

**NWA  
Black  
Heritage**  
SUPPORT THE CAUSE

# 612 S COLLEGE AVE OFFER TO PURCHASE

Fayetteville, AR | NOV 8. 2022





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Legacy of American Slavery

NWA Black Heritage acknowledges that we all live in a system that American Slavery built and that each of us is responsible to do our part to dismantle it. A debt is owed to enslaved peoples and to their descendants especially all those that contributed to the economies of Northwest Arkansas through forced labor, forced illiteracy, and dehumanization. NWA Black Heritage is led by descendants of enslaved people who work to build authentic and lasting relationships to create systemic change through education, recognition, and activation of African American resilience and survival through generations of harsh, uncompromising challenges.

## Land Acknowledgement

NWA Black Heritage acknowledges the Osage, Caddo, and Quapaw peoples, and their elders past, present, and future, for their ancestral stewardship of the land dating from time immemorial and upon which we now live. It is within the responsibility of our educational mission and our commitment to diversity and inclusion that we discuss the intersection of their history with ours as forced cultivators of the NWA landscape from which they were removed in the early 19th century.

## TEAM

**Activators:** Sharon Killian, NWA Black Heritage - Tommie Flowers Davis - Veronica Huff

**Descendants of Original African American Residents on Spout Spring**

Lisa White - Wendy Carr Wendell Huggins - Pamela Miller - Valerie Blackburn - Nadine

Robinson - Regina French - Jeff Carr - Tammy Perry - Angie Blackburn

Jimmye Whitfield - Mary Williams Cynthia Jenkins - Jami Watson - Loni Logan

Jason Fisher - Phillip Deffebaugh - Glenda Deffebaugh - Lois Dean Bryant

Thomas Wayne Lackey - Jonn Benedict - Grayson Davis - JoAnne Lackey Goodley

**NWA Black Heritage Board:** Caree Ann Marie Banton - Stephanie Conway, Treasurer

Cynthia Cooper, Secy - JoAnn Lackey Goodley - George Sabo - Jami Lockhart

Jeannie Whayne - LaDawna Hudson Whiteside - Taliyah Brooks, Director



No Justice, No Peace Mural Juneteenth 2020

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNITY PROFILE	4
COMMUNITY VISION	5
TOURISM	6
THE OFFER	7
IMPACT	8
ALIGNMENT	9
EXPERIENCE	10
APPENDIX I	11
APPENDIX II	12



# COMMUNITY PROFILE



The historic African American community along Spout Spring developed out of the Black residents that lived north of Lafayette Street, Fletcher Avenue on Mount Sequoya to the east, Dickson and Garland to the West, and Deihl to the South (Deihl no longer a street name). [See another erased Black Community North] For thirty-three years, from 1932 – 1965 African Americans who lived along Spout Spring and Willow Avenue and on what was then called the "Yell lands" surrounding 612 S College endured school segregation in their own neighborhood as the Jefferson school next door could be attended only by whites. The citizens of Fayetteville are stewards of its public schools and are an important part of the Master Plan for the City. The 1945 Fayetteville master plan explains how schools are used to affect communities, and in particular Jefferson School.

***"...[Schools] may be used to prevent housing of different races from being built in the same area..."*** A Master City Plan and Public Works Program for Fayetteville, Arkansas, Chapter VI, 1945.

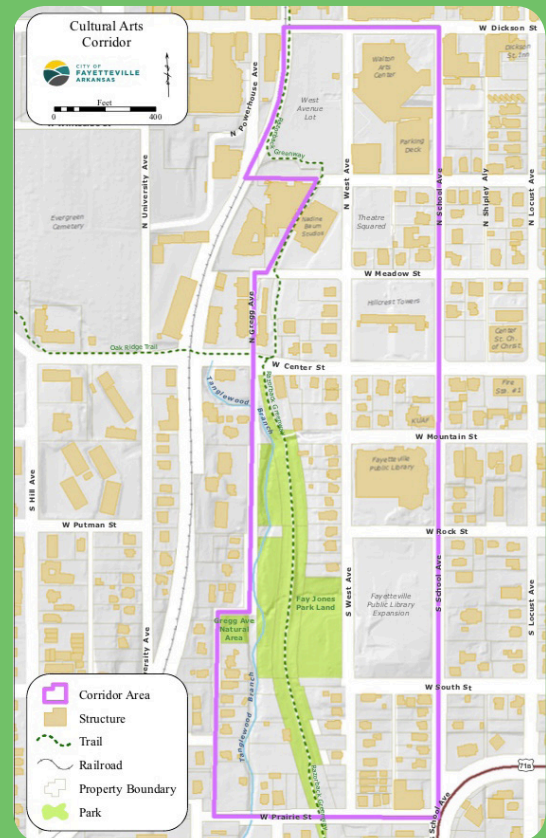
This is the last historic African American community in Northwest Arkansas. It is to be celebrated for its resilience to survive to today, at one time representing one third of the Fayetteville population. Fayetteville begins to repair generations of ill with good by returning the Jefferson property to the Black community to create a vibrant hub for cultural literacy, business and educational advancement, and pride.



