

Jaylen Brown: Hello and thanks for joining us today. I'm so excited to be hosting this episode of Unwritten where expert authors join student hosts like me on discussions on the important current events of our day. Today, we'll explore the history of systemic racism. I'm Jaylen Brown, a junior at the University of Central Florida majoring in Finance and appears in campus ambassador. I'm joined today by my good friend, LaWanda Stone, Director of Corporate Affairs for Pearson, will be moderating our live Q&A.

So, if you guys have any questions, leave them down on the chat, we'll get to them in about 15 minutes. Please join me in welcoming professors, Dr. Darlene Clark Hine and Dr. William Hine, co-authors of the African-American Odyssey. Darlene Clark Hine is a renowned professor of history and a recipient of a National Humanities Medal which Darlene, that was given to you by President Barack Obama, right?

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Yes, the real president.

Jaylen Brown: That's awesome. And Dr. William Hine is a retired professor of history at South Carolina State University. So, I'd like to begin this conversation by turning it over to LaWanda Stone to explain why we're having this conversation right now.

LaWanda Stone: Thank you so much, Jaylen; and thank you all for joining us today. America in this moment is facing a reckoning with race relations and we're having this conversation today because it's one step in fighting systemic racism. Education is a force for equity and change; yet systemic racism is holding back Black and Brown people in a vicious cycle as well as other ethnic diverse people. Learning has the power to change hearts and minds for generations to come.

As an education company, we have a role in convening conversations, serious and difficult conversations like today's, that can lead us to a better understanding of our world and each other. Today's conversation is a first step in that direction as we will take a deeper look at the history of systemic racism in America through the lens of African-American history. Distinguished professors, can you please tell us why you chose to join today's conversation?

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: I chose to join the conversation because we need to have more and deeper conversations about racism, the history of racism, and all of these different manifestations in terms of education, where we live, who we engage with in terms of political participation in the largest society; everything essentially seems to be involved with or around racism as -- and so far as African-American communities are concerned and until we have -- frank open conversations about racism, we're still -- we're going to be struggling to understand and to appreciate each other even more.

Dr. William Hine: Whatever they had that -- well, the past informs the present. We're all a product of our past. We may not always understand that or see that but everyone is a product of his or her experiences, the communities we're living, the states, the nation, the entire globe is a product of what has occurred among people who came before us. Their experiences, episodes that they went through helped us to not only understand today's society but understand how it got to be -- what it is today.

If we don't have some grasp of what occurred in the past, if we don't have some sense of perspective on the past, we can't very well move forward into the future.

Jaylen Brown: Amen! We appreciate your perspectives and I'm so glad we got history professors on here so you guys can help us understand what's happening now through the lens of history, but I'm going to start by talking about some history that's in the making.

It's being announced actually this month and will likely be big in the news but it is a selection of Joe Biden's running-mate. We know be a woman and it's more and more likely -- just looking at it might be a Black woman. So, can you talk about the significance of this from a historical perspective and what it means now?

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Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Well, it would be quite a bonus if you will fight an achievement. Now, Black women have been engaged in politics for many years. We've had women who have run campaigns of their own, (00:05:21), for example, it is really, really important that we understand that there is a history of Black women engagement in politics on their own stand if you will.

So, that history informs this history. This will be the first time that a Black woman, of course, is chosen to be so publicly engaged in politics with a White male running off with a major office. So, it's -- for me, it's really an amazing moment and I'm just really, really happy that most -- this will stimulate even more engagement of Black people and women in politics coming in the future.

Dr. William Hine: Well, I doubt that from the historical perspective, again, African-American women have been involved in politics before there were White women for that matter had the right to vote and go back to reconstruction and there were African-American women involved in politics and other reconstructed southern states. The Rollin Sisters and Charleston, South Carolina and Columbia; they're up through the suffrage movement that resulted in the 19th amendment a hundred years ago.

This year, an African-American women were involved in that. They have been involved in democratic party politics for decades now along with African-American men and it's more than a little overdue with that, an African-American woman would be seriously considered as a Vice-President candidate here in 2020.

