

DATELINE:



DOWNTOWN



WHAT'S INSIDE:

Stolen Words
Office of SGA
Hattie Bledsoe
Pipeline
Doomed
Harris County
Grammy

SGA Needs NCBI
Candidates
Vote
Bullying
West U Shooting
Athletes
Oscars

2

Staff

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News?
Suggestion?
Comment?**

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Dateline Downtown welcomes submissions to the editor from any member of the UH system. Submissions should be no more than 800 words, include the author's full name, phone number or email address, and affiliation with the University, including classification and major. Writers Guidelines are available on the UHD/dateline webpage or Dateline-Downtown.com. Anonymous submissions will not be published.

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Stolen Words Not Silenced

by Darci McFerran

Knowledge is power. Accessing that power is traditionally achieved through the halls and classrooms of a university. Hundreds, even thousands, of years of words collected on the pages of books that impart that knowledge to its reader. These words, as sacred as the rite itself, carry that power from one generation to the next. With each step up that genealogical ladder our ancestors studied deeper into the meaning of these passages, then contributed another layer of growth, of understanding. Freshman entering their first year of studies can often sense that power as they embark on their academic careers and graduates emboldened with the words and wisdom of their knowledge.

Regardless of your degree plan, or academic path, we carry a small part of this sanctified ideal with us on the journey towards graduation. An essential tool for bringing forward the ideas that shape knowledge and learning, written words are fundamental to the academic process and every student's progress. Words, books, and writing, in all of its forms, are essential tools to learning that should be treated as holy. The rules are not written down because, although unspoken, they are generally, universally understood and revered. From one generation to the next, these treasures are gifted forward so that society may continue to advance through the shared knowledge being passed down.

On a rare occasion, this sanctity is broken, in an attempt to stop the flow of information. German-Jewish Poet Heinrich Heine prophesied that, "Wherever books are burned, human beings are destined to be burned too." Heine's words were later fully realized during the Nazi occupation of Germany. In Berlin, 1933, 20,000 volumes were burned during a bonfire in an attempt to destroy all "UnGerman" ideas. This was aimed directly at Jewish communities for their "extreme Jewish intellectualism". Six million Jews were murdered and burned in concentration camps, echoing the truth in Heine's words spoken 100 years prior to the events.

Dateline: Downtown strives, with every issue, to cultivate the open exchange of ideas and information, always honoring these traditions and rites. Newspapers have a unique function within our culture, serving as Democratic "watchdogs", they act as a bridge between the government and the governed. Without this essential element, a democratic society would not be possible. Ideally the news serves to inform, record, and initiate a public commentary that will engage the reader into actively participating in the conversation.² Although often and uneasy alliance, the relationship between the Government and the media reporting their actions is symbiotic, both equally invested in balancing the relationship because they rely on one another.

The staff at Dateline: Downtown aspires to challenge students, ask the hard questions, and bring accurate information regarding all organizations on campus, especially our Student Government Association. In the first issue of this semester (Volume 58 Issue1) we did that and there were evidently individuals who did not agree with our commentary. Immediately following the first and second distribution on campus, all of the Dateline newspapers disappeared within a very short period of time.

Having been editor for two years now, I had never seen the papers move so quickly and I was immediately suspicious. I filed a police report and they are still reviewing all of the campus footage and making a determination regarding the culprit. So, to whoever took all those costly newsprints intended for students: we will not be silenced.

By: Kara Moore

The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)

is a non-profit training organization that has worked since 1984 to eliminate racism, prejudice, and discrimination throughout the world.

How would you feel if you were running for a leadership position and instead of people questioning you on your policies, they insinuated that by being part of a certain culture and by celebrating that culture, you are also part of a terrorist group? That is what happened to one of the candidates for Vice President of UHD's Student Government Association, Armita Tajadod.

On the popular GroupMe application, an SGA volunteer joked about Tajadod having founded "The Yemeni Brotherhood Foundation" when she discussed her founding of the Iranian-American Student Association (a non-religious cultural organization) at the election debate on Thursday, March 30. For reference purposes, this was most likely a reference to the Muslim Brotherhood which is classified as a terrorist group by several governments such as Egypt, Russia, and Syria. The Muslim Brotherhood is primarily based in Egypt but also has several parts across the Middle East, including Yemen.

When this volunteer made their comment, the other current SGA Vice Presidential Candidate, Shay Hopper, responded in the group chat "I am not sure" and current Speaker of the Senate Irene Nuñez stated "Let's keep it positive guys! Let's keep listening...". Due to the comment made by Representative Nuñez, it seems this conversation happened while the debate was still taking place. This is not the first time an insensitive remark concerning SGA has made headlines. A couple months ago, Dateline Downtown published an article titled "Bachata Breakdown" about an allegedly ill-thought-out comment made by then SGA volunteer and current Vice Presidential candidate, Shay Hopper, to another SGA member. It culminated in the passing of a bill requiring SGA certified members to engage in a full-day training done under the teachings of The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) – basically training on being more open and sensitive to cultures that differ from your own, as well as how words and actions can affect people. This training was supposed to happen in January 2017. Now, in April, members within SGA have informed me this training has not happened.

The most resounding aspect of this story is that nobody spoke up when this volunteer made their comment. The most immediate responses seemed to prefer to change the subject. This kind of insensitive comment is the reason the Student Government Association was supposed to have taken the NCBI training in January, so they would be better prepared to address this sort of issue within their organization and within UHD.

