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LIVING THE NEXT CHAPTER

A Conversation with Today's Black History Makers

Our Black History Calendar spotlights current history makers who have made local and national impacts in sports, entertainment, arts, and social justice. They share with us experiences that helped shape their lives, challenges they overcame, and choices they made that helped them in their journey in becoming the living history makers they are today. Each profile includes a special message of encouragement. While reading their stories, know that you are the author of your next chapter. What will you write?

C. BRIAN WILLIAMS

Born 1968

The founder and executive director of Step Afrika!, C. Brian Williams learned the art of stepping as a student at Howard University and member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. While living in Southern Africa, he researched the percussive dance tradition and founded Step Afrika! in 1994.

What he wants you to know: *"Now is the time to take in as much information as you possibly can so that as you grow older, your options will be unlimited! Take educational risks by learning something completely different and new. Explore multiple careers, internships, and volunteer opportunities. Save more, buy less. And get up off the couch (and away from your phone!) in order to explore every corner of your community, your city, and your country."*



JENNIFER KING

Born 1984

Jennifer King is the first African-American woman to coach full-time in the National Football League. Coach King completed her first season as the Washington Football Team's full-year coaching intern in 2020. In her role, King worked with the offensive staff throughout the course of the offseason, training camp and regular season.

What she wants you to know: *"Keep pushing, keep dreaming and just know that you can do anything you set your minds to."*



TONY LEWIS, JR.

Born 1980

Tony Lewis, Jr. grew up in Washington, DC. Author and activist who helped organize D.C. Natives Day and the Don't Mute DC movement, Tony has been a champion for the city's youth for more than 20 years. He has worked to empower men, women, and children impacted by mass incarceration and has received local and national honors and recognition for his work in reentry, social justice, and community organizing.

What he wants you to know: *"In life certain traumatic situations will occur and you may not be able to improve them, but you must always improve. The world is awaiting your contribution. You have inherent value and you are necessary. There isn't a room that you don't belong in."*

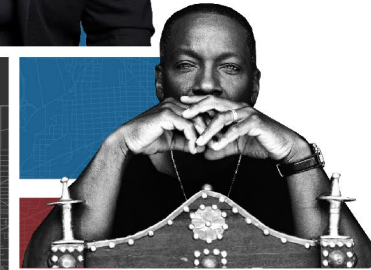


DONNIE SIMPSON

Born 1954

In 1977, Donnie Simpson began a new chapter in his story when he relocated to Washington, DC to work at a local radio station. Star of radio, TV, and film, his celebrated career has spanned 50 years. He is credited as one of the nation's first video jockeys. Recognitions include BET Walk of Fame, Rhythm and Blues Music Hall of Fame, and most recently the Radio Hall of Fame's Class of 2020.

What he wants you to know: *"I get so angry when I hear people refer to our youth as a lost generation. I find them quite found and well aware of where they're going. They're determined to navigate their way to a life that improves the future for their generation and ours. It's always the young who forces change and this generation is no different. Respect!"*



AALAYAH EASTMOND

Born 2001

Aalayah is a student at Trinity Washington University. Three years ago, she survived a mass shooting at her high school in Parkland, Florida. From this tragic event, she began her path of youth organizing. Her first public speaking event was before one million people at a protest march in Washington, DC while a high school senior. Today, Aalayah is the cofounder of Team ENOUGH and Concerned Citizens of DC.

What she wants you to know: *"I am an activist for gun violence prevention and racial equity, who has made DC my new home. I have worked within the DC community to help make our city a safer place for all residents, while amplifying the voices of residents of color! We will continue this fight to end gun violence in DC!"*



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