Jaylen Brown: I love what you said and it's pretty ridiculous. I was actually just talking to LaWanda about this the other day but I didn't really understand the significance of this until I got older myself like, for example, when President Barack Obama got elected President, it wasn't really significant to me because I was eight-years-old when that happened.

You know, even when you got elected for the second time, you know, my parents were like, "Oh my gosh! A second term.", I was like, "This is a norm." but I didn't really understand how big that was until now; especially like the whole Joe Biden running mate thing, this is crazy but that actually brings me to my next point. The potential selection of a Black female running mate is a good example of how Black history contains moments of great progress and great pain.

So, I want to set the same for the audience with this one. But how does this moment in Black history measure up against others especially moments that you guys have lived through for instance like The Civil Rights Movement?

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: I hate to suggest that it is one of the most amazing moments in all of Black women's history but it sure has been a long time coming. So, I have to start with the women who were part and parcel of forming organizations that prepare us by this moment like women who have to organize the National Association of Colored Graduate Women.

Nurses, for example who knew that you have to engage in development of your own professional class in order to ensure the survival of Black people in terms of health care, education, whatever; and so, this is -- in other words, I'm trying to say, this is a combination of a long, long struggle in many different aspects and of Black life in history; and Black women have been very, very conscious and they are very engaged not always giving the credit for what they've been doing behind the scenes but they've held Black people together in many, many different ways and this is like a crowning achievement for women in the future.

(00:10:07)

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: So there's a future, I'm looking towards the future when she won't be just a running mate or will be president of the United States of America and they've been working on that level for a very, very long time.

Dr. William Hine: Well, whoever is the nominee and assuming Jaylen is right here and this is an African-American woman who is selected by Joe Biden the next week or two. I mean she will be standing on the shoulders of many, many women who came long before her -- there's been much made and rightly -- John Lewis is passing a couple of Saturdays ago, but remember Fannie Lou Hamer I've coming out of Mississippi 1964 at the Democratic National Convention or African-American women who have served on the state and National level in Congress more recently. People who were involved women in snick the student nonviolent coordinating committee and and they broke the ground for what is a finally occurring now and the second going on the third decade of the 21st Century.

Jaylen Brown: I love that, LaWanda this is why we need to bring some more history professors on here.

LaWanda Stone: Great.

Jaylen Brown: Darlene, I want to direct this next question to you. So, we lost a legend an icon, when Congressman John Lewis passed away recently. He was a legend for leading a peaceful protest in Selma which ultimately led to us passing civil rights legislation and his decades-long congressional career. Did you ever get the chance to know him and can you talk about his legacy along with the history of demonstration, civil disobedience, and how that has led to change?

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: I did get the chance to meet him. He gave a presentation not too long ago before his death at Michigan State University. He was a speaker there, we talked and I of course share my appreciation for his contribution to African-American history and culture and as a member of the Civil Rights Movement Leadership, I think he was absolutely amazing and one of the things I really, really liked about John and I told him about it. So, those comic books that he edited and created, are you all familiar with those?

LaWanda Stone: Yes, we'll have to send Jaylen some I know that he presented them at Comic-Con.

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Right, what impressed me about that was that he was not just talking to all school people like me. He was really using his ingenuity and his creativity to reach out into the community that's coming up from and -- one of these days' you guys will be teaching and John Lewis his life, his creativity, his passion, his sensibility. I'm a fan, I'm a hero. He was one of my heroes. Let me put it that way, but he made so much sense.

Jaylen Brown: I love that, that's crazy that you actually got to know him personally, but sadly, you know, I did not know who he was until I saw him on the news because they never really teach about people like him in school. But when I looked him up -- I did -- I see that he really was a con. He really was a legend but Bill I want to direct the next question to you. So, I want to talk about more recent events. We've seen protests around the world and response to the killings of unarmed Black people like George, Floyd and Breonna Taylor and we're also seeing federal troops being sent to American cities in response to protests. So, what does history tell us about the evolution of policing and how do we get here?

Dr. William Hine: What it tells us is that this is nothing new. I have to be frank about it and sad to say, again here we are in 2020 and as a major theme within systemic racism is the effort by law enforcement to control African-Americans.