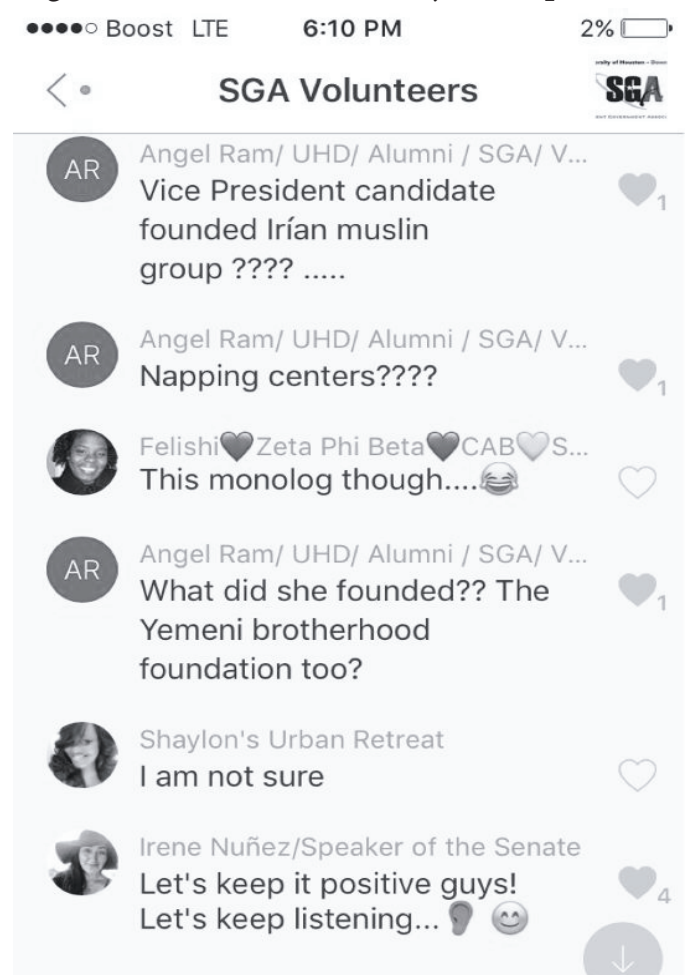
Dateline reached out to the candidates Faryal Gul and Armita Trajadod to get their response to the conversation, only to find they are already aware and have contacted Student Services. They stated they would prefer not to make a public statement at this time, but instead encourage everyone to focus on the actual issues concerning this campaign such as improved student life, improved student involvement, and student government transparency.

Many readers will have a difference of opinion regarding this incident. Was this a joke in poor taste, or a look at the atmosphere of UHD's Student Government Association? Readers can send their opinions to editor@dateline-downtown.com.

EDITORS NOTE:

Dateline encourages students and readers to send us letters and responses to anything that we publish, especially if it disputes or argues statements we have made.

editor@dateline-downtown.com



From the Office of the President of the Student Government Association.

Recently, it was brought to the attention of this office that an article published in January 2017 Volume 58, Issue 1 in the Dateline Downtown authored by Kierra Green released malicious information about the Student Government in regards to the stipends received by certain officials and the organization's overall budget. Although we appreciate the author for her writing which illustrate the duties of a free media, we are particularly concerned about the misinformation such publication is bound to circulate among the student body because obviously, for anyone who has been paying attention to the Student Government even slightly, will see that the author is uninformed about the organization. The key to journalism is been informed about any information that is set to be published.

After reading the article, this office and majority of the students who pay attention to the activities of the Student Government will attest that the writer is blatantly uninformed about not only what goes on in the Student Government but even on campus at large. In the referenced article, the writer questioned why certain SGA officials receive stipends and suggested that the organization is in fact not doing anything and thus, it does not deserve its allocated budget. The writer goes further to raise questions about the amount of money allocated to the Student Government and its source however, the writer failed to sufficiently address what these money is used for. Another thing the writer got wrong was that she did not take a look at our budget to see how the referenced amount in the SGA budget is actually spent. Yes, some of the Student Government officials may receive meager stipends but the overall stipends only account for little percentage of our budgets.

Finally, I would like to address that as a courtesy of informative journalism, the writer should make sure that she/he has all the relevant facts before proceeding with writing. To learn more about the Student Government, you need to be willing to ask detailed questions and not only seek specific information that may seem to quench your thirst for publication without providing all the information that an objective reader will need to form an informed opinion. Recently, there was "The State of the Student Government Address" sent out to the student body to inform the entire students of some of our accomplishments during the past semester and what are some of our plans and activities for this semester. So, if any student would like to know the content of the address please check your gator emails.

Thank you for your attention. And as always, we are here to represent the voice of fellow students and I am particularly confident we are effectively doing our best to ensure that the voices of fellow Gators are heard. We are always here to listen to your concerns and channel them to the appropriate administrators to ensure that they are effectively addressed.

Mustapha Nyallay

This Letter is responding to the Kierra Green Story SGA Budget

SGA Proposed Budget
FY 2015-16

	Allocated Amount	Spent	Remainder
Capital Outlay	\$3,000.00		
Maintenance & Operations	\$59,945.00		
Total Budget	\$62,945.00		

Maintenance and Operations*	Proposed	Spent	Remainder
Special Events*	\$16,600.00		
Stipends	\$25,700.00		
Office Supplies	\$1,000.00		
SGA shirts	\$1,000.00		
Telecommunications	\$2,262.00		
Administrative Adjustment Fund**	\$2,000.00		
Contingency Fund	\$11,383.00		
Total	\$59,945.00		

Budget Total			
old	\$47,945.00		
New	\$62,945.00		
% increase	24%		
Stipends		% of Budget	
old	\$15,900.00	33%	
New	\$25,700.00	41%	
% increase	38%		
Contingency		% of Budget	
old	\$6,483.00	14%	
New	\$11,383.00	24%	
% increase	43%		
Events		% of Budget	
old	\$ 10,000.00	21%	
New	\$ 16,600.00	26%	
% increase	40%		
Leadership Development		% of Budget	
old	\$ 6,000.00	13%	
New	#REF!	#REF!	
% increase	#REF!		

Special Events			
	Proposed	Spent	Remainder
Fall 2015			
Welcome Week	\$500.00		
Student Housing Award	\$500.00		
Ed's Bayou Clean Up	\$300.00		
Org Olympics	\$300.00		
Walk to Vote	\$1,500.00		
100k Poets for Change	\$200.00		
Conference	\$4,250.00		
SGA Leadership	\$1,250.00		
Total	\$8,800.00		
Spring 2016			
Student Appreciation Wk	\$1,000.00		
Ed's Bayou Clean Up	\$300.00		
Org Volunteer Contest	\$300.00		
One Main Event Tbl/Awds	\$300.00		
Induction Dinner	\$400.00		
ASGA Conference	\$4,250.00		
SGA Leadership	\$1,250.00		
Total	\$7,800.00		
Special Events total	\$ 16,600.00		

Stipends			
	Proposed	%	Remainder
President Stipend	\$4,000.00	16%	
Vice-President Stipend	\$3,000.00	12%	
Executive Chief of Staff	\$2,200.00	9%	
Director of the Secretariat	\$2,000.00	8%	
Director of Student Engagement	\$2,000.00	8%	
Director of External Affairs	\$2,000.00	8%	
Director of P.R. and Marketing	\$2,000.00	8%	
Director of Community Outreach	\$2,000.00	8%	
Director of the Treasury	\$2,000.00	8%	
Asst. to President	\$1,500.00	6%	
Chief Justice	\$1,500.00	6%	
Speaker	\$1,500.00	6%	
Total	\$25,700.00		

GUL/ Tajadod

Hello, Gators! My name is Faryal Gul and I am running for SGA President. I am currently a Junior majoring in History and Political Science and minoring in Philosophy and International Politics. I am a part of the University Honors Program, Golden Key, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and Phi Alpha Theta. I am also involved in numerous organizations such as Pi Kappa Delta (UHD Speech and Debate), Iranian American Association, Muslim Student Association, Walter Webb Society, United Nations Association, Model United Nations, Model Arab League; and this year I have had the opportunity to represent the student body in SGA as Senator for University college.



