



# The Torch

Lighting the way for Diversity, Inclusion and Student Culture

February 2022 Issue | A Monthly Insight to Keep You in the Loop at EGCC

**Month-long Observances:**

- American Heart Month
- Black History Month

**Important D&I Calendar Dates:**

- February 1 - National Freedom Day
- February 1 - Chinese (Lunar) New Year (Year of the Tiger)
- February 4 - Rosa Parks Day
- February 8 - Safer Internet Day
- February 14 - Valentine's Day
- February 15 - Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
- February 15 - International Childhood Cancer Day
- February 20 - World Day of Social Justice

## Black Student UNION

The Office of Institutional Diversity in collaboration with Student Government is excited to announce that EGCC will begin The Black Student Union. This student prompted endeavor was spearheaded by Sherina Criswell and Brittany Fears. Both Criswell and Fears are members of EGCC's Student Government. Along with a number of other students, they were able to garner the administration's support during this Fall semester.

The goal of the BSU is to serve as a means of prompting unity, success, and greater involvement for the Black student body. The BSU will meet its goals by provided information and organizing discussions based on political, educational, social, and cultural issues surrounding the African American community. We hope to provide cultural and historical enrichment to benefit the greater EGCC community.

If you are interested in participating in the EGCC Black Student Union, send an email to: [diversityoffice@egcc.edu](mailto:diversityoffice@egcc.edu) with "EGCC BSU" in the subject line.

## Student SPOTLIGHT



**Sherina Criswell**  
Online - California  
Social Work

Sherina "Rina" Criswell is the interim president and founding member of the Black Student Union. She was born and raised in San Francisco, in the Bayview Hunters Point community, currently living in Contra Costa County. She studies Social Work here at Eastern Gateway Community College and will be graduating in The Spring of 2022. Her goal is to earn her master's degree in Social Work. She also serves as the Vice President for on Online Campus and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and The National Association of Black Social Workers, Bay Area Chapter.

Sherina also is a active coach with Bay Area Girls on the Run, an empowerment organization directed toward girls from low-income families. Sherina has been a grassroots community worker throughout the Bay Area. She has worked at San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), Pittsburgh Unified School District (PUSD), Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD), and the City of Concord Parks and Recreation Department. While working for the San Francisco Health Department as a Case Manager, she learned to advocate for the Black In fact Health Improvement Project, which focused on reducing infant mortality and healthy living within the Black community. With over 20 years of advocating experience, Sherina knows that no issue is too big or too small to serve our children in the community.

*If you or a student you know would like to be featured in the diversity newsletter, please send a bio and a photo to: [diversityoffice@egcc.edu](mailto:diversityoffice@egcc.edu) with "Student Spotlight" in the subject line.*

## Black History SPOTLIGHTS



Jackie Robinson with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1954  
Image Credit: [Wikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jackie_Robinson.jpg)

**JACKIE ROBINSON**

**FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYER**

*"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."*

Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier playing baseball in the 20th century. Playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers, he led the International League with a .349 batting average and 40 stolen bases. In 1947, he debuted as the Brooklyn Dodgers first baseman. It was not easy for Jackie playing on an all-white baseball team. He endured physical and mental abuse from both fans and opposing team players, threatening his life and those of his family. He did it with grace and honor even throughout his abuse, becoming the first African American Major League Baseball Player. Jackie retired with a .313 batting average, 972 runs scored, 1,563 hits, and 200 stolen bases. Elected into the Baseball hall of Fame in 1962, Jackie's impact on baseball lives on forever.

Written by Brittany Stevens - with excerpts from [www.baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/robinson-jackie](https://www.baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/robinson-jackie)

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**

**ONE OF THE GREATEST JAZZ SOLOISTS EVER**

Louis Armstrong had a lasting impact on the music industry, becoming one of the greatest jazz soloists ever. Louis's reputation as a fine blues player started while he was working odd jobs delivering papers. As his reputation grew, he replaced his mentor - Joe "King" Oliver in the Kid Ory's Band. In 1977 he joined Oliver in Chicago as the second cornet player in the Creole Jazz Band. While in Chicago, Lois recorded more than 60 records with his band Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five. By then, Louis Armstrong's name was becoming popular within the jazz music industry. using his frame, Louis spoke out in support of the Civil Rights movement and school desegregation, going as far as to criticize President Eisenhower's response to Little Rock Nine. The impact Louis had on American history will last forever.



Louis Armstrong

Image Credit: Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Written by Brittany Stevens - with excerpts from [www.music.si.edu/story/louis-armstrong](https://www.music.si.edu/story/louis-armstrong) and [www.biography.com/musician/louis-armstrong](https://www.biography.com/musician/louis-armstrong)



## Karla's Korner

### Why Celebrate BLACK HISTORY

The achievements and contributions of Black Americans throughout America's history have been overlooked and minimized. Black Americans have had key roles in promoting the success and progression of America. These accomplishments are minimized and kept from the History books studied in most schools. Sure, the books highlight a few, but the reality of the true contributions that tell a whole story is not captured. The truth is if we celebrate the entire story, we bridge diversity gaps between cultures that lead to unification. When we unite cultures and backgrounds, we unwillingly permit people to accept differences.

Black people are not trying to force an issue; freedom is apparent. The story and the bottom line is that freedom for Black Americans didn't start at the same time as other citizens. Even when Black Americans were downtrodden simply for being darker skin, they still fought through their circumstances and acquired freedom for all Black Americans. This was no simple task, and even while enslaved for one generation out of slavery, Black Americans made contributions that better the lives of ALL Americans.

When you look over what Black Americans went through from being enslaved and sold at auction to successful doctors, lawyers, educators, and CEOs, the admiration is in what they overcame. Few people know how to overcome their circumstances. Many people give in to the plight and let the bad dictate the outcome - Black Americans took horrible circumstances and made priceless changes in History, American History.

We celebrate Black History because every person is too remarkable not to revive its glory and success. Every story, black, white, or other, can learn about perseverance, grace, humility, and determination by studying Black American History.

