



Empowering Black Gay Men and Allies in the Coachella Valley

# THE BROTHERS' DRUMBEAT



March 2023 | Issue Twenty Five: Unapologetically Black Gay Men Thriving in the Coachella Valley

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](mailto:info@brothersofthedesert.org).

Follow us on Facebook and visit our website [brothersofthedesert.org](http://brothersofthedesert.org)

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

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## Bylaws Updated and Board Members Elected

Below are the results of the annual BOD elections held in February.

- There are currently 52 eligible voting members in the Brothers of the Desert Organization
- The Organization requires that any changes to the Bylaws and the Election of Board Members be approved by the members
- During the month of February the Board of Directors proposed 6 changes to the Bylaws for the organizations. The six(6) bylaw changes were approved by the membership and the full details of these changes have been incorporated into the revised bylaws document and are available for review by members upon request.



### Election of New Board Members:

Members voted to fill the three seats open in March 2023 by election of the following individuals :

Anthony (Tony) Lanier

Raymond Johnson

Martin Mitchell

The three elected Board members will each each serve a three year term beginning March 1,2023 ending February 28, 2026

Congratulations to Tony, Raymond and Martin on their election to the Board. Thanks to the amazing **Glenn Alexander** for his years of service as Secretary on the board.

### Larry Reese Kidd

Board Member at Large and Chair of the Governance and Structure Committee



### The Newest Board Member Martin Mitchell

Let's welcome to the BOD board our longtime member **Martin Mitchell**. Martin is a man who always has a smile and a warm hug for everyone. He and his husband **Bob Cox** moved here to the Desert in 2019 from the Bay Area. He recently retired from a career in human resources with the Oakland Unified School District. He will be a valuable asset to the board as BOD moves into new frontiers in a fifth year of operation. Congrats and thank you for heeding the call to service for our community.



### Brothers Calendar

- March 10 Bloom in the Desert Spring Fling
- March 11 BOD Monthly membership meeting and brunch
- March 15 Deadline to contribute to HBCU Tour
- March 25 Safe Schools Awards Gala

### Birthday Brothers

- March 13 John Taylor
- March 18 Tommy Dodson
- March 21 Ron Oden
- March 22 Cliff Wynne
- March 25 David Wilson

## MARCH ACTIVITIES

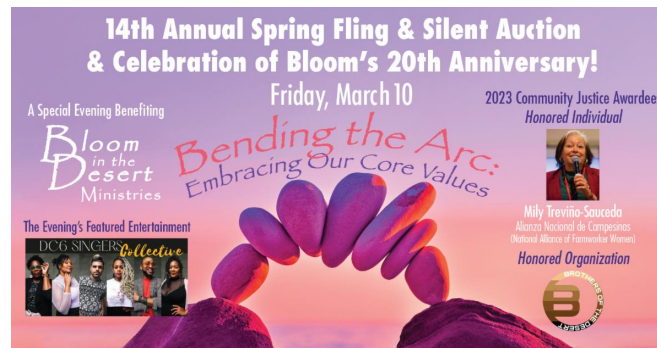


### Bloom in the Desert Spring Fling March 10

Brothers of the Desert will be honored with a Community Social Justice award at Bloom in the Desert Ministries Spring Fling 2023, "Bending the Arc" on Friday evening March 10th. The Bloom congregation and their openly-gay pastor **Kevin A. Johnson** have been friends and allies of BOD since our founding. The event will be a delightful evening fashioned after an exotic bazaar, with international food, music, and entertainment, headlined by the **DC6 Singers Collective**, an

LA-based ensemble of dynamic and energetic acappella, gospel, and Motown singers. There will also be a silent auction, as well as storytelling by **Larry Dean Harris** and **Lorenzo Taylor** of Strong Words, dance music by **DJ Tina Turntables** and interactions with stilt walker **Too Tall Tomm**. Come out and support this wonderful social justice ally organization that will be honoring us. Tickets are \$95 and may be purchased at the link below. Financial assistance is available if you wish to attend, but cannot afford it.

<https://bloominthedesert.org/donate/>



## Membership Meeting and Brunch March 11

Our monthly membership meeting will be held at the LGBT Center of the Desert (1301 N. Palm Canyon Drive) starting at 11:00 am on Saturday March 11. All members and guests are welcome to participate. If you wish to attend virtually contact **Tim Vincent** for the agenda and link at [president@brothersofthedesert.org](mailto:president@brothersofthedesert.org)



Our guest speaker at the March membership meeting will be **Aristotle McDaniel**, founder of Grandparents Love (see article below)

Brothers of the Desert members choose a different eatery to go to after the monthly meeting to socialize. Even if you do not attend the meeting, please join us at 1501 Gastropub Restaurant at 12:30pm. It's at 1501 N Palm Canyon Dr, an easy walk from the LGBT Center and their brunch menu is fabulous! Check out their menu at <https://www.1501uptown.com/menus/> and make your reservations prior to March 11 with Eric Davis [VicePresident@Brothersofthedesert.org](mailto:VicePresident@Brothersofthedesert.org).

