



CLAYTON JACKSON MCGHIE MEMORIAL DISCUSSION GUIDE

An event has happened, upon which it is difficult

[Bringing the Truth to Light]

to speak and impossible to remain silent . - Edmund Burke

History and memory are selective. A society is most apt to remember and record incidents and events that place it in a generally favorable light. That an event is not remembered does not mean that it did not occur. Many tragedies and atrocities have been dumped on history's scrap heap because histories are the purviews of the victors, not the vanquished. It has always been thus.

But 1920 is a signal year for citizens of Duluth and Minnesota. History initially recorded, then tried to forget the June 15, 1920 lynching of three black men on this city's streets. But nearly 80 years after the crime, its citizens not only resurrected this incident, but determined to bring it to our collective consciousness and enable a wounded community to acknowledge complicity in the lynchings and to affect racial healing.

As a child growing up in Duluth, I learned of this incident from my mother when I was perhaps nine or ten years old. Like most Duluthians who had learned of the lynchings, I put it out of my mind until the late 1970s when I wrote *The Lynchings in Duluth* (original title, *They Was Just Niggers*) The book generated little discussion, and little notice.

It wasn't until Craig Grau, a UMD professor, located the graves of the victims of this crime that brave activists within Duluth sought to redress the wrongs of that June night in 1920. The gravesites were commemorated, and good people began talking about the lynchings, formed committees, and determined to infuse the 1920 deaths into the consciousness of the community.

But the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial Committee did much more than that. They set about to establish this poignant memorial as created by sculptor Carla Stetson, with accompanying texts selected by writer Anthony Peyton Porter. These sculptures were cast by Artstone of New Ulm, Minnesota, and are situated on a plot donated by Lamar Outdoor Advertising. The contributions of these two enterprises have made possible the existence of this memorial enabling everyone concerned with human dignity to pause and reflect on an unspeakable past incident, but also to look toward a just and equitable future for all.

-Michael Fedo, Author

[C J M M I n c . I n t o t h e F u t u r e]

It is important to first acknowledge the immense amount of work that has been accomplished over the last few years. Under tireless leadership, countless supporters and volunteers, and the vision of two amazing artists, the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial was created. The day that the memorial was unveiled will be a day that thousands of us will never forget and one of which Duluth can forever be proud.

Many might think that the memorial would be the conclusion of the work by our organization, but it was just the beginning. Our mission has always been to work toward eradicating racism in the Duluth community and we should agree that facilitating the public acknowledgement of the lynchings was extremely important but was not enough to accomplish the important objective we have set forth before us.

We are a unique organization poised to take on the challenge of addressing racism. We have numerous resources: we are diverse in ethnicity, background, age, and scope of influence; a website that is currently being revised and enhanced as a tool of discussion and learning; this important discussion guide; numerous relationships with persons and organizations of influence in the community; and the beautiful and thought-provoking memorial.

During the creation of the memorial, our mantra was always "Bring the Truth to Light." This will carry us forward into our new set of goals and challenges and be our guiding words...

1. Challenging and supporting institutions to acknowledge that racism and discrimination still exist, and working with them to determine their role and place in this work and provide them with tools and resources for doing so.
2. Supporting and involving youth by helping them further their education, supporting them in acknowledging racism, and providing tools for change.
3. Partnering with other organizations in the community to support each other and to determine the niche we all have in undoing racism.
4. Facilitating opportunities for reconciliation and healing by providing opportunities for people to tell their stories about racism and to be heard.
5. Providing tools for learning and discussion including this discussion guide, the website, and a high school curriculum.

We are looking ahead to many years of hard but rewarding work and hope we can support you in the work you are doing in your own community. Thank you for your interest in the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial.

Sincerely,

(signatures here)

Carl Crawford & Lynn Goerd, Co-chairpersons 2005

The Memorial Project

In the fall of 2001, two Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial representatives were appointed to lead management aspects for the creation and building of the memorial. Jill Caraway and Richard Dolezal accepted the demanding and challenging task of project managers. They met weekly with the artist, Carla Stetson, to discuss progress and identify ways they could help meet project deadlines. Their primary goals were to be the buffer between the artists and the City of Duluth, the CJMM Board, the Duluth Public Arts Commission, business owners near the memorial site, and the people they would be working with to hire and volunteer at the site. Many meetings were held with the above named groups to keep the project on schedule. They traveled to Osceola, WI, where the bronze figures were cast and to New Ulm, MN, where the walls were cast. Both experiences were very moving—seeing the memorial components taking shape.

