

UNsung Pillars OF THE WESTSIDE: A Timeline of Legacy

Explore the Inspiring Legacy of the Historic Westside

This timeline serves as a resource for discovering the rich and uplifting history of the Historic Westside surrounding the Pearson Community Center. Each photograph is arranged in chronological order and corresponds to the 21 pillars featured within the community center.

The pillar artwork was created by Mike Norice, while the historical timeline was developed by Claytee White. This poster was designed by Laura Silva of MYS Firm, with video documentation of the mural process and research by Zachary Fried of Arcibo Films.

To delve deeper into the significance of each pillar or to learn more about this community, please scan the QR code to the right or visit bit.ly/3GvL4aR.



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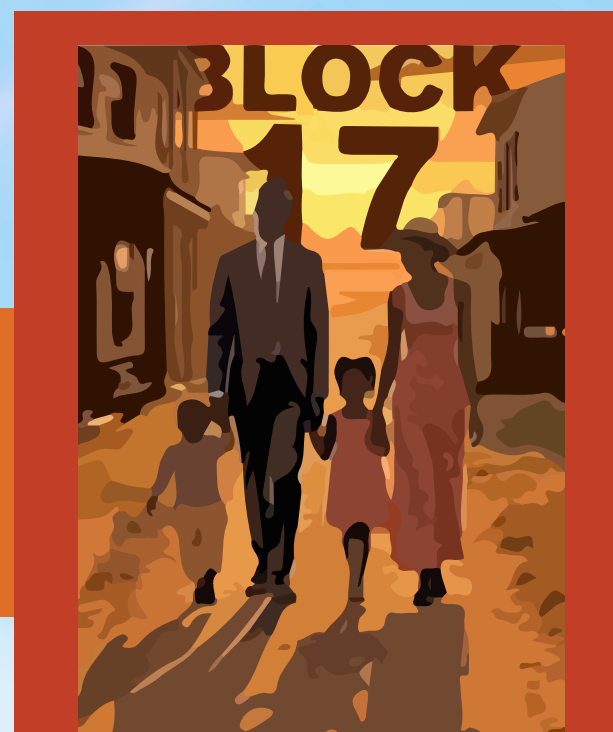
1870
The First Black Landowner in Clark County

In 1870, John Howell, a freed Black man and one of the first landowners in the Las Vegas Valley, began his significant contributions to the area's agricultural and economic development during a transformative period of westward expansion.



1882
1904
The First Lady of Las Vegas Helen Stewart (1882-1903); JT McWilliams

In 1904, JT McWilliams claimed 80 acres of unclaimed land west of the Las Vegas Ranch, leading to the establishment of a townsite after Helen J. Stewart sold 1,834 acres to William Clark for \$55,000.



Block 17: A Black Space

In 1905, Las Vegas was established under the San Pedro, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City Railroad, designating Block 17 for Black residents, where Mary Nettles emerged as a key community leader and co-founder of the local NAACP branch.



Place of Worship

In 1917, the Black community in Las Vegas established Zion Methodist Church on Block 17, marking the beginning of a significant movement to create a robust Black religious community.



1923
The school that would become the hub of Black life

In 1923, Helen J. Stewart donated land for the Historic Westside School, which initially educated a diverse student body and became a significant community hub after ceasing operations as a school in 1967.



1955
First Black Doctor and Dentist

In 1954, Dr. Charles I. West relocated to Clark County, Nevada, as part of the Great Migration after passing the state examination for physicians. In 1960, James B. McMillan, an influential civil rights advocate, led the NAACP in achieving the integration of public accommodations in Clark County and the City of Las Vegas.



1949
The Black Architect - Paul R. Williams

In 1954, architect Paul R. Williams completed Berkley Square, the first Black housing development in Las Vegas, marking a significant milestone in providing homeownership opportunities for African Americans in the area.



1941
The Great Migration

In 1941, as the U.S. entered World War II, the establishment of Basic Magnesium Inc. in Henderson, Nevada, led to significant employment opportunities for Black migrants, contributing to the growth of the Westside community and the housing development of Carver Park.



1928
The Boldest and the Baddest

In 1928, the Las Vegas branch of the NAACP was established by Mary Nettles, Zimmie Turner, Arthur McCants, Bill Jones, and Clarence Ray to combat discriminatory hiring practices at the Hoover Dam and advocate for just treatment of black workers.