# COMMUNITY VISION

## FAYETTEVILLE'S RAMBLE

The Cultural Arts Corridor is a dynamic new 50-acre outdoor public space that will help to revitalize Fayetteville's downtown area and create a destination for residents and visitors alike. Linking the City's key cultural institutions—including the Walton Arts Center, TheatreSquared, Nadine Baum Studios, Fayetteville Public Library, and the University of Arkansas' Art and Design District—the corridor will showcase and celebrate local arts culture. It will also enhance civic space and serve as a catalyst for additional development and density in the downtown area, increasing bike trails and connections, and improving streets and walkability. This project is part of a Bond package approved by Fayetteville voters in April 2019.



Source: City of Fayetteville

## FAYETTEVILLE'S ARTS & DESIGN DISTRICT ON MLK

The district will be developed close to campus, near Martin Luther King Boulevard and Hill Avenue. It will feature several new buildings for art and design classrooms, labs, studios and potentially a public gallery space. The district will bring together art, design and education, while serving as the central hub for the student and faculty artists and designers at the University of Arkansas and beyond.

The Windgate Art and Design District will further expand the reach and scope of the university's School of Art, which was established in August 2017 thanks to a \$120 million gift from the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation.

## FAYETTEVILLE'S NWA BLACK CULTURE CORRIDOR

NWA Black Heritage believes the development of the African American Cultural and historical district aligns with the development of the Fayetteville Ramble and Arts and Design District on MLK. The property is less than one mile, potentially a 2 minute drive or 5 minute ride from the center of the University of Arkansas Design District. The 612 S College property presents an ideal opportunity for cultural placemaking that is necessary in the NWA region.

## **ABOUT CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

### **Fayetteville Promotes Authentic Black Culture and History**

What concerns many people in the historic African American community in Fayetteville beyond the erasure of the community itself is the erasure of the arts, of the objects that we produced for forced work and mere existence, the creations that we did not get to keep, the stories we did not get to own and those we did not get to tell, the skills we did not get to practice or pass on to our children that were not born of slavery. It is inhumane and untenable that the only agency we could have at freedom up to now is how to minute by minute survive systemic dehumanization and elimination in what amounts to the safest place we could be in the region – Fayetteville.

It is important that Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas right this incredible wrong of cultural violence upon the African American community. 612 S College is the chance to begin authentic work on diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism practices so that our regional efforts in this regard become successful.

Fayetteville Black Culture Corridor is to be a hub of Black Heritage, of Black economic activation and growth, of Black Foodways from cultivation to consumption, of Black creativity in science, music, language, art, education, and love of self. It will bring the Black residents a sense of safety and pride.



# THE OFFER

NWA Black Heritage's offer aligns with the Fayetteville Public School Board's "Resolution to Establish Priority Considerations for use in the Review of Offers to Purchase the Stephen M. Percival Adult Education Building" (Jefferson School)

"THEREFORE, the Board will consider the following in its review of offers to purchase the building:"

- **RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE COMMUNITY**

The building was opened in 1932 as Jefferson School (for white children), built and supported to a standard that far outpaced Lincoln School for Black children built at Center St. and Willow Ave in 1939. The Lincoln School was built to move the Black families from Lafayette and Olive Street where the first public school in the State (Henderson School) was built for Blacks. Jefferson at 612 S College served as a backstop to the historic African American community that was being systematically forced further south. African American children attended the 60-year-old Lincoln School until 1965 when the Fayetteville School Board integrated elementary schools.

The African American community's acquisition of this 612 S College Ave property will be the start of a more honest and understanding of the previous treatment of Black peoples in Fayetteville and the Northwest Arkansas region. It is the last African American community remaining from the near 30% of the Fayetteville population at the end of the Civil War.

NWA Black Heritage values that the codified plans by the City of Fayetteville to erase the community have not yet been completely achieved, and that as a City and region we have the opportunity to take corrective steps forward to create the place where we all feel welcome and fully participate in the significant opportunities that lay before us.