One of my major accomplishments in SGA is passing the diversity bill alongside former Senator at large, Jessica P. Delgado and Evelyn Garcia. This bill, hosted by UHD's Center for student Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, requires mandatory diversity training for all SGA members that hold office. I plan to not just represent our student body but to also advocate for you by pushing for further student involvement on campus and more resources that improve each student's unique campus experience. As a student leader myself, I understand that having structure is the key to the success of any organization. As SGA President, I not only pledge to advocate for student success, but also to continue UHD's legacy of improving the college experience.

Faryal Gul

Armita Tajadod
Candidate for SGA Vice President

Hello Gators!
 My name is Armita Tajadod and I am running for SGA Vice President. I am majoring in Political Science and minoring in Criminal Justice. In addition to being a member of the UHD Honors Program, Alpha Lambda Delta, and the United Nations Association, I have also served the Student Government Association for three semesters as an Associate Justice.



My future plans and goals as Vice President are to improve the college experience for UHD students, bring the changes that the students and university deserve, as well as work closely with on campus organizations to increase student involvement and opportunities throughout the school. I want to help UHD shine at its full potential, and am more than excited to be on the path to success along with

Mykal Peterson
Candidate for SGA President
Peterson/Tatum ticket
photo of Mykal Peterson
Mykal Peterson
Candidate for SGA President
Peterson/Tatum ticket



My name is Mykal Peterson and I plan on making University of Houston - Downtown Student Government active beyond its means as President of the Student Body for the 2017-2018 academic year. My goal is to establish an executive branch that will improve students everyday visits to our campus. This will be done by getting students more involved on campus and giving students an opportunity to seek help via mentorships and tutoring as well. I plan on listening to graduate students needs and wants, to improve they're student life also. We have one of the most diversified campuses in the United States and will need to take advantage of that and build strong relationships within Student Government Association and the student life as well. We want to implement stronger connections with Texas legislative and Texas regents to ensure we are being recognized for our efforts and get the improvements on campus that are needed. I will also focus on growing our traditional events here on campus such as walk to vote and eds bayou cleanup. Transparency of what is going on behind the four walls of Student Government will be a must to the student body. Utilizing our community around us from the businesses to the local schools and volunteering within those locations will be done with a strong community outreach team. Parking will need to be tackled and will be done with having a representative always on the committee to voice our matters. Academic success in graduation rates and retention rates will be executed with getting a representative on this committee also. Food options will be s big issue this summer as we select a new vendor and will ensure students are involved with that selection as well. This is the time to make Student Government better than it has been before, with persistence and excellence. Let's go gator nation.

Shenaedra Tatum
Candidate for SGA Vice President
Peterson/Tatum ticket
photo of Shenaedra Tatum
Shenaedra Tatum
Candidate for SGA Vice President
Peterson/Tatum ticket



My name is Shenaedra Tatum and I am running for the position of SGA Vice President for the 2017-2018 academic school year. Based on my leadership skills and educational background I am confident that I will represent the student body effectively. I have served two full semester as the SGA Director of Student Engagement and I am also involved in a number of organizations inside and outside of UHD. I have participated in providing other organizations with volunteers and the assistance with anything that would help their organization be successful with their events. I am a non-traditional student as most of the students at UHD are. This is a quality that I proudly embrace and I also appreciate the people and volunteers who make the sacrifice to participate at UHD with organizations and associations.

I live my life knowing that good character traits are important and by treating people with respect no matter their position, race, or gender. I welcome any challenge, and I never stop until my goal is completed. By electing me as your SGA Vice President and Mykal Peterson as your SGA President, you will have the assurance of strong confident leaders who sincerely care about the well-being of our UHD student body, academics, and student engagement.

My motto: "It 's never to late to be active and to start making a change and that change starts with you!"



PRESIDENT

MEET the CANDIDATES

VICE PRESIDENT

THANK YOU MISS HATTIE DATELINE: DOWNTOWN HONORS YOUR MEMORY AND SMILE



UPDATE: we will be taking notes until Monday at noon. So please share and leave a message for Ms. Hattie

ATTENTION UHD GATORS!

We are working on the next issue of Dateline: Downtown tonight and must have the final PDF in by 1am. We wanted to include a page of messages to say goodbye to Hattie Bledsoe.

SO if you are UHD student, faculty, or alum please comment on this post for me to include a note to her and her family with this issue! Please include pics if you have any and SHARE SHARE SHARE this post!

Tag Photo Add Location Edit

Like Comment Share

Darci McFerran Top Comments

Jason Jonathan Rivas Thank you Ms. Hattie, I know you're looking down now saying, "have a wonderful day baby," to all of us. Thank you for sharing your life with us.

Like · Reply · Message · March 31 at 9:26pm

Cassie Hawks Hattie always brightened my day-she was a bright shining star among us.

Like · Reply · Message · March 31 at 9:30pm

Alejandro Giron Madrigal Although I didn't get a chance to speak to her often while I went to school there, she seemed to be a very happy person.

Like · Reply · Message · April 1 at 12:23am

Write a comment...

shot last night. Fortunately, the student is...

Like Comment Share

362 people reached >

Boost Post

Darci McFerran

Jason Jonathan Rivas



Thank you Ms. Hattie, I know you're looking down now saying, "have a wonderful day baby," to all of us. Thank you for sharing your life with us.

Cassie Hawks



Hattie always brightened my day-she was a bright shining star among us.

Alejandro Giron Madrigal



Although I didn't get a chance to speak to her often while I went to school there, she seemed to be a very happy person.

YOU ARE MISSED EVERYDAY BABY!

