

CHUCK AUSTIN





MUSICIAN WITH A MISSION

By Robert Gorczyca

Charles “Chuck” Austin, a Pittsburgh-born, African American trumpet player, has played in almost every type of venue in the eastern United States and Canada, from tent shows in the dusty farm fields of Tennessee and Arkansas to *The Ed Sullivan Show* in New York. During a career spanning more than six decades, Austin has played every type of music from the blues in Pittsburgh’s Hill District’s nightclubs to sophisticated arrangements played by a 20-piece band for Johnny Mathis at Heinz Hall. Austin rarely stood in the spotlight or gained public acclaim, but among those in the profession he earned respect, admiration, and a reputation as a solid and reliable musician. Austin’s status among his peers was recently formalized with his induction into the Pittsburgh Jazz Society’s Hall of Fame.¹

Austin began his career when both American society and the music business were strictly segregated, but his sense of justice and the bond he felt with his fellow musicians would not allow him to accept the system's inequities. One of the first musicians to break Pittsburgh's color barrier, he participated in the development of a federal lawsuit designed to eliminate the discriminatory practices of Pittsburgh's white bandleaders and the local branch of the American Federation of Musicians.

Today, at age 83 and with his career still in high gear, Austin continues to improve the standards of his profession as a board member of Local 60/471 of the American Federation of Musicians. As president and founder of the African American Jazz Preservation Society of Pittsburgh, Austin is dedicated to keeping alive the spirit of the music that is central to the history and identity of the area's African American citizens. He is a musician with a mission.

Austin took his first music lessons in elementary school in Ben Avon, a few miles downriver from downtown Pittsburgh, playing a trumpet given to him by his grandparents. The school had no formal music program so he and fellow students studied after classes with teacher Nick Lomakin, a clarinet/saxophone player, bandleader, and later the owner of music stores in the Hill District and on Liberty Avenue. Austin came naturally to the task. He remembered, "I had a good ear, not perfect pitch, but I could play along with music on the radio or a recording and then write down what I heard. I knew right away that there was something special in music for me, and I dreamed of becoming a professional musician." Austin's mother, Beulah Wood, provided a special form of training and motivation. Separated from the family by divorce, she worked as a waitress in several Hill District jazz clubs. When Austin visited her on weekends, she took him to

those clubs where he listened and learned from the city's best players.

With such skills and experiences, Austin progressed rapidly, playing in the school district's orchestra and marching band, and leading its high school dance band. The latter caused some difficulty for Austin who, because his parents were divorced, lived with his grandparents. The deeply religious couple believed that popular music was the work of the devil; they gave Austin the option of either quitting the dance band or moving out of their house. Austin chose to continue playing in the dance band, and moved to his father's house nearby. Austin believes that his grandparents were proud of his playing, but his grandfather, George Austin, as a founder of and deacon in Mount Zion Baptist Church in Bellevue, had to set a proper example for his parishioners. In any case, the bond between Austin and his grandparents remained strong. In fact, Austin credits his grandparents with nurturing in him

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the sense of justice, independence, and self-assurance that informed the activism of his later years and helped him to avoid the major hazards of his profession: alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and promiscuity.

After graduating from Avonworth High School in 1945, Austin joined the navy with the intent of attending its music school. Instead, an unscrupulous recruiter, a black man, assigned him to a school for cooks and bakers. In the segregated navy of that day, African Americans usually served as “wait staff” for officers and as cooks for enlisted men. Austin’s

protest saved him from that fate, but, perhaps as punishment for speaking out, he lost the opportunity to study music when he was placed in the general labor pool after basic training. He served at several navy bases in the eastern United States, advanced to Painter Third Class, and at the end of his enlistment in 1948 served as non commissioned officer in charge of an automobile repair shop at the Oceana Naval Air Station at Virginia Beach, Virginia. Except for isolated instances, Austin did not have the opportunity to perform in public, but he continued to practice and study.

