

April 7, 2015

“The Black Experience of the Modern Public School Community”

In conjunction with the LHS Black Unity Club

Participants:

Nicholas Bull is the African/Refugee Parent Liaison here at Lowell High School (LHS Class of 1999). He arrived in the United States in 1996 at the age of 15. He arrived in Lowell in 1998 and attended Lowell High School during his senior year. He was a member of the varsity soccer team and went on to study criminal justice at UMass Lowell. He is married, with two daughters.

Brian Chapman is the founder (in 2001), president and CEO of Mill City Environmental, a \$10+ million dollar company that specializes in waste management, disposal, site remediation, and site restoration. MCE now operates in 17 states with 46 employees. Mr. Chapman is a graduate of Lowell High School (LHS Class of 1980). He sits on the boards of seven local organizations that directly benefit the Lowell community, and supports many others, including Lowell High School. He is well known in our LHS community for the core values that he espouses in his company and in life – honesty, hard work, respect for the environment, community support, and can-do optimism.

Jennifer Cole is a junior at Lowell High School. She is a founding member of the Lowell HS Step Team, a flight commander in LHS’ AFJROTC, is deeply involved in her church (Christ Jubilee), and is deeply committed to community work.

Nina Davidson is an Associate Professor of English at Middlesex Community College where she has been teaching for the last two years. Before moving to New England to teach full time, Professor Davidson taught part time in NJ and PA at Camden County College, Delaware County Community College, Rider University, and Doane Academy, a private secondary school in Burlington City, NJ. Professor Davidson is passionate about exposing her students to writers from diverse backgrounds, as well as spoken word poetry. She encourages her students to discover themselves through the art form. (She notes that she looks forward to more collaborative work between MCC and LHS in the future.)

Lura Smith is the Assistant to the President of MCC and the founder of the Lura Smith Fund, which assists students at Lowell High School and the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School to attend MCC for Associates Degrees. She is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, and has lived in Lowell since 1973. She has been involved in a broad and eclectic number of organizations in the greater Lowell area over the years, from the NAACP of Merrimack Valley to Girls Incorporated of Lowell. She has been active in a number of Lowell-based initiatives to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Aleksandra Tugbiyele, a native of Worcester, was a transfer student to UML, switching from a pharmacy major to English, and falling in love with the city of Lowell. While at UMass Lowell, she began to become involved with community organizations and, after graduation in 2007, began to work with UTEC (United Teen Equality, and has moved on to become the Development and Communications Coordinator for Acre Family Child Care in downtown Lowell. She is also involved with the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Sandbox Leadership Institute, the Lowell Cultural Council, and other Lowell-based organizations.

Special thanks to Cindy Obika, Yvette Cheeks, Nicholas Bull, and Brian Martin for their work in organizing the panel. Nick Valcanas and Bryan Wilkins filmed and edited the session.