It's time to vote!

9

Student Government Association Elections take place next week, April 3-7. Ballots will open on April 3 at 8:00am and close April 7 at 5:00pm. You will have the opportunity to select your student representatives for various SGA positions as well as voting for or against the proposed new sports and fitness facility. Check out the instructions below so you are ready to vote when polls open Monday morning at 8:00am.

How to vote

1. Access your GatorMail email with the subject line: 2017 SGA Elections – Vote Today!
2. Click your Vote Now! personalized link in the email
3. Cast your vote!

Or

Vote in person on campus at one of many polling locations throughout the week.

Learn about the SGA Candidates

The SGA elections will determine the representatives who will be advocating on your behalf to improve your student experience. Student Government plays an essential role in supporting students and ensuring student voices are considered by the administration. To learn more about the candidates, please visit: uhd.edu/SGA

Learn about the referendum for the proposed new sports and fitness facility

In order for us to move forward with the planning and construction of a new Sports and Fitness Center, we

must secure during the upcoming SGA elections a majority vote of support, which will then strengthen the case

for legislative support of a new Sports & Fitness Fee.

The Texas legislature has authority to approve or deny the creation of new student fees associated with projects

like the proposed new UHD Sports and Fitness Building. The predicted financial outlook for the state of Texas

has heightened the legislature's continued interest in the cost of college including the creation of new

fees. Thus, it is essential that we have significant student participation and support in the vote for a new Sports & Fitness Fee, as described below:

For the purpose of constructing a Sports and Fitness Facility UHD is proposing a new fee not to exceed:

- \$150 per student for each regular semester,
- \$75 per student for any term 8 weeks or longer, and
- \$50 per student for each term less than 8 weeks
- Effective 2017-2018 academic year or thereafter as approved by the Texas legislature.

For more information please visit: uhd.edu/vote.

Make sure your voice is heard, be sure to vote this upcoming week! Decide who will represent you and your

interests as a student at the University of Houston-Downtown.



The Pipeline Continues

By Christopher Joseph

The longstanding war between the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the Army Corps of Engineers over the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline had finally come to an end — or so it seemed in Dec. 2016. The Standing Rock tribe had finally won, with the pipeline being rerouted so that it wouldn't disturb the tribe's land and ruin their water supply. However, since the arrival of our new president, the plans of a rerouting have been washed away along with the tribe's victory.

As a part of Donald Trump's 100 day plan, Trump signed two executive orders effectively reviving both the previously mentioned Dakota Access pipeline and the Keystone XL pipeline, a 1,179-mile pipeline that ran from Alberta, Canada to Steele City, Nebraska. Trump promised that the building of the Keystone pipeline would create about 28,000 jobs; in reality, according to the State Department, the Keystone project would indirectly create up to 42,000 jobs that would approximately last up to two years. The State Department

significant human health and economic costs, thus eliminating jobs," Sean Sweeny, director of the Cornell ILR Global Institute, said in a statement.

Things were not looking so well for the Standing Rock tribe this month, either. Protests of the Dakota access pipeline came about after the Standing Rock Sioux tribe were not notified of the pipeline's location. Over the course of 2016, protesters grew larger and larger demanding that the pipeline be rerouted. Reports came out in September that the protesters were attacked by police dogs and in November that 141 arrests had been made. On December 4, 2016, thanks to the Obama administration stepping in, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied an easement allowing the pipeline to cross sacred lands, effectively halting the construction. Both the Dakota Access pipeline and the Keystone XL were dismantled during Obama's terms. On Tuesday, Feb 7th, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had granted an easement in North Dakota for the \$3.8 billion dollar pipeline to continue on the path that ravages through the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's sacred land.

actions to grant them a permit to build the pipeline.

EarthJuice attorney Jan Hasselman, representing the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, told CNN: "Trump's reversal of [President Obama's] decision continues a historic pattern of broken promises to Indian tribes and a violation of treaty rights." He continues, "Trump and his administration will be held accountable in court."

In typical Donald Trump fashion, he went in front of the members of the media on Feb 7th, and boasted on how he hasn't received any negative calls after he signed the executive orders. "As you know, I approved two pipelines that were stuck in limbo forever, I don't even think it was controversial. You know, I approved them and I haven't even heard one call from anybody saying 'oh, that was a terrible thing you did.'"

Despite the cries of the thousands of protesters and many celebrities lending their voice to stop the advancement of the project, plans to move forward with the project will begin in the near future. It seems that Trump is overturning all of Obama's actions. Many other groups are now fearful that Trump isn't going to stop with the pipeline's rebirth...and narrow his sights on appealing everything that the Obama administration had already set in motion.

MAKE A STAND



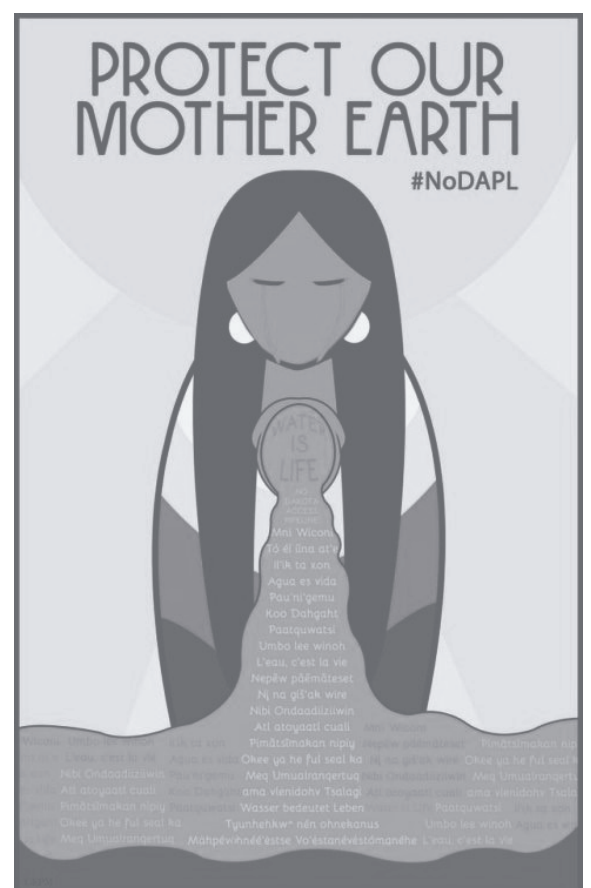
also concluded in its 2014 report that the project would create about 35 permanent jobs.

