

# MESSAGE

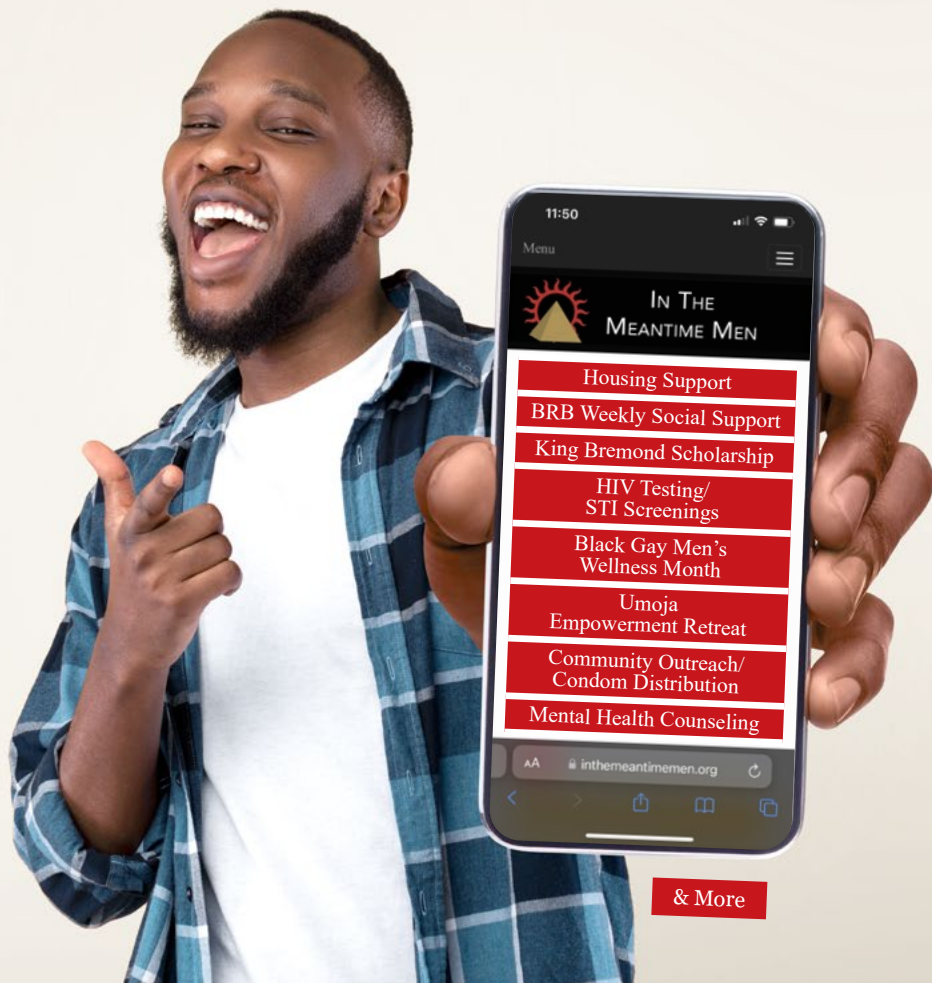
Fall 2023



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Fall 2023

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Creating Unity and Affirming Our  
Common Bond

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This project is supported by funds received from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs

# Full Speed Ahead

Moving From This Place to the Next Level

By Jeffrey C. King

Welcome to the Season of Pride. As the world elevates the consciousness of LGBTQ+ Pride, so does the City of Angels. In particular, the Black LGBTQ+ community exists as a uniquely non-monolithic and vibrant force of nature. We are diverse yet infused into the vast cultural fabric of this sprawling metropolis. From the desert to the mountains, to the ocean, to the valleys, and to the bustling inner cities, we more than exist.

As I enter the final laps of my Legacy Tour, the path forward has become crystal clear. I see myself continuing to work in the community while leveraging my years of social justice advocacy to influence policy at the federal, state, and local levels of government.

I understand more



profoundly the concept of “temperance” and comprehensive self-care. I will remain committed to my life, my family, and the wellness of In The Meantime. It’s time to batten down the hatches and move full speed ahead. I have lightened the load to allow myself to dedicate more time and energy to the things that will get me to the next level. I am intentional about what I (we) do and who I (we) do it with. Everyone can’t have a seat at the table. Everyone can’t come along for the ride.