## Safe Schools Awards Gala March 25

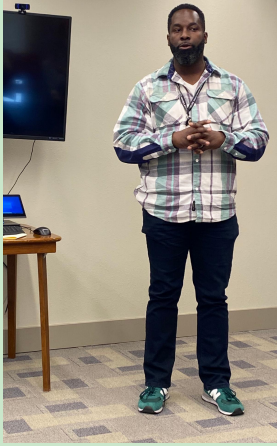
Under the leadership of **Eric Johnson**, Brothers of the Desert contributes to a scholarship from Safe Schools of the Desert Cities. **Gloria Knapp**, who heads up the project invites us to their annual awards reception on March 26 from, 2:00-4:00 PM at UC Riverside- Palm Desert campus. Safe Schools Desert Cities empowers area LGBT+ youth, their allies and GSA advisors and offers opportunities that foster a sense of community and individual growth by providing education, guidance, advocacy, resources, recreational activities and opportunities for self expression. Let Tim know if you wish to join our BOD table.

# FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES RECAP

## February Membership Meeting

At the February meeting we had two special invited guest speakers **Jarvis Williams** and **Dr. Phyllis Richie**.

Dr. Ritchie joined us virtually and made a presentation on significant disparities in HIV/STD and PrEP use for Black gay men and spoke of her free sexual health services in Palm Springs. More information is



available at <https://healthypstest.org/>

Jarvis is looking for support for their Historic Black Colleges and University (HBCU) Tour for eligible Black students in the Coachella Valley wide school districts. The program and tour are funded by Palm Springs Unified School District but students need some fiscal support to be able to comfortably go on the tour. Members present at our meeting seemed interested to support this and Brothers of the Desert is giving a donation of \$1,000 to this effort.

You all are encouraged to donate individually if you are interested and note you are a member of Brothers of the Desert. Jarvis is able to give a letter of donation to individuals, if needed. We hope to match the \$1,000 contribution with the help of our group. The tour is April 1-7 and

ideally he would like to have all donations completed by March 15th.

To donate you would write a check (by March 8th) to PSUSD HBCU Tour and mail to:

PSUSD HBCU Tour  
150 District Center Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92262  
Attn: Jarvis Williams

You can also bring a check or cash to our meeting on March 11th, and we will get the donation to Jarvis.

Jarvis also talked about Kings Circle, a male character-building program he heads up and would like potential guest speakers to enhance the program by speaking with the young men about their careers or experiences.



### Reception for California's First Black Openly LGBT Legislator Feb 11

City Council member **Lisa Middleton** invited Brothers of the Desert to be part of a welcome reception in a private home for Assemblymember **Dr. Corey Jackson**, the first Black openly gay member of the California State Assembly. Dr. Jackson made inspiring remarks about his historical election and what it means for Black History Month. He then presented awards to some leaders of the local Black LGBT community: **Wes Rankin** from Brothers of the Desert and **Lucy and Gail** from the Women's Circle. Several BOD members and city leaders attended the outdoor event held at an Indian Canyon mansion. **Michael Taylor, Eric Davis, Andre Carthen** and **Tim Vincent** are pictures above as they arrived at the event. Lisa Middleton will be hosting a fundraiser reception at her home for **Andrea Jenkins**, the Minneapolis Black transgender City Council Chair on Sunday, March 5. Tickets and details at this link: [Andrea Jenkins Fundraiser](#)



### Black History Parade and Black LGBT Meet-up Feb 26

Once again the Brothers of the Desert had a contingent in the Black History Month parade. It was a smaller group of about ten BOD members and allies behind the banner this year, due to a weather-

related date change. The crowds were large and enthusiastic. Unfortunately, the parade was at the same time as the Black LGBT Meetup brunch at the 849 Restaurant. Two dozen Black LGBT community members from BOD and the Women's Circle came together for some personal reflections on what Black History Month means for our community. Author and diversity consultant **Lauren Joichin Niles** co-hosted the event with BOD President **Tim Vincent**. She did a brilliant assessment of the "good and the bad" of Black progress in this country. Community members were invited to take the mic to share poetry, song and personal reflections, including **Lorenzo Taylor, Anye Elite** and **Wes Rankin**. The showstopper was an acapella rendition of the Negro spiritual "Hush" by BOD member and lyric tenor **Richard Riley**. Some members did double duty and attended both events. Wes and David even did a costume change between the parade and brunch, looking radiant in their African-inspired couture.