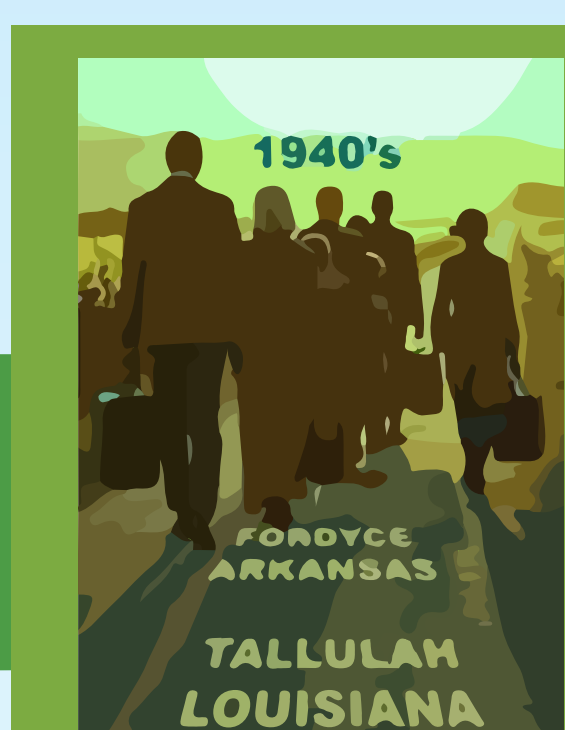
1959
First Black to pass the Nevada State Bar Exam

Charles Kellar migrated to Las Vegas in 1959 to take the Nevada State Bar exam, becoming a pivotal figure in civil rights efforts in the state.



1947
First Black Casino Executive

In 1946, James "Jimmy" Arthur Gay III migrated to Clark County, Nevada, with plans to establish the first funeral home for Blacks, later becoming a prominent figure in the gaming industry and a civil rights advocate.



1940's
Fordyce and Tallulah

By 1942, the Black population in Las Vegas surged from 178 to 4,000, driven by job opportunities during World War II, particularly at Basic Magnesium Incorporated.



1941
The Entertainment Capital of the World

In 1941, Pearl Bailey performed at the El Cortez downtown, marking the beginning of a vibrant entertainment scene in Las Vegas that attracted numerous Black entertainers.



1955
The Moulin Rouge with your emcee... Mr. Bob Bailey

Bob and Anna Bailey received the Distinguished Nevadan Award in 2013, recognizing their significant contributions to the arts and civil rights in Nevada.



1990
Union Power

Hattie Canty, president of Culinary Workers Union Local 226 since 1990, significantly impacted Las Vegas's hospitality industry by leading labor movements and establishing the Culinary Training Center.



1971
Operation Life in the Westside

In the 1960s, Ruby Duncan and other women in Las Vegas formed the Clark County Welfare Rights group, advocating for welfare reforms that led to food stamps, the WIC program, and improved community resources for families in need.



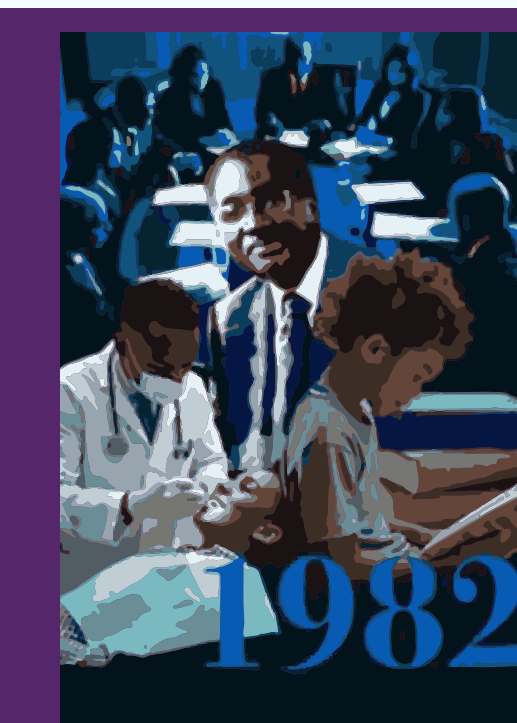
1950
Decade of Change: The 1950s

In the 1950s, the Westside saw significant growth with new housing, the Nevada Test Site, the first integrated hotel casino, and the establishment of the Moulin Rouge in 1955.



1978
Building the Westside for Work and Play

In 1968, the US Fair Housing Act was passed, allowing Black families to fully participate in FHA financing and paving the way for local builders like George Simmons and Louis Richardson to create housing developments and public spaces in Las Vegas. By 1978, Louis Richardson established Richardson Construction, leading to numerous successful projects including public libraries, community centers, and the Moulin Rouge, while continuing the legacy of Black builders in Clark County.



1982
The Pearson

Dr. William Pearson, who established a dental practice in Las Vegas in 1963, became the first Black City Council member in 1982 and was honored as a Distinguished Nevadan in 2004.



1987
Left of Center

In Clark County, the evolution of Black art is marked by the founding of the Left of Center Art Gallery by Vicki Richardson and her partners, fostering a collaborative environment for artists of diverse backgrounds through classes, exhibitions, and workshops.



Then and Now

Since the 1890s, the Latino community has significantly shaped Las Vegas' Historic Westside, which now has about 40% Latino and 38% Black residents and is poised for a bright future despite past challenges.



togetherforbetter



Dr. William U. Pearson Community Center