When Austin returned to Pittsburgh in 1948 the Lower Hill District of Pittsburgh was alive with the sounds of jazz. The Crawford Grill, the Blue Note Café, and many other clubs hosted such greats as Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Ben Webster, and Lester Young, nurturing a jazz culture with such energy and vitality that led many to recognize the Hill District of that era as the “Jazz Crossroads of the World.”² Not as well known, at least to residents outside the

Hill District, was the Musicians Club, which served as the office of black musicians’ Local 471 of the American Federation of Musicians and as an after-hours club. There, when they had finished their shows, the great artists who visited Pittsburgh came to relax, meet friends, and play long into the night, joining Pittsburgh musicians in jam sessions that delighted all who squeezed their way into the club’s smoke-filled confines.

The richness of Pittsburgh’s jazz culture gave life to many of the genre’s top musicians such as Billy Strayhorn, Mary Lou Williams, Errol Garner, Ahmad Jamal, Ray Brown, Stanley Turrentine, and Grover Mitchell, who left Pittsburgh to play in major venues all over the world. Austin recalls the Musicians Club in almost reverent terms as, “our meeting hall, our social club, our recreation center, our school and rehearsal hall, our home away from home, a place where we networked and linked up with the older generation of musicians, and, for some of us, our church.”

Austin was eager to join this scene, but obeyed the first rule followed by Pittsburgh’s freelance musicians: get a day job. With a means to pay the rent, Austin took the next preparatory step, adjusting his playing to the intricacies of “Be Bop,” a revolutionary form of jazz pioneered by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. There was no formal training for the genre’s chord structures and rhythmic patterns. Musicians listened to and imitated the music, then put it into practice on the bandstand. “It was sink or swim,” Austin recalls. “If you didn’t get it, you were out.”

Then, using the G.I. Bill, Austin studied at the Pittsburgh Music Institute under Carl McVicker, the music director at Westinghouse High School who trained many of the city’s top musicians. Austin’s final step was to join Local 471, in part out of necessity because union membership helped to get gigs, but also, as he put it, “because joining the union was the best way that I could express the feeling of fellowship and fraternity that I felt for my fellow musicians.”



Opposite page and above:
In 1951, Austin, 22, and
some friends formed
The Band at the Musicians
Club in the Hill District.

Right: Chuck Austin as a
junior in high school in
1944, wearing his Avonworth
High School band uniform.
All photos courtesy Chuck Austin unless noted.

There was one other factor that Austin had to contend with in establishing himself as a musician: racial discrimination. Austin describes Pittsburgh as one of the country's most tightly segregated cities, to the extent that many African Americans labeled the area "Up South." Its Jim Crow system split the music profession along racial lines. Musicians of the white Local 60 controlled the more lucrative jobs downtown and in traditionally white venues in surrounding areas, while black musicians in Local 471 played the Hill District and other black enclaves in the city and suburbs. Austin recalls the general rule was that no black musicians played below Grant Street, waived only for nationally known artists and a small group of local black musicians who catered to an exclusive, white clientele. However, the rule that excluded African Americans from the hotels and restaurants of the city was never broken; visiting black musicians, no matter how famous, retreated to Hill District hotels, clubs, and residences for respite. The isolation was so complete that some musicians joked that the Ph.D. after a black musician's name stood for a degree earned in "Pittsburgh's Hill District."³

Fortunately for Austin and other young musicians, job opportunities were opened by the vitality of the black community's music culture, a condition engendered at least in part by the enforced isolation of its musicians. Aside from the well-known Crawford Grill and the Hurricane Lounge, there were many secondary venues throughout the Hill District, East Liberty, Homewood, and the North Side where musicians were needed. As Austin recalls, "There were clubs everywhere. We had so much work, we didn't have time to think about what we were being denied [by segregation]." Austin's playing experience covered a wide range of styles from Joe Westry's Blues Band, which featured a young singer named Dakota Staton (who later found international acclaim with her hit, "The Late, Late Show"), to the more sophisticated music of Ruby Youngue.