However, a 2011 study from Cornell University's ILR Global Labor Institute had discovered that the Keystone pipeline would in fact destroy more jobs than it would create. "Pipeline spills, pollution and increased greenhouse gas emission incur

Energy Transfer Partners, the parent firm of the company building the pipeline, said: "With this action, Dakota Access now has received all federal authorizations necessary to proceed expeditiously to complete construction of the pipeline."

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe has one move left, and that is to take things to court. Within hours of the greenlight to move forward with

the project, the Sioux tribe filed a legal challenge to the pipeline project. It claims that the U.S. Army Corps is tearing up land that belongs to the Sioux tribe thanks to the 1851 treaty that designates that piece of land to the Native American tribes. The U.S. Army Corps argues this claim, claiming that the land is federally owned, and that they went through necessary legal



Bullying: Words Hurt

By Philip Feldwisch

11

Imagine being picked on for no other reason than someone doesn't like you. For victims of bullying, this is exactly how it is. I know because I was bullied for being different.

The bullying started in middle school. I was picked on because I was apparently "too smart," and I did not have a lot of friends. I thought that by going to a different high school, I could start over. I was wrong.

I was bullied again in high school. Instead of verbal bullying, people pushed me down stairs and threw water bottles at me. I did not know what I had done to deserve this. It was taking a toll on me, but I pushed through.

When I started college at Valparaiso University in August 2008, I thought that the bullying was finally over. I was wrong again. It started out with kids drawing stuff on my whiteboard outside my dorm room. Instead of nice drawings, it was vulgar images. I honestly did not think that much of it since it didn't really bother me. As time went on, the bullying got worse and affected my academic performance.

By May 2010, my grade point average was below a 2.0 and I was put on academic probation. I also took more credit hours than I could effectively handle. By September 2010 and the beginning of my third year, the bullying became hell. I had people prank-calling me, calling me just about every name you can think of, spreading false rumors about me, and leaving anonymous voice messages telling me how I was just a freak and deserved to be bullied. It got so bad that by October, I contemplated taking my life. The reason I didn't was because of a girl who not only became my best friend but was an angel in disguise. She stuck with me throughout the entire ordeal and never once left my side.

As the semester dragged on, my grades suffered heavily and I was even afraid to show my face around campus. I stayed in my dorm room and only showed my face when it was absolutely necessary. There were times that I skipped class because I was afraid of being bullied and harassed by my classmates. Things only got worse. At the end of the semester, my grades were so bad that I was suspended. Now I got to spend all of 2011 at the local community college. I felt like I had let everyone, including my best friend, down. That was about the lowest I had ever felt in my life. I suffered through

severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and bouts of feeling like no one cared about me.

I had to take it upon myself to stay strong and push through the relentless torment and harassment. I felt completely alone and worthless. The more I tried to get help from the administration at Valparaiso University, the more I was pushed away. It was like nobody cared that I was being relentlessly bullied.

If it wasn't for my best friend that I met over lunch one day, I never would have pushed through and gotten my degree from Valparaiso University. As soon as I told her my story, she was appalled that anyone would bully me. She saw me not as an outcast, but someone who was trying to fit in.

When I found out I was suspended, she stuck with me and helped me to regain my self-confidence. When I came back in January 2012 and continued to be cyber-bullied, I knew I could go to my best friend and tell her what was going on. Not once did she treat me like an outcast or creep.

When it came time for me to graduate in December 2014, I knew that she was going to be invited. What I was not expecting was a card telling me how I proved her wrong and how our friendship would never die. My favorite part of the hand-written note was a quote that said "I have never been more excited to have been proven wrong. You are the epitome of hard work and success and I am so proud to call you a friend. Continue to dream and you will always be successful." She was so proud of me for not giving up and working toward getting my degree. To this day, we are still good friends.

Bullying can affect anyone. The saying that sticks and stones can break bones, but words will never hurt is not true at all. Words hurt. They hurt me. The names I was called have left emotional scars that will never fully heal. If you can't say something nice, do not say it at all. Is it really that difficult to treat someone with respect and kindness? It must be since those who are different will be forced to know how they can't be normal.

Cyber-bullying is far too common today. Victims are made to feel so worthless that taking their own life is the only way to end the pain and suffering. How many more lives will be lost to bullying before something is done? How many more victims will have to suffer in silence?

I still suffer from nightmares and flashbacks because of the bullying I endured during college. There were days that I actually avoided going to class in college because I felt like such a freak. I felt no one cared or even wanted to help me recover. The only person I had at the time to confide in was my best friend. I can tell you from personal experience that it is not funny at all to bully someone. Some states even have laws that state if a person makes a victim commit suicide by bullying, the consequences can be harsh.

What's worse is that many schools claim to have an anti-bullying policy in place, yet don't do anything when victims speak out. This is not right. Victims should not have to suffer and feel nobody is there for them. It's no wonder suicide rates are so high when it comes to victims of bullying.

The effects of bullying are alarming. Victims also can suffer from low self-confidence and feel completely alone. One website that is a great resource for bullying victims is www.pacer.org. There are plenty of resources for both kids and teens to use. Even celebrities are coming forward about their own struggles with being bullied.

Pop singer and former Disney star Demi Lovato has publicly opened up about her experience with being bullied. Before getting professional help at Timberline Knolls, Demi struggled with self-harm, drug addiction, and bipolar disorder. Now, Demi is one of the most well-known and idolized celebrities among teens and young adults.

Why can't all schools put an anti-bullying policy in place and actually enforce it? A lot of times, the school does not want to spend the extra money or effort on it.

It's time that we take a stand and put an end to bullying for good.



Doomed to Reboot

By Chelsea Chance

Nostalgia, the emotional sentiment that makes us wistfully reminiscent of a simpler time, has quickly become a cash cow for the entertainment business. Sure, in the past there have been a plethora of reboots and remakes scattered throughout the years, but don't expect them to stop anytime soon. Why would anyone bother writing a new story, when there are old ones that can be dusted off and tweaked ever so slightly for modern day? Whether it's a reboot, remake, revamp, or revival the outcome is the same, old material that is once again seeing the light of day.

