



Righting History: An Invitation

Featuring the Fr. Markoe, SJ Collection and
the Omaha DePorres Club

Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023

6 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Sarah Singletary Walker, PhD

*Vice President, Division of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Creighton
University*

CREIGHTON CONTEXT [RECORDING]

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

President, Creighton University

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Eric L. Ewing

Executive Director, Great Plains Black History Museum

FR. MARKOE, S.J. AND THE OMAHA DEPORRES CLUB

Matt Holland

Author

INVITATION TO ACCESS THE COLLECTION

Peterson Brink, MA, CA

Head of Archives & Special Collections, Creighton University Libraries

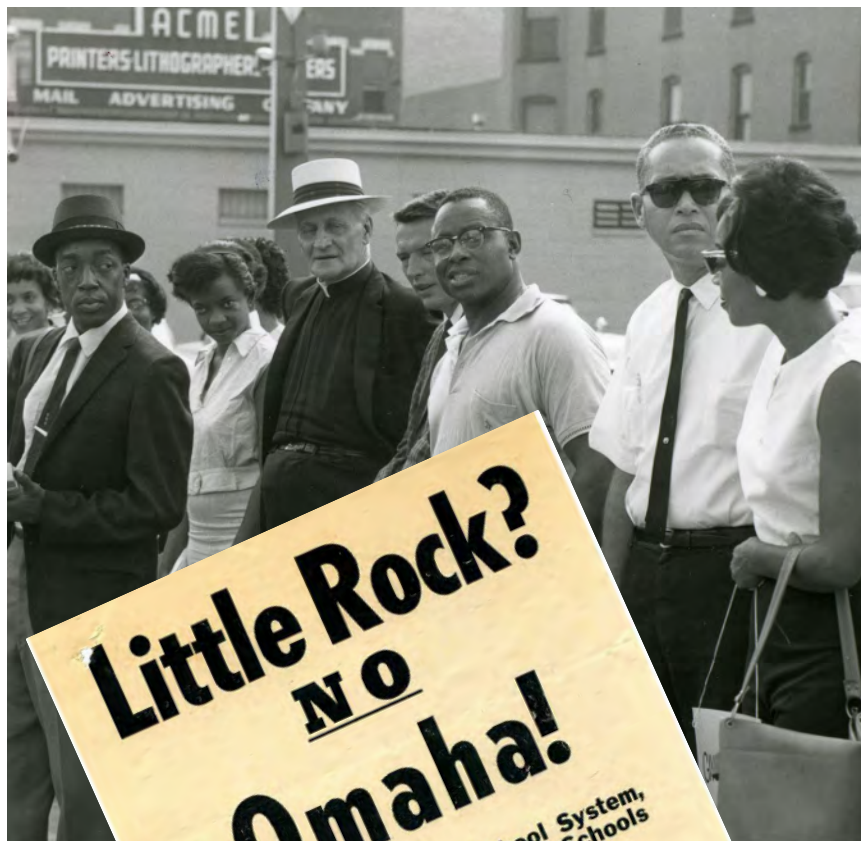
“THERE IS NO FINISH LINE.” AN INVITATION AND CALL TO ACTION

Eric L. Ewing

Executive Director, Great Plains Black History Museum

Exhibit and Book Signing

Please join us immediately following the program two blocks south at the Great Plains Black History Museum: 2221 N. 24th Street (24th and Grant streets) for the exhibit and book signing.



Flyer (1960) and photo (1963) from the Fr. John Markoe, SJ, Collection
With thanks to Matt Holland



At the Omaha DePorres Center, 1949

Recollections of Virginia Walsh (Frederick), BS '50

DePorres Club member
1947-1951



Standing on the steps in the Creighton administration building, 1947. Virginia is at top right. Her mother, Mary Frederick, is center right.

Mary Frederick raised Virginia and her two sisters to “be very conscious” of racism and segregation. As Virginia grew older and began looking for activities she remembered that “It seemed to me a perfect thing to find a club that was also interested in acting like that, so I started going to some meetings.” Virginia joined the DePorres Club during her sophomore year at Creighton, just months after the club’s inception.

Virginia remembered that the “level of action” at the weekly meetings created an atmosphere that was “hard, but exciting. You couldn’t get over the boldness of the ideas because our society was not set up for any kind of activism like that. So it was ingenious.

“ **We were watching the evolution of something. And it was enthralling, it was terrifying. And it turned us into activists.**

We didn’t know that word even, but that is what happened to us.”

Virginia and another club member visited with the president of St. Catherine’s Hospital regarding discrimination against Black patients: “She went ballistic. It’s not too strong a word. She rose from her chair and she flung her arm up in the air and she said, “Sister Angelica, Sister Angelica. Come here and listen to this!” Then we had an audience of two.”

“The times that are the most enjoyable, in terms of just pleasure, are the parties we had together. Because we did have wonderful parties. The singing. Oh, the singing.”

