There should always be rising excitement at the beginning of a new year. A new year usually represents heightened anticipation. It also represents a moment to soberly reflect on the year that just past, while building hope for the days, weeks and months that are just ahead. However, in January 2026, our excitement, anticipation and hope have all been placed in check by the crushing reality of injustice, inhumanity and cruelty.

I have been a proud supporter of the NAACP since I was fourteen years old. At twenty-six I became president of the Central Jersey Branch (Princeton). At thirty-five I became president of the Trenton, New Jersey branch. At forty I became a board member of the Detroit branch and a few years ago I was elected president of the Evanston/North Shore branch. I love the NAACP and here are a few reasons why.

1) For 117 years the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been on the front lines in demanding civil rights for Black people. Since the NAACP's founding at Niagara Falls, the agenda has been clear.
2) Fight for those who are being oppressed.
3) Fight for those who are being mistreated.
4) Fight for those whose rights are being violated, whose personhood is being violated, whose honor is being questioned, whose character is being assassinated, and whose very lives are being taken.

In each decade since its inception, the NAACP has been a vanguard against racism and its heinous tentacles of inequality in education, employment, housing, public transportation, the public sector, the private sector and more. The NAACP has focused upon defending the rights of Black people in southern and northern states, urban areas and rural areas, the east coast and the west coast. We were among the leaders calling for an anti-lynching bill to be passed in Congress. We also sought to end lynchings through protests, demonstrations and judicial processes. We fought for the full integration of United States Armed Forces, demonstrating, appealing to sitting presidents and also threatening to file lawsuits. We have fought for an end to discrimination in housing and continue the battle for equal and affordable housing today. We have been on the front lines in the fight against discrimination in law enforcement and the abuse of law enforcement in states around the nation.

Much of this comes at a cost. Medger Evers was a field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi when he was assassinated in 1963.

Harry and Harriette Moore were Florida NAACP leaders who were killed when a bomb was placed by the KKK exploded under their home on a Christmas night.

Elbert Williams was a charter member of the NAACP in Brownsville, Tennessee when he was murdered by police for his voter registration work.

Wharlest Jackson was treasurer of the Natchez, Mississippi NAACP when he was killed after a bomb was placed in his car.

Vernon Dahmer was an active member of the NAACP in Hattiesburg, Mississippi when his home was firebombed by the KKK after he initiated a voting rights initiative.

Whenever I hear people say, “What has the NAACP done?”, I bristle. We continue to be the very same civil rights organization fighting for the rights of the suffering and oppressed. These days, our safety net has stretched wide to include our immigrant brothers and sisters being terrorized by ICE, our LGBtQ brothers and sisters whose rights and lives are being threatened almost daily, our indigenous American brothers and sisters whose people have been victims of a horrible genocide by our own nation.

While there are many who argue that the NAACP should remain focused only on the civil rights of those out of the African Diaspora, I have a different vantage point. Dr. King put it most aptly, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” God forbid, if a revolution unfolds, or another civil war, or just plain mass destruction and unmitigated dereliction of responsibility, we will need more than just those out of the African Diaspora. We will need our bothers and sisters from “every village and every hamlet, from every city and every state.” We will need “Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Muslims, Hindu and Buddhist, black and white, rich and poor, conservative and liberal.” We will need some of every hue, ethnicity and race to collectively join forces.

When our struggle is interwoven with your struggle and when your struggle is interwoven with our struggle, then we will recognize an important, eye-opening fact. The battle is not against black and white, illegal “immigrant” or citizen. The battle is against the “Haves” and their unabated avarice seeking to take every single vestige of hope, power, authority and wealth from the “Have nots.” What we face today is not a fight against flesh and blood. It is against a fight that pits good against bad and love against hate.

Choose up. Time is one thing we no longer have.

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