In the year 2016, recycled stories could be found on both the big and small screen. "The X-Files," "The PowerPuff Girls," "Voltron: Legendary Defender," "Fuller House," and "Gilmore Girls" are just a few familiar examples of the nostalgia-fueled television at its finest. And while many rejoiced to see some of their favorite shows back on the air, others were disappointed when the material didn't live up to the source. According to a Rotten Tomatoes reviewer, "after just one episode of the upcoming six, 'The X-Files' feels like a faded relic, barely clinging to what once made it great." Meanwhile, "The PowerPuff Girls" came back without the original creator or voice cast and met unfavorable reviews from those who grew up on the original. Both "Gilmore Girls" and "Fuller House" were 2016 revivals of TV shows that were supposedly finished, but received new life on Netflix. What better way to ensure viewers than to entice the old ones with a new ending to a story they long ago thought had ended?

2017 has already started off with the Netflix reboot, "A Series of Unfortunate Events," which was adapted from a book series and already had a film version from 2004 - making the series both an adaptation, remake, and revival. And on the

Harris County Policy Change

By Terrance Turner

At a press conference on Feb. 15, Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg announced a new approach to possession cases. Effective March 1, those caught in the county with four ounces or less of marijuana will be able to take a four-hour "cognitive decision-making class" that costs \$150. If they comply within 90 days, they will not be ticketed, arrested or jailed. There are limits: juveniles and those wanted for other crimes are ineligible for the program. Also, those caught with cannabis in drug-free areas like school zones or jails will be prosecuted. Also ineligible for the program are those on bond, probation, or deferred adjudication.

Ogg cited "an enormous waste of taxpayer dollars" as one of her reasons for the new policy. Over the past decade, she said, 107,000 low-level pot cases have cost the county more than \$250 million. "The amount of money that is currently being spent in Harris County annually to prosecute misdemeanor possession of marijuana cases is over \$26 million a year," Ogg stated. "That's your tax dollars." \$1.3 million a year is spent by police on the four-hour process in which they arrest, transport, and book a marijuana offender. Once the evidence is seized, it costs crime labs \$1.7 million to test it. The county jails shell out \$13 million a year to house pot offenders, and their cases take up 10% of court dockets.

The district attorney emphasized the human cost of the current system. Ogg noted that those arrested for pot possession spend, on average, six days in jail. For those with jobs, children, or parents who need caretakers, those six days can be life-changing, she said. "And once that criminal record attaches, that will change your life forever — and not for the better." Indeed, those with criminal records often face difficulties or outright failure in securing housing, employment, and even financial aid. Some are denied admission to colleges due to their record.

In their remarks at Harris County Criminal Justice Center, both District Attorney Ogg and Mayor Sylvester Turner stressed that the new policy is a diversion program, not legalization or decriminalization. Mayor Turner praised Ogg for a program that he called smart and innovative. "We can be tough on crime — and we will be tough on crime — but at the same time, we can be smart, and we can be cost-efficient," he stated. Houston Police

big screen? Who can forget the controversy surrounding the "Ghostbusters" remake and its female stars? While the film received generally good ratings, it was a box office flop. It could be because so many potential moviegoers took to social media and complained about the all-female cast as soon as the news released that the script was being written, threatened to boycott the film, and continued to complain until the film stopped playing in theaters.

In the new year, the remakes will continue to trickle in, mostly thanks to Disney. In 2016 they provided live-action remakes of "The Jungle Book" and "Pete's Dragon," and have plans to keep remaking their animated classics. After the success of Disney's live-action "Cinderella," the company announced that they have locked down four dates for fairy-tale remakes. "Beauty and the Beast" is set to air in 2017, and the company has already announced their intentions for a live-action remake of the 1998 animated film "Mulan." With the proven success of retelling, rebooting, and reviving, will we continue to experience a new version of the same story? Are viewers putting themselves in this reboot loop because they don't want the nostalgia to end? Or will 2017 be the year of new stories?]



Chief Art Acevedo echoed the tough-but-smart angle during a brief speech at the press conference. He pointed out that a similar policy undertaken while he was police chief in Austin produced positive results. "We reduced violent crime between 2007 and 2015 by over 40 percent," he said.

Reaction to the new policy varied, although some were less enthusiastic than others. In nearby Montgomery County, District Attorney Brett Ligon wasted no time stating his opposition. "Unlike Harris County, Montgomery County will not become a sanctuary for dope smokers," Ligon said. "I swore an oath to follow the law — all the laws, as written by the Texas Legislature. I don't get to pick and choose which laws I enforce."

But criminal justice reporter C.J. Ciaramella, writing for Reason.com, disagreed. "Prosecutors do pick which laws they enforce. They do it every day. Prosecutors have freedom to choose whether to file or dismiss charges, and they often have several overlapping criminal statutes to choose from, allowing them to overcharge or undercharge a defendant as they see fit." Kevin Buckler, an associate professor of criminal justice at the University of Houston-Downtown, agreed. "Prosecutors have tremendous discretion in terms of filing charges; police have tremendous street-level discretion in terms of how they handle cases," Buckler said. In his Feb. 17th Reason column, Ciaramella linked to a joint study by the Human Rights Watch and American Civil Liberties Union. The project, called "Every 25 Seconds," found that 53% of drug possession arrests in Harris County during 2015 were for marijuana. This mirrors a chilling nationwide trend: "Despite shifting public opinion, in 2015, nearly half of all drug possession arrests (over 574,000) were for marijuana possession. By comparison, there were 505,681 arrests for violent crimes (which the FBI defines as murder, non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault). This means that police made more arrests for simple marijuana possession than for all violent crimes combined."

With this new policy, Ogg is seeking to reverse that trend. Under the new policy, law enforcement will have more time and resources to fight greater threats: burglaries, robberies, rapes. Ogg underscored the issue of public safety: "We, as the leadership in Harris County, believe those tax dollars should be spent making you and your families safer, and that is the policy reason behind the implementation of this new program."

Athletes in a Bubble

By Terrance Turner



Patriots players Martellus Bennett (#88) and Devin McCourty (right) during a game on Sept. 11, 2016. Photo courtesy of Deadspin.com.

In the past year, professional athletes have been increasingly emboldened to speak out on social issues. In July, Carmelo Anthony appeared with fellow NBA athletes Chris Paul, Dwyane Wade, and LeBron James at the 2016 ESPYs, where they decried issues like racial profiling and gun violence. In the NFL, Colin Kaepernick's fiercely polarizing national anthem protest sparked similar moves: many players also kneeled during the anthem or even raised their fists, reminiscent of the 1968 Summer Olympics protest in Mexico City. But as the season drew to a close, some NFL players not only weren't speaking out on the issues, they didn't seem to know what they were.