- **IMPACT TO THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PUBLIC ACCESS, MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS, AND PROGRAMMING THAT SERVES THE COMMUNITY**

The 612 S College Ave property along with the nearby Walker Park will be an anchor to the only historic African American community remaining in NWA. It will bring new housing, arts, classroom, a community auditorium(a), conditional live/work space, restaurants, shops, scaled retail, non-profit suite(s), and a cultural hub that will be a tourist destination for Fayetteville and NWA. Industry leaders, employers, and employees from around the world will have a greater understanding and appreciation of the multicultural underpinnings of the success and beauty of this region.

Within the rubric of this impact will be numerous collaborations that have begun with myriad arts and culture organizations, and University of Arkansas departments including in science and technology and food. We will create a non-profit hub that will engage young people in community service and more.

### **COMMUNITY ACTIVATORS & SUPPORTERS**

Art Ventures Gallery - Non-Profit / Diverse, Inclusive Art Engagements

Veronica Huff - Community Activist / Student UA School of Art

Monique Pierre - Partners for Better Housing

Dr. Airic Hughes - professor of history, UA; Visionari Enterprises

Dr. Synetra Hughes, Managing Dir. Diversity & Inclusion UA/Walton College

Sara Segerlin, Community Engagement, Crystal Bridges Museum

Lakeisha Bradley - MY-T-BY-DESIGN Therapeutic Art Studios

Dominique Washington - Real Estate Agent / Entrepreneur

NWA MLK Council

University of Arkansas Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

University of Arkansas African and African American Studies Program

Dr. Barbara A. Lofton Office of Diversity & Inclusion

St. James United Methodist Church

St. James Missionary Baptist Church

Community Cohesion Project

Yvonne Richardson Community Center

Octavio Logo - Resident Artist, Crystal Bridges



- **ALIGNMENT WITH THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE'S WALKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

"Keep Jefferson Square as the neighborhood core" is stated in the Walker Park Neighborhood Plan and we contend that Jefferson School and the surrounding lots are not the core of the white majority neighborhood largely to its south. To African Americans, "Keep Jefferson Square as the neighborhood core" comports with its original purpose: to keep Black people out.

It is important to note that the Executive Summary for the Walker Park plan is written in the spirit of the longstanding, official City of Fayetteville Master Plan, 1945, to honor segregationists and their project to eliminate the African American community along Willow Ave. 612 S College along 3rd Street was to maintain the landscape of confederate Archibald Yell. His historic properties were being protected from Black presence. Further, there is no mention of the African American community which is a significant part of the history of the Walker Park neighborhood. If we are to believe venerating Yell and the historical context within which African Americans have survived nearby the Waxhaws landscape is a positive thing that uplifts us all, we must consider that this landscape included the Lynching Tree.

*"The Walker Park Neighborhood embodies significant portions of Fayetteville's history as one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City and former home to notable Fayetteville and Arkansas figures such as Archibald Yell. Changes over time have shaped the neighborhood's development pattern as the area shifted from a predominantly rural area to a modest extension of downtown neighborhoods to an area zoned for multi-family housing. Development pressure is inevitable given the area's proximity to Downtown and the Arkansas Research and Technology Park. Planning enables stakeholders to influence the form of future development by setting forth a vision document that encourages traditional neighborhood development and sustainability." The City of Fayetteville*

This property by Action of NWA Black Heritage's bid to acquire it helps reduce the terrible stigma of ongoing systemic racism and bias that's outwardly denied but has been codified in the Walker Park Neighborhood Plan, and for the last 80 years by the City of Fayetteville in "A Master City Plan and Public Works Program for Fayetteville, Arkansas".

- **DEMONSTRATED EXPERIENCE WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION OR INTERSECTING WITH RE-DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.**

NWA Black Heritage received approval for National historic preservation for East Mountain Cemetery which has interred early slavers and developers including Sutton, Pegram, Wilson. It also has "numerous unmarked graves." Continuing the traditional process of preserving in place steals teaching moments because all of those unmarked graves were of human beings who deserved respect and to be carried into history with intentionality.

Also importantly, historic preservation in Fayetteville has only ever focused on white communities, except for St James Methodist and St James Missionary Baptist Church, and Oaks Cemetery. The homes that have historic preservation status were either built at the hands of Black people who were enslaved or by those who survived the legacy of slavery. The opulence was also afforded by the great wealth created for white people with the system of American Slavery in Washington (Benton) and Madison counties. The Black community that is being erased at Jefferson School (612 S College) was destined to become a parking lot adjoining highways and parks meant for the pleasure of white people at "Historic Washington-Willow" (many homes being built twenty years or more after emancipation) to the north and the Yell plats to the south.

There were African American properties on 7th Street that are now gone. Three lots of African American land appear in the appraisal documents for this sale. Many white developments, businesses, and homes were built upon lands owned by or settled upon by African American landowners in the early years after emancipation.