I am grateful for the privilege to be of service. It is a calling that I have never taken for granted. I have learned firsthand that nothing is free. There is always a price and a sacrifice to be made in the pursuit of justice, equity, and inclusion. So is my life.

Doing this work has come with a great price and with many sacrifices. I have witnessed people at their absolute best and at their absolute worst. I have been both personally and professionally attacked by people who look like me and for sure by the others. I have no regrets and let the record reflect that I (we) came, I (we) saw, and I (we) transformed the world around us.

I have watched good people lose their way and become blinded by ego and power grabs. I have watched hard-working people be attacked and wrongly labeled for simply telling the truth and challenging our broken bureaucratic systems. Well, we must all reach a point in our lives where we must surrender to the will of God and allow the Universe to manage the ill-doers and the obstructionists. Today, I surrender them all.

Today, I hold fast in knowing that there is a universal energy that is set into motion by the good that we do. My life is a testimony of such. I live in a world where there is no lack or limitation. I can continue to see good no matter what.

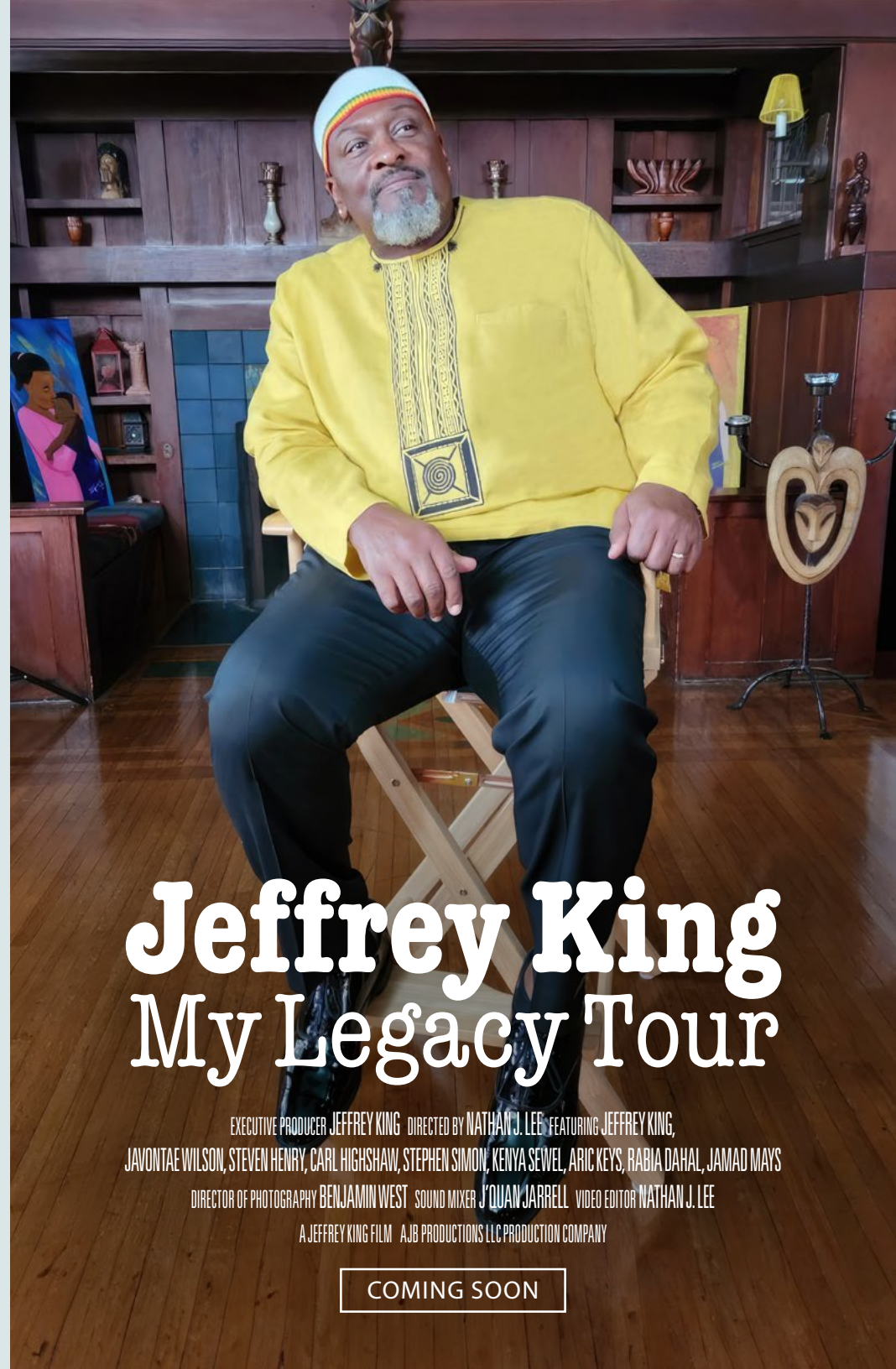
I have a lot of stories to share about my experiences over the past 30+ years. I will tell you that when I sit in the stillness of my home, I see the faces of thousands of people whom I have been able to support through the work of In The Meantime. This is my truth, and it will be told for years to come.