As Austin gained experience he developed a reputation as a skilled and dependable

musician. This prompted a business agent of Local 471, George Childress, to refer Austin to an agent who booked musicians for touring shows. Work on the road was difficult because of the traveling, but it was steady and the pay higher than local rates. Austin's first experience with this type of work came in 1951 when he was hired to play in a tent or carnival show called *The Brown Skin Models*, a musical review that entertained at farm shows and fairs throughout the Midwest and South. The cast performed what Austin called family-oriented shows, but the late show, billed as the *Midnight Ramble*, catered to an adult audience. To avoid conflicts with the segregation laws, members of the show traveled and slept in their own Pullman car. The show also traveled with its own cook, who provided meals for the troupe in the tent used for their performances. "It was a learning experience," Austin says. "I played every day with veteran musicians who helped me with new techniques. I was getting my 'chops' in shape, and when I returned to Pittsburgh I was ready to play all night."

Austin returned to Pittsburgh at the end of the tour in 1952 and resumed his freelance playing. In 1953, as part of the Ruby Youngue combo, he played at the opening of the Hurricane Lounge. In 1956 Austin joined the Apollos, a group that featured piano player Horace Parlan, who went on to develop an international career. The band was even invited to play at the Crawford Grill, a distinction that Austin calls one of the highlights of his career.



From 1958 through 1961, Austin went on the road playing in the "Big Show," a review that took big-name rock and roll recording stars to venues throughout the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. It featured top artists like Paul Williams of "Do the Hucklebuck" fame, who toured with Frankie Avalon, Fats Domino, Bobby Rydell, Buddy Holly, and such groups as the Coasters and the Drifters. The troupe routinely encountered segregation restrictions—one required the black and white entertainers to travel in separate buses. In many northern cities, black performers encountered segregated hotels and had to find accommodations in the black community. As a general rule audiences in the North were integrated and black people made up a large portion of the audience. In the South the segregation laws were more extensive and strictly enforced with the added measure of enforcement supplied by the Ku Klux Klan. Sometimes the audience was segregated with black people seated in the balcony, and at others, such as in Little Rock, Arkansas, where the two groups attended separate shows, the white

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Austin, front row, center, wearing plaid shirt, with the participating members of the former Pittsburgh Musical Union Local No. 471 in a 1997 Survivor's Legacy Reunion photo.

audience watched the show in the main hall and, later, the black audience in the basement. Another segregation rule dictated that mixed race groups could not perform before white audiences. One of the troupe's singing groups, The Crests, had one white and three black singers. In order to fool the Chattanooga, Tennessee, segregation police, the white singer had to use makeup to darken his skin.

In 1959, Austin toured with Lloyd Price, whose hit songs "Personality" and "Have You

Ever Had the Blues?" swept the country. Austin played in the band when Price recorded these tunes and performed with the group on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. After more than 40 years, Austin is still chagrined that for the Sullivan appearance, band members were required to wear new Florsheim shoes, the \$45 cost of which was deducted from their weekly pay.

Sometimes touring musicians, even with union membership, had little to say about the terms of their employment. On one tour the agent arbitrarily imposed a 50 percent pay cut

on band members. When one band member protested, he was fired. In another instance the show's agent attempted to manipulate the books to skim money from the players' payroll. Austin protested and was threatened with a beating for speaking out. The band members were not able to recoup the stolen funds. Another arbitrary action resulted when, after the main tour was finished and the headliners departed, the band would do a series of one-night performances. If the next day's show was not sufficiently booked, the agent would cancel the show, and the musicians, who were then paid on a performance basis, would not

receive any pay for that day. Austin found himself unable to pay his expenses and send home enough money to support his family, so, under pressure from his wife and other family members, he left the tour when it stopped in Pittsburgh in March 1960, promising his wife that he would not go on the road again.

Despite his promise, economic necessity forced Austin on the road the following year where he performed at the Idlewild resort on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Wealthy African

Americans from the Detroit and Chicago areas frequented the facility, which featured top-ranked singers, dancers, comedians, and musicians in its weekly shows. Austin played in the band that backed up these performers. When the season ended he went with the band as it played a series of engagements in Detroit, then returned to Pittsburgh in September 1961. Two years later, Austin led a quintet that played an extended engagement in the Crawford Grill #2, located in the

middle Hill District area. He received offers to go on the road with the Basie band and with Ray Charles but, unwilling to leave his family again, he turned down these rare opportunities.