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And that effort to control African-Americans is with the approval of the larger White society in which they and by Europeans -- European-Americans, African-Americans as well as Native Americans have thrived and so, often not thrived over the past several Centuries. There has been a consistent pattern and determination to maintain control and discipline over the African-American population that goes back long before the American Revolution. Back to slavery in the 13 colonies, all 13 colonies, the establishment of slave patrols. The control of African-Americans following the end of slavery; one, it was virtually recreated. Slavery by another name Douglas Blackmon's fabulous book on the grim-grim subject of convict leasing in America in the late 19th and early 20th Century; so, this is a persistent pattern. And law enforcement officials, North and South who've been almost entirely White for Centuries have maintained this commitment to control through the use of force the Black population in their cities and counties. So, George Floyd is not an entirely new or startling example and that is at the grim truth of it.

Jaylen Brown: Awesome! Thank you for that. I want to direct this one to Darlene. We're seeing Black Lives Matter painted in bright yellow on city streets across the nation, which is pretty cool from my perspective, but can you talk about the role of Black women in catalyzing movements such as Black Lives Matter?

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: How much time do we have?

Jaylen Brown: Take as much as you need.

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: One of the things that we need to appreciate even more as we go forward with the struggles that our female ancestors engaged in to try and save the lives of their children, the next generation, if you will, I mean, just save the lives of our children. It's been so passionate, I mean, so meaningful, so important. And it is hard for me to talk about Black women and their struggles without emphasizing that it wasn't just for us. It's for them, the next generation of children, and the next generation. And we need educational facilities, we need healthcare, we need all of the accoutrements that will ensure that their potential genius will be realized and that they will live in a world that's free and where honesty and talent are appreciated and where the color of your skin should not determine your future destiny. That's a lot of words, but Black women have sacrificed everything just for their children and for their children's children.

Jaylen Brown: Amen! I love that. I see we have a lot of questions from the audience. So, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to LaWanda to help out with some Q&A.

LaWanda Stone: Thanks so much Jaylen and thank you for your perspectives, professors. We do have a lot of questions, so let's jump right into them.

The first one, it goes back to the top of this discussion where we talked about Jill Biden's pick for vice president, which will most likely possibly be a Black woman. The question is, do you think that the country is ready for a Black woman vice president? Will they embrace this change considering the climate that we are living in today based on your expertise of history?

(00:20:00)

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Do you want to go first, William?

Dr. William Hine: Is the country writing for an advocate American woman? You could look at it from a variety of perspectives. You can say in 2016, they weren't ready for a White woman to be president. There's no question and there was a undercurrent of hostility directed toward Hillary Clinton in 2016 because she was a woman and that there were men who would not vote for strictly for that reason and that will be even more so of a case with an African-American woman. We're talking about vice president at least in 2020 here, so the main focus will be on the two candidates, Donald Trump and Joseph Biden as opposed to the Vice Presidential candidates, but assuming that perhaps, Biden only serves one term or even if he does serve two terms, his Vice President would be in a position to then move up to the presidency. I think that hostility will not only be based on gender but be based on race as well.

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Personally, I think that the country is long overdue for a Black woman president. If there is anyone or any group of people who've been more foundational in developing American society making contributions that have never fully been appreciated or acknowledged, that's my perspective. Black women, and so, I applaud Joe Biden for even having the courage to take us there, and he made a promise and I trust that anyone of the African-American women that he has listed would be great. Vice President and Lord help us, President, one of these days.

LaWanda Stone: Yes. Lord, help us, for sure. Another question that has come in prominently is what advice or suggestions would you give to other ethnic groups of immigrants residing with Black and White people in America such as Latinx, Chinese, Koreans, Indians, and others.

Dr. William Hine: You need to learn about each other. If you're going to live among each other, you need to learn about each other in your schools, in your communities, share each other's cultural traditions not only as June 10th or February Black History Month, but it can be shared by people who are not African-Americans.

So, people need to work together, try to cooperate, try not to maintain the distance among themselves. Several years ago, Darlene and I were in San Francisco, it was St. Patrick's Day and they had a big St. Patrick's Day parade in San Francisco and you look at the parade, there were a lot of children in the parade, and of course, St. Patrick's Day celebrates the -- the parade was made up of African-American children, Hispanic children, Asian children and all, they are marching down the street enjoying themselves, celebrating March 17. That's the kind of experience maybe as limited as this, but experience that people should try to share with each other. Children do it better than adults, most often.

