

In an era of the suppression of authentic Black history, local Spirit & Place (S&P) Festival and a local IPS history group continue to reveal Indianapolis Black history and implications for the present and future of our IPS.

Healthy IPS School Board Elections is a part of the national fight for a true Black history in schools—and in this case not only a fight for an honest Black history, but an honest IPS genealogy.

Below is a review of the Nov. 10, 2023 S&P event at the Indianapolis MLK Center: Nourishing Democracy: Healthy IPS School Board Elections presented by the Loflin Center on IPS History.

To concerned Indy citizens, all I can say is that you had to be there. Nourishing Democracy met all expectations and more. From my perspective, this was enhanced and validated by an S&P characteristic regarding the use of the arts to complement and supplement festival presentations. Validating the idea from Virgil Boyd of Indianapolis that we can't have social change without art, this festival presentation was fully enhanced.

From the specially prepared poem, "What's this democracy thing all about?" by local open mic poet Dr. Monday to the mixture of music, food, and democracy by local musician Clockwork Janz (who is also a chef), to the outstanding paintings/illustrations of the workshop's themes by local artist Clyde Gaw, the arts were integral. Gaw's attached paintings are reminiscing of the editorial cartoons of newspapers. His works dealt with the presence of hegemonic bigotry and political power in IPS school board elections (1930-1970) to an obvious hegemonic indulgence of money in recent (2012-2022) IPS elections. The workshop showed how both the above election eras reflected monopolistic control of a public school board—a democratic entity that needs dialogue (the back/forth interchange of debate) nourished in its DNA, all in order to stay "healthy." Of course, this democratic nourishment is maintained for the sake of the children.

Several concerns came out of Friday's S&P inspired discussion about our IPS elections: a) some knew and many did not know about the over 4 decades (1922-1925/1930-1970) of bigoted and complete control of IPS by Indy's Citizens School Committee (CSC). Bigoted is used here because the CSC not only had a history of racism, but discrimination and prejudice regarding religion, class, geography, ability, gender, and ethnicity; b) raising the consciousness of parents/guardians, politicians, teachers by community organizing; and, c) analyzing the implications of current increases in the amount of campaign donations state-wide and nation-wide.

History shows us how, due to the importance of the philosophy of Wilma Mankiller, that "Whoever controls the education of our children controls our future." So, it's vital that the very, very large amounts of money accepted by past/present pro-privatization

IPS commissioners are analyzed. Otherwise, Indianapolis and IPS leaders are no better than those involved in today's national efforts to either cover up or erase Black American history.

Indy's African-American community needs to know the true history of our IPS and consequently our city to go forward. Presently, they do not.

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Our IPS has a problem-which means Indy has a problem. This is because the history of our IPS is basically the history of Indianapolis after the Civil War. Indy's current history is built on an underbelly of deleted facts (for example the 9 years [1917-1925: <https://ulib.iupui.edu/digitalcollections/IRecorder>] of the missing *Recorder* newspaper), or propaganda, or one-sided stories. Facing history means we have to face ourselves. This affects our democracy and so our freedom.

Indiana history is discussed in IPS schools. Indy/IPS history is not, even though the history of IPS is also the history of our city. The history of our IPS is also of the history of Indiana Blacks. *Cui bono?* Who benefits when this history isn't revealed and analyzed? IPS is, perhaps unknowingly, enabling those in the country, state, or city who don't want an authentic Black history. Why?