
THE COALITION OF UNITED PROGRESSIVES CHARMECK CHRONICLE



Greetings!

We truly appreciate everyone's involvement.
This War on Oppression will only be won as one
mass movement.

Sections

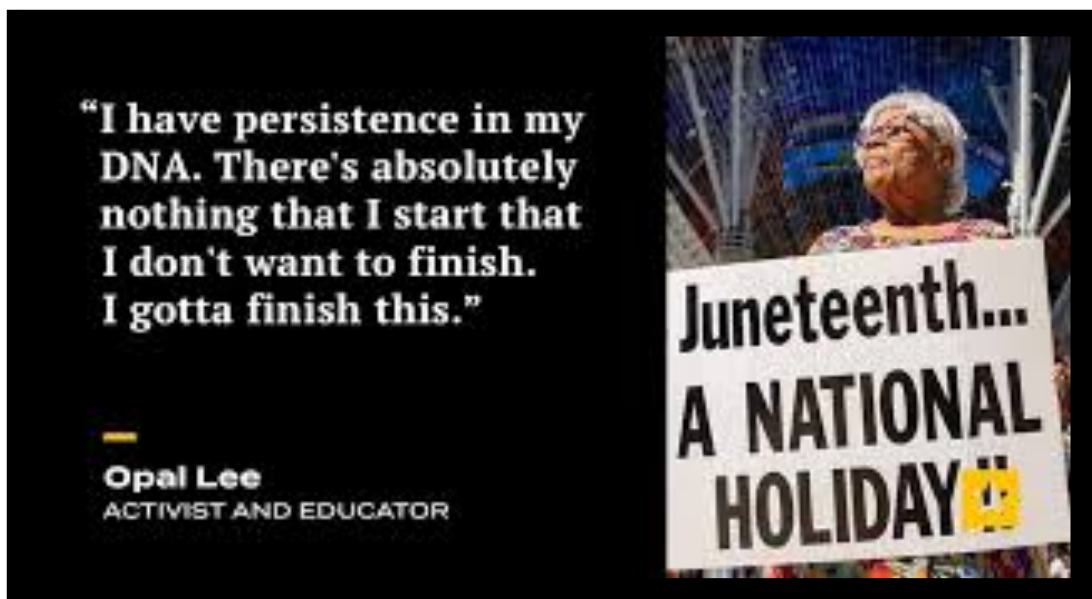
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Our Mission Statement

The continual unification of as many organizations as possible starting at the local level and branching out to both the state of North Carolina and then the entire nation.

Spotlight

Opal Lee "Grandmother of Juneteenth"



(Born October 7, 1926)

By DonnaMarie Woodson

[Opal Lee](#), also known as the “Grandmother of Juneteenth” has finally accomplished what she exclaimed that she and her ancestors have been waiting 155 years, 11 months, and 28 days to do; make Juneteenth a [federally-recognized holiday](#). And, on June 17, 2021, the wait was over. [President Biden](#) signed Senate Bill S. 475, and Ms. Lee was standing beside him during the ceremony. making Juneteenth the eleventh federal holiday.



The history of Juneteenth begins the day [Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger](#) issued [General Order No. 3](#) on June 19, 1865, in [Galveston, Texas](#), further informing residents of, and enforcing, [Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation](#)

[Proclamation](#) which set all Confederate states' slaves free on January 1, 1863. Granger's actions set-in motion the yearly celebration date of June 19 as “Juneteenth” by African Americans. Today, thanks to Ms. Lee's persistence, it's official.

"And now we can all finally celebrate. The whole country together," Ms. Lee told NPR minutes after a landslide House vote approving legislation establishing the day, now known as Juneteenth, as a federal holiday to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States.

In a warm and raspy voice, Ms. Lee recalls her decades of work in the Juneteenth movement after joining the [Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society](#), which oversaw local Juneteenth celebrations. But she said that after more than 40 years as a

community activist, she "really doubled down in 2016" by "going bigger."

At the age of 89, Ms. Lee decided her new life mission was much like that of Granger: "I knew I just had to spread the word about Juneteenth to everybody." The best way to do that, she figured, was to help get Juneteenth accepted as a national holiday.