LaWanda Stone: This is very true. We learn a lot from our kids, don't we?

Another question that's come in, what is one major change to the traditional US history curriculum that would make a significant difference in raising awareness of systemic racism in America? We know that you've written a book, '*The African-American Odyssey*' that's targeting higher ed to history students. What are your thoughts on what can really make a change in terms of helping educate everyone from K-12 and beyond about being anti-racist?

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Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Since that's been one of the true lines in American history, it's very difficult to just single out one thing that would make a difference, but I'm convinced that the more books we have, the more education we provide to everyone. The more we teach the importance and significance of just listening and paying attention and being appreciative of what other people who don't look like us, nevertheless have contributed to the making of this larger society and honoring each other as well as honoring our own contributions with the development of America and calling out evil when we see it.

As my grandmother used to say, I don't like ugly any and all that taken to look pretty either, just be real and do your work and try not to diminish other people because of some fictitious notion that they are inferior and that they do not deserve to be respected and cared for and appreciated. We can make this world so much better if we could just begin to appreciate each other for who we are and what we are worth and what we can give and share and make this world a better place.

Now, you didn't ask me that question to have me preach, but sometimes I just sort of slide off into that kind of zone.

LaWanda Stone: We need you to be who you are. So, thank you.

Can you talk a little bit about the role of historians, such as yourself and the next generation of historians, and the historical consciousness and the work that's been done and still needs to be done to dismantle systemic racism? What are your thoughts? What's the responsibility? What's the charge? What do you -- when you are ready to pass that torch, how will that be done?

Dr. William Hine: By continuing to reveal the past, by continuing to emphasize what has occurred in the past and to add to that. A few minutes ago, I mentioned Douglas Blackmon book on a time that racist (00:27:52) slavery by another name. I mean, that adds to our knowledge of what occurred in the past. It's a very grim, sad and tragic story. Not all of the stories are like that, but the current generation of historians and the future generation has an obligation to try to reveal what occurred in the past that is meaningful to us in the present and will continue to be meaningful in the future, and the more people who dig into the various and many aspects of the past will help us come to grips with that and help us shape and mold society as we move on into the 21st Century.

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: I know that sounds cliché but this is what I believe so completely and thoroughly. The past is never past. I mean, it's just a cliché but I believe that and we can continue to improve our present. The more we understand fully the past, the mistakes, the successes, the things that were insignificant but then became totally out of proportion and just putting things in perspective and drawing from that energy and from all of the struggles that people made so that we could be here today.

What were the victories? Where can we improve in this particular moment so that the future generation will be even more empowered to make this world a more perfect world?

LaWanda Stone: Well, we all know that knowledge is power and that leads us to one more question which we have time for.

(00:30:03)

We have several people asking, if you can share the name of your book, the full name. If you could do that and share any last remarks before I hand it back over to Jaylen, that will be great.

Dr. William Hine: The full name of the book is '*The African-American Odyssey*' published by Pearson Education, and I need to emphasize that there is a third author, Dr. Stanley Harrold, three of us wrote the book, but when Stan asked to be on today, we said three is too many Stan, just make room for Darlene and Bill, that's not true but Stan contributed every bit as much as Darlene and Bill to '*The African-American Odyssey*'; Stanley Harrold, Bill Hine, and Darlene Clark Hine.

LaWanda Stone: Well, we thank you, Bill, Darlene and Stan for creating this amazing resource that we can all go back and read if we choose. We know there's so many other options to learn our history and we'll continue to watch for your future works. At this point in time, I think you all are going to see a poll come across your screen. We would love to get your feedback on today's conversation, and with that, Jaylen, I'm going to toss it back over to you.

Jaylen Brown: Awesome! Thank you! I just want to thank the professors one more time. You guys were awesome, I love this, and I also want to thank our viewers who joined us today. So stay tuned, we are actually doing this again next week and we're going to be speaking with the authors of '*The Struggle of Freedom*'. So, hopefully, see you then. Stay safe and be well!

Dr. Darlene Clark Hine: Thank you! Thank all of you! You're doing a great work here.