



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



February 2023 | Issue Twenty Four: Black Gay Men Making History in the Church and the Legislature

Welcome to the Brothers' Drumbeat, a monthly e-newsmagazine to keep you informed about what's happening and coming soon with Brothers of the Desert. If you have questions, please contact info@brothersofthedesert.org.

Follow us on Facebook and visit our website brothersofthedesert.org

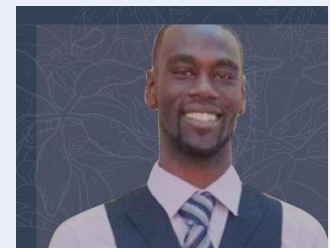
Please share our newsletter with someone who will benefit from the information!

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Rest in Power Tyre Nichols

Brothers of the Desert stands in solidarity with the family of Tyre Nichols on the loss of their son in a senseless brutal murder by members of the Memphis Police Force and the inaction of first responders. We hope that there will be justice to punish the perpetrators, changes so that no one has to suffer the senseless loss of life to police brutality, and healing across the nation for those traumatized by this incident.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Brothers Calendar

- February 1 Not Your Chicken Ranch Drag Show
- February 3 Black History Month Opening Reception at PS Art Museum
- February 4 Black History Month Committee Gala at the Hilton Hotel
- February 11 BOD Monthly/Annual membership meeting and brunch
- February 11 Reception for State Assembly Member Dr. Corey Jackson
- February 18 GED Magazine Bingo
- February 18 Black History Month Men's Basketball Tournament
- February 25 Black History Parade and Town Fair

Birthday Brothers

- February 1 Langston Hughes
- February 8 Bob Cox
- February 15 Charles Huff
- February 19 Wes Rankins
- February 23 Tony Bradford

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

"Not Your Chicken Ranch" Benefit Drag Show Feb 1

The "Not Your Mother's Chicken Ranch Drag Show" takes place Wednesday, February 1st at the Roost Lounge in Cathedral City. The show starts at 7:00 pm but you should arrive early. There will be performances by five hilarious drag queens with special guest performer **Kiki Nixon Masters**. The free show benefits Brothers of the Desert. For reservation call 760-507-8495



Black History Month Opening Reception at Palm Springs Art Museum Feb 2

Look for BOD members at the Black History Month opening event and reception at the Palm Springs Art Museum with performances by the James O. Jessie Desert Highlands Drill Team and Drum Squad. Following the kick-off event, enjoy docent-led or self-guided tours highlighting the works of African American and African artists from the museum collection.

The event is 5:30-8:00 pm on Thursday, February 2, and is free with no registration required. The museum is located at 101 N Museum Dr, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

<https://www.psmuseum.org/events/bhm23-kickoff?date=2023-02-02>

Membership Meeting and Billy Reed Brunch Feb 11

Our monthly membership meeting will be held at the LGBT Center of the Desert. The meeting will start at 11:00 am. At this meeting, we will have our formal annual meeting and elect board members.

All members and guests are welcome to participate. We will have two special invited guest speakers **Jarvis Williams** (see article below) and **Dr. Phyllis Richie**. If you wish to attend virtually contact **Glenn Alexander** for the link at secretary@brothersofthedesert.org



After the meeting, we will gather for brunch and social time at Billy Reeds Restaurant, 1800 N Palm Canyon Dr, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Please join us even if you are not at the meeting.



Meet California's First Black Openly LGBT Legislator Feb 11

City Council member **Lisa Middleton** has invited Brothers of the Desert to be part of a welcome reception in a private home for Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson on Saturday, February 11 from 3-5 pm (see his bio below) At the event, sponsored by Equality California, they will recognize some leaders in the local Black LGBTQ+ community. It will be an opportunity to celebrate our Black LGBTQ excellence and achievements during Black history month.

RSVP at <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/coreypalmsprings>

Bingo for Charity Feb. 19

Join us on Sunday, Feb 19 for GED Magazine's Bingo at the Roost Lounge, benefiting Brothers of the Desert. Enjoy the fabulous fun with **Ethylina Canne**. We'll be playing games, drinking mimosas and having a ball all while raising money for charity! Doors open at noon and Bingo games start at 1:00 pm. Inside is already SOLD OUT & the patio with television monitors is more than half full...so reserve NOW before that sells out as well. Join in on the fabulous fun with **Ethylina Canne** for the BEST BINGO in the valley. We'll be playing games, drinking mimosas and having a ball all while raising money for charity! Reservation call 760-507-8495 (\$20 per person) includes five games of Bingo.