She decided to start with a walking campaign in cities along a route from her home in Fort Worth, Texas, to Washington, D.C. It wasn't a straight line. Over several weeks, Lee arrived in cities where she'd been invited to speak and

walked 2½ miles to symbolize the 2½ years that it took for enslaved people in Texas to learn they were free.

"I was thinking that surely, somebody would see a little old lady in tennis shoes trying to get to Congress and notice," she said, laughing at the memory.



Since then, Lee has become known as the "Grandmother" of Juneteenth. One of her annual walks culminated in a trip to the Capitol carrying a petition signed by 1½ million Americans urging Congress to pass legislation for a

federal holiday. "It wasn't a success," she said about that trip. But, on June 17th, Biden's signature declaring Juneteenth a National Holiday changed all that!

Ms. Opal Lee was born in [Marshall, Texas](#) on October 7, 1926. She was the oldest of three children of Mattie (nee Broadsus) and Otis Flake. When she was 10 years old, she and her family moved to Fort Worth, Texas. The Flakes later moved to the 7th Ward of [Fort Worth, Texas](#) (also known as Terrell Heights).

In June 1939, her parents bought a house in the 900 block of East Annie Street, then a mostly white area. On June 19, 1939, 500 white rioters vandalized and burned down her home. Lee was twelve years old at the time. Recalling it years later, she said, "The fact that it happened on the 19th day of June has spurred me to make people understand that Juneteenth is not just a festival."

Before the passage of the Juneteenth legislation by the House and



Senate, there have only been four new holidays added to the national calendar in the past 100 years.

The last one was in 1983 when President Ronald Reagan signed a bill adding Martin Luther King Jr. Day to celebrate

King's contribution to the civil rights movement. It was a 15-year journey that began in 1968, four days after King was assassinated, and it wasn't observed until 1986. Even then, it took nearly two more decades for all individual states to also recognize the holiday.

Let's hear Ms. Opal share her exhilaration about our new holiday!

(Click on link below for Ms. Opal's journey)

<https://youtu.be/y397TDJh-6Y?t=1>



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Editorial

Getting Back to Normal is not Normal

By

Tarik Kiley

June 28, 2021



Many workers who have been on unemployment benefits are not returning to their jobs, post-pandemic or have been applying for jobs, but not accepting the job offers they are getting from

employers. Why are employees not returning to work? Some cite that it is easier to live off unemployment benefits rather than work for a living. But are pandemic unemployment benefits what is causing the worker shortages? I would argue that monetary compensation is only one aspect of job satisfaction.

Receiving an adequate amount of monetary compensation for your work is one part of job satisfaction. According to an article in The Guardian from Feb 2021, Bernie Sanders said that Americans are subsidizing very profitable corporations such as McDonalds and Wal Mart. Despite the incredible amount of profit that these corporations make, they do not pay their workers a living wage.



Sanders goes on to say, “he had ‘talked to too many workers in this country who, with tears in their eyes, tell me the struggles they have to provide for their kids on starvation wages.’” The article from the Guardian continues to explain, Executives from Walmart and McDonald’s were invited to the

hearing, titled, “Should Taxpayers Subsidize Poverty Wages at Large Profitable Corporations?” They declined to appear.

The senators heard from low-wage workers from McDonald’s and Walmart. Terence Wise, a McDonald’s employee from Kansas City, Missouri, said his low pay had led to his family becoming homeless.

“My family has been homeless despite two incomes. We’ve endured freezing temperatures in our purple minivan. I’d see my daughter’s eyes wide open, tossing and turning, in the back seat. Try waking up in the morning and getting ready for work and



school in a parking lot with your family of five,” said Wise. “That’s something a parent can never forget and a memory you can never take away from your children. You should never

have multiple jobs in the United States and nowhere to sleep.”

Obviously, working for little or no reward is a concern and leads to serious job dissatisfaction. It also can be a burden on mental and physical health. In the case mentioned above, having no place to sleep must be detrimental to one’s health.



