pole Project with installation of pole at 3 p.m.

For a complete schedule, go to [www.bluecc.edu/community/diversity-at-bmcc/arts-and-culture](http://www.bluecc.edu/community/diversity-at-bmcc/arts-and-culture)

Society’s “The Determination of Azimuth” — the story of the black women who made history at NASA with their achievements. The play predates the movie “Hidden Figures,” which tells the same story. Gillespie also performed her own one-woman show called “Panties UP, Dress DOWN,” a collection of her mother’s and grandmother’s homespun advice.

“I grew up with the adage that you are going to have to be twice as good to get half as much,” she said.

Gillespie exudes a cheery confidence. “If you can’t find a reason to smile,” she told the BMCC audience, “you’re done.”

That said, some historical events and ongoing societal attitudes sadden her. The more than 4,000 lynchings of black people in this country’s history. The disproportionate number of blacks who are stopped and sometimes treated unfairly by police.

Historical events such as the Tulsa Race Riots that fade from history books because they don’t put whites in a positive light.

Few in the BMCC crowd had heard of the Tulsa Race Riots, so Gillespie gave a condensed account. In 1921, a black man and a white woman got into the same elevator car. He stumbled and fell onto her. The woman claimed impropriety and the man became the target of an armed mob. By the time things had cooled, 35 blocks of the black part of Tulsa burned and close to 300 people died.

In more recent history, the Black Lives Matter movement emerged on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman after he shot a black teenager Trayvon Martin in 2013. Black Lives Matter led to “Blue Lives Matter” and “All Lives Matter.”

Gillespie said she has family members in law

enforcement. She agrees that all lives matter.

“I was taught under the umbrella of God that people are all one,” Gillespie said. “This thing called racism — this thing called prejudice — doesn’t make sense.”

According to Gillespie, it’s simple, really.

“We’re all in this together,” she said. “We’re all on the same team.”

Gillespie said she is proud of the creative and military achievements of her race. She ticked off inventions and innovations by African Americans, which include traffic lights, blood transfusions, gas masks, the first open heart surgery and even the Super Soaker.

“My ancestors helped to build this country,” she said.

As BMCC’s artist in residence at the festival, Gillespie will appear several times this week. At 11 a.m. Tuesday, she will present “Text Construction: The Art of Narrative.” At 7 p.m. Wednesday, she will perform “Songs of Protest, Songs of Peace.” Both events take place at the Bob Clapp Theatre. At the Hermiston campus, she will present “Black Lives Matter” at 1 p.m. Wednesday and “Common Threads: Similarities in the Liberation Movement in Black and Latino Communities” at noon on Thursday.

# ROBOTICS: Umatilla’s fourth trip to the championship

Continued from 1A

spread,” she said.

Umatilla did more for Pendleton than provide an example for success.

Sipe said Umatilla helped the Pendleton team in building their robot and offered a Tom Denchel Ford-sponsored truck to transport both teams’ gear to Houston.

Julie Smith, the Pendleton School District special programs director and a coach on the robotics team, said she and the students were thankful for Umatilla’s help in getting to their first robotics championship.

Only a few years old, Pendleton earned the Houston trip by doing well in regional competitions in Ellensburg, Washington and Clackamas, winning the “rookie all-star” award along the way.

After further review, competition judges decided to send Pendleton’s Modern Americans team to the championship on April 9.

That created a time crunch to raise funds for the trip, setting students and staff into motion. Smith said the team ultimately raised \$4,000 from Gordon’s Electric,

St. Anthony Hospital, Sno Road Winery, Cayuse Technologies and other local sponsors.

While this is Pendleton’s first trip to the championship, it’s Umatilla’s fourth foray, which isn’t that unexpected for a team ranked 21st in the Pacific Northwest division.

Spending more time in the game means operating on a different scale. The eight-member Modern Americans team from Pendleton will send six students to Houston while Umatilla’s Team Confidential will send 48 out of the 57 members of their team.

With some experience under their belt, Sipe said Team Confidential is trying to learn from how it did in the competition last with year with an eye on winning a prize.

Like many robotics competitions, the Umatilla and Pendleton teams will use their robots to retrieve objects like balls and place them in receptacles, which will factor into their score.

Sipe urged community members back home to watch the teams on the FIRST Robotics Competition live stream at [www.firstchampionship.org](http://www.firstchampionship.org).

# Safe Sitter Class

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND • 9:00 AM - 4:PM • ROOMS 1 & 2

**WHO:** Potential babysitters grades 6 and above.

- Safety Skills • First Aid and Rescue Skills
- Child Care Skills • Life and Business Skills

Cost: \$30 ~ Includes book and lunch

To Register ~ 541-278-2627 or [emilysmith@chiwest.com](mailto:emilysmith@chiwest.com)



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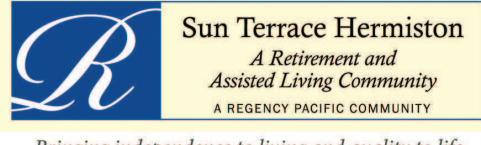
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# UMATILLA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING & MEMBERSHIP DINNER



**Saturday, April 22, 2017**  
**Hermiston Conference Center**  
**5 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

**Our Annual Meeting theme**  
**“Reaching New Heights” is a recognition of the milestones reached over the last 80 years and what we expect in 2017.**  
**As always, attendance is free to UEC members.**  
**We hope you will join us!**



**Featured Speaker**  
**Bob Welch, of Eugene**  
**a celebrated author,**  
**will highlight Umatilla Electric’s 2017 Annual Meeting!**