BOD Marching in Black History Parade Feb 26

Once again the Brothers will have a contingent in the Black History Month parade. Join us as we show our solidarity with the struggles and rich history of our Palm Springs Black community. This will be our fourth year marching in this important community event. Please contact **Wes Rankin** if

you would like to participate or help out. wesmess20@hotmail.com

JANUARY ACTIVITIES RECAP



Yvans makes a point as Johnnie looks on.

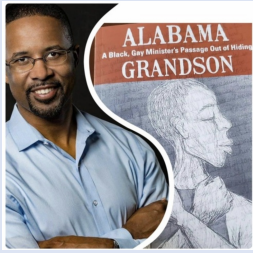
Membership Meeting and Blackbook Brunch Feb 10

We had a great members' meeting in January with 26 attendees present in the room and six more online. President Tim Vincent welcomed five new attendees/potential members Johnnie, Carl, Vince, David, and Scott and each attendee shared their hopes and aspirations for 2023. Tim and **Michael Taylor** recapped the successful New Year's Eve celebration and discussed some upcoming grant opportunities and collaborations. There was a vote on some minor revisions to the bylaws related to board structure and dues. There was an invitation to apply for the open seats on the board. We thanked **David Maurice Jones** for his loyal service over the past two years as he stepped down from his role as coordinator of social engagement. Fourteen of us got together after the meeting for brunch and conversation at Blackbook.



FEATURE ARTICLES

FROM REJECTION TO REDEMPTION IN THE CHURCH



In 2019 the United Methodist Church was in crisis, with a high-profile split over the issue of homosexuality that threatened to permanently sever the 200-year-old denomination. At its annual conference, conservatives from the southern U.S., Africa, and elsewhere passed a policy that essentially ostracized LGBT people and clergy, proclaiming that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." Thanks to the work of fierce LGBT advocacy and protests many of the conservative denominations formed their own sect. The mainline church worked through its issues without a messy split and in November it ordained their first Black gay bishop **Rev. Cederic Bridgeforth**. He won the appointment after the UMC Western Jurisdiction voted for him with nearly 80 percent of the vote. Following his election, Bridgeforth thanked his husband for his love and was met with applause from the crowd.

Bishop Bridgeforth was recently in Palm Springs and discussed his remarkable journey to a leadership position in the church, much of it brilliantly described in his recent autobiography "Alabama Grandson, A Black Gay Minister's Passage Out of Hiding." Through his writing, lectures, and witness, he is a powerful advocate for racial and sexual identity within the changing Methodist Church worldwide. Learn more about him and purchase his book on his website at the link below.

<https://alabamagrandson.com>

HELPING STUDENTS CONNECT WITH THEIR HERITAGE 2023 HBCU TOUR



*Jarvis Williams with group of Palm Springs high school students who toured HBCUs in 2022
photo courtesy of Jonathan Horowitz*

Young people growing up in Palm Springs often don't have positive role models of black excellence to equip them to be successful in a country that often undervalues and stereotypes them. Our speaker at our membership meeting on February 10 is **Jarvis Williams**, the Diversity and Racial Equity Specialist for the Palm Springs Unified School District. He is working hard to create programs that reverse that narrative through the Junior Black Achievers, African American Parent Advisory Council, an annual systemwide Diversity conference, multicultural festivals, and an effort that will send two dozen Black high school students on a tour of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and an additional two dozen local Latino high school students to Hispanic Serving Institutions in Texas. Last year the program sent 22 students and their chaperones on an HBCU tour that visited the East Coast institutions of Howard, Hampton, Norfolk, and Morgan State as well as monuments, museums, and historic locations. Mr. Williams will help BOD understand how we can help young people in our community connect with African American culture and support

RIVERSIDE ELECTS BLACK GAY STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBER

When Riverside County voters elected **Dr. Corey Jackson** to the California State Assembly in November, he became the first Black and openly LGBTQ California State Legislator in the State's history. The former community activist represents a new district that represents a large portion of Riverside County, including Moreno Valley, Perris, Hemet, San Jacinto, and the unincorporated areas of Mead Valley, Good Hope, Nuevo, and East Hemet. He won the seat with a 15-point margin over his Republican opponent. He is already hard at work in Sacramento where the freshman Assembly member was selected as Chair of the Committee on Human Services and he introduced his first bill AB 11, which aims to find solutions to the high cost of living in California and his upcoming legislation package that is planned to address mental health and systemic racism.