“The meetings were very enjoyable because of the level of action, so they were very exciting. And it was just wonderful, but scary. Very scary. I was afraid the whole time.”

It took sustained courage, enough maturity to persevere in the face of rejection and derision, and a visceral intolerance for oppression. You had to have this voice inside you that said, ‘I can’t stand this. We can do better.’”



Recollections of Agnes Stark (Wichita), BS '52

DePorres Club member
1949-1951



1949 Omaha DePorres Club
Human Race Day picnic
Agnes Wichita, far left

In April 1951 Agnes Wichita and several other DePorres Club members met with the plant manager of Reed's Ice Cream on 24th and Wirt. After hearing the club was looking into a boycott against Reed's, the manager shared that he felt the company could survive a boycott, but if not, they would be willing to go out of business rather than hire 'Negroes.' He ended the conference by speaking directly to the twenty-one year old Wichita, telling her that she "hadn't been out in the world enough to know what it was all about."



I really didn't have time...but I just couldn't help but be a part of that admirable group of people.

"It was scary. It was a challenge. It was not comfortable. Although I felt ok going to the meetings, going down to the North Side, getting involved in it all and I enjoyed all the people. But doing some of these more aggressive things..."

"And then also we would go to the Dreamland ballroom, so it wasn't all work. Those were some good times. Bull Moose Jackson was playing at the Dreamland."

"Had it not been for the direction of Denny and Fr. Markoe it would never be done. They were so comfortable with the need to combat this problem. So then it kind of grew on you and you realized, 'Yeah it was a problem and here we were just ignoring it.' Well, the whole thing was just, to many of us, a whole new concept. We were developing an awareness of the injustice of it all, something that had not occurred to us."



Omaha DePorres Club members: listed as active or associated members and/or mentioned in meeting minutes between 1947 and 1960

Anderson, Carol	Hodges, Alma	O'Brien, James
Anderson, Chet	Hodges, Oscar	O'Hare, John
Barton, George	Holland, Denny	Ortman, Eleanor
Barton, Sam	Hollins, Robert	Phillips, Herb
Baugh, Kathleen	Horn, Ramona	Phillips, Wilbur
Beasley, Oscar	Hovendick, Beverly	Pierce, Jean
Beckers, Robert	Irwin, Bernadette	Poindexter, Irwin
Blackwell, Bob	Jackson, Bessie	Pruitt, Matalonia
Bradley, Ardell	Johnson, Fr. Earl	Reid, Bill
Brown, Mildred	Johnson, Ted	Ries, Louise
Brownell, Max	Jones, Joan	Schutz, Mary Jo
Bruggemann, Gunther	King, Leonard	Sheehy, Jerry
Butler, Donald	Kubart, Rev. Frank	Sluka, Walter
Byrnes, Natalie	Lambert, Bob	Smith, Claude
Calloway, Bertha	Lee, Fay	St. Clair, Colleen
Caradori, Anthony	Littlejohn, Theresa	St. Clair, Dave
Coakley, James	Locke, Mary Ann	Stark, Agnes
Devine, Doris	Lucas, Regina	Swain, Samie Lee
Corbett, Charlie	Macy, Mike	Tibbs, Harold
Corbett, Ed	Mahoney, Ellen	Todoroff, Theodore
Edwards, Tessie	Marcil, Rita	Ventry, Anna
Eure, Dorothy	Markoe, Fr. John P.	Vogel, Larry
Faucett, Melba	McCaffrey, Owen	Waite, Jean
Finney, Molly	McCarthy, Juanita	Wall, Peggy
Fisher, Jean	McCraney, Ola	Walsh, Virginia*
Fitten, Peggy	McGinn, John	Washington, Marguerita
Foxhall, Emma	McGrath, Ronnie	Webb, English Jr.
Frederick, Mary	McNally, Jerry	Welch, Cornelius
Gordon, Edward	McVoy, Lawrence	Whitehall, Merica
Griffin, Bill	Metoyer, Raymond	Wieseler, Mary Lou
Hanna, Eve	Miller, Claude	Wiggins, Celeste
Hassmann, Bernadine	Miller, Rev. Austin	Woods, Alfred
Heifner, Mildred	Mirasky, Margaret	Woods, Helen
Henderson, Tess	Morgan, Woodrow	Young, Robert
Herder, Charles	Mulhall, Jack	
Hinton, Addie	Mulvihill, Monica	
Hinton, Commradge	Nelson, Anna Regina	

**Present at tonight's event*



Speaker Bios



Sarah Singletary Walker, PhD

Vice President, Division of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Creighton University

Professor, Heider College of Business at Creighton University

Walker graduated *summa cum laude* while earning her bachelor's degree in psychology from Dillard University in New Orleans. She has a PhD in industrial/organizational psychology from Rice University in Houston, Texas. Her training in industrial/organizational psychology provides her specific expertise in diversity, recruitment, selection, training, testing and measurement.