The installation of the walls at the site signaled a turning point in the completion of the memorial. It meant we were now in the phase of building the memorial, which would require much volunteer assistance. It also gave the community a very visible sign that the memorial was happening and encouraged significant financial contributions.

Communities of Faith, area youth groups, and other civic minded groups were approached about helping with the preparation of the site for block laying, actual laying of the thousands of blocks in the areas surrounding the gardens and sidewalk and garden planting. These groups volunteered hundreds of hours; the City of Duluth also provided support in the creation of the gardens. Area garden shops contributed plants and trees to complete the site.

The memorial creators, Anthony Peyton Porter and Carla Stetson, had to deal with delays which extended the finishing of the project by five months. Delays in acquiring the property kept the site preparation work from getting started. The artists were gracious in accepting this extension of time without any additional compensation.



Artists' Statement of Purpose

We—Carla Stetson, a Duluth sculptor and designer; and Anthony Peyton Porter, a Minneapolis editor, publisher, and writer—have collaborated on the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial because we believe it is important to acknowledge this horrific event and not forget about it or cover it up. We must know our history in order to understand the present and conceive of a brighter future.

Our monument relates the murders of Elmer Jackson, Elias Clayton, and Isaac McGhie to all murders of the Other—American Indians, Kurds, Armenians, Tutsis, Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Gypsies, Hindus and those people who live across the street. Duluth is a part of the world. This particular evil was not in the mob ignoring the law—many awful things are unlawful, including murder; the evil began, as usual, in judgment.

Ideas and sentiments from different cultures with symbolic visual statements give voice to our thoughts. Quotations on the walls, key words in the pavement, strong textural pattern, and bronze figures of the three young men create a contemplative space that stimulates reflection and discussion. We hope it acts as a lens to focus on some important questions such as: What drives people to mob violence? What enables some to protest it? How can we feel compassion for the victims and their murderers?



THE ARTISTS

Carla Stetson is a sculptor and designer. She designed the Memorial plaza and walls and created the bronze figures.

Anthony Peyton Porter is a radio commentator, writer, editor, and publisher. He selected the quotations for the CJM Memorial and wrote the story for the wall.

We collaborated on the Memorial because we believe that the writings and visual language are more effective together than they could be apart, to help up come to terms with the complex nature of this event.

Memorial Quotations

An event has happened, upon which it is difficult to speak and impossible to remain silent. - Edmund Burke

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) was a British statesman and member of Parliament. Born in Dublin, Ireland, he was an influential orator and the author of many political essays and a book on aesthetics. The header quotation is from a 1789 speech on the impeachment of Warren Hastings, a former governor general of India whom Burke accused of betraying British ideals of justice and fair play.

The truth is rarely pure, and never simple. - Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an Irish poet, essayist, playwright, wit, and novelist whose works include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, among others.

Holding onto anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one getting burned. - Gautama Buddha

Siddhartha Gautama (c.563-c.483 BCE), also called Sakyamuni, was the founder of Buddhism.

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing. - Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was a physicist, pacifist, and Nobel Prize laureate who propounded the special and general theories of relativity. A profoundly compassionate man, he spoke and wrote extensively against the use of nuclear weapons, to which his theories had led.

If you as parents cut corners, your children will too. If you lie, they will too...
If parents snicker at racial and gender jokes, another generation will pass on the poison adults still have not had the courage to snuff out. - Marian Wright Edelman

Marian Wright Edelman (1939-) is an activist and advocate for children and the founder of the Children's Defense Fund.

Forgiveness is giving up all hope of having had a better past. - Anne Lamott

Anne Lamott (1954-) is a novelist and spiritual philosopher whose books include *Operating Instructions*, *Traveling Mercies*, and *Bird by Bird*.