During the 1960s, civil rights legislation was gradually breaking down the barriers segregating Pittsburgh's music business, giving black musicians new opportunities. Austin's wide-ranging experience and pristine reputation allowed him to become one of the first players to break the color line when his

friend from the Musicians Club, George Childress, recommended him for a job in Jack Purcell's all-white Society Band. Because Austin was usually the only black person in the Purcell band and some others that he played in at the time, he was viewed by some as a traitor and called a "House Nigger" and an "Uncle Tom." It was true that in many cases Austin was the only black person in the band. It is also true that he was acting as a pioneer in the effort to integrate Pittsburgh's music business. "It hurt me that people I thought were my friends could say those things about me," Austin says, "but this was a step up in my career. I was fulfilling my dream of becoming a top musician, and I knew that I had earned the job. It wasn't given to me because I was black."

The job with the Purcell band proved to be a milestone in Austin's career, for, in addition to providing music for many Heinz Hall, Syria Mosque, and

Trumpet players Pete Henderson, Will Austin, Chuck Austin, and Tommy Turrentine stand behind Will Smith and his bongos in Teenie Harris' studio, c. 1951-1952.

Photo by Charles "Teenie" Harris, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.1542.



Benedum Center shows such as those featuring Johnny Mathis, Tom Jones, The Carpenters, Glen Campbell, and Tennessee Ernie Ford, the band played at most of the Pittsburgh area's other major events, including the Ice Follies, high society balls, proms, and awards dinners. The pay was good and the work steady, a Pittsburgh musician's dream.

Coincidental to these developments, the American Federation of Musicians ordered its segregated union locals to merge, and talks between representatives of black Local 471 and white Local 60 got underway in 1963. Austin describes this as a complex process that ended in tragedy for Pittsburgh's black musicians. Because of their much smaller membership base, black musicians were concerned about achieving equitable representation on the merged local's board of governors and gaining a presence on the staff. The intransigence of the Local 60 representatives stalled negotiations and delayed the merger until 1965 when Local 60/471 of the American Federation of Musicians was created. The merger added three black members to the six-member board of directors, and made provisions for a black person on the local's office staff and for black representation at the union's national conventions.

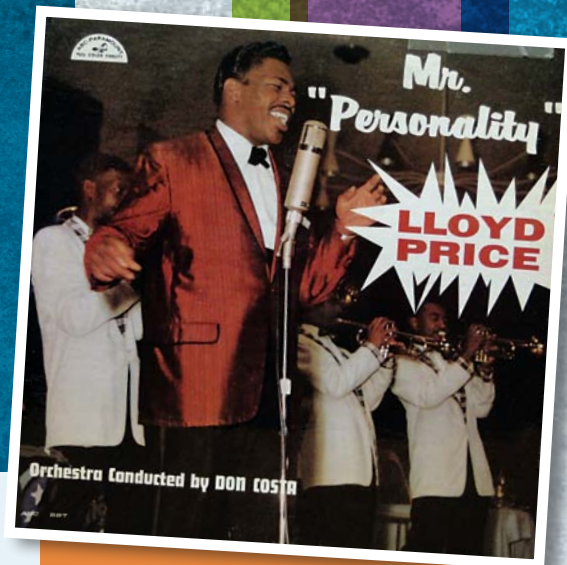
The agreement was not permanent in that it was thought that once the black membership had established itself in the local, special representation provisions would no longer be needed. According to Austin, this did not happen. The black membership was subsumed into the much larger white membership that remained unwilling to share power in the organization or the jobs it controlled. Laboring under a ten-to-one membership handicap, and with a two-to-one disadvantage on the local's board, black members exerted little influence on the new local's proceedings and were unable

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to eliminate the preferential treatment of white musicians. Discouraged by these circumstances, black members did not attend union meetings, forfeiting what little voting power they had. Many other black musicians simply refused to join the union, unwilling to pay dues to support what they saw as bigoted leadership.

In a separate action, Pittsburgh's black musicians formed BMOP, the Black Musicians of Pittsburgh. An ad hoc committee of that organization, of which Austin was a member, filed suit against Local 60 and a number of local bandleaders seeking the elimination of discriminatory hiring practices, and compensatory damages and back wages for those practices.⁴ William Gould, a Harvard-educated civil rights attorney who taught at Stanford University, represented the BMOP members. His efforts were to no avail and the suit lost in the local court and again on appeal. This litigation took several years.⁵ By that time Austin had resigned from the BMOP committee because he viewed the committee's demand for compensation and back wages as unrealistic and unattainable.