I have already done what I was sent here to do, and now I get to do more of it until the Universe says differently. The following is a list of refined services that ITMT will facilitate until new leadership steps into place: Sexual Health Education/Risk Reduction, HIV Testing/STI Screening, PrEP Linkage, Social Support, UMOJA Retreat, Black Gay Men’s Wellness Month, Housing Support, Mental Health Counseling, Personal and Professional Development, and Case Management/Service Linkage.

A word to the wise as you continue to rise: Be not discouraged when met with opposition, but rather be empowered in knowing that the source that governs the universe is always in control. You are sent here for a purpose, and it is your responsibility to find it out and to step into it. Everything else will fall into place. Calm the static by separating yourselves from the masses so that you are able to hear what is intended specifically for you. Some will hear breaking news, but you can hear directions to a pathway forward to the next level of your life. Know that you are needed, and our community can benefit greatly from the selfless sharing of your gifts.

I leave you with these words to live by. In the words of Steven Henry, “What got me to this place will not be the same thing that gets me to the next level of life’s journey.” Be still and know.

*Jeffrey C. King is Founder and Executive Director of In The Meantime Men’s Group.*



# Jeffrey King My Legacy Tour

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## The Power of One

### Jewel's Catch One Documentary Sheds Light on Many LGBTQ+ Victories

By Erin Herriford

Although Pride Month is just in our rearview mirror, nostalgia has set in as the 50th anniversary of the grand opening of Catch One reminds all people of the power of one influential woman: Jewel Thais-Williams. *Jewel's Catch One* is a tribute in documentary form to one of the longest-standing, eclectic, Black female-owned disco clubs in the United States. Located at 4067 W. Pico Blvd. in Los Angeles, Jewel's Catch One served as a beacon of hope and a cultural staple for members of the Black LGBTQ+ community.

As of 2015, the former disco club is now known as the Union and, although the name has changed, the historical remnants of the once-popular club have yet to be forgotten. So much so that the club has recently been restored to its original name: Jewel's Catch One.

Jewel Thais-Williams, the 84-year-old owner and founder of Catch One, is a well-known and revered figure in the Black LGBTQ+ community, namely for her unapologetic determination, her proud

declaration of support for the Black LGBTQ+ community, and her iconic and influential disco nightclub. Over the course of 42 years, Jewel became a business tycoon. Jewel's vision of acceptance transcended all barriers once in her way, allowing local Black LGBTQ+ members to find a safe haven among the closed doors and adversities plaguing them at that time.

Dissension existed among different ethnicities in the LGBTQ+ community dating as far back as 1959. Several incidents of discrimination created a negative environment for Black LGBTQ+. Reportedly, an incident called the Cooper Donuts Riot resulted in several biased arrests among members of the LGBTQ+ community who were loitering at the shop on Main Street in downtown Los Angeles. The Stonewall riots in New York occurred just 10 years later, causing more police and LGBTQ+ tension, after nearly a week of police raiding bars. Last were the Sip-Ins, which began in 1968 in Griffith Park and would continue as a "silent and peaceful form of protest." Here, the idea was for patrons to go into a bar

and request to be served as a test of how they would be treated—not unlike the “sit-ins” that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement.

Jewel endured a great deal of racism. Hailing from Arkansas, the family moved to Gary, Indiana, in her childhood and later arrived in San Diego, which she said was “just a recreation of the South” in terms of de facto segregation.

Her father was a strict disciplinarian. He was very conservative, she said. Her mother wasn’t much different. Neither encouraged her to “co-mingle” with peers outside of school, as she had more than enough siblings to interact with at home. Although challenging, Jewel credits her father for relocating in order to pursue career advancement and allow his children to receive a better education. Jewel’s entrepreneurial mind is owed to a few events, including having authority over a small corner store on weekends at just nine years old, opening a boutique as an adult, and growing up impoverished. She desired to become the owner of her destiny.