Love is all we have, the only way that each can help the other. - Euripides

Euripides (c484-406 BCE) was a Greek playwright, whose extant works include *Medea*, *Electra*, and *The Trojan Women*.

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest. - Elie Wiesel

Elie Wiesel (1928-) is a writer, Jewish Holocaust survivor, and Nobel laureate committed to informing people about the Holocaust and opposing racism and oppression. His works include *Night*, *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, and *The Testament*.

Hatred can never answer hatred; all violence is injustice. - Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh (1926-) is an exiled Vietnamese Buddhist monk who was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr. His published works include *The Miracle of Mindfulness*; *Living Buddha, Living Christ*; *Peace is Every Step*, and many more.

He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr., (1929-1968) was a civil rights leader, anti-war activist, and Nobel laureate who was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee. His published works include *Letter from Birmingham Jail*.

The reformatory effect of punishment is a belief that dies hard, chiefly, I think, because it is so satisfying to our sadistic impulses. - Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) was a philosopher, mathematician and Nobel laureate whose works include *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* and *Political Ideals*, among others.

We are responsible for the world in which we find ourselves, if only because we are the only sentient force that can change it. - James Baldwin

James Baldwin (1924-1987) was an American essayist, novelist and playwright whose works include *The Fire Next Time*, *Another Country*, and *Notes of a Native Son*, among others.

We are the mirror as well as the face in it. We are tasting the taste this minute of eternity. We are pain and what cures pain. We are the sweet, cold water and the jar that pours.

- Jalalludin Rumi

Jalalludin Rumi (c1207-1273) was a Persian poet and teacher, much of whose poetry has been translated into English, including *Open Secret* and *The Essential Rumi*.

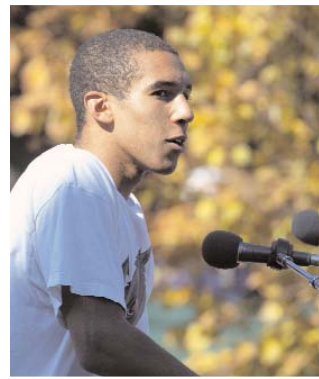
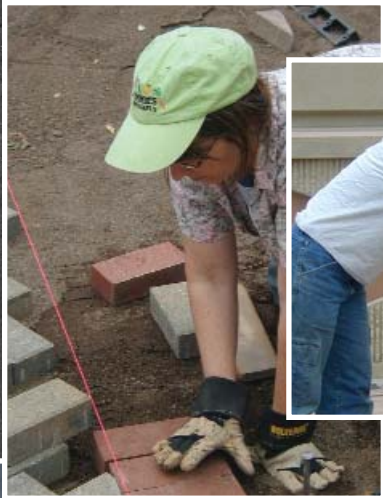
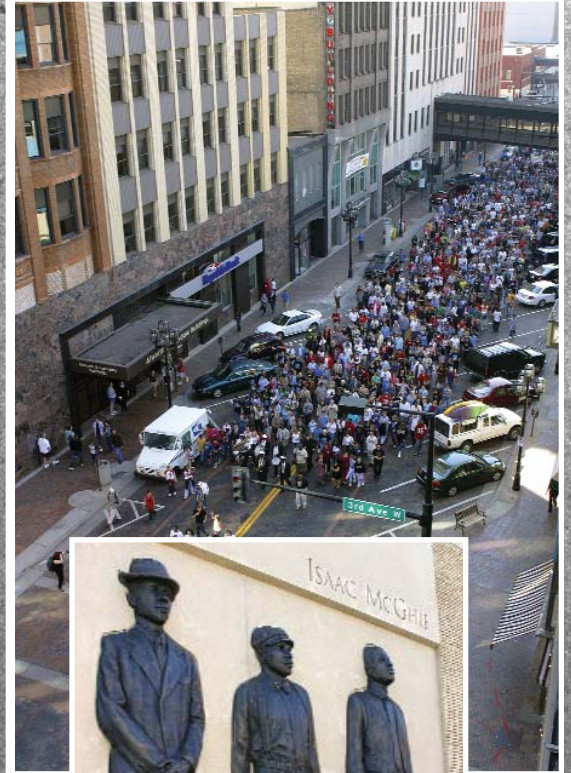
A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner:

"Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil, the other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time." When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied, "The one I feed the most."