## FEATURE ARTICLES

### Grandparents Love Supports Locals Raising Their Grandkids



Many of us in the Black community have first hand experience with being raised by grandparents. Grandparents Love (GPL) is a Coachella Valley nonprofit 501(c)3 created in 2022 to support and assist grandparents who are raising their grandkids. The mission of GPL is to provide the basic resources and support that custodial grandparents so desperately need when taking on the responsibility of bringing up their grandchildren. Often grandparents take custody and raise grandchildren because parents are either deceased or unable to provide care, due to drugs, incarceration or other reasons. In the Coachella Valley almost 1,800 children age 17 and under are living with their grandparents. Raising kids all over again is a huge undertaking for anyone, especially when you're older and not in the best of health.

**Aristotle McDaniel** started GPL in memory of his grandparents Jim and Marie McDaniel as a way to support and assist grandparents like his who go above and beyond for their grandkids. Donations are used to help with bills, car repairs, food, clothing, and other necessities to relieve the burden suddenly put on the grandparent guardians. They also provide "respite" experiences like movies or dining out. Although not exclusively serving the Black community, the GPL officers and board members are predominantly African American men.

Find out more about this amazing community organization at the March members meeting or on their website. <https://gpl-grandparentslove.org/>

# Dear White People: Please Don't Do This!



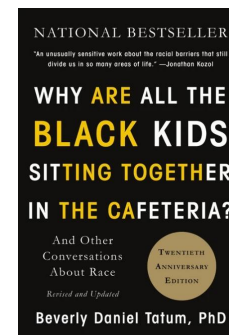
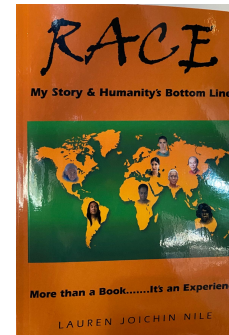
In her thought-provoking remarks during the Black LGBT Meet-up, author, keynote speaker, trainer and licensed attorney **Lauren Joichin Niles** struck a nerve and got a heartfelt "amen" from the audience when she mentioned her top racial pet peeve about living in Palm Springs. Like many of us, Lauren grew up in the segregated South and there is an annoying habit that many White people who are not from the South tend to have. Many feel that they

need to preface their introduction to a Black person by letting them know that they know someone Black or have a special appreciation for Black culture. Stop this! she says. "it's one of the most prevalent "daily indignities" that I hear African Americans complain about." Trying to validate yourself in this way supports the myth that proximity to blackness immunized white people from doing racist things. It also makes us feel that you are only interested in knowing us because of our race. Think about it. Black people would never introduce themselves by saying that they have White friends or that they really like Frank Sinatra music. If you want to be a friend, focus on the things we have in common. It's a subtle form of micro aggression to assume that Black people will only accept you if you have Black friends.

BOD member **Wes Rankin** shared another racial pet peeve based on his experiences in Palm Springs. It's the discomfort that he senses from white people when a group of predominantly Black people enter in a public space like a restaurant - the head turning and disapproving stares. It's that same feeling that many of us had in school when we sat with other Black kids, an unfounded fear that we are separatists or too loud or not fitting in. In a place where there are few Black people there is safety and comfort in being with others who share a common history and heritage. Many of us work and live in integrated or predominantly white circumstances where we are constantly code-switching in order to fit in. Some of us bear the scars of being legally barred from patronizing "White businesses." The next time you see a Black group sitting together SMILE and think about 1) why are all the White people sitting together and 2) how would you want to be received coming into a predominately Black space.

Learn more about Lauren's racial journey and more n her book *Race My Story and Humanity's Bottom Line*. <https://www.race-therealtruth.com/>

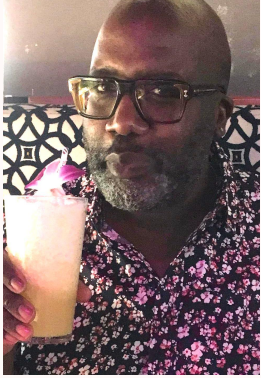
Check out Beverly Tatum's best seller *Why are all the Black Kids Sititng Together in the Cafeteria* <https://www.basicbooks.com>



## BROTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY



Each month *Brother's Drumbeat* profiles one of our outstanding members. This month we introduce the fabulous **Chuck Jones**.



### 1. How long have you been in Palm Springs? Where did you grow up and where did you move here from?

I will have lived in Palm Springs, CA for one year beginning March 2023. I moved from the SF/Oakland CA Bay Area where I lived for the last 33 years. grew up in North Carolina. Army brat here.