This year's Pro Bowl was played in Orlando, where 49 people were gunned down in the Pulse nightclub shooting last June. But when Outsports reporter Jeremy Brener asked Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce how he felt about the Pulse attacks, Kelce replied, "I'm not gonna lie, I haven't even heard of them." How had Kelce not heard of the worst lone gunman mass shooting in American history? "I don't listen to the media. A lot of it's negative stuff," he continued. "I don't really turn on the news or read the newspaper. I hope everybody's all right and my prayers go out to everybody who was hurt, but I don't know much about it."

Brener found more cluelessness when he interviewed Philadelphia Eagles running back Darren Sproles. The reporter asked, in part: "How can the NFL players improve relationships with the LGBT community? How can they become more knowledgeable about LGBT issues?" Sproles replied: "I don't know. I don't know nothing." Brener tried again: "Is there talk about LGBT issues in the locker room?" Sproles answered with a question of his own: "What are you saying? What does that stand for?"

It appears that New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady is also unaware of national goings-on. While addressing the media at Houston's Minute Maid Park on Jan. 31, Brady was asked about his relationship with the president and flatly stonewalled: "I'm not talking politics at all." When asked about the executive order that bans residents of seven majority-Muslim countries from entering the U.S, he asked, "What's going on in the world? I haven't paid much attention. I'm just a positive person."

Perhaps Brady can ask his teammates what's going on: six of them have announced that they will not be attending the Patriots' upcoming trip to the White House, a tradition for Super Bowl champion teams. Moreover, four of them are doing so for political reasons. Patriots tight end Martellus Bennett said at Minute Maid Park the same night that he would not attend: "I don't support the guy that's in the house." Free safety Devin McCourty told Time magazine via text message that he'd skip, too. "I don't feel accepted in the White House. With the president having so many strong opinions and prejudices I believe certain people might feel accepted there while other won't." Running back LeGarrette Blount felt the same way: "I just don't feel welcome in that house," he said on The Rich Eisen Show Feb. 9.

Defensive lineman Chris Long also passed. As he explained on the podcast Pardon My Take, "I've got plenty of serious political issues that probably don't belong on this show, but I'm just not doing it." Linebacker Dont'a Hightower is also skipping, having already visited as part of Alabama's college football championship team in 2009. "Been there, done that," he said. Defensive tackle Alan Branch said he wanted to spend more time with his family. But are those reasons merely pretexts for their ideological opposition?

Obviously, the demands and pressures of the NFL make it difficult for some players to keep up with current events. The relentless grind of striving towards the Lombardi Trophy clearly prevented Sproles and Kelce from knowing the basics of American civic discourse. But what about Brady? Trump claimed on election night that Brady had voted for him — but the quarterback has remained silent: on his vote, on his relationship with the president, on his personal views. He's surrounded by vocal teammates, yet resolutely silent. Why?

A possible explanation could lie in a comment by Green Bay Packers QB Aaron Rodgers. Last August, he told ESPN Radio: "I think some guys in the NFL are probably worried about repercussions [from the league] on speaking their mind." Publicly endorsing a president who has attacked Mexicans, Muslims, veterans, women, the disabled, the press, and black communities could be damaging for an NFL superstar's brand, career, and pocketbook. Worth noting is the possible influence of free agency on the players' outspokenness: Chris Long will not be returning to the Patriots, and Martellus Bennett is expected to depart as well. While some players' dedication to the sport has them living in a bubble, others may be sealing themselves in a "bubble" of their own making.

The 59th Annual Grammy Awards Review: What a night.

By: Christopher Joseph

The 59th Annual Grammy Awards was last Sunday, February 12th, and boy, was this a night to remember. The musical performances were top notch this year, pulling no punches when it came to political hot topics. But the Grammys were upstaged by the two most talked about icons in music today, Adele and Beyoncé. With Adele opening the Grammy's with her hit song "Hello" with an angelic halo around her, to Beyoncé killing it on stage – while full on pregnant-- with her performance of "Love Drought" and "Sandcastles". This was a Grammy to go down in the history books.

After the beautiful Adele graced us with her performance, the host of "The Late Late show" James Corden bought his charming personality to the stage, from his slapstick gag of him falling down the stairs after his elevator malfunctioned to his light-hearted charisma. Corden really brought his "A" game to the show, when he pulled out his most signature viral segment, "Carpool Karaoke." I'm pretty sure everyone sang along with him and his various musical guest. Although he didn't grace us with his singing voice, he did give us a rap during his monologue to get everyone in the musical spirit, if you weren't after Adele's amazing pipes. But his humor did not set the tone for this musical trip.

One of the most unexpected and highly praised wins was that of 23-year-old Chicago artist Chance the Rapper. He made history that night by being the only artist to ever win a Grammy award without being signed to a major record label. A rule that was set in place last year that enabled unsigned artist or streaming-only albums to be eligible for a Grammy nomination. Chance the Rapper was nominated for a total of seven Grammys, managing to win a total of three. He won Best Rap Album for "Coloring Book," Best New Artist, and Best Rap performance for "No Problem." His win has sparked a fire in many young aspiring artists' eyes. He has made history by proving that you don't need a major record deal to carry you to the stars.

A certain number of musical performances decided to bring some political hot topics to the musical stage. First, it was Katy Perry who donned an all-white pantsuit – kind of reminded me of the former Presidential candidate Hillary

Clinton—with a red armband with the words "Persist" written. Although her performance of her new single, "Chained to the Rhythm," was nice and all, she didn't really stand out with her whole "Persist" movement compared to the legendary hip-hop group A Tribe Called Quest who went all out for this performance, dominating the stage with an amazing stage presence that should have woke the world up.

Sharing the stage with Anderson Paak and Busta Rhymes, a Tribe Called Quest brought the house down when it came to their performance of "We the people." One of the members, Q-Tip started the party off by stating that group was there to represent everyone who wants better government representation; Busta Rhymes chimed in midway through to announce, "I'm not feeling the political climate right now," calling out Trump in a not so subtle way by thanking "President Agent Orange" for his "unsuccessful attempt at the Muslim ban." Then the Bandmates knocked over a fake wall — subtle — before performing "We the People." As the song played, a group of very diverse men and women claimed the stage alongside the performers, as the last verse by the late Tribe member Phife Dawg played, the performers raised their fists to the sky saluting the Black Power movement with the word "Resist" draped behind them.