She recalls her early attempts at searching for a job. “That was the only way out, feeling the pain of being a chocolate girl. Before anyone said anything or did anything or accepted your application, they’d already dismissed you—but that’s not right!”

Jewel recalls the discrimination in Los Angeles in those days. “The most popular gay clubs in West Hollywood wouldn’t allow the DJs to play music that would encourage Black youth to come and dance. You’d have to have a couple of IDs, at least two, in order to get in. Women had to wear closed-toed shoes. The guys knew how to dress! They’d wear silk shirts and were required to wear name tags on them with glue, ruining their shirts. That was one of the reasons I decided to open up a club, even though I wasn’t a club person—I thought it was

ridiculous.” The owner of one of the hottest gay clubs in West Hollywood was openly racist and made sure to continuously adjust and create new rules to make it hard for Blacks to keep the party going.

While Jewel was working at a local establishment, she overheard Caucasian individuals saying how they didn’t care for people of color in bars. She then dreamt to herself that one of these days she’d own the building and make it accessible to everyone. Thus, the idea of Catch One was born.

The most exciting parts of the documentary are the segments about successes that Jewel achieved in more than 40 years of her Black-owned business. In the early 1970s, she put a \$1,000 down payment on the building, formerly known as the Diana Club, and quickly paid the remaining \$17,000. She swept, mopped, buffed, cleaned, painted, and even learned to tend bar, to create a “safe and welcoming environment” for her patrons.

It worked. The Catch One would become a major hot spot for Black youth, white celebrities, and people of all colors—so much so that some patrons created shirts requesting that the Catch One remain Black-owned. As well, a number of celebrities took notice of the club, among them Donna Summer, Luther Vandross, Madonna, Janet Jackson, and Bette Midler.

During this time, Jewel had to postpone her UCLA education due to financial constraints. In 1988, however, she returned to school to earn her Master of Arts in Oriental Medicine from Samra University in Los Angeles and opened an acupuncture clinic called the Village Health Foundation (now the Village Hope Foundation) at 4149 W. Pico Blvd., just across from Catch One.

The Village Health Foundation’s main purpose was to treat people suffering with AIDS using nontoxic

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This program is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$9 million with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of ITMT and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



treatments. Additionally, they used acupuncture and herbs to help assist in pain management, hypertension, breast cancer, high blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic disease. The Catch One was not just a disco or nightclub, but rather, a place where issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, such as the AIDS epidemic, were addressed. Over the years, Catch One hosted many fundraisers and charity events in support of those persons suffering from AIDS.

Jewel warmly recalls a funny circumstance in which a patron bragged boisterously about how well they knew the owner (her). Little did the patron know that Jewel enjoyed flying under the radar and treated everyone equally—oftentimes, she only knew celebrities arrived through word of mouth. Little did this young woman know, Jewel was standing right behind her, shouting out “Hey, Jewel!” Jewel found this quite amusing, but an all-in-good-fun memory.

“I ended up in the perfect place for me, somebody who never partied, somehow at 32 years old I ended up with a bar. It wasn’t a chance thing by a long shot.”

Jewel was considered a “threat” to law enforcement who frequently harassed her at Catch One. She recalled how squad cars blocked the front of the club, searched behind bars and ticketed bartenders, and trailed Jewel home. She said she knew not to reach for her purse in the back of her car, instead letting the officer know where it was. She declared, “You’re not going to blow my head off ‘cause I was reaching.”

A fire was set in her nightclub, leading to her club being shut down for just over two years. The firefighters who investigated made sure to make nasty comments about hoping the place would have burned down and

failing to further investigate or hold anyone responsible. Buyers offered large sums of money, but Jewel’s response was simple: “You’ve got it wrong, boo. I don’t know when or how, but we’ll open again.” Jewel always suspected the fire was set to intimidate her and force her out of a much sought after piece of real estate.

Open again they did and continued to offer a positive environment for those searching. She notes that disco was it, a sound of expression, and set the stage for voguing as well as providing a way for individuals to “Catch One,” meaning secure themselves a date and in some instances a partner, while abiding by the homophobic laws that prohibited same-sex dancing.