When the temporary merger agreement ended in 1970, any hope for job distribution equity and fair representation on the union's staff and board disappeared. Austin explains that many black musicians felt they had been written off, that the merged local had become an exclusive club for white symphony and big band players. With the exception of a temporary appointment of about six months, no black person served on the board of Local 60/471 until 2000. The economic



Austin played in the Lloyd Price band in 1959 during the *Big Show* tour. He is to the right of (and partly obscured by) singer and album star Lloyd Price on the "Personality" album cover.

difficulties associated with the collapse of the area's steel industry, and urban renewal projects that destroyed the Lower Hill District community and the jazz clubs that were part of it, exacerbated the problem. Jobs were scarce, and musicians, many of them union members, often worked for less than union scale, further weakening the union's influence.

As good as it was, Austin's job with the Purcell band did not pay all the bills. To supplement his income, he joined a band that entertained during Steelers games, a gig that lasted 17 years. He also played in Amerita, an Italian American marching band that participated in the area's many parades and summer concerts. At this time he was operating a carpet cleaning service and on many occasions went to work cleaning carpets after performing most of the night. Eventually he acquired a job as a night janitor at the Koppers Company that gave him Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off, a perfect fit for his music schedule.

Unlike many of his friends, Austin retained his membership in Local 60/471 and actively participated in its affairs. He could not tolerate the union's indifference to its black members, but he believed in the union movement and felt that it offered the best way to establish professional standards for black musicians. As a practical matter Austin retained his union

membership because, while he was playing with the Purcell band, he was adding to his Social Security, life insurance, and pension trust funds. In 2000 Austin won election to Local 60/471's board, a position he still holds. In the face of ongoing discriminatory hiring practices, and testing the membership's willingness to address long-festered problems, Austin proposed that the union implement a hiring diversity program, but the proposal got little consideration. In addition, Austin attempted to broaden the base of the work dues collection system by seeking the cooperation of such venues as the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, but this effort also failed. The failure of these proposals stands as a measure of the impotent, minority status of the local's black members and the white members' indifference to their plight, a condition that plagued the merger from the start.

In 2004 Austin was chosen to play in the Pittsburgh Public Theater's presentation of the Fats Waller musical *Ain't Misbehavin'*. His work in the show was the high point of his career, not only because of the show's great music, but also because the performances marked the first time a band with all black musicians played in a major Pittsburgh musical production. "I thought that our work in the musical proved that we black musicians could do the job, any job that we were called upon to do," Austin said. "Every day as we got ready to go on stage I thanked the band members for their participation in what we were doing." Mayor Bob O'Connor marked the historic nature of the show with a proclamation, but, in retrospect, Austin feels that the group's work in the show had little impact on opening the job market to the young black musicians coming up through the ranks.

In 2005 Austin got work with a Latshaw Productions touring band that played luncheon shows in clubs all around the northeastern United States. The shows, with such titles as *Puttin' on the Ritz* and *As Time Goes By*, were tailored for senior citizens and

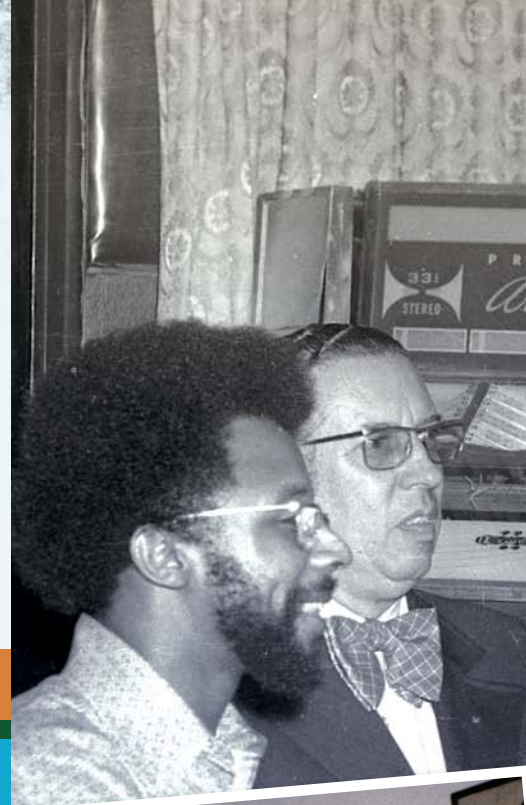
featured music from the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Unlike the tours of an earlier time, there were no segregated hotels or theaters to concern the musicians. Another difference was that Austin and his fellow musicians had to drive the many miles of the tour because no buses or Pullman cars were provided.