She is the Vice President for the Division of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Creighton University and is also a full professor in the Heider College of Business at Creighton. As vice president, Walker oversees the strategic direction of initiatives designed to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff. Her research interests are directly related to this and work and includes examining the experiences of marginalized individuals (e.g., racioethnic minorities, pregnant women, LGBTQIA, older workers) at work with a specific focus on individual and organizational-level strategies for creating more equitable workplaces.

Prior to joining Creighton University in 2018, Walker served as an associate professor in the Marilyn Davies College of Business at the University of Houston – Downtown (UHD) for ten years. While at UHD, Walker co-authored two federally funded grants which resulted in \$1.1M in federal grant funds. The federally funded grants were designed to increase opportunities for underrepresented minorities in graduate degree programs.

She remains an active researcher and has published in a variety of applied psychology and management journals throughout her career including the *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*, *Industrial and Organizational Psychology Perspectives*, and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.



Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

President, Creighton University

The Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, is the 25th president of Creighton University; a position he has held since 2015.

Prior to serving as president, Fr. Hendrickson was a Creighton student in the Jesuit Humanities Program in 1996, before returning to teach at the University from 2000 to 2003. He was elected to the Creighton Board of Trustees in 2013, elected president of Creighton in December 2014.

During his presidency, Creighton University has welcomed record-breaking first-year classes of more than 1,000 students each year, recorded a 99 percent outcome rate for graduates, opened a health sciences campus in Phoenix, and overseen nearly \$200 million in scholarship dollars for Creighton students.

Fr. Hendrickson serves on the boards of Boston College and Xavier University; is the current chair of the BIG EAST Conference Board of Directors; and is a trustee of ILAC/Centro de Educación para la Salud Integral (CESI) in the Dominican Republic, and Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL).

A native of Fremont, Nebraska, Fr. Hendrickson holds a BA from Marquette University; an MA in philosophical resources from Fordham University; a Master of Divinity degree from the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University; and MA and PhD degrees from Columbia University.



Eric L. Ewing

Executive Director, Great Plains Black History Museum

Ewing is a native of Omaha, married, with three successful adult children and four grandchildren. He is retired from the United States Navy. He received his associate's degree in general studies from Vincennes University, an undergraduate degree in workforce education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and a graduate degree in management from Bellevue University. He also holds a graduate certificate in life coaching from Bellevue University and a graduate certificate in college teaching from Capella University. He is currently working on his PhD in post-secondary education from Capella University.

His professional development includes The Fund Raising School in 2018, the Nonprofit of the Midlands Executive Institute Class 12 from 2018-2019, Leadership Omaha Class 42 from 2019-2020, and LeadDiversity Class 2 from 2020-2021.

He has served in higher education as an academic dean, manager of academic advising, an adjunct professor for Bellevue University, Metropolitan Community College, and Omaha School of Massage and Healthcare of Herzing University.

He is currently serving in the nonprofit community as executive director for the Great Plains Black History Museum. He also serves on the Board of Directors of 100 Black Men of Omaha, Nebraska Museum Association, Board of Governors Center for Great Plains Studies, Omaha Community Council for Racial Justice & Reconciliation, and he has co-chaired the 100 Black Men of Omaha's Annual African American History Challenge.



Matt Holland

Author/researcher

Holland has been researching, writing, and presenting about the little-known stories of Fr. John Markoe and the Omaha DePorres Club for two decades. His 2014 book, *Ahead of Their Time: The Story of the Omaha DePorres Club*, has been called an "important history – for the civil rights movement and for Omaha." His 2023 book, *The Rarest Kind of Courage: The Extraordinary Life of Fr. John Markoe*, has been described as "a much-needed story of persistence and faith...the true story of a true son of Ignatius, a soldier, scholar, advocate for justice, a man who never let his own weaknesses dissuade him from answering the call to transform the places where he journeyed. It gives us hope."

In June of 2023, Holland gifted his late father Denny Holland's collection of Omaha DePorres Club and Fr. John Markoe materials to the Creighton University archives, in partnership with the Great Plains Black History Museum.



Peterson Brink

Head, Creighton University Libraries' Archives & Special Collections

Peterson Brink currently serves as the head of Creighton University Libraries' Archives & Special Collections where he helps manage the rare, unique, and valuable materials in the University Libraries. Peterson earned his bachelor's degree in American history from Doane University and a master's degree in museum studies from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, equipping him with the skills to curate and safeguard cultural artifacts and documents. His dedication

to the profession is further underscored by his status as a Certified Archivist through the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Before assuming his current role, Peterson served for 17 years at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. During this time, he held the position of Assistant University Archivist and Preservation Coordinator, where he played an instrumental role in safeguarding the university's historical legacy and ensuring its accessibility to generations to come.

Presented by:

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