Jewel jokingly remarks that at the age of 84, she still struggles with conversations regarding her sexuality. “I am still working on it. It took almost that long—it was probably around my late 30s or early 40s. I was a late bloomer in that regard.”

A vegan for more than three decades, Jewel is still thriving. She remains a telehealth consultant for those in pain and is actively involved in discussing the HIV/AIDS crisis. She and her wife, Rue, have been happily married for 34 years.

The music may have slowed, but the “Dancing Queen,” as she’s sometimes referred to, continues to sway, gently and beautifully.

Jewel says, “It was just camaraderie and being around people that were good people. They were used to being on the bottom of the totem pole, so you didn’t have a whole bunch of prejudices, regardless of whether they were racial or otherwise. Ya know, it was about the party and folks getting along.”

*This article originally appeared in Our Weekly.*

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# Ending the Epidemic

## JavonTae Wilson Addresses Black Gay Men in Los Angeles

By Tyrique Wilson

Community activist JavonTae Wilson has dedicated his life to addressing the issues that disproportionately impact young adults and Black gay men in Los Angeles County. He currently serves as Lead HIV Tester and Linkage Navigator at In The Meantime Men's Group.

JavonTae participates in the Department of Mental Health LGBTQ+ Task Force and the Black/African American Community Task Force, which primarily focuses on HIV in the Black community. In addition, he is responsible for the HIV testing and STI screening component of In The Meantime's venerable BoiRevolution initiative—an innovative, multi-layered intervention targeting young Black gay men in Los Angeles County.

JavonTae is also a member of the Ending the HIV Epidemic Steering Committee formed in September 2020 by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The committee was established to develop new strategies for ending the HIV epidemic and to identify partners that could support the local implementation of these strategies and serve as a catalyst for collective action. Since its inception, the committee has made great strides towards reaching its goal.

"I have seen a better push for implementation with targeted funding

initiatives that are increasing rapidly for community usage," JavonTae said.

The goal of EHE is to help reduce new HIV transmissions and diagnoses in the United States by 75 percent in five years (by 2025) and by 90 percent in 10 years (by 2030.)

The EHE's strategy includes four pillars:

- 1) Diagnose people living with HIV as early as possible
- 2) Treat people living with HIV rapidly and effectively to achieve viral suppression
- 3) Prevent new HIV transmissions using proven interventions
- 4) Respond quickly to HIV outbreaks and deliver prevention and treatment services to people who need them

For JavonTae, being a part of EHE is the culmination of everything he has worked to achieve for himself as a young Black gay man and for the community he serves. He said, "Representing Black, young, gay men gives me a sense of fulfillment that I am sharing my lived experiences and the experiences of my peers to represent on behalf of Black gay men in Los Angeles County."

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*JavonTae Wilson can be reached at 323-733-ITMT.*



# Mission Accomplished

## Drew University of Medicine and Science Launches Medical School

By Cynthia Davis

On July 10, 2023, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science launched its independent medical school with a class of 60 medical students. This achievement had been a long time coming. Since 1981, CDU has been in partnership with the School of Medicine at UCLA to offer a joint Drew/UCLA undergraduate medical education MD degree program, where medical students completed their first two years of education at UCLA and their last two years at CDU. With the opening of CDU's medical school on July 10, 2023, CDU is now operating its new medical school independent of the School of Medicine at UCLA

and has established the first new medical school in South Los Angeles. The Mission Statement of CDU reads: "Charles R. Drew University is a private nonprofit student-centered University that is committed to cultivating culturally diverse health professional leaders who are dedicated to social justice and health equity for underserved populations through outstanding education, research, clinical services and community engagement."

CDU was established in 1966 as a direct result of the 1965 Watts Rebellion. A group of Black physicians who were members of the Charles Drew Medical Society

incorporated the University in August 1966 as the Charles Drew Postgraduate Medical School. The Charles Drew Postgraduate Medical School partnered with the Los Angeles County Public Health Department in 1972 with the opening of Martin Luther King Jr. General Hospital.

Over the past 50 years, CDU has evolved into an academic institution and community resource that has worked tirelessly to improve the health and well-being of community residents of all racial/ethnic identities residing in South Los Angeles. Through its education, community service, training, and research programs, CDU has helped to establish health systems and infrastructure to address the numerous health disparities impacting medically under-resourced populations not only in South Los Angeles, but around the world.