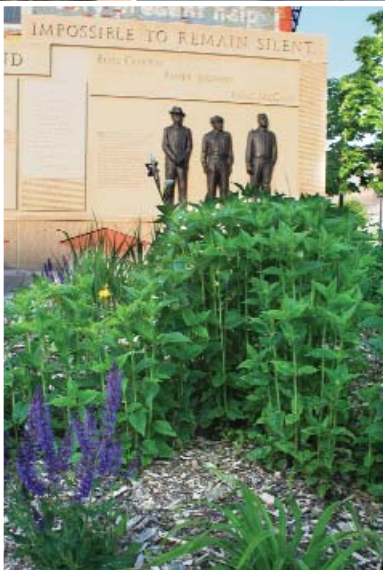
- George Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was an Irish playwright, novelist and critic, and is said to have recorded the quotation from an anonymous Native American elder. Shaw's works include *Pygmalion*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, among many others.

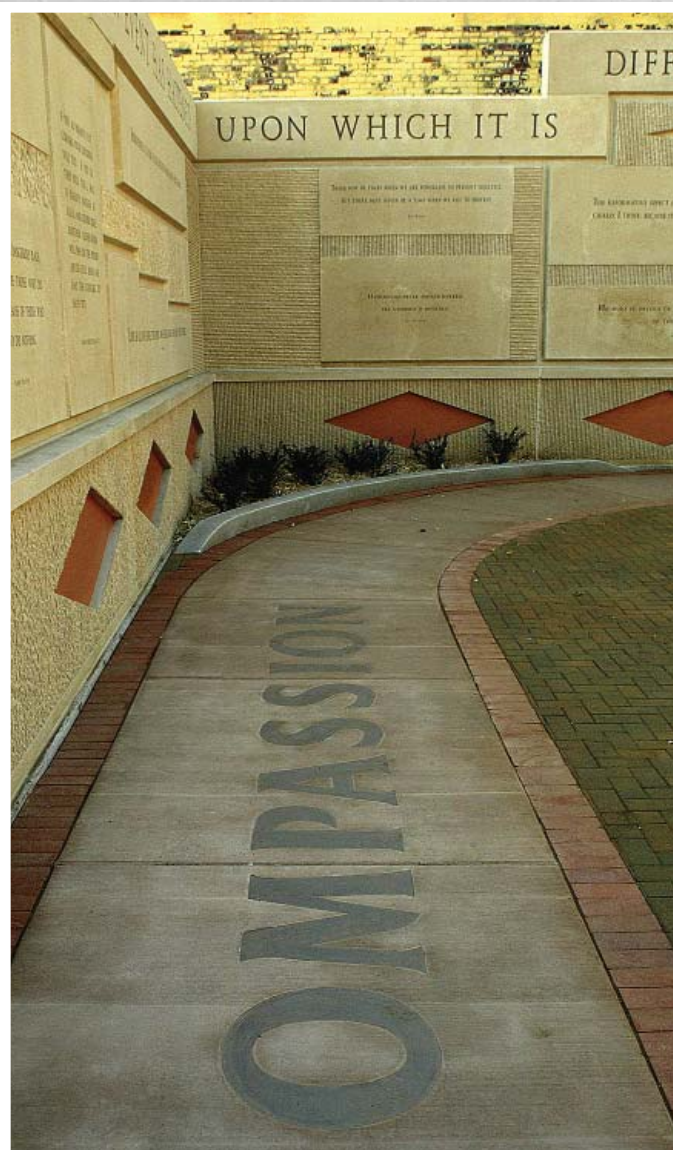
Memorial Construction & Dedication



Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial



Pondering the Quotes



Activities for educators and group leaders.