Knowledge, skills, and abilities to help determine the historic value of buildings and use of complementary design principles are not in short supply here in our town. Several architects, landscape architects, and design specialists have done significant work in recent years and developers with sensitivities to this neighborhood are chomping at the bit to provide expertise toward building a more livable and prosperous neighborhood here. The key is that decision-makers have a direct connection to the Black neighborhood that could guide that development toward equitable and just ends. We also have contact with African American architects and designers who have demonstrated experience in historical preservation intersecting with re-development projects.





November 10, 2022

Ms. Sharon Killian, Board President  
NWA Black Heritage  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Ms. Killian,

It is with great anticipation that I write this letter in support of NWA Black Heritage's offer to purchase the Jefferson School and ancillary property from the Fayetteville School District. Partners for Better Housing is in full support of your efforts to bring a culturally astute and comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the site. Far too often, in cities around the nation, when redevelopment work is done in Black communities, the lead entities are not representative of the historically marginalized; leading to further harm. NWA Black Heritage has taken a decisive move to acquire the Jefferson School and there is no other entity better suited to be stewards of the future of that site and the surrounding community.

It is important for the Fayetteville School Board, City, County, State and Philanthropic partners to acknowledge the deleterious impact to the Black residents of the City of Fayetteville, and the continued harm that comes from the absence of a social-cultural hub that represents a safe place for expression, commerce, self-direction and healing. The highest use of the site should be decided by the community for the community. It will be an excellent opportunity for place making through Design Excellence and Choice Neighborhoods.

Partners for Better housing intends to continue our support of NWA Black Heritage in this endeavor. Our staff has over 25 years of housing and community development, outreach and engagement experience and look forward to working with NWA Black Heritage as they pursue the redevelopment of the site.

Best regards,

Monique L. Pierre, CEO  
Partners for Better Housing



November 10, 2022

Dear Board of Education with Fayetteville Public Schools,

I am writing on behalf of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art to express the museum's support and commitment to serve as a partner organization with Northwest Arkansas Black Heritage, founded by Sharon Killian. The museum's top strategic priorities for the next three years is to become an anti-racist institution and become a community centered museum. To do this, Crystal Bridges is actively seeking opportunities to support the growth of our region's diverse perspectives, cultures, histories and live experiences by serving as a partner with BIPOC organizations who are leading the way for this development, such as NWA Black Heritage and Art Ventures, which are two organizations founded by Sharon Killian.

Since the museum's opening in 2011, Sharon Killian has served as a significant contributor and collaborator with the museum extensive teams in curatorial, exhibitions, learning and engagement on the development of Black led scholarship, discourse, education and outreach. Through Sharon's organizations we have worked closely in hosting, engaging, and collaborating with visiting artists and architects—most recently with the *Architecture at Home* exhibition. We have observed that Sharon is an invaluable leader for Northwest Arkansas; is an inspiring mentor for future leaders; and is a champion of community partnerships and collaborations between peoples, cultures, and communities. This has been demonstrated through the 2021 Creative Impact Award (\$25,000 grant) by the Mid America Art Alliance, as well as her lead part in the award-winning documentary film by Obed Lamy, called [\*Once Forgotten\*](#), recounting the story of three enslaved individuals lynched in 1856 in Arkansas.

Based upon these factors, the museum is confident in Sharon's leadership and strategic vision to elevate and expand NWA Black Heritage to serve as a community center, history museum, and place of learning for all visitors. On behalf of Crystal Bridges and the Community Engagement department, we would like to extend our letter of support for NWA Black Heritage's organizational development with a home at the future site of the Jefferson School, which will serve as the first Black cultural arts district in Northwest Arkansas and a historical learning space about Fayetteville's black community and enslaved cemetery. We are committed to serving as a community partner and will plan to support through community art activations, discussions, visiting artists and collaboration on NWA Black Heritage exhibitions to be held at the Jefferson School. Crystal Bridges would be thrilled to work with NWA Black Heritage and the Jefferson School on using the museum's resources in hopes to provide greater access to the arts, culture, and education in the region and to uplift Black led organizations at the forefront.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Crystal Bridges commitment to NWA Black Heritage, please feel free to contact me via my mobile at 585-269-9434 or email at [sara.segerlin@crystalbridges.org](mailto:sara.segerlin@crystalbridges.org).

Sincerely,

Sara Segerlin

Director of Community Engagement  
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art  
Email: [Sara.segerlin@crystalbridges.org](mailto:Sara.segerlin@crystalbridges.org) Mobile: 585.269.9434