In 1996 Austin read *Jackson Street After Hours*, a book about Seattle's black musicians. The book motivated Austin to organize the African American Jazz Preservation Society of Pittsburgh (AAJPSP), an organization dedicated to preserving Pittsburgh's musical heritage and the memory of the men and women of Local 471 who nurtured that heritage. The organization sponsored an oral history project that has preserved the memoirs of many members of Local 471 in the Labor Archives of the University of Pittsburgh. Another project produced a video recording of some of Pittsburgh's prominent musicians such as Duke Spaulding, John Hughes, Spencer Bey, James Johnson, and Tim Jenkins. The society also sponsored concerts/

"Every day as we got ready to go on stage I thanked the band members for their participation in what we were doing."

talks for senior citizen groups at the Hill House and the Vintage Senior Community Center in East Liberty and provided documents and interviews for Jonathan White, a doctoral candidate whose dissertation deals with the Hill District's musical culture. Each year the society honors a Pittsburgh musician with an award recognizing contributions to Pittsburgh's

jazz culture. Recipients include Ruby Young, Duke Spaulding, Joe Harris, Walt Harper, and Harold Better. The highlight of the society's efforts came in 2007 with a concert at the Strayhorn Theater featuring a retrospective on the music of Pittsburgh piano player and composer Mary Lou Williams by vibraphonist Cecilia Smith.





Austin with the Pittsburgh Black Musicians and their lawyer at the Flamingo Club, January 1974. The group fought racial discrimination in the union and contractors. From left: Claude Jackson, George "Duke" Spaulding, Ruby Younge Buchanan, Chuck Austin, Thomas "Doc" Miller, "Ducky" Kemp and attorney William B. Gould, law professor at Stanford University. Not pictured: Leroy Brown.
 Photo by Charles "Teenie" Harris, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.9886.



In April 2008, Austin and the AAJPSP hosted a jazz concert celebrating the centenary of Local 471 and the Musicians Club. Members of the local joined young musicians from Pittsburgh's High School for the Creative and Performing Arts in playing the music that is so central to the identity of Pittsburgh's black community. The celebration included a display of original artwork, video and film presentations, and a recognition award, all directed at keeping alive the spirit that made the intersection

of Wiley Avenue and Fullerton Street the "Jazz Crossroads of the World." Recently the AAJPSP received approval from the Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission to erect a historical marker in Pittsburgh's Lower Hill District honoring Local 471 and the many fine musicians who held membership in the organization.

Meanwhile, Austin maintains a rigorous playing schedule. His ongoing work with the union and the AAJPSP highlights his belief that his mission is not finished, that the task of achieving equity for black musicians and recognition for their music is not complete.

Austin admits to some disappointments too, the most significant deriving from the failure of black and white musicians to make Local 60/471 not just a paper merger but a

means to improve the standing of everyone in the profession. Nonetheless, Austin looks back on his career with a sense of pride and accomplishment. As a youth he felt that music held something special for him and dreamed of becoming a fine musician. Indeed, Austin found something special in music, a lifetime of useful, interesting, and creative work as an entertainer. Without a doubt his dream has been fulfilled, and he has and will continue to play with the best. But the music profession, and in particular jazz, has received something special in return. Austin's love for music, his work preserving the city's musical heritage, his dedication to the profession, and his pioneering effort to eliminate the strictures of segregation and bigotry have not only helped to maintain the highest standards of

the music profession, but also gave jazz and its practitioners their deserved respect and status. In doing these things, Charles Austin has made society just a little more humane for all of us.⁶

Robert Gorczyca is a retired City of Pittsburgh teacher of U.S. History. He has written several plays plus numerous articles for this magazine including "The Civil War Letters of General Alexander Hays" and "McCarthyism Hits Home."

