

# HARD WON, NOT DONE: VOTING MATTERS

Saturday, August 14, 2021  
State House Lawn, Montpelier, 3-5 P.M.



**Introduction by MC** MIA SCHULTZ

**Musical Performance** NICOLE NELSON

**Land Dedication** MELODY MACKIN

**Student Essay on Non-Citizen Voting** HUSSEIN AMURI

**Reading of Poem “Ferene Existing While Black”**

FERENE PARIS MEYER

**Artist Vision Statement on Live Painting**

**“The Light of Truth Upon Them”**

CYNTHIA CAGLE

**Keynote Speech “Voting in Texas—156 Years of Struggle”**

ANNETTE GORDON-REED

**Remarks on Queer Inclusion** JEAN SZILVA

**Student Essay on the For the People Act** TYLER HEDDING

**Closing Remarks & Music**



*Haven't registered to vote? You can do so at any time during the event at the table hosted by League of Women Voters of Vermont!*



**Vermont Suffrage  
Centennial Alliance**

# PRESENTERS



## MIA SCHULTZ

Mia Schultz (Bennington) is the president of the Rutland Area branch of NAACP, the nation's first and largest grassroots-based civil rights organization.

Schultz is also a writer. In one of her recent pieces for Vermont Digger, Schultz wrote, "Remember the fire that galvanized your commitment to show up for justice last year. Think about the murders of Black citizens we have seen since then. The forces we see around us both locally and nationally refuse to bring racism to justice. Be with us now; be the force that bends the arc of the universe to justice."



## NICOLE NELSON

Nicole Nelson (Burlington), accomplished singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, is of half Trinidadian and half Norwegian descent.

Nelson began her professional career in music in the mid 2000's playing shows up and down the East Coast. She first received national acclaim in 2012 as a finalist on NBC's "The Voice".

Today, Nicole tours in the indie-soul band "Dwight & Nicole" with singer-songwriter and guitarist, Dwight Ritcher. In 2019, she founded the Vermont chapter of the Resistance Revival Chorus. In 2020, she teamed up with the Clemmons Family Farm to offer free sound healing sessions to Vermont's BIPOC community.



## MELODY MACKIN

Melody Mackin (Barre) is an educator and artist. A citizen of the Elnu Abenaki Band, she has held leadership positions on the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs. Within her community, Mackin has focused on cultural revitalization and concepts of personhood. A member of the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association, Melody was named one of USA Today's Most Influential Women of the Century as part of the Suffrage Movement's centennial.

## HUSSEIN AMURI

Hussein Amuri (Winooski) is an immigrant from Tanzania, whose family arrived in the US in 2015. As a member of the Winooski Charter Commission, he worked to advise his City Council on a charter change that would allow non-citizens to vote in municipal elections. An alumnus of the Governor's Institutes of Vermont, Amuri is a recipient of the Vermont Presidential Scholars Program. His dream is to be in the Vermont Legislature someday! Hussein shares his essay on Non-Citizen Voting.





# FERENE PARIS MEYER

Ferene Paris Meyer (Burlington), storyteller and founding CEO of All Heart Inspirations, creates heart-centered spaces through workshops, community engagements, culinary arts, and more! She aspires to make a difference within her local Vermont community and beyond, one story at a time. Ferene will share her poem "Ferene Existing While Black."

# CYNTHIA CAGLE

Cynthia Cagle (South Burlington), artist, is creating a painting that will serve as a record of our commemoration of the suffrage centennial for women, which will endure long after we disperse today. She is here with us today, painting onsite for all to see.

A Chicana from Los Angeles, Cagle arrived in Vermont in 2004. She is working on a series of paintings that explore her identity as a Latina as well as her indigenous ancestry. Drawing on her interest in evolution, biology, and nature, her current work investigates family trauma, racism and personal history through a process of discovery and self-reflection.



# ANNETTE GORDON-REED

Annette Gordon-Reed, author and historian, is the Carl M. Loeb University Professor at Harvard. She has won 16 book prizes including the Pulitzer Prize in History and the National Book Award for her book "The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family." Her most recent book, "On Juneteenth," was published on the eve of Juneteenth, June 19th, becoming a national holiday. Among her many honors, she has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, MacArthur fellowship, National Humanities Medal, and the Frederick Douglass Book Prize.



In her keynote, **VOTING IN TEXAS-156 YEARS OF STRUGGLE**, Gordon-Reed will explore what happened after Black Texans got the right to vote on Juneteenth 1865, denial of those rights during the South's period of redemption, and the fight for voting rights that still exists today. A native of Texas, Gordon-Reed grew up in the racially segregated town of Conroe and was the first child to integrate the town's all-white school.

# JEAN SZILVA

Jean Szilva, M.D. (Winooski) is an assistant professor emerita at the UVM College of Medicine. She is devoted to making good trouble. Today she will provide us with some comments on Queer Inclusion and voting.



# TYLER HEDDING

Tyler Hedding (East Montpelier) recently graduated from U-32 High School. This fall he will attend Villanova University in Pennsylvania. He is most proud of his commitment to challenging himself academically and personally throughout high school and of his involvement in athletics and extracurricular activities at school and in his community. He received the All-Around Learner, Advocacy, and Engaged Citizen Awards at his school. Tyler will read his essay, "For The People Act."



# SUPPORTERS

This event would not be possible without the generous support of these organizations. Thank you!



**John M. Bissell Foundation, Inc.**