CDU has a College of Medicine, School of Nursing, and a College of Science and Health. During its 57-year history, CDU has graduated more than 600 physicians, 1,225 physician assistants, over 1,300 nursing professionals—including 950 family nurse practitioners—over

2,700 physician specialists through its sponsored residency programs, and over 1,600 other health professionals.

CDU is recognized as a Minority Serving Institution by the Office of Civil Rights as well as a Historically Black Graduate Institution under the U.S. Department of Education's Title III Part B Program. CDU is also a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. CDU does not have HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) designation. HBCUs are institutions of higher education in the U.S. which were established before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with the intention of primarily serving African Americans. However, CDU is one of only four historically Black Medical Schools in the U.S., along with Meharry Medical College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Howard University College of Medicine.

As a faculty member at CDU for the past 39 years and a parent of an African American physician, what is so significant about the launching of the new independent medical school and participating in its first White Coat Ceremony is



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that CDU administrators have been working for decades in partnership with South Los Angeles community advocates, activists, and community gatekeepers to establish an independent medical school in South Los Angeles. When I came to CDU in August of 1984, I was mentored by several of these community advocates, activists, and faculty members, including Lilliam Mobley—called the Mother of Watts—as well as Nola Carter, Dr. Ernie Smith, MD, Dr. Ernie Smith, PhD., Dr. Samuel Shacks, and Mary Ashley, a registered nurse in the Department of Family Medicine since the early 80s.

These CDU faculty and community advocates, along with CDU administrators and board members, worked tirelessly for decades to promote the development of an independent CDU-operated medical school in South Los Angeles. Many of these community leaders and CDU faculty and administrators have passed on, but their lifelong legacy and desire to see CDU operating as an independent medical school has come to fruition with the installation of this class of 60 new medical students who represent CDU's medical education program's inaugural Class of 2027.

White Coat Ceremonies were established in the U.S. in the early 1990s, with the first official White Coat Ceremony being held in 1993 at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons to commemorate and acknowledge the “transition of students from the study of preclinical to clinical health sciences.” Additionally, the WCC brings entering medical school classes’ family members, the community at large, medical school administrators and staff, and other well-wishers together on a specific day to celebrate and acknowledge the hard work and dedication it takes to be accepted into medical school in the U.S. while pursuing a career in medicine.

I went through the same ceremony in 2010 when my child, Maisa, participated in her White Coat Ceremony at UC San Francisco. It is a proud and joyous moment to be on stage with your child helping them put on their White Coat as they start their medical education program.

At CDU on August 19, 2023, the University held its medical education Class of 2027 White Coat Ceremony. It was a very joyous occasion for numerous family members and friends who were in attendance to support their child, relative, or friend who was being recognized and installed as the inaugural CDU medical education Class of 2027. At the White Coat Ceremony, there were families from all over the world dressed in their traditional dress from Africa, Asia, South and Central America, the Philippines, and more regions around the globe.

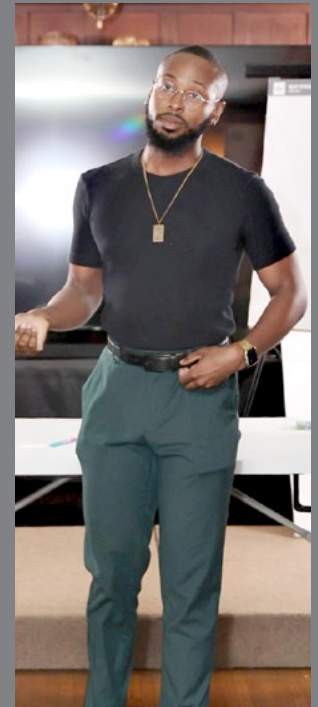
CDU has one of the most diverse classes of medical students in the U.S. It was such a proud moment for all family members, friends, and supporters of these young people who represent the future physician leaders in the medical profession and who will be caring for and advocating for people of color to improve our quality of life for generations to come.

Walking across the stage to receive their White Coats symbolized their entry into a world of academia in which, for the next four years, they will receive the best training, education, support, and guidance to prepare them to work as well-educated, trained, and qualified physicians to serve the community and the world. The White Coat Ceremony represents a milestone in the lives of these students who have dedicated themselves and worked hard to maintain high academic standings in their fields of training to be able to demonstrate that they are now ready to begin a new journey in their quest to becoming compassionate, exemplary, and highly trained Physician Servants.