Assemblyman Jackson recently told the Press-Enterprise, "Whenever you're the first in anything people didn't think it would be possible. And so hopefully this breaks down people's thoughts about what's possible for them. Being a part of the LGBTQ community in some places, being African American, would be a hindrance for you to win these offices," Jackson said. "As a matter of fact, you could have had to hide pieces of yourself if you were identified with these communities. And so what I think is that the Inland Empire is a new place of opportunity, It's a new place of inclusion."

The 40-year-old Democrat was elected to the Riverside County Board of Education in 2020 and he was founder and Chief Executive Officer of SBX Youth and Family Services, whose mission is to break the cycle of poverty and violence through mentoring education, and community organizing. He continues to serve as the Political Action Chair of the Riverside NAACP and as Youth Minister at the Moreno Valley Church of Christ. He is a graduate of CSU San Bernardino where he received a degree in political science and a graduate of California Baptist University where he received his Master of Social Work degree.

BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY



BOD Supporting Black History Committee Gala Feb 4

Once again this year, the leadership and members of the Brothers of the Desert will be attending the annual Palm Springs Black History Committee Annual Awards Gala. For the past three years, we have shared at least one table at the event. This year the gala will be on Saturday, February 4 at the Hilton Hotel. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and a cocktail hour and silent auction start at 6 p.m. Dinner and awards begin at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$75 in advance and \$100 at the door and formal

attire is requested. It's an important opportunity for BOD to show its support for our Black community. For more information or to purchase tickets see link below.

<https://palmspringsblackhistory.org/annual-awards-gala>

Ralph Cole Jr. Does Strong Sexy Words Feb 13

The emcee of our NYE event returns to Palm Springs on Feb 13 for one night only as part of the "Strong Words - Voices of the City" performance at the Camelot Theater. The venerable **Ralph Cole Jr.** will be one of six storytellers sharing true accounts of some of their own terrible love experiences. This will be a RAW night - dirty and telling it like it is. Tickets

and more information are at this link.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sexy-strong-words-valentines-edition-tickets-523983748497>



Get your Heart On with Local Single Guys Feb 16

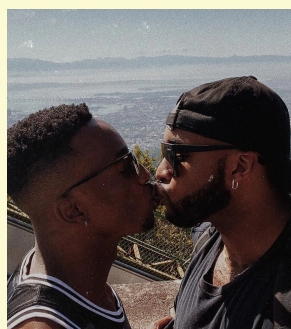
Brent Heinz started the Palm Springs Single Guys group in 2019 as a way for eligible local single gay men to meet each other outside of the bars. The group meets monthly for a social mixer in the VIP Lounge at the Camelot Theater 2300 E Baristo Rd, Palm Springs, CA 92262! Nothing too complicated... just a great group of single guys of many backgrounds looking for romantic connections. Check out the group and maybe meet your next boyfriend or husband on February 16 from 5:30-7:00 pm. A cash bar is available. Send an email to Brent for dates of future mixers and activities. info@begintheshift.org

Tony Bradford Takes to the Basketball Court Feb 18

BOD member **Tony Bradford** and his DAP Health team will be joining other community members for the annual Black History Month Basketball Event - Men's Tournament. At 6 foot 4, we know the brother can jump and dunk too! Come out and cheer Tony on to take the trophy home or suit up and join the fun. . Registration begins at 9:00 am for ages 18+ at the Jessie O. James Unity Center 480 W. Tramview Rd. Palm Springs, CA 92262



Show Some Love: Valentine's Day Is Not Just for Lovers



February 14th is Valentines Day. Do something special to let your sweetheart know that you appreciate him. Find some inspiring Black Gay Love Stories in the Reckoning Darian Aaron's online magazine <https://www.thereckoningmag.com>

If you don't have a boo, do something special for a friend or family member to let them know they are special and loved. Send Valentine's cards to your mother, sister, auntie, or to a healthcare worker, send flowers to a single mother or a box of chocolates to your best friend. Let's spread the love around.

Brothers of the Desert is a non-profit 501-c 3 organization whose mission is to build to nurture, support and connect Black gay men in the Coachella Valley through philanthropy, volunteerism, mentorship, education, advocacy and social networking.

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