(1970's family home)

The idea of the middle class is built upon the idea of disposable income. The idea is that workers will be paid a wage that allows them to buy the necessities of life and then afford some luxury goods as well. While those in the middle class are not rich, they are expected to be able to afford durable goods such as refrigerators and dish washers, making their lives somewhat more comfortable. If you cannot afford to buy the goods that the market offers, not even a place of residence, then you not only are not middle class, but your

American Dream is an American Nightmare.

Still, not being able to afford the necessities of life, is only one aspect of job dissatisfaction. Another aspect is the need for or the lack of childcare. Pre-pandemic, American families were paying a lot of money for childcare. Low wages also have made quality childcare almost impossible to obtain, and because most American families have two working parents, the need for childcare outside of the home becomes crucial.

Childcare outside of the home can become extremely expensive. This is also not to mention the fact that the USA trails northern European countries on certain benefits such as maternity leave. Not being able to care for children, adds an additional burden of stress to one's work life.

This all leads to the idea of work-life balance. Pre-pandemic, many Americans had an unhealthy work-life balance. Being able to stay away from work has really hit home this point for many. Americans

were working too many hours to provide for their families, and as a result had little time to spend quality time with their families.

This means that many Americans were working to pay for a lifestyle that they in fact, never got to enjoy, and sitting in traffic two to three hours a day, for example did not help to create any type of work-life balance, either. In fact, pre-pandemic, Americans were working too long and too hard with too little free time to enjoy their family life.



This cannot possibly be beneficial to mental health. The American workplace is in fact, super stressful, and this stress has led to strained relationships—not to mention that it also drives up your blood pressure.

So, it is understandable that people, post-pandemic, are seeking a manageable workload. People are also seeking flexibility in their work environment, too. The use of Zoom and other conferencing technology exposed the fact that many workers, who are not essential workers, do not actually have to be in an office setting to accomplish their goals.

Now, many workers do not want to commute anymore, but instead want flexibility in location. If one only needs a laptop computer and an internet connection to get one's job done, then it seems reasonable to allow a worker to complete their tasks from the neighborhood coffee shop, the beach, wherever, if the work gets done.

Also, people are looking to unplug more. The fact that life slowed down during the pandemic has shown that people can survive without working yourself into the ground. When people were not allowed to be around one another as often during the pandemic,



people began to understand that some time to oneself to breathe is a healthy thing.

So, this is all to say that the United States of America is going to have to deal with the new post-pandemic worker.

This is a worker who is not necessarily lazy, but who has embraced their humanity, and realizes that there are aspects to living beyond simply slaving away for a wage and hoping that they can make enough money to make ends meet.

People are beyond just paying bills now and want to be able to afford happiness. This means not only higher wages, but also having a family and being able to afford family life. It means being able to spend time with your family and being able to readily afford care for yourself and your children. This is the balance that the new American worker is looking for.



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Announcements



Democrats of North Mecklenburg

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, July 1st at 7:00 PM

Cornelius Town Hall

21126 Catawba Ave.

Deadline for Democracy: Coalition Caravan and Rally

Rally in Support of For the People Act S.1

Hosted by: Indivisible NC District 9

AMPAmerica.org,

NC Poor People's Campaign; A National Call for Moral Revival

Friday, July 2nd at 11:00 am

Senior Thom Tillis Office

9300 Harris Corners Pkwy, Charlotte, NC 28269

**Register here: [https://act.indivisible.org/.../local-
actions/163195/signup/](https://act.indivisible.org/.../local-actions/163195/signup/)**

Announcements



Mecklenburg County Senior Democrats

Friday, July 9th, 11:30 am

[Register to attend on Facebook Page](#)

Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, July 14th at 6:30 PM

Register in Advance: DWMC FACEBOOK PAGE

African American Caucus of Mecklenburg County

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, July 27th at 6:30 PM

ZOOM



Please submit your group events to donnamarie93@gmail.com by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the Announcements.

Happenings Gallery!



The Executive Corner:

Executive Director - Jade X. Jackson

Rev Rodney Sadler, Joel Segal, DonnaMarie Woodson

Rev. Glencie Rhedrick

Coalition of United Progressives-CharMeck Chronicle

Editor: DonnaMarie Woodson

Contributor: Tarik Kiley