Aside from all the political agenda, it was night many dubbed "Beyoncé vs Adele." Both Adele and Beyoncé were in the running for taking home the most Grammys for the night. Adele had a total of 5 nominations, and Beyoncé with her grand slam total of 9. Adele eventually came out on top winning in all five of her categories, beating Beyoncé for Song of the year with her hit single, "Hello" and the big award for the night Album of the year with her album "25." Beyoncé did, however, win Best Adult Contemporary Album for "Lemonade" and "Formation" won Best Music Video.

What really made the Grammys the "Adele and Beyoncé show," was Adele's passionate speech. She gave a heartfelt thank you, for Beyoncé's "Lemonade" album for being empowering, not only to her and her life but for everyone. Adele herself said onstage that she did not deserve the award, that it should have been given to Beyoncé. In a press conference backstage, Adele told

reporters: I feel like it was [Beyoncé's] time to win. My view is: what the f--k does she have to do to win Album of the Year?" She continued: "I am a Beyoncé stan. I remember when I was 11 years old, I was with some girlfriends, and we were practicing a song to do at an assembly. I probably suggested the Spice Girls, and they said have you heard [Destiny's Child song] 'No, No, No'? And I was like, 'no, no, no.' I remember how I felt hearing her voice. I fell in love immediately with her. The way I felt when I first heard 'No, No, No' was exactly the same as when I first heard 'Lemonade' last year... The other artists who mean that much to me are all dead."

Adele was not the only one who disagreed with the outcome. Many of Beyoncé's fans also shared their displeasure with Beyoncé being overlooked for the award of best album of the year. Solange, who won her first-ever Grammy (Best R&B Performance, for "Cranes in the Sky") also shared some distaste with the Adele winning over her own sister. Solange tweeted "wuddup Frank," referencing Frank Ocean's boycott of the Grammys due to show's failure to honor the talents of black artists, stating "cultural bias" of the winners.

The Grammys were something spectacular, and the first time I actually enjoyed the Grammys. In the tribute to George Michael, Adele gave a very powerful and emotional rendition of Michael's 1996 ode to casual gay sex, "Fastlove." Even the late Prince received a purple stage tribute, performed by Bruno Mars and The Time. The Prince tribute was straight up funky, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind on how much an impact that Prince had on the music industry. The 59th Grammy awards showed how much love prevails over everything, and if we can come together we can make a change in the world.



In Shocking Move, the Academy Acknowledges Black People

Terrance Turner

15

When the nominations for the 89th annual Academy Awards were announced on January 24, the recording 14 nods for the musical “La La Land” weren’t the biggest surprise. Instead, the shocker was the inclusivity. After two years of all-white nominees, six black actors were recognized for their performances — the most ever in a single year. Furthermore, three of the ten Best Picture nominees had predominantly African-American casts. This is also a record.

One of the films is true — a surefire conversation piece for Black History Month. “Hidden Figures” is the little-known but true story of three women who played a crucial role in the U.S. space race. The “West Area Computers,” an all-black group of female mathematicians, worked for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) from 1943 until it became NASA in 1958. According to NASA.gov, the “computers” read photographic film of changes in pressure readings, ran calculations on the data they found, then would plot the results by hand on graph paper. Taraji P. Henson plays Katherine Goble (nee Johnson), who calculated the trajectory of the first American in space. Mary Jackson, who became NASA’s first black engineer, is played by singer Janelle Monae. The role of Dorothy Vaughan, Jackson’s supervisor and NASA’s first black manager, is performed by actress Octavia Spencer.

Spencer was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for her work in the film. So was Viola Davis, for “Fences,” the film adaption of playwright August Wilson’s piece about a black sanitation worker and his family in 1950s Pittsburgh. Also nominated: Naomie Harris for “Moonlight,” a drama about a young man’s coming-of-age in South Florida. Mahershala Ali was up for Best Supporting Actor, also for “Moonlight.” (Monae plays his girlfriend in the film, ironic since Ali also appears in “Hidden Figures.”)

For Best Actress, Irish-Ethiopian actress Ruth Negga was recognized for her role in “Loving.” The film chronicles Richard and Mildred Loving, whose interracial marriage in 1958 led to their arrests (!) and then to a landmark Supreme Court case. Denzel Washington is up for Best Actor for “Fences,” which he directed. It’s his seventh Oscar nomination, the most ever for a black actor. Davis’ three nominations are the most for a black actress. (Best Actor went to Casey Affleck for “Manchester by the Sea”; Emma Stone won Best Actress for “La La Land.”)

Never in 89 years of the Academy Awards have there been black nominees in every acting category. But the historic strides don’t stop there. Four out of five Best Documentary nominees are black: Raoul Peck (“I Am Not Your Negro”), Ezra Edelman (“O.J.: Made in America”), Roger Ross Williams (“Life, Animated”), and Ava DuVernay. Her film “13th” addresses the racial disparities in the criminal justice system and the skyrocketing rates of mass incarceration in this country. According to Variety magazine, she’s the first black woman to have her work recognized in this category. (“Made in America” won the prize.)

When it came to recognizing Latinos, however, the Academy was not so generous. Lin-Manuel Miranda scored a Best Original Song nod for “How Far I’ll Go,” from the animated film Moana. But aside from the multiracial Puerto Rican playwright/composer, representation was minimal. Spencer hinted at this via an email response to USA Today: “There’s so much more to diversity than being black or white...I’d like to see more diversity in directing.” (Indeed, Barry Jenkins was the lone person of color nominated for Best Director — an all-male roster of five. Damien Chazelle won, for “La La Land.”)

Still, the Academy has taken a stunning leap forward. Never in 89 years have there been black nominees in every acting category. The diverse groups in the Best Picture and Best Documentary categories are also unprecedented. The unexpected inclusion was a welcome surprise for Black History Month, and Octavia Spencer must have echoed the thoughts of many with her response to the award selections: “I’m over the moon. Pun intended.”

UPDATE: Black History Month ended with a bang when the Academy Awards were held on Feb. 26. Davis took home the Best Supporting Actress trophy, becoming the first black person to win an Emmy, Tony, and Oscar for acting. Mahershala Ali became the first Muslim actor ever to win an Academy Award when he won Best Supporting Actor for “Moonlight.”



In a shocking finale, Best Picture went to “Moonlight.”

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