

Press Release: November 3, 2021

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Subject: Spirit & Place program: Past the Klan: The Roots of Racism in IPS and Beyond

Theme: If those who fail to study history are doomed to repeat it, can we stop and study now--to chart a different future for Indianapolis and our children?

Past the Klan: The Roots of Racism in IPS and Beyond is a one-night set of 4 workshops created in partnership with the Spirit & Place Festival and hosted by the Center for Black Literature & Culture at Indianapolis Public Library's Central Branch, 14 E. St. Clair St., on Wednesday, November 10, from 6 to 8 p.m. Here, community members interested in will have a chance to unpack the powerful and continuing loop of racism that has impacted IPS for more than a century.

The event is now sold out. For those who want to join by Zoom, here's the link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUld-6qrzoqE9cSWGeI_dgyojltJ9-rhEW. Participants are encouraged to send their contact info and what single workshop topic they want to discuss from the 4 listed below to johnharrisloflin@yahoo.com. Each will be sent the topic packet with information for study before the event. Zoom is also a good way to attend anonymously.

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and based on 40 years of research, "Past the Klan" invites participants to travel in time to 1921. Here they will trace the events that led up to the creation of 1) IPS's segregated high school, Crispus Attucks; and, 2) a decades-old and city-wide K-16 hierarchy reflecting an educational system that sorted and ranked students and their schools not only by race, but by class, religion, neighborhood, ability, ethnicity, career/vocation, politics, and even gender.

Participants will investigate board notes and decrees, news articles, and period literature to uncover secrets and dispel urban myths. They will discover the organizations, city leaders, journalists, and others that "built" Attucks without lifting a brick.

Here are the four workshop topics. Workshop will meet separately. Participants may choose only one to study, evaluate, and then decide at the meeting what needs to be done:

- [IPS and the mystery of the missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers](#)
- [Principal George Buck and Shortridge High School: The legacy of the IPS caste system](#)
- [Myth vs. Fact: Crispus Attucks High School and the Ku Klux Klan](#)
- [What was the Citizens School Committee, the most powerful, longest-lasting IPS school board group no one's ever heard of?](#)

By comparing yesterday to today--history as it was to history as it is written--Past the Klan attendees will find answers and also ask questions. Who ran our schools and who attended them? What is different today in IPS and what looks strangely the same? And what do we do now?

Past the Klan: The Roots of Racism in IPS and Beyond is produced by the [Charles E. & Virginia P. Vornehm-Loflin Center on the History of the Indianapolis Public Schools](#) in partnership with the Kheprw Institute, [Polite Protest](#) author Dr. Richard Pierce, Virgil and Sheila Boyd, [The Historic Journey](#), The Black & Latino Policy Institute, Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Brown, and [Families Talk: IPS Oral Histories](#).

The Spirit & Place Festival (Nov. 4-14) celebrates the powerful role the arts, humanities and religion play in community life and is housed in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. Learn more at www.spiritandplaceindy.org or 317-274-2462.