¹ *Pittsburgh Musician: Official Journal of Local 60-471, AFM*, Vol. XLXII No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 2010.

² Local historian Charles McColester uses this term on page 387 of his book, *The Point of Pittsburgh, Production and Struggle at the Forks of the Ohio*.

³ The discriminatory practices mentioned are reviewed in an undated *Pittsburgh Courier* article titled "Black Musicians Continue To Fight Racism," located in the Charles Austin file at the University of Pittsburgh's Labor Archives.

⁴ The lawsuit is titled "Black Musicians of Pittsburgh and George Childress, et al., Plaintiffs-Appellants vs. Local 60-471 American Federation of Musicians, AFL-CIO and Black Musicians of Pittsburgh and George Childress, et al., Plaintiffs-Appellants vs. Joseph Schaefer, Anthony Pasquarelli, Nicholas Lomankin, Joey Simms, Joseph Marone and Jack Purcell."

The action also invites others to join the suit as plaintiffs and states the following: "...the local and the international and the individual contractors named above have discriminated against black musicians because of race and have excluded them from work and discouraged them from applying for work."

This information is contained in an unpublished essay by Shakura A. Sabur titled "The Roots of the African American Musicians' Union Local No. 471 of the American Federation of Musicians in the City of Pittsburgh 1920-1966 and Beyond," found in the Charles Austin file at the University of Pittsburgh Labor Archives.

⁵ See undated *Pittsburgh Courier* article titled "Black Musicians Continue to Fight Racism" mentioned in Footnote 3.

⁶ The unfootnoted information in this article was compiled during eight hours of conversation between the author and Charles Austin.

AFRICAN AMERICAN PROGRAMS AT THE HISTORY CENTER

America's Best Weekly, an exhibition opening February 11, 2011 at the Heinz History Center, will explore the African American experience through the lens of a Pittsburgh-owned business and examines the impact of the country's most influential black newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, on American politics, culture, and society. Appropriate for all ages, the exhibit will tell the story of the *Courier's* influence on issues such as Civil Rights and integration. The History Center will be presenting a series of related programs celebrating African American heritage and culture.

- On March 3, area educators can join History Center educators, curators, and local experts for "Teaching Freedom of the Press with *The Pittsburgh Courier*." This free, evening program featuring lectures, workshops, and educational sessions offers three Act 48 credit hours with online pre-registration.
- In "Giving Voice to National Politics," scheduled for mid-2011, historians and authors will discuss their work on the *Courier's* role in the American political arena. Larry Glasco, Ph.D., professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh, will moderate. The panel will include Oscar Williams, "George Schuyler: Portrait of a Black Conservative," assistant professor of Africana Studies, State University of New York-Albany, and Nancy Goldstein, *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Woman Cartoonist*.