1. Read through the quotes on the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial wall. Select one or two favorite quotes. Find someone else in the group who has chosen at least one of the same quotes. Discuss your reasons for choosing that quote. If you can, find a quote you may not particularly like or agree with. Try to find someone who selected the same one and discuss your reasons for selecting that quote.
2. Place the individual quotes around the room in an organized fashion (numbered on a wall, desks, chairs, etc.). Ask participants/students to locate the quote they like the most. Once a small group has gathered at a particular quote ask the students to explain why they like this quote, what aspects of the quote they can associate with, and what life experiences allows the participants to relate to this particular quote.
3. Randomly distribute the quotes to all participants in the group...perhaps duplicates will need to be made so each individual will have a quote. Ask the participant to read the quote, explain the meaning, and decide if they agree/disagree with the quote.
4. After the quotes have been reviewed ask the participants to reflect upon how the quotes can be used to teach others about race relations in a community.
5. Think about your own personal life experiences. What are some key things life has taught you and what message would you like to leave behind to others? Write this message down and share it with someone.
6. How have the quotes inscribed upon the CJMM wall impacted you today and what elements could be added for future generations?
7. Examine the quotes and list a social issue, historic event, or personal situation that relates to the message of the quote. Explain why you selected that event and how it relates to the quote.
8. What makes a quote memorable?

What can you do in your community?

1. Ask yourself some questions. How does racism and prejudice affect your thought process? What stereotypes do you find yourself buying into? How do you respond internally when you find yourself being racist in speech or action, especially when no one else knows about it? How do you handle yourself when racism rears its head in a conversation? Are you willing to speak up?
2. Learn to be assertive in talking about racism. Educate yourself, especially on how racism affects people of all races psychologically. It's a difficult subject to attack, and we are still at an age when people are prone to defensiveness and denial when confronted with racism as a topic of discussion. How can you help?
3. Connect with others who are working against racism in your community. Most areas have organizations already established. Go to their meetings. Be willing to work. Listen.
4. Explore your community's history. Is there an event creating animosity or resentment that people of privilege either don't know about or have repressed? Can bringing that event to community consciousness help clear the air? Just as in families, telling the truth about traumatic events or history is the first step in moving forward.
5. Don't be afraid to enlist your local government in projects opposing racism. Sometimes they will surprise you. (Be concrete.)
6. If you are white, be willing to admit collective responsibility for the privileges racism has brought you. If you are a person of color, welcome white folks who show their commitment to the cause. Be committed to the cause.
7. Don't believe anyone when they say the fight has been won. It hasn't.

Some Other Local Organizations Working to Eradicate Racism Locally:

The People's Institute North • YWCA • NAACP • Duluth Human Rights Office

To Contact the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial:

claytonjacksonmcghie.org

CJMM, INC • 310 N. 1st Ave. West, Room 116 • Duluth, MN 55806 • Office phone: 218.722.3186 • Fax: 218.722.3189

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Acknowledgement and Apology for Offense to the Anishinaabe Community

Soon after the memorial was erected, the CJMM Board received various communications from the local American Indian Community expressing resentment and some anger over the use of a quote by "an American Indian elder." There were two primary sources of concern: First, that the quote was felt to be derogatory by many from the local Anishinaabe community because it referred to a "dog" as a representation of the inner self. Not only is the reference to a dog as a part of a human being offensive, it made it apparent that the reference has no connection to the local American Indian community. Second, the quote had no attributable author, calling into question the verification, and was the only quote without an author inscribed after it.

The CJMM Board agreed that although the quote was chosen by Anthony Porter, an exceptionally gifted author and poet, it was very unfortunate that there was not a priority to include a quote representing the wisdom of the local Anishinaabe people. It was also an oversight that the quote's author, George Bernard Shaw, was not inscribed into the wall at the time the memorial was erected.

The CJMM Board strongly agreed that attempts needed to be made to correct the wrong that we acknowledged had occurred, but our options were limited since the memorial is owned by the City of Duluth. The true author of the quote was inscribed into the memorial, but the quote remains as a part of the wall.

We want to apologize to the Anishinaabe people of our region for our lack of foresight and express our appreciation for those community members who were willing to speak up at the time that the memorial was unveiled. The American Indian community has demonstrated a tireless devotion to eliminating racism and violence within our communities, and we will continue our relationship of working together for the betterment of all humanity.