### 2. What have you done in the community (or for work) prior to being involved with BOD?

I've been a nurse for 21 years. My volunteer activities have centered around singing with local choirs to help with fundraising and to uplift community spirits. I've also "ministered" to members in my church communities who have needed both emotional and medical/nursing support.

### 3. Why is BOD important to you and how have you participated in Brothers of the Desert?

It's important that everyone, regardless of their political and/or social preferences to see brown faces like ours in the Coachella Valley. I've attended just a few of BOD's events such as their Wellness Summit, brunches, and social gatherings.

### 4. What is your lifelong dream? (Something on your bucket list)

To stay on that path that has been God-predestined for me. To continue to shine and breakdown barriers. To be higher-inspired to strengthen communities and to feel accepted and supported by them.



### Brothers of the Desert Day in Cathedral City

Cathedral City Council member **Raymond Gregory** presented a proclamation designating February 19 as "Brothers of the Desert Day"! Accepting the recognition are **Raymond Johnson, Andre Carthen, Tim Vincent** and **Eric Davis**. But wait, there's more, GED Magazine made a \$2000 donation to BOD from the proceeds of the Roost Lounge's Ethyl's Bingo and the Not Your Chicken Ranch drag show. Thanks to Eric Davis for organizing this.



### Jase Nagaia Receives Community Service Award

We are so proud of BOD member and exercise guru extraordinaire **Jase Nagaia** for receiving a community service award from the City of Palm Springs Human Rights Commission! He was recognized for his dedication and hard work in founding *Endeavor with Jase* which provides free low-impact fitness courses to promote health equity and inclusivity in our community. Also This award his activism, passion, and voice for those living and aging with HIV. You may remember Jase from the fitness workouts before the Desert AIDS WALK and at the BOD Wellness



Summit. He is pictured on the left with his friend BOD member **Will Dean**.



### Yvans Jourdain Spokesman for COVID Drug

If you watched television lately you couldn't have missed the new Paxlovid commercial that features our BOD member **Yvans Jourdain**. Yvans appears as a middle aged golfer who consults with his doctor after taking a COVID test. Our resident actor scored a "hole-in-one" with this gig!



### Help Give Sammy a Star on the Walk of Fame

A local community coalition including members of the Black Chamber of Commerce is organizing to get a commemorative star for singer and Palm Springs resident Sammy Davis Jr in downtown Palm Springs. BOD supports this effort which came up during our candidates forum in November. If you are interested in helping out contact **Anye Elite** at [anye@iconcity.net](mailto:anye@iconcity.net) or **Lorenzo Taylor** at [taylorlorenzo@gmail.com](mailto:taylorlorenzo@gmail.com) to get involved.

### Nest Fest and LGBT Days in Cathedral City March 3-5 A Queer Community Music and Entertainment Festival

Music lovers should head over to the Roost Lounge in Cathedral City for a weekend of music with headliner **Crystal Waters** (Gypsy Woman, 100% Pure Love), along with Pepper MaShay, David Hernandez, the Modern Men chorus, Brian Scott, Tom Goss, Angeria Paris Van Michaels, and many more. The weekend will include a Sunday T-Dance, a beer and wine garden, guest DJs, and other surprises. Visit [www.theroostcc.com/nest-fest-2023/](http://www.theroostcc.com/nest-fest-2023/) for full lineup and detailed information.



This same weekend is LGBT Days in Cathedral City which will feature a screening of the film *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, a drone show, a tribute to **Leslie Jordan**, a pool party, live entertainment, community booths, and the famous bed parade and race competition. More information can be found at:

<https://www.cathedralcitylgbtdays.com/>



### Red Dress Dress Red Party Needs Volunteers

Our friend **Charles Huff** at the LGBT Center is looking for volunteers to help with the Red Dress Dress Red party on Saturday March 18. It's the biggest party and fundraiser of the season with over 2500 attendees. Charles needs people to help with set-up, on site registration, monitoring photo booths and much more. Many different shifts and duties available. Contact him at 760-281-2605 or [charles@thecentercv.org](mailto:charles@thecentercv.org).

## Springing Forward, Hallelujah!



We can all agree that it has been an unseasonably cold and rainy winter in Southern California this year. Rain storms, wind and a snowpack on the mountains remind us





that we are still in winter. Get ready to toss those wool sweaters and pull out the shorts since spring starts on Monday, March 20. With all the rain, we should have a spectacular wildflower blooming season. Also remember that we set our clocks one hour ahead when Daylight Savings Time starts on Sunday March 12, so our days will start to get longer. Get outside and enjoy the sunshine!

***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.***  
***Follow us on Facebook & Instagram Brothersofthedesert***

Brothers of the Desert | 333 N Sunrise Way Box 1314, Palm Springs, CA 92262

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