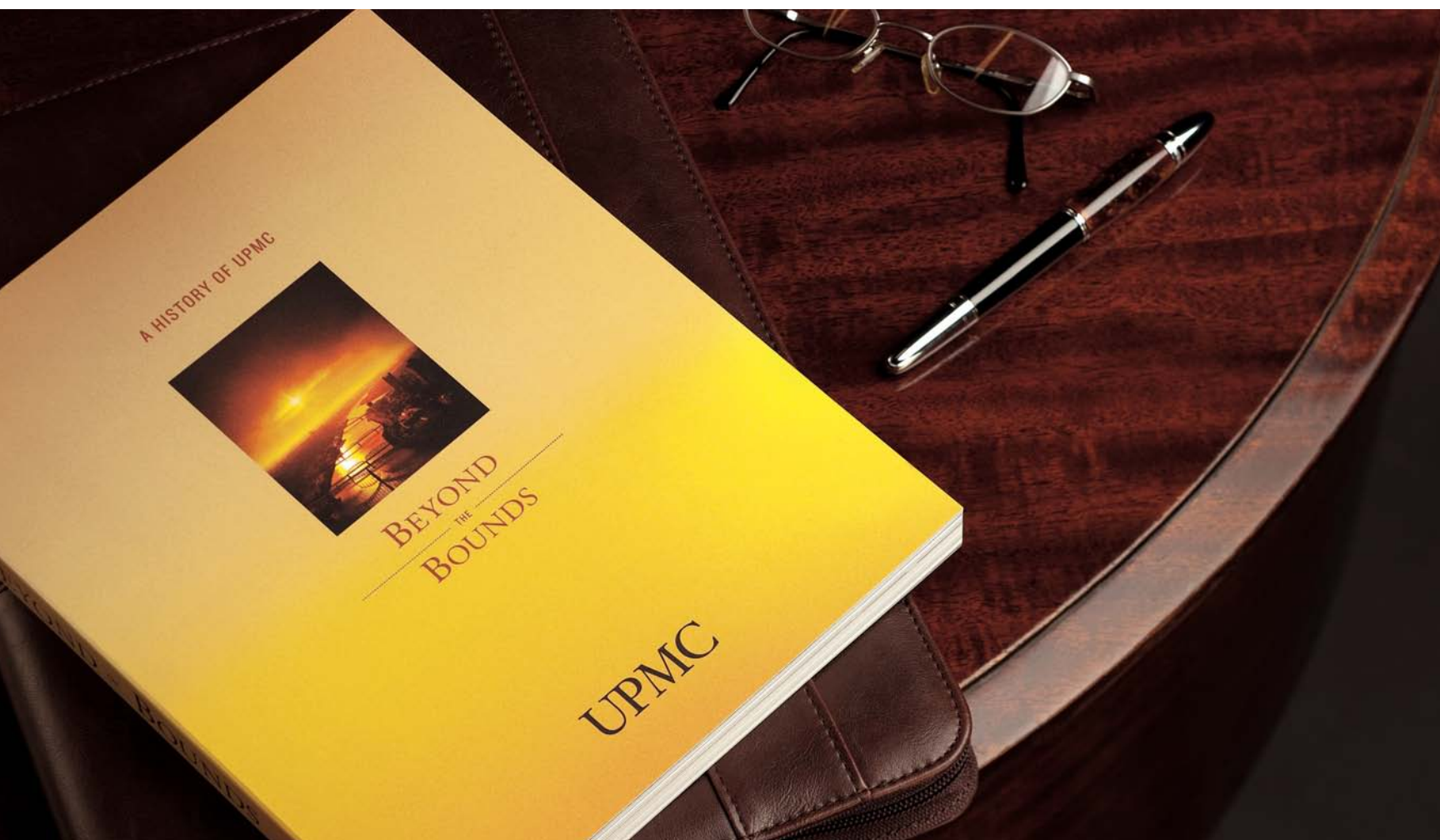
- *Newspaper of Record*, a new documentary film by Ken Love, traces the *Courier's* rise to a national paper with 14 editions. The History Center will host a special screening and discussion in Summer/Fall 2011. Love filmed a number of *Courier* employees before their passing, including legendary editor Frank Bolden. The inspirational film documents the paper's advocacy and leadership on behalf of so many important issues, from lynching and civil rights to its successful efforts to get the Red Cross to accept blood from African-Americans. Other highlights include:

- "African American Experience in Western Pennsylvania, Live and Learn Weekends," one in a series of programs designed to engage audiences through discussion, lecture, first person interpretation, and music;
- "National Constitution and Good Citizenship Day: Freedom of the Press," September 2011, with activities, guides, and a reciting of the Preamble;
- "An Inside Look at the Courier," an exhibition tour and discussion with curator Samuel Black scheduled monthly during the run of the exhibition;
- "The Future of the Press," a round-table discussion, including representatives from *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *The Tribune Review*, *The New Pittsburgh Courier*, and electronic news media, scheduled during the run of the exhibition.

- And opening November 2012: *From Slavery to Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Legacy of Freedom in Western Pennsylvania*. This exhibition will introduce the key role local African Americans played in the national organization of the abolitionist movement, especially Martin Delany, who is considered by many scholars to be the Father of Black Nationalism.

For more information on these and other programs about African American history presented by the Heinz History Center, please visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org, then click on Exhibits and Collections, or contact Terri Blanchette, director of School and Public programs at tsblanchette@heinzhistorycenter.org or 412-454-6411.





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