# A Deeper Love: Black Gay Men's Wellness Month Opening Reception

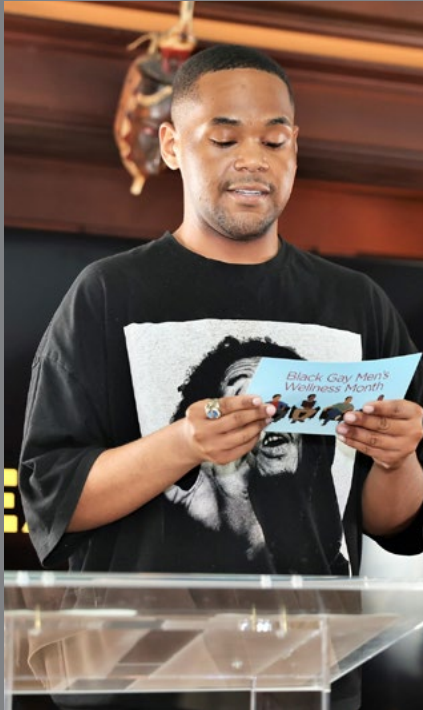
August 1, 2023

Delicious Chocolate, Black Excellence, Black Beauty, and Black Boy Joy filled the Carl Bean House parlor to overflowing, and the courtyard was graced by some of LA's brightest stars. The King-Bremond Scholarship was awarded to two of the most deserving—Pastor Sammie Haynes and Leon Maultsby. B. Thompson lifted the roof of the two-story historic mansion. Chef V served pure love through her freshly prepared delights. The beautiful photography of A.J. Calloway captured it all. Ben Carlton, Pastor Curt D. Thompson, George M. Johnson, and Kaitwan Jackson fed our spirits with power-filled words to grow by. It felt amazing to have our national partner, Alvin Quamina of Atlanta, in the house. The list of amazingness goes on and on.









## A Deeper Love: Umoja Retreat 2023 Creating Unity and Affirming Our Common Bond

October 6-8, 2023

Black gay men loving themselves, each other, and their community is a fact and was proven at In The Meantime's annual Umoja Retreat 2023. This year's retreat, "A Deeper Love," was beyond expectations with transformative groups, Black gay boy joy expressed, and an unbreakable spiritual core. This is the real news of the day. The King legacy lives on.







# BRBB

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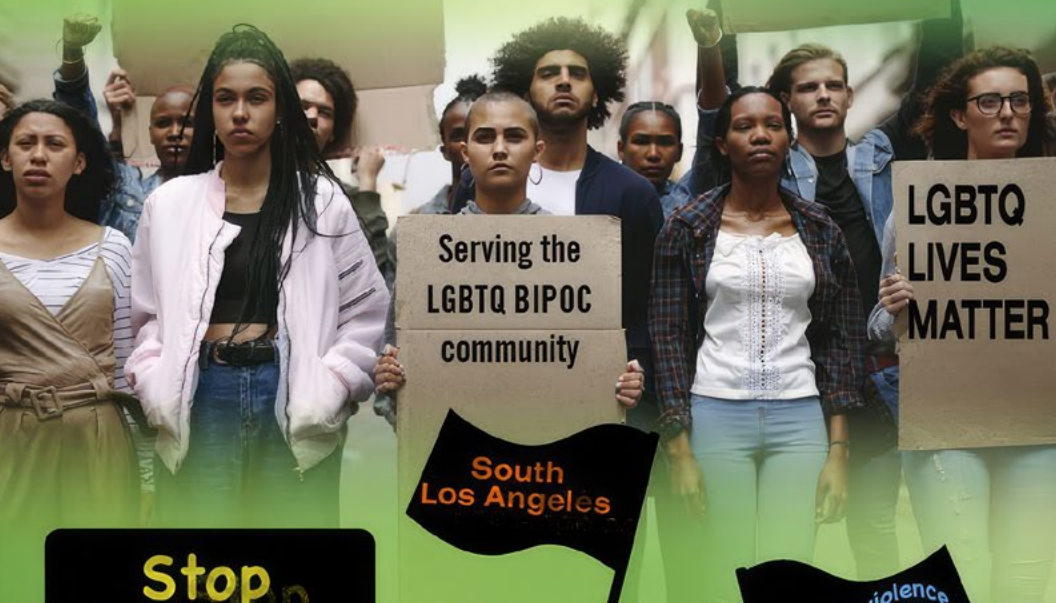
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